



**Stakeholder involvement in the policy process of  
immigrant integration policies:  
Working together towards effective local immigrant  
integration policies in the Netherlands**

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# SUMMARY

Where the scientific and policy debates surrounding integration policies were before about the definition of integration, the focus has shifted to the effectiveness of integration policies and the way to prove the effectiveness of integration policies (Garibay & de Cuyper, 2017). This paper investigates the extent to which stakeholder involvement in the policy process contributes to the effectiveness of local integration policies in the Netherlands. The goal of this research is to figure out to what extent and if so how stakeholder involvement can influence policy effectiveness in the context of local integration policies. Therefore the following research question was formulated: *To what extent does stakeholder involvement in the policy process contribute to the effectiveness of integration policies on the level of the municipalities in the Netherlands?*

For quite a period of time policymakers at both the national and local level have been trying to figure out what works when it comes to integration policies (Koolmees, 2018). That makes finding out whether stakeholder involvement contributes to the effectiveness of integration policies and which stakeholders are necessary for effective integration policies relevant to examine. The context of this research are three municipalities in the Netherlands with an approach to the integration of refugees with a residence permit that is proven to be effective. The effectiveness of the policies was assessed by looking at evaluation reports and by the use of semi-structured interviews.

Scientific literature used for this research is literature on stakeholder involvement, policy effectiveness, governance structures, the policy process and integration policies. Expectations are formulated based on the theoretical findings. Three theoretical mechanisms can be used to argue that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness. First, stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness by the effects of increasing process inclusivity. Second, stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness by the effects of increased diversity of perspectives that are represented in the policy process. Lastly, stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness by the increased amount of knowledge and resources shared between stakeholders and the local government.

The expectations are tested using a mixed-method qualitative research design, consisting of semi-structured interviews and an analysis of documents. Policy advisors of the three municipalities and stakeholders that are involved in the policy process of the integration policies of the three municipalities were interviewed. The stakeholders that were interviewed work for housing corporations, employment agencies, educational institutions, wellbeing organizations, refugee advocacy organizations, and Community Health Services. A policy maker who works for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment was interviewed to gather more information and get a better insight into the new national integration law that is currently being designed and will be implemented in 2021. For the document analysis were policy documents, evaluation reports and management reports analysed. These methods were used to gather data about the approaches, the stakeholders involved and the effect of stakeholder involvement on policy effectiveness in the specific contexts that were studied.

All of the three municipalities that were studied work together with multiple different stakeholders as part of the approaches that are designed for the integration of refugees with a residence permit within the municipalities. The results show that stakeholder involvement contributes to the effectiveness of local integration policies as perceived by the respondents for multiple reasons. Examples of these reasons are bringing together different kinds of expertise and different knowledge to contribute to reaching a shared goal and by making sure the same work is not done more than once. But working together with different stakeholders within a policy process can also lead to discussions when the different interests and perspectives of the stakeholders do not align.

Key words: stakeholder involvement, policy effectiveness, local integration policies, policy process

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# PREFACE

Dear sir/madam,

Before you lies the master ´s thesis that I have been working on for the past months. The topic of my master ´s thesis is the contribution of stakeholder involvement in the policy process to the effectiveness of local integration policies in the Netherlands. Last year I took a course called intercultural communication at Utrecht University. During that course we talked about integration policies and the different aspects of it that do not seem to work so well. We tried to answer questions that immigrants have to answer as part of the integration exam. We as Dutch citizens were not able to answer some of the questions. Integration policies are every now and then mentioned in the news. Not often something positive is said about the integration of immigrants. But it cannot all be wrong, right? That´s where it started. I wanted to try to look at the positive side, to see what is going well with regard to integration policies. What started as an idea in December to study something to do with integration policies became a research proposal for a research about the contribution of stakeholder involvement to the level of effectiveness of local integration policies in the Netherlands.

This topic offered me the opportunity to combine topics of my master´s program, integration policies, the policy process and policy effectiveness, with one of my favourite topic that was discussed during my bachelor´s program Organization Studies, which is networks of organizations. I was able to gather information about the importance of working together on a complex issue like integration of refugees with a residence permit. I believe that the insights that I have gotten by doing this research will turn out to be very useful in my future career within a society and even world in which networks have become more and more important to deal with current issues.

I have learned a lot during the whole process that started with coming up with the right topic and will end with my thesis defence. I have learned that when something goes wrong it is not the end, you just need to find a solution to deal with the situation. I have learned how difficult it can be to interview someone and to design a topic list that will help you get the needed information out of an interview. But I have also learned that I really like to speak with different people about a topic that is of interest to me and to learn about other people´s perspectives.

I would like to thank Mallory for all the advice that she gave me and for the reassuring comments when they were needed. You helped me a couple of times to find the words for what I was trying to say. I would like to thank Harmen for the feedback that he gave me on my research proposal. I would like to thank all of the respondents for the interesting interviews, the information they gave, their kindness and their openness. Doing the interviews was for me the favourite part of this whole process. I would like to thank Marleen for designing the lay-out of this document. It is way more than just a finishing touch. Lastly I would like to thank everyone that helped my throughout this process by listening and by giving useful comments.

I hope that you will enjoy reading my master ´s thesis. If you have any questions or comments after reading this document, you can always contact me.

With kind regards,

Lieke van Beers

15<sup>th</sup> of July 2019

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Policies designed to improve integration of immigrants into their new society are high on the political agenda in multiple European countries (Neureiter, 2018). The definition of integration is over ten years after introducing immigrant integration policies across Europe still an unsolved policy issue. However, the definition of integration has become less of a focus point within the policy debate. The focus has shifted to the effectiveness of the integration policies and the way to prove the effectiveness of certain policies (Garibay & de Cuyper, 2017). A question that remains when talking about integration policies is: what works? In the search for what works when it comes to integration policies in the Netherlands I examined the role of stakeholder involvement in the local policy process. This research focuses on the different actors that are involved in the policy process and the contribution of the involvement of stakeholders to the effectiveness of integration policies.

Integration is one of the complex problems that governments have to deal with at the moment. The majority of the people that come to the Netherlands as asylum seeker stay in the country. Integration policies have a multidimensional nature and different parts of society play a role in the execution of integration policies. Therefore, immigrant integration can be seen as a challenge and a complex issue for both governments and civil society (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003). In 2015 a policy brief written by The Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) was published. The policy brief was about the integration of asylum seekers in the Netherlands. The position of 33.000 asylum seekers who were registered in the Netherlands and the situation in eleven Dutch municipalities was studied. The main conclusion of the policy brief is that there is no time to lose when it comes to the integration of newcomers (Engbersen, Dagevos, Jennissen, Bakker & Leerkes, 2015). One issue surrounding refugees with a residence permit<sup>1</sup> is dependency on social benefits. According to the policy brief were refugees with a residence permit at that moment in time to often long term dependent on social assistance. It is important to prevent that large groups of refugees with a residence permit become long term dependent on social benefits (Engbersen et al., 2015).

One of the recommendations of the WRR was to strengthen the role of the municipalities in the integration process of refugees with a residence permit. A more active role for the municipalities is desirable to fasten the integration process and to bring together the necessary and relevant actors, according to Engbersen et al. (2015). Municipalities will get a more important role within the integration process when the new national policy is implemented. In 2021 a new national integration policy will be implemented in the Netherlands (Koolmees, 2018). This policy will entail more governmental help for immigrants who want to integrate and a bigger role for the municipalities. The municipalities will be the directors of the integration process (Koolmees, 2018). The new national integration policy is supposed to facilitate municipalities in the development of approaches to successful integration of newcomers. The new national policy is not about decentralization of responsibilities, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment is still responsible for the integration of newcomers [R19]. Municipalities are already trying to figure out what works (Koolmees, 2018), some with better results than others. Three municipalities that have implemented approaches to the integration of refugees with a residence permit that have shown positive results are studied within this research. The beforementioned policy brief was seen as a wake-upcall by one of the municipalities studied [R1]. The municipality used the recommendations in the WRR policy brief to design a new approach to the integration of newcomers that has up till now shown to be effective.

