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LOOPER

LEARNING LOOPS IN THE PUBLIC REALM

WP3. Co-creation framework and platform
T3.2. Methodology for the inclusion of hard-to-reach groups

Deliverable D 3.2

REPORT ON THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE INCLUSION OF HARD-TO-REACH GROUPS

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable provides an overview of academic and practice-oriented literature on hard-to-reach groups and puts it in the context of LOOPER. The inclusion of hard-to-reach groups can greatly contribute to the success of a public participation or co-creation process, but engaging these groups is not a straightforward exercise.

It is difficult to define who is hard-to-reach, as there is no universally accepted definition. Moreover, the term 'hard-to-reach' implies a homogeneity within a distinct group that does not necessarily exist. Nevertheless, there seems to be consensus among researchers that hard-to-reach groups are often characterised by their lower socio-economic status and isolation from mainstream channels of communication. However, the make-up of these groups depends on the local context.

While there is no silver-bullet that will result in the engagement of hard-to-reach groups, this document identifies strategies that can increase the participation of those groups. These strategies include gaining a foothold within a community (e.g. by attending neighbourhood activities), using pre-existing community networks and organisations (e.g. by working with schools), and communicating through ethnic media.

Knowing *who* is hard-to-reach and designing a strategy on *how* to reach them are first steps towards an inclusive participation process. However, it is of crucial importance to clearly communicate *why* the hard-to-reach groups should participate. People need to see the relevance of the process to their lives and need to be kept engaged throughout the entire participatory process.

2. INTRODUCTION

Including hard-to-reach groups can greatly contribute to the success of a public participation or co-creation process. Engaging those who would usually not participate can increase the diversity of opinions as well as the support for co-created solutions. However, engaging these groups is not a straightforward exercise.

This deliverable gives an overview of best practice in citizen and stakeholder engagement to develop a distinctive yet practical LOOPER approach to engage hard-to-reach groups in the whole co-creation cycle. Furthermore, this deliverable maps the needs of hard-to-reach groups in terms of understanding the different stages of the co-creation process, and develops relevant strategies to bridge gaps.

LOOPER is divided into a three-stage process of problem identification, co-design and evaluation of alternative solutions, and implementation and monitoring of solutions. As this approach is based on the high involvement of users and stakeholders, LOOPER intends to increase the engagement of groups of people that are usually underrepresented in living lab projects. This includes citizens with no IT knowledge or access to the internet.

This document first explains the LOOPER project context (section 3) and gives instructions on how to use these guidelines (section 4). Then, academic and practice-oriented literature on engaging hard-to-reach groups is reviewed (section 5). In section 6, the results of a survey on hard-to-reach groups in the LOOPER Living Labs are presented. The literature is put into the LOOPER context in section 7, after which the findings are summarised (section 8).

3. THE LOOPER PROJECT CONTEXT

These guidelines on the inclusion of hard-to-reach groups are a deliverable within LOOPER (Learning Loops in the Public Realm), a JPI Europe funded research project with Living Labs in Brussels, Manchester and Verona. The aim of this project is to build a participatory co-creation methodology and platform to demonstrate 'learning loops', bringing together citizens, stakeholders and policy-makers to iteratively learn how to address urban challenges such as road safety, traffic calming, air and noise pollution.

Deliverable 3.2 on hard-to-reach groups builds on Deliverable 3.1 that develops a methodology for co-design and gives an overview of tools that can be used when setting up a co-creation platform. Also relevant is Deliverable 4.1, which details the underlying concepts like Living Labs and co-creation as well as the focus on learning loops which underpin the LOOPER methodology. Deliverable 4.1 also describes the three-stage process of problem identification, co-design and evaluation of alternative solutions, and implementation and monitoring of solutions. These three stages are especially relevant, as there are different hard-to-reach groups in each stage of co-creation.

4. HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

4.1. For whom are these guidelines?

This deliverable can be used by anyone that is looking for information and tools on how to engage hard-to-reach groups in co-creation processes. The potential audience may include researchers, city officials, urban planners, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), or citizens who are organizing a participatory initiative.

These guidelines have been compiled for the three specific LOOPER Living Labs in Brussels, Manchester and Verona. These Labs focus on issues in urban areas that are often related to mobility (e.g. street safety and air quality). However, the reviewed methods can be employed in many circumstances and participatory processes other than the LOOPER Living Labs.

