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SCALING UP DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: FROM CLASSROOM TO MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates opportunities for scaling up the diversity and inclusion of international residents at the level of municipality service offerings. The starting point is a set of small-scale service design projects actively involving municipal representatives and university students.

This collaboration was part of a service design course at Aalto University addressing challenges faced by the municipality of Espoo, Finland.

Through triangulation of three data sources i) pre-course meetings, ii) email surveys during the course, and iii) semi-structured interviews with participating municipal representatives after the course, this paper offers insights on how small-scale service design collaborations can facilitate the scaling up of international diversity and inclusion within public services. Our findings identify prerequisites for scaling up (i.e., exposure

and impetus for change, diversity and inclusion immersion, and personal empowerment), but they also highlight institutional hindrances (i.e., institutional inertia, reframing and reverting, and implementation paralysis) that warrant further investigations.

INTRODUCTION

Diversity and inclusion of international residents are globally relevant, timely, and pressing topics. Extant research repeatedly demonstrates that the organisations with less marginalisation (e.g., not pressing certain groups of people in less-deserving positions) and more diversity, have higher productivity and competitiveness (Cox & Blake, 1991; Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the European economy is in an urgent need to boost growth and the European commission calls on all national policies to find sustainable ways to strengthen the economy (European Commission, 2020). The United Nations 2030 agenda calls for reduced inequalities (UN, 2015) and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2001) underlines the importance of cultural diversity to fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance and to support the realization of human rights (UN, 1948). While positive attitudes towards growing cultural diversity are increasing globally

(Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009), anti-immigration right-wing populism is simultaneously spreading across Europe (e.g., BBC News, 2019). While migrations within and towards the European Union are increasing, municipality policies and politics uncover discriminating practices, such as neglecting the human rights of certain groups of immigrants and lack of educational equality (Dancygier, 2010; Moreno-Lax, 2018).

With the above issues in mind, this paper addresses the challenge of scaling up diversity and inclusion of international people in the context of the municipality of Espoo and its public services. Diversity and inclusion are key to successful business growth (Hunt et al., 2020) which understandably functions well as a motivation in the context of business organisations. While the European Union actively emphasizes the importance of diversity and inclusion, municipalities have a tendency to be very slow in implementing systemic changes. Furthermore, immigration matters are a sensitive political topic, constantly being pulled in two directions. On one side, social-democratic politicians support integration and advocate the ground-level importance of equality to build sustainable futures. On the other side, the anti-immigration politics are increasingly trying to blame international residents for diverse problems including unemployment, criminality, and decrease of national security (Dancygier, 2010). These issues, among others, increase the challenge of achieving and scaling up successful cases of diversity and inclusion at a municipal level.

We investigated this phenomenon in Espoo, which has one of the highest percentages of international residents in Finland. In particular, the percentage of the international population has been rapidly growing, making integration of the international population one of the key priorities and strategies towards sustainable futures (Espoo Story, 2017). In this context, the term ‘international residents’ refers to those residents who do not speak the country's official language as their mother tongue and have a foreign nationality.

Service design has been identified by many as a successful practice to develop service offerings towards more human-centered, productive and valuable ones (e.g., Kimbell, 2009; Mager, 2009). Yet, making change and scaling up solutions in public services has been identified as a problematic topic in design literature. For example, research conducted within the DESIS Network (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability) recognizes scaling up social innovations and transformative changes as a challenge which calls for further investigation (Cipolla, 2018). Authors who have studied design collaboration with municipalities claim that it is challenging to have a long-term impact through service design practices if the projects are short-term, clients are not committed, and public institutions lack tools and practices to implement the residents’ needs

(Hyvärinen et al., 2015; Pirinen, 2016). Yet, according to Deserti and Rizzo (2014), achieving systemic change through design is possible if the culture of the organisation is developed simultaneously towards the same goals as the intended change. Also, Vink et al. (2019) suggest that reshaping the mental models of those who are part of the organisation contribute to innovation. They propose focusing on enabling conditions, such as coaching, participation and supporting physical materials, to allow a shift in people’s own assumptions and beliefs. The shift can be facilitated through practices of experiencing surprises, realising multiple perspectives, and alternative futures (ibid). Nevertheless, we lack the knowledge on whether small-scale service design projects with municipalities can set the stage for scaling up diversity and inclusion.