The Social and Economic Council wrote a report about refugees and work (Sociaal-Economische Raad, 2018). In that report it is mentioned that in order to achieve successful integration it is important to: enable refugees to participate in society as soon as possible; combine the approach for enhancing participation with learning the language, getting an education and/or getting a job; and to provide continuity in the support for newcomers (SER, 2018). Multiple actors are needed to provide what is needed for successful integration. Different theories consider the importance of including or representing multiple interests and stakeholders in the policy decision-making process (Compton, Luetjens & 't Hart, 2018). Inclusion of different stakeholders in the policy decision-making process can lead to solutions that are more effective and better fit the context, to enhanced legitimacy and to more trust in the outcomes (Bryson, Crosby & Bloomberg, 2014; Compton et al., 2018; Gouillart & Hallet, 2015; Torfing, 2019). Research has shown that solutions for challenges within the public sector made within networks of actors, rather than made within a state-centric fashion, are

<sup>1</sup> When an asylum seeker is recognized as a refugee that reasonably fears for prosecution or danger in the home country, he or she can get a residence permit for five years. The permit can get withdrawn during those five years. This happens in case the situation in the home country changes considerably which makes returning to the home country a viable option. Refugees with a residence permit are eligible for a more definitive permit to stay in the Netherlands.

better, generate more support and offer more robust solutions (Huxham, Vangen, Huxham & Eden, 2000; Torfing, Peters, Pierre & Sørensen, 2012). Is this also the case for integration as a challenge within the public sector? Does the involvement of different actors in the policy process of integration policies lead to better solutions for the issues involving integration? That is what is examined by looking at the policy process of current policies and the involvement of different actors in it.

The goal of this research is to figure out whether stakeholder involvement in the policy process in the domain of integration contributes to the effectiveness of integration policies on the level of the municipalities in the Netherlands. The choice to examine local integration policy cases in the Netherlands is made, because municipalities have the responsibility to house refugees with a residence permit and offer guidance and support when refugees with a residence permit arrive at the municipality. After the implementation of the new national integration policy in 2021 will the municipalities be better able to take on a more directive role within the integration process and be more in charge of the integration process of the newcomers that arrive in the municipality. But who is needed for effective integration policies? Based on the research goal is the following research question formulated:

*To what extent does stakeholder involvement in the policy process contribute to the effectiveness of integration policies on the level of the municipalities in the Netherlands?*

In order to answer the research question multiple sub-questions are formulated. The research question involves multiple concepts: stakeholder involvement, integration policies, the policy process, policy making at the local level and policy effectiveness. These are the theoretical concepts are the building blocks of the research question. Theoretical concepts, models and mechanisms are described and discussed in order to answer the theoretical sub-questions, to be able to answer the empirical sub-questions and to eventually answer the research question. The theoretical sub-question are:

- What is policy effectiveness?
- What are the different types of stakeholder involvement?
- At what stages of the policy process can stakeholders be involved?
- What roles can stakeholders play within the policy process?
- How can the involvement of different stakeholders in the policy process affect policy effectiveness?

Empirical sub-questions are formulated in order to help answer the main question of this research and form the basis of the empirical research together with the theoretical mechanisms. The questions are answered by the use of different methods, which are described in the methodological section of this research. Three municipalities form the three cases that are analysed. Leveraging the theoretical questions, the empirical sub-questions that are answered within this research are:

- What integration policies are being used by the municipalities?
- Which actors are involved in the policy process?
- Why are the different actors involved in the policy process?
- How is the involvement of actors in the policy process structured?
- What is the influence of the involved actors on the integration policy?
- What works and what could be changed for the better when it comes to stakeholder involvement in the policy process?

Three municipalities were selected based on the dependent variable of this research, which is policy effectiveness. The effectiveness of the policies currently used by the municipalities was analysed based on policy documents and evaluation reports. All three municipalities have implemented an approach or a program concerning the integration of refugees with a residence permit that has been effective. Document analysis was used for finding out what the specific policies entail and for finding out which stakeholders were or are involved in the policy process surrounding the certain policies. Based on the analysis of documents was a list made of organizations that were involved as stakeholders and could be reached out to with the question whether it was possible to schedule a meeting for a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews were held with 19 respondents in total.

## 1.1 RELEVANCE

### Scientific relevance

This research can contribute to what is known in the scientific literature about Dutch integration policies, specifically about stakeholder involvement in the policy process surrounding local integration policies. Quite a lot of research is done on the topics of policy effectiveness, stakeholder involvement and process inclusivity, but these theoretical concepts have not yet been examined together in the domain of local integration policies. Whether stakeholder involvement might be one of the necessary theoretical building blocks for effective integration policies has yet to be studied. Penninx (2005) states that when it comes to integration policies the real work has to be done at the local level in collaboration with all the interested parties. He argues that local integration policies should use strategies and tactics that involve the stakeholders in the integration process as a condition for effective integration policies (Penninx, 2005). These are lessons that he drew from scientific research on the topics of integration processes and integration policies in Europe, but did not test to see whether the assumptions made based on scientific research are true. Therefore the possibility of stakeholder involvement contributing to policy effectiveness of local integration policies is examined within this research. Are the assumptions made by Penninx (2005) applicable to the case of Dutch local integration policies? Something is added to the argument made by Penninx (2005) that interested parties should be involved in the integration process. I argue that besides the implementation of local integration policies, stakeholders could also play an important role during the design and evaluation stage of local integration policies. That argument is explained later on in the theory section of this research paper.

### Societal relevance

Knowing what works and what is needed to improve the effectiveness of integration policies is societally relevant, because it can contribute to improving the integration of newcomers. After the national elections of 2017, VVD, CDA, D66 and the ChristenUnie together formed a coalition. VVD is a Dutch liberal party, CDA and the ChristenUnie are Christian democratic parties, and D66 is a social-democratic party. According to the coalition agreement written by the coalition that is currently in office is integration vitally important for immigrants as well as for the Dutch society (Rutte, van Haersma Buma, Pechtold & Segers, 2017). Immigration is a continuing process, whereby integration policies can help immigrants to become part of the society of their new home country. Newcomers with their knowledge, skills and experiences can form an asset for a society, as long as the necessary tools and opportunities are provided. According to Alba (2012) can the social and economic gaps between natives and migrants only be bridged by better use of the talents of the migrants by the western societies. The policy brief written by Engbersen et al. (2015) that was mentioned earlier mentions the importance of integration for society. It is important, for society as well, to prevent groups from becoming long-term dependent on social assistance. Another aspect that makes this research societally relevant is the new national integration policy that will be implemented in 2021. Municipalities will be able to take on the role of director of the process, but how could or should that be done? The municipalities studied have designed and implemented an approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit within the municipalities that are proven to be effective and fit within the framework of the new national integration policy that will be implemented in 2021. The results offer useful insights for other municipalities that are currently designing plans and programs for local integration policies that fit within the new national guidelines that will be implemented.

## 1.2 READER'S GUIDE

This paper reports findings from a theoretically informed empirical investigation of the research question and the sub-questions mentioned above. The theoretical framework draws on the literature on policy effectiveness, stakeholder involvement, governance and the policy process. In the theoretical framework are the theoretical sub-questions answered, the theoretical concepts defined and the theoretical mechanisms explained. The empirical focus is on three municipalities in the Netherlands. The selection of the cases based on the dependent variable. The research design and methodology of the study is set out in the empirical framework. In that section is described which methods were used to select, collect and analyse the data used for answering the research question and empirical sub-questions. The results of the data analysis is shown in the results section. The empirical results are compared to the theoretical results in the findings section. The findings section is followed by the conclusion which is made based on the empirical and theoretical results of the research. The results are further discussed in the discussion which ends in recommendations. The recommendations are written for local governments in the Netherlands and focus on what should be considered when the choice is made to involve stakeholders in the policy process surrounding local integration policies.

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## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter the definitions of the concepts are described, the theoretical mechanisms are explained and the theoretical sub-questions are provided with an answer. Based on information found in the scientific literature are expectations formulated which functioned as the starting point for the empirical part of this research. Scientific literature on stakeholder involvement, governance, the policy process and policy effectiveness is used for this theoretical framework. The outcome of interest within this paper is policy effectiveness. The goal of this research is to find out whether and if yes in what way stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness. In this chapter the expected effect of stakeholder involvement on policy effectiveness is explained by results of prior scientific research. In the first section of this chapter is policy effectiveness defined and conceptualized. In the section thereafter are the arguments shown why stakeholder involvement is expected to contribute to policy effectiveness.

### 2.1 POLICY EFFECTIVENESS

Börzel and Cichowski (2003) define policy effectiveness as “the use of particular policy instruments, in such a way as to increase the chance to achieve the defined policy target” (p. 113). I do not agree with that definition. Policy effectiveness is not the use of particular policy instrument in a way to achieve a certain policy target, it is the result of the use of a particular policy instrument if that use leads to the achievement of the defined policy goal. Policy effectiveness is not about increasing the chance to achieve the defined policy target, it is about achieving the policy target. An increased chance of achieving the policy goal might tell you that the policy or the policy instrument is more effective than the one that was used before or other options. But that does not tell whether a policy target is actually achieved. Policy effectiveness is about “the success in achieving desired policy outcomes” (Nicholson-Crotty & Carley, 2016, p. 85) by the use of a certain policy.