4.2. How to use these guidelines?

The following sections give an overview of academic literature on hard-to-reach groups as well as an overview of practical guidelines and handbooks on engaging hard-to-reach groups in participatory processes. These resources contain strategies and tips that can be used to contact and engage hard-to-reach groups in living labs. Furthermore, the implementation plans of the LOOPER Living Labs (documented in Deliverable 5.1 for Brussels; Deliverable 6.1 for Verona; Deliverable 7.1 for Manchester) will identify specific methods depending on the local context. These implementation plans will include concrete examples on how hard-to-reach groups can be engaged, as well as the reasoning behind the choice of methods.

5. REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

5.1. Methodology

Literature on hard-to-reach groups has been searched using the keywords in **table 1**. The words have been mixed and matched in Google Scholar to find relevant resources.

Community	Outreach	Strategy
Public	Mobilisation	Transport planning
Citizen	Mobilization	Urban design
Citizen science	Involvement	Living labs
	Engagement	Learning loops
	Hard-to-reach	Participatory data collection
	Hidden	Digital literacy
	Co-implementation	
	Co-design	

Table 1. Keywords used to find literature on hard-to-reach groups

The results of the literature search are summarised in the following two sections. Section 5.2 gives an overview of academic literature on hard-to-reach groups. Section 5.3 gives an overview of practical guides and handbooks that can prove useful when developing an engagement strategy.

5.2. Who are hard-to-reach groups?

Who makes up a hard-to-reach group depends on the context and the issue at stake (Brackertz, Zwart, Meredyth, & Ralston, 2005). In the context of public participation, Brackertz (2007, p. 1) argues that hard-to-reach groups are "those sections of the community that are difficult to involve". Although there is no universally accepted definition of who is in a hard-to-reach group, Froonjian & Garnett (2013, p. 832) claim that "generally, the hard to reach are defined as having characteristics associated with lower socio-economic status and for various reasons may be isolated from mainstream channels of communication". Examples include those who do not speak the dominant language, ethnic minorities, immigrants, the elderly, and the homeless.

Little research has been found on how to engage hard-to-reach groups in the context of urban mobility, urban planning, urban design, or participatory processes such as Living Labs. Research on hard-to-reach groups is more developed within the context of health and education and often focusses on recruitment and sampling. Examples include research by Cunningham et al. (2007) on health care utilisation of HIV-infected individuals and research by Crozier & Davies (2013) on school involvement of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage parents in England.

Although there is some research on who is usually (not) included in participatory processes (for example, Elvy (2014) finds that in the UK people with disabilities, children and young people are better represented in local transport planning processes than older people, ethnic minorities, lone parents or people on low incomes), there is a lack of research on *how* to engage those groups of people that usually are not included. Two exceptions should be noted. First, Froonjian & Garnett (2013) give an overview of strategies that can be used to engage hard-to-reach groups. The suggested strategies include

> gaining a foothold within a community from which to expand outreach; using data collection tools to identify populations; partnering with leaders within the community, with nonprofits or agencies already working with the hard to reach, and even with private companies; working in the schools to reach adults; and in the case of immigrants, taking advantage of rapidly growing ethnic media that is increasingly penetrating non-English-speaking households. (Froonjian & Garnett, 2013, pp. 835–836)

Second, Delbosc & Currie (2010) describe the methods used by the government in Victoria, Australia to include hard-to-reach groups in transport surveys. The authors find that sampling techniques such as snowballing – participants refer other members of their groups to participate – and location sampling – recruitment of members of a specific group at locations they are known to frequent – are effective methods to better target hard-to-reach groups such as the unemployed, single mothers, young people, disabled people and the homeless.

Groups of people can be hard-to-reach due to their geographical or physical location and/or social and economic situation (Ellard-Gray, Jeffrey, Choubak, & Crann, 2015; Shaghaghi, Bhopal, & Sheikh, 2011). Attitudinal characteristics (no interest in public participation; mistrust of research process) also need to be considered when defining hard-to-reach groups. Other hard-to-reach groups are those that lack time to participate (e.g. because of full-time employment), people with a low commitment to the local area, and people who are disillusioned with the political process and have therefore become disengaged (Brackertz, 2007; Ellard-Gray et al., 2015). Some researchers include so-called hidden populations such as drug users or those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) among the hard-to-reach (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015; Gatlin & Johnson, 2017).