To address this problem and research gap, we observed the prerequisites and hindrances of scaling up through a university course in service design that is organised in partnership with civil servants from the City of Espoo. The enrolled, master level students had a background in design, and most of them had previous experience in collaborative and human-centered design. It was a highly international cohort with 16 students from 11 different countries and only five local students. In addition to the learning objectives that focus on service design related themes, the course has an additional thematic component which changes each year. In 2020, the main topic was internationalisation which was opened up and explained to mean the integration of international residents to service development and the diversity and inclusion of international residents in service offerings. The choice of topic was agreed with the municipality, and was intended to i) address the topical situation the municipality is facing with an increasing number of international residents, and ii) overlap with the research questions of the first author, who acted as teaching assistant in the course.



Figure 1: Residents participating in city planning set up by the student team. (Photo: Jelske van de Ven, Emma van Dormalen, Austen Arnould and Virve Boesch)

The course ran over six weeks with a highly intensive schedule including literature and lectures along with the

project work (see Table 1). The project work was done in five groups of three to five students and each group addressed a design brief of their own (Figure 1). The briefs included international residents' participation in urban planning, attracting international talent, facilitating employment and onboarding processes, as well as rethinking the concept of a local museum to become more inclusive. In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the course was organized mainly remotely using Zoom and Miro platforms. Table 1 depicts the design project phases, related group work activities, and anticipated interactions between students and municipal partners.

Table 1: Course phases and interactions between students and municipal partners by weeks (W).

W	Phases	Activities	Collaboration
1	Dive into the topic	Forming teams, theme explorations; first provotype concepts; field study plan	Meeting with municipal partners
2	Field research	Project focus, background & literature research	Contacting diverse stakeholders, including service customers, and providers
3	Frame your action	Making sense and exploring by observation, interviews, co-design, preliminary findings, stakeholder insights, and initial ideas	Contacting stakeholders, field studies. Mid-term review of preliminary findings
4	Insights and ideas	Elaborations, further making sense and exploring, design interventions	Participating in co-creation interventions
5	Synthesizing and design interventions	(Continuation of the field research), analysis, personas, design directions	Receiving feedback on findings and design directions
6	Finalising	Finalising design ideas, learning portfolio, deliverables	Preparing for the final presentation and feedback session
	Final deliverables	Group presentation, Final report, Executive summary	Detailed feedback

For this paper, we focused on studying the municipal partners and their expectations, learning, and

experiences. We collected data before, during and after the course from all the 13 municipal representatives who participated in the course as owners of the five different project briefs. In this paper we opt to call them partners to highlight the co-creative nature of service design. Before the course the partners were observed in a series of meetings organized to develop the briefs, during the course weekly emails were sent to the partners to reflect on the topics of service design and diversity and inclusion, and after the course semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the participating partners. Through this data collection we aimed to obtain a finer-grained understanding of the individual and systemic prerequisites that lead towards change.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

SERVICE DESIGN AND MUNICIPALITY COLLABORATION

This paper focuses on diversity and inclusion through a service design intervention. Therefore, we investigated recent literature on service design projects with municipalities. We can recognise that triggering change through collaboration is a challenging topic. Stickdorn et al's (2018) characterisation of service design practice includes experimenting, prototyping, tackling with uncertainty, making action and learning from it, and highlights the iterative and reflective process of service design. Yet, traditionally municipalities are not well-equipped for experimenting and have a tendency to be slower in the process of change compared to the private sector (Pirinen, 2016). This may lead to a gap and, thus, to misunderstandings in the culture of practices between service design and municipalities (Vaajakallio et al., 2013). There are, however, examples of how service design and municipality collaboration has led towards a change when organisational capabilities, structure, routines and culture were taken into consideration during the planning of different phases of transformation (e.g., Malmberg, 2017; Yu & Sangiorgi, 2018). However, Pirinen (2016), who focused on co-design projects, claims that: "a university-led service co-design project remains a superimposed activity with low impact on actual design decisions or core activities in the client organisations and that the utilisation of co-design greatly relies on individual, committed participants" (p. 27). In the same vein, Hyvärinen et al. (2015) recognize that public organisations lack the tools and practices to have the residents' needs and wishes implemented in the development of services.