The main difference between the term effect and the term effectiveness is that effectiveness is connected to a desired effect, while the term effect is linked to the actual effect (Czaika & de Haas, 2006). As Czaika and de Haas (2006) explain the difference in the following manner: “the term ‘effectiveness’ establishes a relation to policy objectives, and thus adds an evaluative and subjective dimension to the analysis of the ‘effects’” (Czaika & de Haas, 2006, p. 491). In the case of this research an evaluative dimension is added to the results of local integration policies. A policy is effective when the before formulated goal is achieved by the use of that certain policy. What is difficult about determining whether a policy is effective is the issue of whether something can be attributed to a policy change or a new policy. Therefore it is important to take in consideration other possible reasons for the results found when the effectiveness of a policy is assessed.

Within this research the focus is on the effectiveness of local integration policies in the Netherlands. As mentioned in the introduction is the policy debate surrounding integration policies focusing more and more on the effectiveness of integration policies and finding out what works. Studying policy effectiveness is important, because in order to find out what works policies need to be effective. If by the use of a certain policy the goal of that policy get accomplished, more information will be available about how to effectively integration newcomers into the new home society.

One factor that could explain or contribute to policy effectiveness is stakeholder involvement. The arguments used as building blocks for this statement are found in the scientific literature on stakeholder involvement, the policy process and governance. Three theoretical mechanisms can be used to argue that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness. First, stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness by the effects of increasing process inclusivity. Second, stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness by the effects of increased diversity of perspectives that are represented in the policy process. Lastly, stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness by the increased amount of knowledge and resources shared between stakeholders and the local government. Within this chapter the line of reasoning behind these statements is explained. First stakeholder involvement is defined and conceptualized. The section thereafter discusses how stakeholders can be involved at the different stages of the policy process.

### 2.2 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholder involvement has developed into being an integral element of many policy-making processes (Carmin, Darnall & Mil-Homens, 2003). Stakeholders can be involved in the policy process in different ways, to different degrees

and at different stages of the policy process. Forms of stakeholder involvement can range from consultation with the public and giving information to public-private partnerships (Carmin et al., 2003). Before describing when and how actors can be involved in the policy process, a definition of involvement is needed. Involvement can be defined as 'the act or process of taking part in something' (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). The term 'stakeholder' is used within this research to refer to the persons and organized groups that are involved in the policy process. Therefore stakeholder involvement is about stakeholders that are part of the policy process surrounding specifically chosen local integration policies in the Netherlands. In the scientific literature, different types of involvement of stakeholders can be distinguished. In this section the different types are conceptualized and outlined. First an overview is given of the different ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy process that were found in the scientific literature. The overview is followed by an discussion of the different roles that stakeholders can play within the different stages of the policy process.

### 2.2.1 Ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy process

One type of stakeholder involvement in the policy process is collaboration. Over the last years the interest in collaboration within the policy-making process has increased (Bradford, 2016). There is more attention for governance processes that involve collaboration between public, private and community sectors, as a reaction to the interconnectedness and complexity of some of the issues that governments have to respond to (Bradford, 2016). Collaborations can be conceptualized as "consisting of a number of identified organizations that are involved in working relationships with each other in the pursuance of a common purpose" (Huxham et al., 2000, p. 341). This may sound simple, but systems of collaborative governance tend to have quite complex structures. Within the governance processes that include collaboration with different actors, the amount and modalities of collaboration between the different actors will likely show differences (Campomori & Caponio, 2017). According to Ansell (2012) is the definition of collaborative governance is dependent on the actors that collaborate, on who is the sponsor of the collaboration, on what is meant by collaboration and on the way the collaboration is organized. Collaboration in policy settings most often exists of both governmental and non-governmental actors. Governmental actors are usually the ones with a central position when it comes to the coordination of the collaborative processes (Kim & Siddiki, 2018). The actors involved in collaborative governance engage in the decision-making process and are not only consulted by public agencies. Public and private actors work together in a collective manner to make or implement laws and rules concerning public goods (Ansell & Gash, 2007). The level of success of collaboration depends on the previous history of cooperation or conflict, the stimulus for actors to be involved, imbalances with regard to power and resources, leadership and the institutional design. What is important with regard to the process itself are face-to-face conversations, the building of trust among actors, developing commitment and having the same understanding (Ansell & Gash, 2007).

Collaboration is seen as a higher-order level of collective action compared to cooperation and coordination (Thomson & Perry, 2006), which will be discussed hereafter. According to Thomson and Perry (2006) would most scholars, of whom Thomson and Perry (2006) reviewed the work, agree that cooperation and collaboration can be distinguished by the "depth of the interaction, integration, commitment, and complexity, with cooperation falling at the low end of the continuum and collaboration at the high end" (Thomson & Perry, 2006, p. 23). Cooperation is about working together to achieve common objectives, but with individual motives. Cooperating to achieve common objectives is one of the aspects of the institutional analysis and development framework made by Ostrom (Ostrom, 2007, as cited in Birkland, 2010). In her framework the problem at hand is called the action situation. In that action situation are the people who are involved in making decisions situated. The people in the action situation have certain positions on what should happen if it were up to them and the desired outcome or the outcome they worry for. The action situations also contains the extent to which the involved actors have an influence on the outcomes, the suitability of the information that can be accessed by the actors or by some of them and the extent to which a rational assessment can be made of the costs and benefits of the outcomes under consideration (Birkland, 2010). Stakeholders can be involved in the policy process, according to the institutional analysis and development framework, by cooperating towards a common goal as part of the action situation. The framework suggests that the level of influence on a certain policy is dependent on the available information and whether a solution to a policy problem, that you as stakeholder prefer, is perceived as more beneficial than costly.

Coordination can be defined as "the act of managing interdependencies between activities performed to achieve a goal" (Consoli, Tweedale & Jain, 2006). Coordination focusses on the process of working together with different units. Coordination is used to inform the different units when and how they must act. Coordination can be seen as a framework that guides the action of the different units so that they work together as a system to achieve a certain goal. Coordination helps to enhance efficiency of the work done collectively but tells nothing about the results of the work done by the different units together. Cooperation and coordination can both be characteristics of being part of a policy network. An approach to involving different actors into the policy process that is less formalized and designed in comparison to collaborative processes is network governance. When talking about the role of network governance in the governing of societies has the focus primarily been on the way in which governance networks can increase the effectiveness of governance (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). Network governance is about 'networks of interdependent actors that contribute

to the production of public governance' (Torfing, 2012, p. 99).

Both collaborative governance and network governance can result in *coproduction*. Coproduction can be done through collaboration, cooperation and coordination. Coproduction can be defined as “government-solicited forms of participation in which stakeholders may be involved in a variety of ways in producing public goods for the community” (Lelieveldt, Dekker, Völker & Torenvlied, 2009, p. 6). In coproduction processes are both citizens and organisations asked by the government to become involved in policy making and are actively part of one or more stages of the policy process (Lelieveldt et al., 2009). Based on the issue can the actors be given information, be consulted or asked to their opinion about different policy options. Besides can actors get the entitlement to decide what is done with certain budgets or be given the task to implement certain policies. In the case of coproduction, the government and other actors together share responsibility for producing certain public services (Lelieveldt et al., 2009).

Coproduction can be arranged through public private partnerships. Partnerships can be defined as “semi-autonomous organizational vehicles through which governmental, private, voluntary and community sector actors engage in the process of debating, deliberating and delivering public policy at the regional and local level” (Skelcher, Mathur & Smith, 2005, p. 575). Partnerships can both act as mechanisms for coordination and as structures for the delivery, through which public resources can be moved from one place to another. Choices have to be made between options and possibilities both about the goal of the public policy as well as about the means that will be used to achieve that goal, which are normative questions (Skelcher et al., 2005). The partners involved in a partnership have a degree of discretion when it comes to deciding upon these normative issues. Using partnerships as an institutional design for collaboration offers both flexibility and the engagement of stakeholders in the process of governance (Skelcher et al., 2005). While public-private partnerships generally need collaboration between actors in order to work, the goal is most of the time to achieve coordination instead of achieving decision-making consensus by itself. A public-private partnership can just be an agreement between actors to deliver certain agreed upon services, whereby the focus is more on coordination and less on collaboration.

The last type of involvement that is discussed is consultation. Stakeholder surveys, focus groups or public hearings are examples of consultative techniques that can be used by governmental actors to collect information about for example opinions or views. These techniques give the public an opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns to the policy-makers (Rasmussen & Toshkov, 2013). Consultation of the public enables the aggregation of the demands of citizens and for the passing of those demands to the political system. This can either be done directly by citizens themselves or through non-elected representatives of groups of citizen (Rasmussen & Toshkov, 2013). More information and knowledge based on experiences is taken into account during the policy-making process, which can be advantageous for the effectiveness of policy when implemented. While stakeholder involvement through consultation can be advantageous for the level of effectiveness of public policies (Rasmussen & Toshkov, 2013).