Within Living Labs, who is hard to reach depends on the local context. **Table 2** can be a useful aid in identifying hard-to-reach groups in these different contexts. The table gives an overview of demographic, cultural, behavioural and attitudinal characteristics of hard-to-reach groups as well as examples of groups that have these characteristics. However, this table does not cover all groups in the context of urban mobility. For example, people who commute through an area are not a homogenous group nor are they organised, but they can provide useful insights in a co-creation process.

Two pitfalls in using the term 'hard-to-reach' should be noted. First, by applying the term 'hard-to-reach' to sub-sections of populations, one runs the risk of implying a homogeneity within distinct groups that does not necessarily exist (Brackertz, 2007; Shaghaghi et al., 2011). Second, Cook (2002, p. 523) argues

that "the 'problem' of the hard to reach rests not so much with the subjects of consultation, but rather with those conducting it". Furthermore, Wilson (2002, p. 2) claims that some argue that "no-one is hard to reach, just more expensive to reach".

5.3. Overview of selected practice-oriented literature

The handbooks and guides in this section have been chosen based on their applicability to LOOPER Living Labs as well as their practical use. The practice-oriented handbooks and guides will give Living Lab organisers practical tips on how to engage hard-to-reach groups. Rather than duplicate work that has been done by people and agencies specialised in engaging hard-to-reach groups, this deliverable provides a selection of handbooks and guides that are useful resources when developing an engagement strategy. It should be noted that this selection is not exhaustive.

Characteristics of hard-to-reach groups	Possible attributes	Examples	Prompts: What do we know? What do others know?
Demographic: The quantity and characteristics of the group	• Small numbers • Dispersed population • Place of residence • Occupation and employment status • Age • Gender • Educational level attained • Income • Tenancy status	• Farmers • Unemployed persons • Tenants • New residents • Old people • Young people • Women • Businesses • Community groups and organisations • Indigenous • High rise apartment dwellers • Faith based communities	• Where are these groups found? • How many are there in the group? • What do members of the group have in common? • (Where) do they get together? • Who else contacts them and how?
Cultural: The way of life of a group of people	• Lack of established information networks • Unable to access services easily • Language spoken • Ethnic or cultural background • Social invisibility • Lack of knowledge about councils' role and services	• Culturally and linguistic diverse • Illiterate people • Home workers • Ethnic groups • Indigenous • Drug users • Sex workers • Homeless people • Problem gamblers • Residents of hostels and boarding houses	• Which organisations could we work with to develop an information network? • What established information networks do people already use and how could we tap into them? • Are there individuals we could work through? How? • What are the alternatives to written information and points of contact?

Behavioural and attitudinal: The way the group's attitude to council influences their behaviour	• Distrust of government agencies • Unwillingness to access services • Public participation in local or council matters is a low priority • Lack of time • Diffuse or poorly organised internal structure and communication • Previous bad experience	• Busy people • (Single) mothers • Businesses • Illegal workers • Drug users • Sex workers • Homeless people • Problem gamblers • Residents of hostels and boarding houses	• Who do they trust? • How can we inform or educate about the relevance of, or necessity for, consultation? • What methods of outreach can we use (social marketing approach)? • How can we establish new relationships? • What or who can influence them? • What about the timing of the intervention?

Table 2. Tool to identify characteristics of the hard to reach

Source: adapted from Brackertz (2007)

5.3.1. « Il y a *toujours* des personnes qui ne participent *jamais* ! »

"There are *always* people who *never* participate!" (Periferia, 2011) is a handbook on how to engage people that usually do not attend public participation meetings. It can be used by anyone involved in public participation. The handbook was written by Periferia, a Brussels-based international non-profit association specialised in participative democracy. The handbook is based on the experiences of Periferia, in particular in the context of their experiences of a public participation project in the Brussels Scheut district.