Transformative service research highlights the importance of human-centeredness and improvement of wellbeing (Sangiorgi, 2011). Fisk et al. (2018) propose transformative service research as a model towards more inclusive design and more valuable services for all

as it is “enabling opportunity, offering choice, relieving suffering and fostering happiness” (p. 835). Moreover, this idea seems to be aligned with i) the previously mentioned suggestion by Deserti and Rizzo (2014) of simultaneously developing the culture of an organisation and the service offerings (to be more diverse and inclusive), as well as, ii) the reshaping of mental models proposed by Vink et al. (2019). To sum up, facilitating the interactions between the municipality culture and its legacies and service design practice on one hand, and focusing on committed individuals on the other hand, can lead to successful impact towards change. Considering this, we can distinguish that research from the municipalities side on the prerequisites leading towards change can be fruitful for developing services that support the diversity and inclusion of international residents.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTS

Diversity and inclusion of international residents are topical issues in many countries and municipalities and it has not yet been fully explored by design research. Inclusive and universal design are well-researched topics that have greatly contributed to the development of artifacts and services to become more suitable for marginal user groups such as elderly, young people, and disabled (Ostroff, 2011). This has added to our understanding of how the viewpoint of users that are different from ourselves, contributes to more equality as well to products and services that have a better usability in general (Clarkson et al., 2013). Existing research shows that service design is a functioning practice to build equality through inclusion in service systems (Fisk et al., 2018), yet research on racial inclusion is underrepresented despite its timeliness. Currently in many European Union countries service systems are affected by disturbances to scale up diversity and inclusion, such as racism towards foreign nationalities in the educational system (Kurki, 2019) and discrimination in recruitment processes based on foreign family names (Ahmad, 2020). Also as aforementioned, the political atmosphere is strongly affected by the anti-immigration debate and those who aim to support the realisation of human rights. The topics related to inclusion and diversity of international residents are strongly based and biased by assumptions (Blum, 2002) which makes scaling up of services that support diversity and inclusion more important yet challenging.

SCALING UP

Existing literature on scaling up highlights examples from public sector (e.g., healthcare) and private sector (e.g., retail) where emerging behaviour of key actors, as well as ‘learning by doing’, are identified as important factors for scaling up (Paina & Peters, 2012; Subramanian et al., 2011). In service design research,

the topic of scaling up is less rigorously researched, yet the topic of change is presented from different angles. According to Andreassen et al. (2016), it is possible to develop organisation-level change through service design and user-centered practice as they enable the participation of all stakeholders in the organisation. Junginger and Sangiorgi (2009) suggest that to create lasting transformation and to scale up change in an organisation requires in-depth knowledge of the organisational structure. They add that small changes may have a long-lasting impact, but to gain deeper transformation requires longer term collaboration and strong commitment. Di Pietro et al. (2017) propose, based on research conducted with two private sector companies, a framework of four key drivers of scaling up service innovations: “effectuation as the basis for creating the value proposition; sensing and adapting to local contexts; the reconfiguration and alignment of resources and forms for collaboration between actors; and values’ resonance” (p. 146). Through their work they highlight the importance of change of values and sense of benefit for the different participants of the service to be able to scale up innovation. Yet the prerequisites for scaling up for these settings remain under-researched.

To sum up, service design practice has been identified as a positive stimulus for scaling up inclusion and initiating change. Still, more research is needed to understand its potential for scaling up diversity and inclusion of international residents in municipalities, especially when social anti-immigration movements try to pull away from such a change.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This paper leverages data gathered from a 2020 autumn edition of a service design course that involved an intensive collaboration between master level students from Aalto University and diverse municipal partners from the City of Espoo in Finland. The partners were six service managers, three service planners, two specialists, one business coordinator, and one assistant. The course includes group work for tackling a practical project with the aim to innovate municipal services through a human-centered, holistic, and iterative approach, following the way Blomkvist et al. (2010), among others, have coined the key characteristics of service design approach.