By being consulted, stakeholders can be involved in the policy-making process, but whether consultation can be seen as a light version of collaboration is debatable (Newig et al., 2018). Ansell and Gash (2007) are of the opinion that consultative techniques could be very useful as management tools, but that they are not collaborative because they do not consist of two-way flows of communication and deliberation. In the case of consultation can stakeholders react upon one another, but there is no reflexive conversation (Edelenbos et al., 2011). Collaboration, according to Ansell and Gash (2007) is about responsibility for policy results for non-governmental stakeholders as well.

### 2.2.2 The stages at which stakeholders can be involved in the policy process

The policy process consists of multiple stages, namely the agenda setting stage, the policy preparation stage, the policy decision-making stage, the policy implementation stage, the policy evaluation stage and the policy feedback stage (Bovens, 't Hart, van Twist, van den Berg, van der Steen & Tummers, 2017; Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2014). The purpose of describing the different stages of the policy process is to be able to analyse in which stages the different stakeholders were involved in the policy process during the empirical research.

The first stage is *the agenda setting stage*. Agenda setting is “the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention, or the activities of various actors and groups that cause issues to gain greater attention or prevent them from gaining attention” (Birkland, 2011, p. 168). Different factors can facilitate shifts in what is on the policy agenda (Tantives & Walt, 2008). Baumgartner and Jones (1991) are of the opinion that the rise of a new issue on the policy agenda and the accompanying shifts in policy only happen when a considerable transformation takes place in a policy subsystem. New actors with different beliefs, norms and preferences have to replace the existing policy communities (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Other factors that can facilitate shifts in what is on the policy agenda are changing public opinions, by interest groups organized movements and campaigns in the media (Tantives & Walt, 2008). At the agenda-setting stage, stakeholders can be or get involved by getting in contact with policymakers, by asking for

attention for certain research evidence, by organizing campaigns and by promoting dialogue on certain topics (Tantives and Walt, 2008). This is done to get the attention of policy-makers for important issues or problems.

*The policy preparation stage*, also called *the formulation stage*, is about the collection and analysis of information about different policy options on the one hand and the formulation of advices regarding the policy to be made by policy-makers or appointed task groups on the other (Bovens et al., 2017; Tantives & Walt, 2008). The actors involved at this stage need to have a minimal base of knowledge and skills concerning the problems and solutions surrounding the issue at hand, as they have to look for, assess and explain the appropriateness of different policy options (Tantives & Walt, 2008). At this stage can stakeholders provide policy-makers with information necessary to examine the appropriateness of policy options (Tantives & Walt, 2008). Stakeholders that are appointed by the authorities to be a part of this stage have leverage over others by having a say in the way the policy is formulated. Being consulted as part of the formulation stage gives the stakeholders that are consulted possible influence on the content of the public policy.

*The decision-making stage* of the policy process involves the decision-making about the content of the policy (Bovens et al., 2017). According to Burton, Adams, Bunton and Schröder-Back (2008) can the involvement of stakeholders at the decision-making stage contribute to the commitment to and trust in the decision made. Beierle and Koninsky (2001) conclude in their paper that the involvement of stakeholders at the decision-making stage produces tangible societal benefits. The benefits that Beierle and Koninsky (2001) found during their research are: “making decisions that better reflect public values and incorporate public knowledge” (p. 526); “improving relationships by resolving conflict among stakeholders and building trust in government agencies” (p. 526); and “building capacity among stakeholders and government to understand environmental problems, coordinate action to address them and influence change” (p. 526). Their research is specifically about environmental decision-making. But the word ‘environmental’ in the last mentioned benefit could maybe be replaced by words like for example economic, agricultural or integration. Involving stakeholders can result in a more well-informed decision-making process by the gathering of knowledge. This can contribute to coming up with innovative solutions, enhancing the use of private resources to attain a public goal, dealing with conflicts and creating a space where actors can come up with good ideas together (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007).

Birkland (2011) conceptualizes *policy implementation* as “the process by which policies enacted by government are put into effect by the relevant agencies” (p. 263). The public policy that is designed is at this stage translated into action (Tantives & Walt, 2008). Policies may be adjusted at this stage due to problems that have arisen during the translation of policy on paper to policy in practice. Involving actors that are responsible for the implementation of the policy during the policy design phases might help to prevent certain implementation deficits (Tantives & Walt, 2008). Stakeholders can play a role in the execution of the designed policy, by offering services or products. Another role that can be taken on during this stage is the role of advisor. Tantives and Walt (2008) mention that stakeholders can also function as platforms for action when it comes to issues that are not addressed by governments. This possible role, however, is outside the scope of this research as the research focuses on the involvement of stakeholders in the policy process of issues that are addressed by governments.

*Policy evaluation* can be seen as a tool for learning and feedback (Bovens, ‘t Hart & Kuipers, 2006). Evaluating policies can help further advance the policy by looking at what needs to be changed and what is working really well and therefore needs to be kept or further used. Evaluation can be used to gather information about the impact and effectiveness of a certain policy or to evaluate the feasibility of certain possibilities for tackling a policy issue (Hill, 1993). The results of the policy evaluation stage are the input for *the feedback stage*. The aim of the policy feedback stage is to decide whether a policy should remain enacted, should be changed or should be cancelled (Bovens et al., 2017). That decision is, in theory, based on the results of the policy evaluation. The stakeholders that are part of the policy process, for example as advisor or as executive agency, can be asked to give input at the evaluation and feedback stage. Based on their experiences with the policy can recommendations be given for further improvement of the current policy.

The stages model of the policy process is used within this research to analyse at which stage of the policy process different actors are or get involved. Is it mainly at the end when the policy is implemented? Or are actors involved earlier on and do they have a say in the decision-making? The policies that were studied within this research have been designed, implemented and evaluated. One of the aspects that are studied is the moment or moments at which stakeholders are involved in the policy process. One of the aspects studied is the moment or moments at which different stakeholders are involved in the policy process of the cases studied. Were the stakeholders only involved at the implementation phase as partners to help carry out the policy or were stakeholders involved earlier on in the policy process as well? For example when the policies were designed and the decision were made.

Altman and Petkus wrote an article in 1994 about a stakeholder-based policy process. Altman and Petkus (1994) used the above outlined policy stages as starting point for their analysis and made a conceptual framework of the policy process with a focus on stakeholder involvement. Stakeholder involvement enhances the chance of developing and

implementing policy in a successful way in their opinion (Altman & Petkus, 1994). This article shows how different stakeholders can be involved in the policy process and how that contributes to the quality of the policy made. The most important difference between the conceptualization of Altman and Petkus (1994) in comparison to the one described before is the stage called consult, involve, accommodate. That stage follows the problem definition and agenda setting stage and comes before the policy formulation stage (Altman & Petkus, 1994). Altman and Petkus (1994) argue that policy problems have become more complex over time. That complexity makes it for policy makers more important to give stakeholders a more active role within the development phase of the policy process. Policy maker ask stakeholders during this stage about their ideas, interests, concerns and other information. That information can be potentially used to improve the quality of the policy that will be proposed later on. “A process of consulting, involving, and, to varying degrees, accommodating stakeholder interests may result in the formulation of more effective and efficient policy in the long run” (Altman & Petkus, 1994, p. 44).

There has not been a scientific discussion about whether stakeholder involvement at the different stages of the policy process has a different effect on policy effectiveness. Therefore is chosen not to focus on specific parts of the policy process but on the policy process as a whole.

So far, policy effectiveness and stakeholder involvement are conceptualized, different types of stakeholder involvement have been discussed, as well as the way in which stakeholders can be involved at different stages of the policy process. The following section discusses different theoretical mechanisms that are expected concerning the way in which stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness.

## 2.3 POLICY EFFECTIVENESS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Based on the scientific literature, multiple expectations can be formulated about the effect of stakeholder involvement in the policy process on policy effectiveness. The expectation is that the involvement of stakeholders in the policy process improves the effectiveness of policies, among other factors, through process inclusivity, diversity of perspectives, and the combining and sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources. According to the existing scientific literature can these aspects of stakeholder involvement influence whether stakeholder involvement will contribute to the effectiveness of public policies (Compton et al., 2018; Curseu & Schrujijer, 2017; Edelenbos et al., 2011; Huxham et al, 2000; Scott & Thomas, 2017; Tantivess & Walt, 2008). The mechanisms that link these aspects of stakeholder involvement to policy effectiveness are explained in this section.