The handbook gives five key steps that are of importance when engaging hard-to-reach groups in a participatory process:

1. **Meet the people who are not used to participating** through individual meetings or small group workshops.
2. **Meet the neighbourhood** by attending neighbourhood activities.
3. **Co-create a common concern** by organising collective workshops.
4. **Gradually develop a collective reflection** by
   a. revealing shared priorities;
   b. participating in the development of priority projects;
   c. taking part in important moments for the neighbourhood;
   d. developing tools that avoid new urban developments that exclude the most fragile;
   e. daring to use participative democracy mechanisms that are targeted towards certain groups in particular;
5. **Encourage meetings and connections within the neighbourhood**

Periferia used this five-step process in 2010 when it led a public participation project in the Brussels Scheut district. It contacted people who were not used to participating – such as the elderly – via associations as well as organisations that provide support in the neighbourhood. Two neighbourhood strolls were organised that allowed people to comment on public space while using it. The organisers also explored the area and talked to people on the street. During the first public meeting, participants decided the improvement of the neighbourhood park to be a priority. The second public meeting was a brainstorm session on *how* to improve it, and was attended by an expert that could answer questions and show examples. A representative from the municipality presented the plans for the neighbourhood park during the third meeting. The plans were inspired by the input from the participants in all three meetings, including the input from those who were not used to participate.

« Il y a *toujours* des personnes qui ne participent *jamais* ! » can be accessed in French via the following hyperlink: http://www.periferia.be/Bibliomedia/PUB/EP2011/periferia_2011_public_absent.pdf

5.3.2. Social Inclusion of the Hard to Reach

'Social Inclusion of the Hard to Reach' (Brackertz & Meredyth, 2008) is the final report of a three-year collaborative research venture on hard-to-reach groups between local governments in the state of Victoria in Australia and the Swinburne University of Technology. The report gives guidelines on how to identify and involve hard-to-reach groups in community consultation.

The report was written as a practical resource for local councils that want to engage hard-to-reach groups in decision-making and planning. It gives several strategies for involving hard-to-reach groups that are illustrated with examples:

- **Overcome prejudice** towards the hard-to-reach groups that you want to engage as well as of the preconceptions the hard-to-reach groups may have about you or your project.
- **Adapt consultation methods to be more inclusive:** consult the techniques for inclusive consultation in **table 3**.
- **Communicate and negotiate access** to the hard-to-reach group through trusted channels and in a visible, accessible and relevant way.
- **Use pre-existing community networks** to reach out to specific groups.
- **Develop community relations and trust** by developing ongoing relationships with hard-to-reach groups and giving them ownership of the participation process.

- **Choose appropriate locations** that are accessible, are easy to find, and do not deter certain groups of people.
- **Use expert knowledge and work with consultants** if you lack specialist training and experience with hard-to-reach groups.
- **Deal with vocal interest groups** that may hijack the participation process by encouraging the participation of those who support your project.

Publicity	• Local newspapers • Community radio • Pamphlets • Newsletters (e.g. neighbourhood house, sports clubs) • Website • Email bulletins • Library
Making contact	• Service clubs • Sporting clubs and associations • Interest based community groups • Faith based groups • Ethnic groups • Local leaders • Hire service providers to contact, consult (e.g. aged care services) • Staff networks
Participation incentives	• Paid focus groups, interviews, surveys • Food vouchers, prizes • Barbeques, children's activities
Formal consultation methods	• Citizen researchers (interviews, surveys, focus groups) • Think tents and listening posts • Drop-off and pick-up surveys
Informal consultation or community-building methods	• Fishing trips • Street parties • Mural projects • Outdoor movies
New technologies	• Text messaging • Online survey • Casual sounding email
Access	• Council transport • Appropriate venues • Child care • Consult out of hours • Help people fill in a questionnaire

Adapting information	• Pamphlets in different languages
	• Audio tape in different languages
	• Websites in different languages
	• Braille
	• Translators
	• Large print

Table 3. Techniques for inclusive consultation

Source: (Brackertz & Meredyth, 2008)

'Social Inclusion of the Hard to Reach' can be accessed in English via the following hyperlink: http://healthissuescentre.org.au/images/uploads/resources/Social-inclusion-of-the-hard-to-reach.pdf

5.3.3. 100 Ideas to Help Engage Hard-to-Reach People

'100 Ideas to Help Engage Hard-to-Reach People' (Capire Consulting Group, n.d.) was written by an Australian consultancy specialised in community engagement. The document gives 10 engagement principles that should be considered before designing an engagement strategy as well as 90 ideas to engage the following hard-to-reach groups:

- Newly arrived people
- Older people
- People with a disability
- Homeless people
- Indigenous Australians
- The bereaved
- Older migrants
- Children
- Young people

The document is very easy to read as each idea is summarised in one or two sentence(s). It provides tips on topics such as how to select an appropriate venue or how to deal with different cultures and religions.