Since for this paper we focus on motivations, learnings, and experiences of the involved municipal partners, the research process started before the course was even launched, already in spring 2020. Within the municipality, first, a call for partnership was published to which municipality representatives volunteered for. For this collaboration, the briefs were framed around the current issues that match the overall topic of the course

and that offer a meaningful learning experience. Once the briefs were selected, partners were i) tutored on how to reformulate project briefs and prepare necessary background materials, ii) advised on how to work with students and how much time they should dedicate for the project involvement, iii) introduced to service design mindset, processes, and methods, and iv) informed about what to expect from the collaboration. The latter one included making municipal partners aware that in a student project, the students are expected to reformulate the brief, and as it is a learning process, they will face uncertainties. The partners were also invited to contribute to student groups' learning process by giving feedback, answering questions, joining co-design workshops, and feeding insights (as visible in Table 1). Below, we outline the course's briefs addressing the topic of international diversity and inclusion:

Brief 1: Rethink the concept of a local museum with the mindset of togetherness

Recently, a local museum experienced a decrease in the number of monthly visitors, particularly from the target group of international residents. This project focused on exploring potential avenues to ensure a cosy, safe, and homely environment for diverse municipal residents. The main idea was to bring people together regardless of their origins thus creating a new concept of 'home-internationalisation'.

Brief 2: Integration of international students into the workforce

With the influx of international students at the leading local universities, the municipality recognized the need to smoothen student's integration into the workforce already before, but also after their graduation. This project focused on finding ways to facilitate students' connections with local companies and public sector providers with the aim of increasing their employability.

Brief 3: 'Starter-kit' for companies to hire international talents

Following a successful example of a starter-kit offered to new parents, this project explored how similar offerings can be designed for the context of international recruitment. The main focus was put on the 'ingredients' (i.e., physical items) of the starter-kit necessary for both public and private sector employment.

Brief 4: Digital support for job acquisition for entry-level national language speakers

An important part of unemployed international residents has learned speaking the national language but may have insufficient written proficiency. This project

focused on how digital application and tools could support companies in hiring internationals with still inadequate language requirements for the job position.

Brief 5: Engaging non-national language-speaking residents in the neighbourhood urban planning

All neighbourhood residents have the right to participate in the development of the area in which they live. However, due to the multiculturalism of local residents, it is becoming increasingly difficult to capture everyone's voice. This project focused on finding scalable long-term solutions for participatory urban planning.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The research process employed multiple methods to collect relevant data: (1) pre-course meetings, (2) weekly e-mail surveys collecting municipal partner's reflections on the topic of integration, inclusion, diversity, service design approaches, and student collaboration, and (3) semi-structured interviews with the municipal representatives who participated in the project (see Table 2). We opted for multiple data sources and their triangulation (Bowen, 2009) since it increases reliability and trustworthiness of the research findings (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Table 2: Triangulation of data sources.

Brief	Municipal partners	Pre-course meetings	Survey responses	Semi-structured interviews
1	3	3	20	3
2 and 3	2	2	14	2
4	4	3	25	4
5	2	4	9	2
General partners	2	3	9	2
Total	13	15	77	13

PRE-COURSE MEETINGS

Before the start of the course, we collected data during a series of meetings with the municipal partners (primary data) and based on the documentation they provided to develop the project briefs (secondary data). A total of 15 pre-course meetings were held with 13 municipal partners organized around the 5 projects. During each meeting, the responsible teacher and teaching assistant were present and were taking notes and making observations. Based on these meetings, the overall topic of internationalisation was reframed to focus on

‘diversity and inclusion of international residents. Consequently, five project briefs were developed based on the meetings and documentation provided by the partners (e.g., background information about current functioning of their services, current levels of international diversity and inclusion etc.). All the brief owners had similar requirements for providing documentation. The resulting brief documents contained the following categories: the challenge clearly explained, the motivations behind it elaborated, context of the challenge, expectations of the results, relevant contact persons, and background material related to service in question and challenge (e.g., brochures, strategy reports).