### Process inclusivity

The first aspect of involvement that is examined is process inclusivity. Involving stakeholders in the policy process makes the policy process more inclusive, which offers certain advantages. Process inclusivity is about the representation and inclusion of different interests in the policy process. It is about the extent to which different actors collaborated with policymakers throughout the policy process (Compton et al., 2018). The amount of stakeholders involved, the degree of involvement and the stage at which the stakeholders are involved are choices surrounding process inclusivity that policy designers have to make (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016 in Compton et al., 2018).

Different theories consider the importance of including or representing multiple interests and stakeholders in the policy decision-making process (Compton et al., 2018). Making the policy process more inclusive can bring new people into the policy process that can challenge the ruling elites and their ideas (Sørensen & Torfing, 2018). A new way of thinking about certain topics might uncover that the way things are done around here do not work so well anymore. Higher inclusivity contributes to the assurance that issues and opportunities are covered (Newig et al., 2017) and talked about. Concerns or ideas of stakeholders who were not involved before, will be up for discussion once those actors get included. Someone who works for an NGO that represents the interests of refugees, someone who works for an educational institute, an owner of a company and a policy advisor might look at the same issue from different perspectives and come up with different ideas. Literature on public management theory mentions that it is important to include actors that are closely involved in the policy implementation and actual delivery of the public services during the policy design phase of the policy process (Compton et al., 2018). Those actors can tell the policymakers what works and what does not work based on their experience (Compton et al., 2018). Having that information throughout the policy process can help design a policy that is well-informed, based on actual experiences and has the support of the actors that have to execute. This increases the chance of designing a policy that is feasible and fits the context. Involving stakeholders in the policy process offers the advantages from a policy design and production of public value that are more effective (Bryson, Crosby and Bloomberg, 2014).

The expectation is that the involvement of different actors can contribute to the effectiveness of policies by making the policy process more open and inclusive. Enhanced inclusivity can result in bringing in a more diverse set of perspectives into the policy process. These different perspectives can shed light on new solutions, new issues and new opportunities. New ideas and options can result in more effective ways of reaching the desired policy goal and in that way lead to a higher level of policy effectiveness. Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Stakeholder involvement at any stage of the policy process increases process inclusivity and thereby improves policy effectiveness.

### Diversity of perspectives

A diverse set of perspectives can have both positive and negative effects on the policy process and its outcomes. The policy process can benefit from a diverse collection of perspectives (Curseu & Schruijer, 2017). Having diverse insights when deciding on a policy can contribute to the effectiveness of the policies because the policy is looked at from and discussed by stakeholders with different perspectives that focus on different aspects of the policy and its feasibility. Having a diverse group of people together can increase collaborative learning processes (Kim & Siddiki, 2018). But that diversity can also result in negative consequences. The interests and expectations that actors have with regard to being involved in the policy process can be different (Huxham et al., 2000) and can cause misunderstandings. Diversity of insights can trigger frictions and conflict between different actors (Curseu & Schruijer, 2017). Greater diversity can for example challenge consensus on what should be the outcome (Kim & Siddiki, 2018). There can be tensions and contradictions (Griggs, Howarth & Feandeiro, 2018) that have to be dealt with in order to be able to continue working together.

The expectation is that the level of diversity of perspectives of the stakeholders involved in the policy process can both have positive and negative consequences with regard to the effectiveness of public policies. Having a diverse group of people will contribute to having a diverse collection of perspectives and ideas that can contribute to finding solutions for issues that need to be solved. A diverse range of arguments can be considered when it comes to determining the policy content and its implementation. But many different opinions and preferences can also lead to misunderstanding, friction or even conflict. Therefore communication is considered as an important factor to take into consideration. Expected is that diversity of insights and viewpoints will less likely lead to misunderstanding and friction when people are aware of the differences and are able to talk about it. To test these expectations the following hypotheses are formulated:

H2: Stakeholder involvement at any stage of the policy process increases diversity of perspectives and thereby improves policy effectiveness.

H3a: Stakeholder involvement at any stage of the policy process increases diversity of perspectives and thereby reduces policy effectiveness.

H3b: The negative effect of diversity of perspectives on policy effectiveness is lessened by clearly communicating about the differences in insights and viewpoints.

### Sharing knowledge, expertise and resources

John Kingdon developed an approach to the policy process by which he uses streams as a metaphor. Politics, problems and policy are within that approach described as three streams that, once they come together, create a window of opportunity for policy change (Birkland, 2010). Different individuals, institutions, agencies and groups that are involved in the policy process are part of those three streams. The problem stream is about the aspects of a problem, whether that problem can be solved soon or is getting worse and whether people are aware of the problem. The policy stream is about the possible solutions to a problem that could be advocated for. The policy stream involves the public opinion and the current state of politics (Birkland, 2010). When the streams come together a window of opportunity for policy change can be opened, which does not mean that a policy change will happen per se (Birkland, 2010). When you look at stakeholder involvement in the policy process through the lens of the streams metaphor, one might say that stakeholders can get involved or are involved through the policy stream. Stakeholders can be the ones to offer a needed solution for a problem, like a certain service or product. Besides can stakeholders have certain knowledge or information that can be used for coming up with possible solutions for problems that have arisen.

Sharing knowledge and resources is another aspect of stakeholder involvement in the policy process. By involving different actors, new knowledge, insights, resources and information can be gathered and used within policy processes (Curseu & Schruijer, 2017; Edelenbos et al., 2011; Scott & Thomas, 2017; Tantivess & Walt, 2008). Involvement of actors can be seen as a way to create synergies by bringing people with different knowledge and different resources together (Qvist, 2017). Experiential knowledge about the implementation and service delivery can be very useful when deciding on which policy instruments will be used and in which way they will be implemented (Gouillart and Hallett, 2015). Involving different actors with different knowledge in the policy process can improve the quality of decision-making (Renn, 2006;

Scott & Thomas, 2017). Scott and Thomas (2017) argue that collaborative processes result in more effective policies because of the diverse set of knowledge and perspectives that are used as basis. Especially when public policy-makers do not have the necessary experience or knowledge about the target group or context of a certain policy to be made, the input from other actors that do have the necessary experience or knowledge can improve the design and the implementation of the public policy (Scott & Thomas, 2017).

Involving actors with different expertise and knowledge can therefore result in policy solutions that better fit the context. Involving stakeholders is seen as an effective strategy for dealing with problems without already available solutions (Koski, Siddiki, Sadiq, & Carboni, 2018). Including actors that are affected, interested and/or have the relevant knowledge and expertise can be a good approach to solving issues that are complex and uncertain (Koski et al., 2018). It can produce (more) innovative solutions to emerging or stuck challenges (Torfing, 2016). Involving stakeholders can improve the “decision comprehensiveness through the richness of the knowledge pool scrutinized and integrated in the policy process” (Curseu & Schruijer, 2017, p. 114). Besides knowledge can the necessary resources also be found among different actors (Qvist, 2017). Involving different actors in the policy process can open up access to the resources of the different actors for the development and execution of public policies. Resources can be harnessed from a diverse group of actors (Kim & Siddiki, 2018; Koski et al., 2018). The bringing together of different resources of each partner that provides the potential for collaborative advantage (Huxham et al., 2000, p. 348). In order for actors to share their knowledge and resources they must be willing to get involved. According to Sabatier, et al. (2005) is this willingness influenced by the participation preferences of actors and the trust between both state and non-state actors. It is important to consider why actors are willing to get involved if the knowledge and resources of the actors are desired for the policy process.

The expectation is that the involvement of different actors in the policy process will lead to a diverse collection of knowledge, expertise and resources. Expected is that combining the knowledge, expertise and resources of the different actors will lead to a policy design that is based on a solid base of knowledge, that is well-considered and that fits the context of the policy. I expect that the combining of different resources will make it more feasible to reach the policy goal because more resources can be used to reach the policy goal. I expect therefore that the involvement of different stakeholders in the policy process will lead to more effective policy through the bringing together of knowledge, expertise and resources. To test these expectations the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Stakeholder involvement at any stage of the policy process improves policy effectiveness by bringing knowledge, expertise and resources into the policy process which increases the possibility of designing and implementing a policy that is feasible and suits the policy goal.

Figure 1 shows the expected connections between the variables as discussed in the section above.