'100 Ideas to Help Engage Hard-to-Reach People' can be accessed in English via the following hyperlink: http://www.mengage.org.au/MENGAGE/media/MediaLibraryOne/Capire/Community-Engagement-100-Ideas-to-Help-Engage-Hard-to-Reach-People-Booklet.pdf

5.3.4. Good Practice Guidance – Consultation with Equalities Groups

'Good Practice Guidance – Consultation with Equalities Groups' (Reid-Howie Associates, 2002) is a booklet on how to engage hard-to-reach groups in public consultation. It was developed for the Scottish Government and written by a public and social policy consultancy. The findings are based on the experiences of Scottish local authorities, national equalities organisations, public bodies and the Scottish Executive. The booklet identifies the following hard-to-reach groups:

- women
- minority ethnic communities
- gypsies/travellers
- asylum seekers
- refugees
- disabled people
- people with specific health issues
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups
- young people and older people

- those in specific areas (such as rural areas or peripheral estates)
- religious/faith groups
- those on low incomes

In the section on hard-to-reach groups (pp. 15 – 20), the authors write that identifying hard-to-reach groups is best done via existing umbrella groups and organisations. These groups can participate directly or invite their members to participate in events. These umbrella groups and organisations can be found on the internet as well as through local authorities.

Relying on these outreach methods alone brings the risk of excluding certain groups, as not all groups are organised nor homogenous. It is therefore important to reach individuals and groups that are usually hard to reach, for example by organising events specifically for these groups. And if you do not have the resources or skills to do this, ask a third party like a local umbrella group to carry out the work on your behalf. Lastly, contacting hard-to-reach people online can be a useful additional method to include more people. It is always important to use a range of outreach methods in order to successfully engage hard-to-reach groups.

There are also issues that need to be addressed *during* the participatory process in order to keep the hard-to-reach groups engaged. The booklet (pp. 21 – 34) highlights the following issues:

- The **attitudes of staff** can have a significant impact on the accessibility of the process. Avoid making inappropriate assumptions, discrimination in language or behaviour, and approaches that can be seen as patronising.
- **Provide enough time to respond**, as some groups may need to translate materials, organise community meetings, or are unavailable due to religious holidays.
- **Provide accessible information.** Use plain language, avoid language that can be seen as discriminatory, make documents easy to read, and translate texts if necessary.
- **Organise inclusive events** by providing information about the venue and set-up, and ask participants to inform you in advance about their individual requirements. Parents may need childcare for their children and disabled people need step free access to the venue.
- **Provide feedback** on the outcome of the consultation to participants and the reasons for (not) including their views.

When you are identifying appropriate publicity for the consultation it is important to ask:

➔ Where does this community/group get information from?
➔ Where are they likely to see/hear/receive information?
➔ What forms of publicity are likely to be available to/used by the community?
➔ Are there any specialist media for this group?
➔ Are they likely to have access to the publicity provided or are there other media that can be used?

'Good Practice Guidance – Consultation with Equalities Groups' can be accessed in English via the following hyperlink: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/46729/0025644.pdf

5.3.5. Participation – actively engaging citizens and stakeholders in the development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

'Participation – actively engaging citizens and stakeholders in the development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans' (Lindenau, Böhler-Baedeker, & Rupprecht Consult, 2016) is a publication by the EU-funded research consortium CH4LLENGE. The publication is one of four manuals developed for transport planners who need to develop a sustainable urban mobility plan. The manual views hard-to-reach groups from a transport perspective. Especially relevant are the sections on who should be involved when developing and implementing a mobility plan (sections 3.2.1 and 3.3.3).