E-MAIL SURVEYS

Throughout the course, on a weekly basis, we surveyed municipal partners about their opinions, attitudes, and certain aspects of their collaboration experience (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Surveys were sent via email and contained a set of weekly unique open-ended questions. Respondents were encouraged to share their personal viewpoints without conforming to what they thought researchers wished to hear. Only one reminder was sent to nudge the partners to fill in the survey. Main topics covered by the survey were: i) interest for participation and expectations, ii) opportunities and challenges of international diversity and inclusion, iii) status quo of diversity and inclusion in their organisations, and iv) the role of service design in ‘change making’.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

After the course, we conducted 13 semi-structured interviews with all the participating municipal representatives to allow them to reflect on the entire collaboration. Main topics covered by the interviews included: i) course organisation, ii) valuable takeaways and eye-openers, iii) future of diversity and inclusivity in their organisations, iv) value of service design, and v) overall satisfaction with student projects. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, by the first author, and lasted 30-60 minutes with an average length of 40 minutes. Each interview was recorded with informant's permission and later anonymized, transcribed, and translated for analysis. Each of the authors read the transcripts independently and followed a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) while coding. Subsequently, the authors met for a joint analysis session in which they shared their initial codes and reflections. Finally, the codes were aggregated and further fine-tuned into a set of themes.

FINDINGS

PREREQUISITES FOR SCALING UP

Analysis of the multiple data sources contributes to our understanding of how small-scale collaborative projects can instigate transformational processes with a larger vision at the municipality level (Manzini & Rizzo, 2011). Our research uncovers three prerequisites or enablers for scaling up that have emerged throughout the collaboration, namely:

1. Exposure and impetus for change

Municipal partners felt ready for opening-up and receiving an outside-in perspective. They frequently emphasized the importance of learning alongside and from the design students, ‘getting their hands dirty’ through this collaborative applied project, and practicing systems thinking zooming-in and -out approach to encourage municipal transformation. Finally, they trusted that the involvement of diverse stakeholders in the co-design process will ensure the creation of novel value propositions triggering institutional change as well as create opportunities for diversity and inclusion. As indicated in the following quotes:

“Contacts and collaborations with international experts should be a constant so-called ‘hidden agenda’ for the course. This would, for example, greatly develop the language skills and diversity of the representatives of Espoo. Being part of this course serves as an exposure tool.” (Participant 5)

“I look forward to new, innovative, and ‘outside the box’ solutions to our challenges, as well as engaging and inspiring work with students.” (Participant 10)

“Being part of the course is an opportunity to get a new perspective on issues that are a little too close for us to see them clearly.” (Participant 2)

“[What concrete came up with the collaboration?] The pain points of communication and interaction [with international residents] quickly came to the fore, which are not specific only to the international people of Espoo, but to everyone, they came up really quickly, really amazing.” (Participant 1)

2. Diversity and inclusion immersion

Insights collected through both email surveys and semi-structured interviews emphasize the importance of the multicultural environment to which partners were immersed throughout the course collaboration. Since the Master level students represented a very diverse set of cultural backgrounds and the official language of the

course was English, municipal partners felt that the topic of diversity and inclusivity of international residents was an integral part of the course, service design process, and project outcomes. Furthermore, partnering up and collaborating with a multicultural mix of students served in a way as a service prototype for how the municipality wishes to expand and transform their service offerings. Here we include a couple of quotes highlighting this theme:

“In connection with the theme of internationalisation, multilingualism must always be brought to the fore. [...] It was nice to see a little different way of working and be surrounded by an international crew of students...and peek into the university. The international team supported the topic perfectly... and we also encouraged them to take advantage of it.” (Participant 8)

“[What does internationalisation mean for you?] Expanding our own ideas, hearing new ideas, and exchanging ideas. Collaboration and learning from others. Now we need to share with those from our organisation who were not involved in the course that service design works and that such a diverse group of students was really effective, especially considering the short time spent on the project.” (Participant 2)

“This [collaboration] clearly showed that we need to involve customers more in the development process and this especially in foreign language services, too much is subject-object thinking.” (Participant 4)