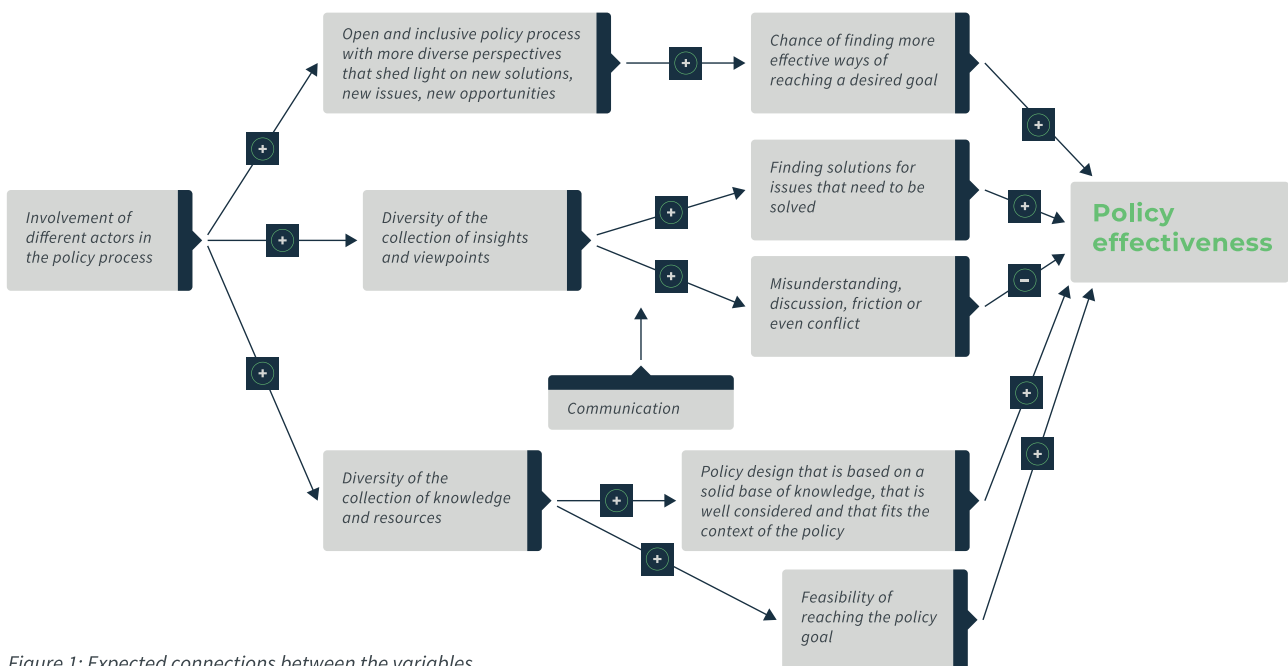


Figure 1: Expected connections between the variables

The hypotheses mentioned above are tested by the use of an empirical case study of local integration policies in three municipalities in the Netherlands. The following section contains more information about the context of this research.

## 2.4 CONTEXT: LOCAL IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICIES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Bradford and Andrews (2010) studied local immigration initiatives in Canada. In their article they wrote about four aspects that are crucial for effective integration, one of them being the involvement of multiple actors in the decision-making process in order to be able to use the synergies created by the bringing together of multiple actors, resulting in responsive and sustainable integration activities (Bradford & Andrews, 2010). By doing this research the aim is to figure out whether the involvement of different actors in the policy process of integration policies has an effect on the effectiveness of integration policies in the context of Dutch municipalities as well. In order to provide some context an overview is given of academic and policy perspectives on immigrant integration policies, of the historical development of Dutch integration policies and the role of municipalities in the Dutch integration policy.

### Academic and policy perspectives on immigrant integration

Immigrant integration can be defined as the 'incorporation of migrants into the society' (Maliepaard, Witkamp, Jennissen, 2017, p. 14). The Council of the European Union (2004) defined integration as 'a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the Member States' (p. 12), which is a broader definition than the more one-sided focused definition used by Maliepaard et al. (2017). Gray (2006) agrees with the Council of the European Union (2004) that immigrant integration is a two way process, this implies obligation both on the side of the government and on the side of the immigrant. The immigrant needs to have a willingness to integrate into the new society without being expected to abandon the own culture, and the society needs to have a willingness to accept the immigrant into society and facilitate the required necessities for the immigrant to become part of society with all the rights and duties involved (Gray, 2006). Immigrant integration policies are introduced to help immigrants integrate into the society. Gray (2006) mentioned that integration policies have to result in immigrants who can take care of themselves in an autonomous way, who are able to get a job so they can live independently and are committed to being part of and contribute to the society, in order to attain the goal of integration.

The objectives that Gray (2006) has in mind come close to the objectives of the Dutch government of immigrant integration policies. The general aim of the Dutch integration policy is to provide newcomers the ability to participate and fully function in the Dutch society, by for example working or studying. Immigrant integration policies can contribute to three different dimensions of integration, namely economic integration, social integration and political integration (Neureiter, 2018). Economic integration is about an immigrant's employment status and income level. The political dimension of integration can be captured by looking at the level of political participation, political interest and institutional trust. Social trust and tolerance can be used to measure the degree of social integration (Neureiter, 2018). The current Dutch national integration policy focusses mostly on the economic and social dimension integration and less on political dimension of integration. The Dutch government considers it important that newcomers participate in the Dutch society and are able to take care of themselves, if in the position to do so (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). That is different to the aims behind policies concerning immigrant integration in the decades before.

Dutch integration policies have changed over time. During the 1970s many foreign workers came to the Netherlands (Groen, 2017) as a way of solving the problem of a lack of workers in the Netherlands. At that time there were no integration policies, because integration policies did not seem to be necessary. The idea was that the foreign workers were going to stay in the Netherlands for a while and would go back home after. In the beginning of the 1980s the realization came that the foreign workers were not going to go back home any time soon, they were here to stay and policies were needed for the integration of foreign workers into the Dutch society.

In 1983 policies were made with a focus on three domains: working, living and knowledge (Groen, 2017), which were bundled in the so-called Minority note. The goal of these policies was that immigrants would integrate into society while keeping their own cultural identity, so that the immigrants could easily return to their home country. In 1989 the government started with the foreigner policy with the goal of faster and better integration of immigrants into the Dutch society (University College London, n.d.). Learning the Dutch language was seen as most important. Education and language courses were offered by cities and municipalities, which immigrants could join voluntarily (University College London, n.d.). The foreigner policy is followed up by the newcomers integration law in 1998. All immigrants above the age of 18 have to take part in an integration program. The goals are self-reliance and the ability to fully function within the Dutch society (University College London, n.d.). Language education and social guidance to help find a job or to help go back to school were offered. An immigrant risked financial sanctions if he or she decided not to take part in an integration program (University College London, n.d.).

In 1997 the Law Consultation Minorities was established (Groen, 2017). The aim of this law was for the minister



responsible for integration to have regular consultation with representatives of the different minorities within the society. Policies, measures and possible existing tensions were talked about during the consultations (van Ooij, 2017). The regular consultation with different minority groups was abolished in 2011. Representation based on ethnicity was outdated, according to the cabinet (van Walsum, 2017). The cabinet would rather talk to people individually about their responsibility. In 2017 an evaluation report was published about the national consultation of minority groups. The recommendation made in that report is to not re-establish the consultation of minority groups as it was before but to re-establish it in an adequate, modern, flexible way that is more suitable to the current situation (Kasem, de Jong & Büller, 2016). Migrant groups are still barely represented within departmental advisory groups, which makes the existence of minority group consultation still relevant (Kasem et al., 2016). At this point in time it is not clear whether the minority consultation will make a comeback or not.

A research and consultancy firm looked into the national integration policies in the Netherlands from the beginning of the twenty-first century until 2015 (Klaver, Odé, Smit & Witkamp, 2016). A change can be noticed in the national integration policies from the beginning of the twenty-first century in comparison to the policies that were made and implemented before. The permissiveness of the integration policy and the role of the government were limited and multiculturalism was not seen as the normative ideal anymore. Shared citizenship and own responsibility became core themes of the policies that were designed and implemented after 2000. Immigrants became responsible for their own integration process. Newcomers have to find an integration course themselves and take care of the financing of that integration course by getting a loan. Shared citizenship was conceptualized as speaking the Dutch language, abiding to the basic norms of the society and active participation within society. Speaking the language is seen as an important precondition for successful integration into the new home society. To improve the language skills of immigrants was the choice made by the government in 1998 to oblige immigrants to take integration courses. In 2007 an obligation to achieve certain results was added to the obligation to take integration courses (Klaver et al., 2016).

A combination of specific and generic policies are used to improve the situation of immigrants. The aim was to make policies as generic as possible and make specific policies for immigrants concerning integration when that is needed. One of the goals is that immigrants will have an equal position in comparison to other groups within the society. The government wants to avoid discrimination. The government takes action when certain groups of people are discriminated, based on the antidiscrimination policy. Every citizen needs to have equal opportunities. Preventing and combating discrimination have been a constant factor in the integration policies made between 2000 and 2015. Another aspect of the integration policies in the period of 2000 until 2015 is that socio-cultural integration became more and more seen as essential for the enhancement of social cohesion and participation of immigrants within society (Klaver et al., 2016).