Although the manual acknowledges that hard-to-reach groups are a set of diverse sub-groups and individuals, it identifies the following hard-to-reach groups:

- Children and young people
- Elderly people
- Single parents
- Minority ethnic communities
- Language minorities
- Disabled people
- People with specific health issues
- People with low literacy levels
- Faith communities
- People on low incomes

The authors suggest several ways these groups can be engaged in urban mobility plans:

- Identify barriers that could deter people, such as the language or timing of an event.
- Provide sufficient background information, as the audience may not know the subject well.
- Information needs to be easily accessible and understandable.
- Local organisations can be useful in spreading the message of your participatory process.
- Events should be accessible to all potential participants – think about access to the venue, parking, signage, lightning, etc.
- Provide financial or other support to people who would otherwise lack the resources to participate.

'Participation – actively engaging citizens and stakeholders in the development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans' can be accessed in Croatian, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian via the following hyperlink: http://www.sump-challenges.eu/kits

6. SURVEY ON HARD-TO-REACH GROUPS

In order make this deliverable as useful as possible, a survey on hard-to-reach groups was sent to the organisers and participants of LOOPER Living Labs in Brussels, Manchester, and Verona. This section will discuss the methodology and results of the survey.

6.1. Methodology

Organisers and participants of LOOPER Living Labs in Brussels, Manchester, and Verona were invited to answer an online survey (see Appendix) about hard-to-reach groups in their Living Labs. The survey contained three open questions on what groups of people do (not) participate in the local Living Lab, seven closed and one open question on barriers to participation in the local Living Lab, and two open questions on strategies that have been or could be used to engage hard-to-reach groups in the local Living Lab. In total, 12 people participated in the survey. Most responses came from Verona, where the survey was filled in by participants during a meeting.

6.2. Results of survey

In general, most participants of the survey believe the relationships of the Living Lab with key people and organisation in the neighbourhood to be sufficient, but they could be improved. Communication is thought to be open and inclusive, and participants in the Living Labs have the opportunity to give feedback on the outreach methods used. The diversity of communication channels is believed to be sufficient, but could also be improved. Most participants believe the language of communication to be correct, however three participants disagree. The majority also believes the choice of meeting locations, the timing of meetings, and the choice of problem in the Living Lab to be open and inclusive.

6.2.1. Brussels

The participants of the Brussels Living Lab are Belgian, middle-class, and cyclists. Many of them are involved in other neighbourhood projects that touch on the issue of mobility (e.g. air quality or traffic safety) and know each other from these projects. Whereas Brussels is a dominantly French-speaking city, the participants often had Dutch as their mother tongue.

Groups identified as missing in the Living Lab are car owners, people who do not live in the neighbourhood but frequently visit, people with migrant backgrounds (there is a Turkish community in the area), people with lower incomes, and people with disabilities. A cause of the lack of participation from these groups is the outreach strategy, which has not sufficiently taken into account these groups.

After the second Living Lab meeting, a new strategy has been developed with the input from participants to find ways to include these hard-to-reach groups. This strategy will include outreach in Francophone schools, on the street (i.e. weekly markets inside as well as outside the neighbourhood), and in a community meeting of Muslim women.

6.2.2. Manchester

In Manchester, participants in the Living Lab have diverse backgrounds. The participants have different ethnicities, genders, ages, levels of education, family situations, mental health, and employment situations. The group also contains both people that own a car and those that do not. Groups that are identified as missing from the Living Lab are the Chinese community, men that do not have leadership roles in the community, people with physical disabilities, and temporary residents.

The reasons behind the lack of participation from certain groups vary. The local partner in Manchester did reach out through a Chinese community centre, but this did not lead participation of members of the Chinese community in the Living Lab. The absence of men that do not have leadership roles can be explained by the influence of Muslim traditions in the neighbourhood. Women often take part in community activities, and feel uncomfortable with men being included in them. Temporary residents such as students tend not to be invested in the neighbourhood. Middle class people also tend not to engage in the Living Lab, potentially because they are connected to places outside of the neighbourhood and do not see themselves as members of a community where social housing dominates.

6.2.3. Verona

The Verona Living Lab has attracted a diverse group of participants. The participants have different ages, genders, family statuses and health. However, many participants are Caucasian Italians, live in the neighbourhood, already were engaged with the topic of air quality, have a medium to high level of education, and own a car.