3. Personal empowerment

At the individual level, municipal partners felt empowered with the new knowledge, skills, and capabilities acquired through being a part of our service design course. They reaffirmed that this collaboration activated their change mindset and that they are better equipped for abandoning their silos thinking and becoming advocates of service design for transformation. Moreover, many informants shared some unintended positive consequences for their personal development, among which, practicing English language, managing diverse teams, dealing with uncertainty, and recognizing the importance of visual communications. As suggested in the following quotes:

“Service design is interesting as a theme or form of development. This spring, my own job description changed from customer work and training to design and development. I feel that what I have learnt throughout the course could also be useful for my own work and that we could adopt new ways of planning and developing our operations within our organisation.” (Participant 3)

“An important revelation for me was the understanding that participation needs to be the same regardless of the background. When I innovate services to make them accessible for the special needs segment of clients, then it serves the majority better as well. Solutions that help the international audience also support the ‘basic residents’ too.” (Participant 1)

HINDRANCES TO SCALING UP

While our analysis uncovered prerequisites for scaling up evident among our informants after only a short-term collaboration with the University, some challenges were identified as well. These barriers or hindrances to scaling up seem to be activated as an opposing force for each of the outlined prerequisites (see Figure 2), namely:

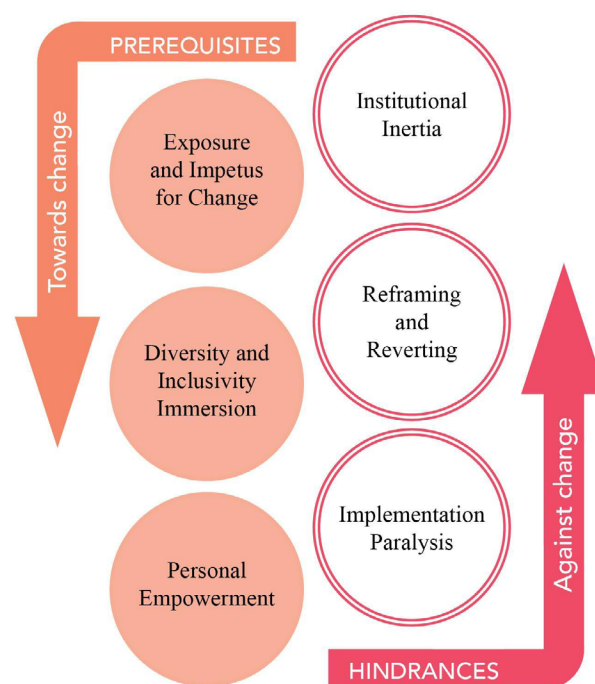


Figure 2: Prerequisites and hindrances to scaling up.

1. Institutional inertia

Inertia or “a tendency to do nothing or to remain unchanged” (Oxford Dictionary, 2021) was commonly referred to as the most disabling characteristic of municipality level functioning. Our informants reported that, oftentimes, there is no willingness to change and that employees lack energy, while managers lack common vision, resulting in conflicts and absence of incentives to transform the system. Furthermore, those who try to make changes and innovate processes get overpowered by institutional inertia. Here we include some quotes which highlight this theme:

“Openness to change requires energy, maintaining good energy is always challenging. Conflicts arise easily and one must find energy to resolve them.” (Participant 2)

“The biggest challenge is that some people have not been able or willing to accept the new situation [the influx of immigrants], resulting in oppositions within the organisation.” (Participant 6)

“To change something in the public sector!?! [laughs]” (Participant 7)

2. Reframing and reverting

As we collected insights on a weekly basis throughout the course, we also noticed that some participants had difficulties accepting design students’ framings of the challenges in the early stages of the project. This finding resembles what Lee (2020) coined as ‘frame failures’, however, in our paper observed from the perspective of municipal partners rather than design students. Along with attempts of reframing, we recognized elements of reverting, where municipal partners tried to return to their old ways of doing and abandoning their open-minded approach held before the course. As indicated in the following quotes:

“The ‘discover’ phase [of the design process] was surprisingly extensive. At first, I was worried that the students would expand the perspective so broadly that they would try to solve too big a whole at once. They, however, returned to roughly what we had originally presented.” (Participant 1)