Multiple changes were made to the integration policy in the period from 2000 until 2015. Three overall objectives were identified by the research and consultancy organization (Klaver et al., 2016):

- Promoting social cohesion and preventing social tensions
- Striving for an equal position for every citizen and for participation of every citizen within the Dutch society
- Making sure that immigrants have the needed knowledge about the Dutch society and are able to use the Dutch language

Citizenship as a concept has taken the central stage in integration policies since the 1990s, norms and values have become important aspects within integration policies (Schinkel & van Houdt, 2009). This can be linked to the change that becoming a citizen of a certain country is seen more and more in moral terms instead of formal (Schinkel & van Houdt, 2009) terms with a focus on rules, rights and duties.

### The new national integration policy

A new change is coming. The coalition that is currently in office has decided to design and implement a new national integration policy ('Wet Inburgering'). The new policy was part of the coalition agreement written in 2017 and will come into force in 2021. The new integration policy will entail more help for newcomers when it comes to the integration process and more motivation for newcomers to commit to integration (Koolmees, 2018). On the one hand more will be asked of immigrants as part of the integration, but on the other hand the immigrants will get more help from the Dutch government. The government will take on more the role of facilitator than it did before. That facilitation will be done by the local governments, the municipalities. The new integration policy will offer municipalities more opportunities to take control facilitate what is necessary. At the moment the focus is mainly on self-reliance, newcomers have to take care of for example their language courses themselves. Newcomers can borrow money to pay for language courses. Self-reliance turned out to be something that does not suit the target group. Therefore the choice is made to give the municipalities more tools to help newcomers with the integration. That will happen when the new integration policy will come into force in 2021.

### The role of the municipality

Municipalities are already designing and implementing policies regarding integration. At the moment are municipalities responsible for the housing of and support for newcomers who are granted a residence permit (VNG, n.d.). Refugees with a residence permit are divided over the municipalities based on the amount of residence of the different municipalities. Municipalities have the legal obligation to offer guidance to newcomers. This means that municipalities have to offer help and guidance to newcomers when it comes to getting a place to live, applying for social benefits and when it comes to understanding and finding your way in the Dutch healthcare system. In many municipalities are the beforementioned tasks surrounding social support done by welfare organisations.

Migrants who received their residence permit after the first of October 2017 have to sign a declaration of participation (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). Municipalities are responsible for the execution of the trajectory surrounding the declaration of participation. The trajectory is meant for offering newcomers information about the Dutch society and its core values, like freedom, equality and solidarity. Besides getting information about the Dutch society is getting to know the municipality and everything that it has to offer integrated in the trajectory as well (VNG, n.d.).

Other obligations that the municipality has concerning refugees with a residence permit that are assigned to the municipality have to do with the Participation Law. The municipality is responsible for guiding refugees with a residence permit towards a job because of the Participation law. The Participation law says that everyone should participate, either through paid work or through other activities. This is an example of a generic law that is meant for both refugees with a residence permit as for other groups within society.

### The amount of refugees that arrived in the Netherlands in 2015 and 2016

One of the reasons that municipalities decided to design a (new) approach for the housing and integration of refugees with a residence permit was the relatively large amount of refugees that arrived in 2015 and 2016 in the Netherlands and the arrival of centres for asylum seekers in different municipalities [R7; R8; R10]. The centres were opened to receive the asylum seekers that arrived. The relatively large amount of asylum seekers that arrived in the Netherlands in 2015 and 2016 was due to multiple large conflicts in different parts of the world. Multiple municipalities were of the opinion that measures had to be taken to help the relatively large group of new inhabitants to integrate into the new home society.

The result of the decentralisation of governmental tasks concerning integration is a heterogeneous collection of local integration policies. At the moment it is not really clear what works and what does not work concerning local integration policies (Koolmees, 2018). The aim of studying local integration policies, especially the involvement of stakeholder in the policy process of integration policies, is to get a better understanding of whether stakeholder involvement can contribute to integration policy effectiveness and about what possibly works.

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# 3. EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter has two purposes. The first is the operationalisation of the theoretical concepts. The second is to describe and explain the methods that were used for collecting, selecting and analysing data. In order to answer the research question, comparative case study research is conducted on three local integration policy cases in the Netherlands. A qualitative research design is chosen because qualitative research offers the opportunity to get an insight in people's perspectives on a certain situation or phenomenon (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) that cannot be collected by the use of quantitative research. Qualitative research offers the possibility to ask why respondents have a certain opinion or to ask for further clarification. I was able to make little changes in the wording of certain questions because of the methods I used. I learned more about the situations that I was studying while doing the interviews. That helped me to figure out what the right words were to for example address the stakeholders as a certain group of organizations or individuals. This research is about a social reality in which multiple actors are connected because of a certain topic to which they all are related. Qualitative research was the right method to learn more about that social reality and the connections between the different actors involved (Bryman, 2012).

The methods used for this research are document analysis and semi-structured interviews. In-depth semi-structured interviews are held with 19 respondents, representing different groups of stakeholders involved in the policy process of the three municipalities that are studied.

## 3.1 OPERATIONALISATION

The theoretical concepts were operationalised by the use of a operationalisation scheme. The operationalisation scheme can be found in Appendix 1. In this section it is explained how the theoretical concepts were measured within this research.

One way of determining the level of *policy effectiveness* is by looking at the programmatic success of a policy. Programmatic success is a dimension of policy success and is seen as the 'classic' evaluation of policies with a focus on the degree to which a policy attains valuable impacts (Compton & 't Hart, 2018). It assesses policies by looking at the policy objectives and the achievement of goals (Bovens, 2010). An assumption mentioned by Marsh & McConnell (2010) is that programmatic success is more probable when the process of policy-making involves and mirrors the interests of a collation of interests that is adequately powerful. Information about the effectiveness of a certain policy can be discovered in sources like party political speeches, legislative committee reports, briefings from stakeholders, media commentary (Marsh & McConnell, 2010), policy documents and policy evaluations. The way in which the level of policy effectiveness is determined within this research follows the established work done by Marsh and McConnell (2010) and Compton and 't Hart (2018). What is looked at to assess the level effectiveness of a policy is the implementation of the policy as per objectives and the achievement of the intended outcomes (Compton & 't Hart, 2018; Marsh & McConnell, 2010). Target goals are the unit of analysis. It is assessed whether the policy resulted in the achievement of the target goals. Besides looking at the results of the policies were the respondents asked whether they perceive the policies in municipality A, B or C as effective.

Based on document analysis an overview was created of the stakeholder that are involved in the policy processes of the cases studied. During the interviews the level of *stakeholder involvement* was examined by asking questions about the stages at which stakeholders are involved, the role the stakeholders play and the amount of influence that stakeholders have during the policy process. The three specific aspects of stakeholder involvement that were looked at within this research were operationalised in the following way.

*Process inclusivity* is measured by the degree to which the societal actors affected by the policy were actively involved throughout the policy process (Compton et al., 2018). The respondents were asked questions about the openness of the policy process for different stakeholders to be part of it. Who got involved, how did the stakeholders get involved, whether it was difficult to get involved, to what extent they were involved and in which part of the policy process the actors were involved was asked. Other topics that were discussed are at which stages of the policy process the stakeholders are or were involved and the degree of involvement. The answers to these questions gave an insight into the inclusivity of the policy process.

*The diversity of insights and viewpoints* was assessed by examining the different views and opinions of the respondents.



The respondents were asked whether they experienced that there are differences in viewpoints between the different actors that are involved in the policy process. Additionally, the actors involved in the policy process were asked how they experienced the diversity of insights of the actors involved and whether possible differences in viewpoints ever led to discussions or even conflicts.

The respondents were asked about the extent to which *knowledge and resources are shared* between stakeholders and the local government and between stakeholders and other stakeholders. The respondents were asked about the kind of knowledge and resources that were shared and the moments at which the sharing happened. The respondents were asked their opinion about the effect of the sharing and bringing together of knowledge during the policy process.

To examine the possible link between stakeholder involvement and policy effectiveness were the respondents asked whether they think that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness or not. The respondents supported their answers with multiple arguments. The last topic that was discussed was the current way in which stakeholders are involved in the policy process. Respondents gave insights into what goes well at the moment and into what could be possibly improved. The topic lists used for the semi-structured interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

## 3.2 CASE STUDY

A case study design is chosen because there is not something yet that can be tested on a larger scale when it comes to the involvement of different actors in the policy process and the effectiveness of policies in the domain of local integration policies in the Netherlands. The current Minister of Social Affairs mentioned that it is not quite clear what works when it comes to integration policies in the Netherlands (Koolmees, 2016). Propositions about what works first need to be made before it can be tested on a larger scale. Therefore it is more suitable to conduct a case study to examine what is happening and what the effects are.