Groups identified as missing in the Verona Living Lab are people with non-Italian nationalities, representative of religious institutions in the neighbourhood, and those on low incomes. Reasons behind their lack of participation are believed to be low interest, lack of information, and difficulties in understanding the goal of the project.

7. HARD-TO-REACH GROUPS IN LOOPER LIVING LABS

As the context of every public participation process is different, there is no silver-bullet that will result in the engagement of hard-to-reach groups. Moreover, successfully engaging hard-to-reach groups does not only depend on the strategy but also on the execution.

Thinking about *who* might be hard-to-reach and *how* they can be engaged are important first steps to making a Living Lab more inclusive. When organising a public meeting, see which groups of people are not represented. Not only demographic characteristics such as age should be considered, but also cultural ones (e.g. language), behavioural and attitudinal ones (e.g. time-poor). Comparing demographic characteristics of participants with official statistics can give an insight on which groups are missing.

Cultural, behavioural and attitudinal characteristics are often not found in statistics and can therefore be more difficult to spot. A collective brainstorm session with Living Lab participants is a potential strategy to find groups of people that are underrepresented or not represented at all.

In the context of LOOPER and based on the experiences in LOOPER Living Labs as well as the consulted literature and handbooks, the following groups of people are often found to be hard to reach:

- Children and young people (special rules apply concerning research ethics)
- Minority ethnic communities
- Language minorities
- Faith communities
- People on low incomes
- People with physical disabilities
- Digital illiterate people
- People without internet access

When trying to engage people, it is useful to know *where* and *when* they meet and interact. Being present at these times and places will allow for direct interaction with hard-to-reach groups. Bring tools such as a map to get a discussion started. If possible, use community representatives as communication relays, as they know the hard-to-reach group. Moreover, some people may trust information less when it comes from an outsider than when it comes from a trusted channel.

Outreach efforts to hard-to-reach groups can be time-consuming and should therefore be done in a strategic way, especially when financial resources are limited. Using existing contacts or resources to communicate with hard-to-reach groups can prove effective. For example, it is not possible to translate information in every minority language or contact all foreign language media outlets when resources are limited. A way around this problem is to use a communication relay (i.e. a community representative) that speaks the main language as well as a minority language.

The LOOPER methodology is based on different stages of co-creation. Problem identification is the first stage, followed by co-design and evaluation of alternative solutions, and implementation and monitoring of solutions is the last stage. The hard-to-reach groups can differ between the different stages. For example, those who do not own a smartphone or have internet access can be recruited via offline communication channels, but may be hard-to-reach in the first stage when data needs to be collected or in the second stage when ideas are co-designed online.
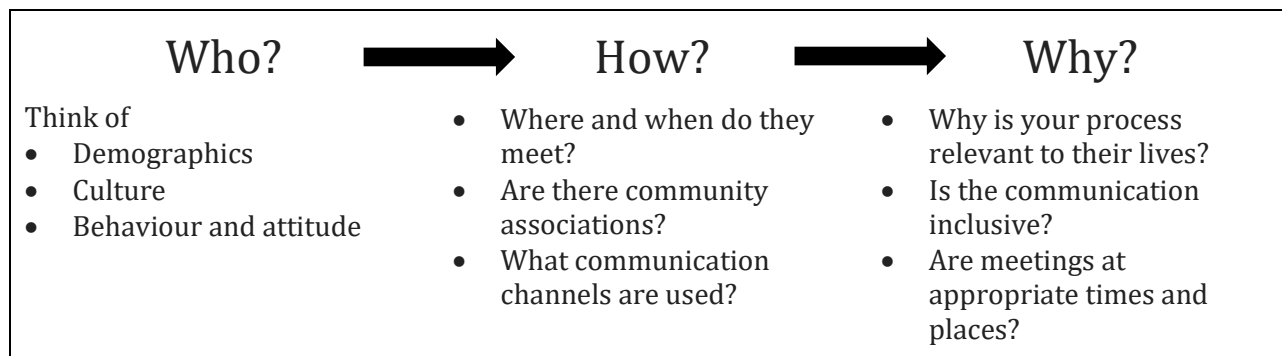
Identifying and reaching hard-to-reach groups are important first steps, but maintaining their interest and asking for feedback may be even more important. Taking into account the following points can have a positive effect on maintaining people's interest:

- Convince people that the participation process is relevant to their lives, as it makes them more inclined to participate.
- Be visible, accessible and relevant when communicating.
- Avoid jargon, as it may scare of people.
- Correct interventions by the organisers can prevent that some groups hijack the participation process.
- Organise meetings at a time and place that is accessible to everyone. Different lifestyles can be accommodated by alternating afternoon and evening sessions.