“Does orthodox service design exist? I am opposed to this kind of thinking e.g., ‘in service design, it is customary to think or do things this way’. I still do not understand what can really be expected from service design in the end and what are the subsequent processes towards changing reality and certain ways of working.” (Participant 4)

3. Implementation paralysis

Municipal partners seemed to be puzzled with how to move the projects into their implementation phase. Commonly cited reasons for the implementation paralysis included: lack of resources, unskilled staff, additional help needed to bring the projects and design capabilities forward, and the slowness of change at the municipalities in general. The latter one caused many informants to feel powerless and trapped in their institutional modus operandi. The following quotes emphasize the theme of implementation paralysis:

“The course came at an excellent time, but in order for its results to be taken forward within the organisation, additional help is needed.” (Participant 5)

“Espoo has so much to change and the necessary processes are not always in place. There is not enough staff to take the responsibility for these things...and even though the findings and our collaborative work were very important, unfortunately, they may not go forward.” (Participant 11)

“The challenge, of course, is resourcing. [...] Our project interventions would produce better results for all...but the development phase would require inputs.” (Participant 1)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper contributes to the timely discussion on diversity and inclusion of international residents in the European Union. We discussed this phenomenon in the context of service design projects done in collaboration between University students from highly international backgrounds and the increasingly multicultural municipality of Espoo. We first looked at previous research on service design and institutional change, as well as barriers and enablers of employing service design in the public sector (e.g., Deserti & Rizzo, 2014; Hyvärinen, 2015; Pirinen, 2016 Vink et al, 2019). Our findings resonate with their work regarding the potential use of service design towards institutional change. This study contributes to the earlier work by addressing, in particular, the questions of scaling up change in municipalities with small exemplars of service design practice.

To understand the potentials of change we observed the presence of three prerequisites: exposure and impetus for change, diversity and inclusivity immersion, and personal empowerment. Simultaneously, we identified the presence of resistance to change in the organisation in the form of hindrances that paired with the prerequisites and created opposing forces (Figure 2). We refer to the moments when these opposing forces occur as leverage points, which are best described as places “where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything” (Meadows, 1999). We believe that they offer an interesting potential for further research and our aim is to investigate whether they can be manipulated as ‘acupuncture points’ to ease the scaling up of diversity and inclusion in municipalities, and also, to study the role of service design in the process. These questions will be addressed in our continuing collaboration with the municipality. Particularly, the focus will be put on institutional hindrances since they were identified as the barriers to scaling up. Diversity and inclusion are not hindrances

themselves but the institutional challenges are preventing them from coming to the fore.

The intensive course offered an example of how service design students and municipality representatives can work together towards equality and human rights, and speculate how these efforts could be scaled up. On the one hand, this University-Municipality collaboration confirmed that the students' application of service design practices, such as collaborative workshops and engaging multiple stakeholders, offered a quick immersion to the topic and personal empowerment for the representatives of the organisation. On the other hand, the openness of the briefs, and design students' process of reframing and experimenting created a forum of co-learning, exposure, but a cultural clash, too, leading to reverting and paralysis. The course is a small-scale intervention and it cannot be considered as the solution for tackling the issues of diversity and inclusion in a municipality level. However, our findings suggest that it offers a valuable perspective that shows potential for new initiatives. For example, after the course the municipality organized an event where the outcomes of the course were presented to a wider audience. This subsequently led to new initiatives in the municipality that are currently in progress.

Stuedahl and Mainsah (2019) suggest that in the context of co-design, designers require knowledge on cultural diversity to be able to better understand and engage with culturally diverse groups of people. Our study indicates that the culturally diverse team of students as designers helped the representatives of the municipality to be immersed in the topic. This finding calls also for further investigation to be confirmed, however shows yet a potential for change towards inclusion.

Finally, when further working on this fruitful University-Municipality collaboration to support the change towards a more diverse and inclusive society and investigate the role of service design in this change, we are aware that courses and research that are funded by the public sector and municipal bodies include political drivers and political turns are part of democratic dynamics. In municipal decision-making, scale can influence the priorities and question our plans for future studies, as well as the motivations of scaling up, to respond to the United Nations sustainable development goals to "Reduce inequality within and among countries" (UN, 2015, Goal 10).

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