A threat to LOOPER's inclusive approach is the use of ICT devices and other high-tech technologies. Whereas these technologies can greatly contribute to the co-creation process and can even be used to engage those who do not have time to attend face-to-face meetings, some people may lack the knowledge and experience required to use these technologies, and may therefore feel excluded. It is therefore of vital importance that these technologies *complement* rather than *substitute* face-to-face interaction.

Figure 1 summarises the engagement process for hard-to-reach groups in Living Labs. The first step is to look at characteristics of a group in order to define the groups that are hard-to-reach. When this has been done, contact those groups by visiting them and/or via community associations. The last step is convincing the people in the hard-to-reach group to engage in the Living Lab. In the beginning, people

need to be convinced that the process is relevant to their lives. Keeping people engaged can be done by giving them ownership of the process, communicating in an inclusive way, and by organising meetings at different times and at accessible venues.

Who?	How?	Why?
Think of • Demographics • Culture • Behaviour and attitude	• Where and when do they meet? • Are there community associations? • What communication channels are used?	• Why is your process relevant to their lives? • Is the communication inclusive? • Are meetings at appropriate times and places?

Figure 1. The engagement process for hard-to-reach groups in Living Labs

Always keep in mind there is no perfect way to engage hard-to-reach groups. Moreover, quality of participation should go over quantity. Different people lead different lives, and their commitment will vary.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

This deliverable has provided an overview of academic literature on hard-to-reach groups as well as practical handbooks on how to engage them. An inclusive participatory process is likely to be more successful because of the larger diversity of opinions as well as the broader support for co-created solutions. Who make up these hard-to-reach groups depends on the context and the issue at stake. Hard-to-reach groups can be engaged with the right strategy and execution. This will take time and costs money, however.

Knowing *who* is hard to reach is only the first step towards an inclusive participation process. A strategy then needs to be designed on *how* to reach the hard-to-reach, e.g. via community representatives or by using different communication channels. When communicating, it should be clear *why* the hard-to-reach groups should participate. People need to see the relevance of the process to their lives and need to be kept engaged throughout the process. This can be achieved by developing a common concern between participants during meetings, and allowing participants to take ownership of the process.

The chosen methods and strategies to engage hard-to-reach groups in the LOOPER Living Labs will be described the implementation plans (Deliverable 5.1 for Brussels; Deliverable 6.1 for Verona; Deliverable 7.1 for Manchester). This deliverable on hard-to-reach groups can be used as a starting point for those plans. The implementation plans should ask the three questions in **figure 1** – who, how, and why – and provide answers.

Correctly identifying the hard-to-reach, reaching and engaging them in several ways and keeping them engaged throughout the process is a time-consuming but worthwhile effort. However, no matter how much energy you put into engaging this group, there are always people that never participate!

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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11. APPENDIX – SURVEY ON HARD-TO-REACH GROUPS

11.1. Defining hard-to-reach groups

So far, what groups of people participate in your LOOPER Living Lab?

So far, what groups of people DO NOT participate in your LOOPER Living Lab?

Why do some groups of people not participate in your LOOPER Living Lab?

11.2. Barriers to participation

Our Living Lab has relationships with key people and organisations in the neighbourhood.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

Our communication is open and inclusive

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

Our Living Lab has diverse communication channels

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

The language of our communication excludes groups of people

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

The choice of our meeting locations intimidates or excludes parts of the population

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

The timing of our meetings excludes parts of the population

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

Our choice of problems to be addressed excludes parts of the population

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

Our Living Lab allows for participants to give feedback on outreach methods

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

Any other thoughts on participation barriers?

11.3. Strategies

What strategies (if any) do you have to engage hard-to-reach groups in your LOOPER Living Lab?

Do you have any books, articles or website with guides or methods on engaging hard-to-reach groups in the public participation process that should be mentioned in Deliverable 3.2?