## 3.3 CASE SELECTION

A purposive mode of sampling is used to select the cases. Purposive sampling is chosen because the cases to be chosen are chosen with a specific goal in mind. I want to examine integration policy cases in which multiple actors were involved in the policy process and of which the results are available. I want to examine two cases of local integration policy processes that resulted in effective policies. This choice is made because it offers the opportunity to see to what extent the involvement of different actors contributed to the effectiveness of the policies studied. Whether a local integration policy was or is effective was assessed by examining evaluation reports. An overview of the documents that were analysed can be found in Appendix 4. This approach helped to find out what works when it comes to involving actors in the policy process of integration policies and to find out why. By the use of this approach five municipalities were contacted. Employees of two municipalities responded positively and were willing to be part of this research. The approach of two municipalities to the integration of refugees with a residence permit are the cases studied within this research. Two municipalities were already part of a research at that moment and one municipality did not respond.

I reached out to two other municipalities during the orientation phase of the research project. The aim of that was to get to know more about local integration policies and the policy process surrounding integration policies. For the sake of convenience and out of curiosity for the integration policies in the two municipalities that I have lived in where these two municipalities contacted in February. One of those two municipalities was added as a case because of the effective project that was established in collaboration with five other municipalities in the region and an organization that offers advice and information about work, financial support, participation and to deal with issues surrounding poverty, debt and social isolation. That organization is established by six municipalities within one region as executor of task concerning participation. The second municipality was not included as a case within this study because the projects that are designed for the integration of refugees with a residence permit were starting in the same month I spoke with one of the policy makers of that municipality. Therefore conclusions about the effectiveness of the approach made by the municipality in collaboration with different stakeholders can not be made yet. Information given by the respondent from that municipality was used to support the arguments made in the result section.

## 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Document analysis and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data for the case study. Document analysis as a way of systematically reviewing and evaluating documents was used for multiple purposes. The first purpose is to find the information needed to select the cases as is described above. Second, documents were analysed in order to be able

to make a list of organizations that formed the sampling frame for the semi-structured interviews. Official documents were used to make a sampling frame that is as comprehensive as possible. Document analysis was thirdly used to gather part of the data needed or answering the research questions. I am aware that every document is written with a certain purpose and based on certain assumptions. That was taken into account during the analysis of the documents. The documents are social products and should be treated as such. An advantage of document analysis is that the data is not produced for the purpose of this research. As researcher I did not have an influence on the information written down in the documents. Document analysis gave relatively easy access to a lot of information. A disadvantage is that I did not have the chance to talk to the authors of the documents to check whether my interpretations of the information is right in their view. I know less about the context in which the information was found that is described in the documents, which might lead to misinterpretations. Multiple documents were analysed that gave information about the three municipalities and the local integration policies. Chances of misinterpretation were lowered by examining multiple documents that gave information about the same policy.

Semi-structured interviews are chosen as a way to gather data because the data that is necessary to answer the research questions is about opinions and perspectives. Opinions and perspectives are difficult to capture with for example questionnaires or experiments. For the semi-structured interviews I interviewed policy advisors of the municipalities studied and different actors that are involved in the policy process of local integration policies of the municipalities studied. Interviewing multiple people who were part of the same process offered different perspectives that can be compared and gave a more comprehensive view of the situation. The data is about perceptions of people, which asks for some caution. The data collected during the semi-structured interviews is treated as what it is, perspectives of people on the situations in the past, on the current situation and possible future situations. It is important to not speak of causality when that is not the case. A disadvantage of using semi-structured interviews as a research method is the relatively small amount of respondents that can be questioned in comparison to the amount of respondents that can be reached out to by using questionnaires as a research method.

### Document analysis

Document analysis was used to select the cases for the case study, to select the respondents for the semi-structured interviews and to gather data necessary for answering the research questions. The type of document analysis within this research is content analysis. Content analysis is “the process of organising information into categories related to the central questions of the research” (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). The following questions were used to guide the document analysis:

- Are the policies that are being used effective?
- What policies are currently being used in the municipalities that are studied?
- Which stakeholders are involved in the policy process of the integration policies of the municipalities being studied?
- Why are the stakeholders involved in the policy process of the integration policies of the municipalities being studied?

The question whether the policies are effective was used to select the cases for the case study. The other three questions were used to gather data to be used for the answering of the research questions. Question three had a second function. That question was used to create a list of possible respondents.

Most of the analysed documents were found online. Four documents that were analysed were given by respondents during or after the semi-structured interviews. Those documents were given either to offer more information besides what was already told during the interviews or to have a structured overview of what was mentioned on paper. The documents analysed contain information about the policy implemented by the municipality, information about the effectiveness of the policies studied or information about the collaboration between one of the municipalities and one of the organizations.

### Semi-structured interviews

The respondents for the semi-structured interviews were selected by use of purposive sampling. After the municipalities were selected, a list of the actors involved in the policy process of those municipalities was made. The aim was to make a list that is as comprehensive as possible. Policy documents were used to make the list of actors. Based on that list organisations were contacted with the question whether the organisation was able to participate in this research. All of the organizations were contacted in the same way by the use of the same message. The aim was to speak with someone from different kinds of organizations that play a role within the integration policy of the municipalities that were studied. The different stakeholders might have different views on the topics that were discussed during the interviews. A second aim was to speak with people from similar organizations in each municipality. The similarity of stakeholders that were spoken with offers the opportunity for a valid comparison of the data found in the different municipalities. Table 1 contains an overview of the respondents that were interviewed. It shows to which municipality they or their organisations are affiliated to and for what kind of organisation they work for.

The selection of respondents that are interviewed was partly based on the accessibility of people. Besides the beforementioned number of municipalities were 35 organizations contacted. Of that group did 25 organizations sent a response. Employees of 6 organizations responded by telling that none of the employees of those organizations were not available for an interview because of time and schedule related issues. Three respondents responded with the message that as far as they knew the organization either was not involved or that the organization did indeed speak with employees of the municipality and signed a covenant but that afterwards no form of collaboration or involvement was established between the organization and the municipality. I have spoken with 19 respondents from 15 different organizations.

	Policy maker/ policy advisor	Housing corporation	Employment and participation services	Welfare organisation	Refugee organisations	Educational institutes
Municipality A	1	1		1	4	1
Municipality B	1	1	1	1 <sup>2</sup>		1
Municipality C	2		2			
Municipality D	1					
Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment	1					

Table 1: Overview of the respondents

Three topic lists were made beforehand as instruments for the semi-structured interviews. One topic list was made for the interviews with the policymakers of the different municipalities. For the interviews with the respondents who work for organizations that are involved in the policy processes studied was the topic list slightly altered to better fit the perspective of the respondents. A third topic list was made in preparation for the interview with the policymaker who works for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The three topic lists are similar because the focus of each of the topic lists is on the same concepts. The use of the same topic list for the same type of respondent made the interviews more standardized which increases the reliability of the collected data (Straits & Singleton, 2011). The topics in the topic list are based on the research questions and the operationalisation of the concepts and theoretical mechanisms discussed in the theoretical framework. The operationalisation scheme, to be found in Appendix 1, that was mentioned earlier on in this chapter was used for the creation of the topic list. The topic lists can be found in Appendix 2.

Most interviews were done face-to-face at the location where the respondents either work or had a meeting after the interview. Three interviews were done over the phone, due to factors concerning the possibility to meet face-to-face. One interview was not completely recorded due to technical complications. The part that was recorded was transcribed. A report is written about the remaining part of the interview that was not recorded. After discovering that only a small part of the interview was recorded I wrote down everything I remembered from that interview. That was right after the interview. A document was given to me by the respondents during that interview that contains most of the needed information, which made the incomplete recording less inconvenient. The parts of the interviews that were used for the result section were sent to the respondents to check whether what was written down after the interview was indeed what they told me. The interview was with respondents 4, 5 and 6, who all work for the same organization.

Throughout the interviewing process I learned which terms should be used to get the needed information. Therefore some different but similar terms were used if the first interviews are compared to the last. Some information asked during the semi-structured interviews might be less relevant for the overall research, but were relevant to understand the other information that was given or to get a better idea of how the context is structured. One aspect of the interviewing process that was a little difficult was to not use the information heard during other interviews. By the use of the same topic list for the different interviews is tried to lower the degree of bias caused by unconsciously using questions that are influenced by already collected data. Influence of already collected information can prevent unprejudiced consideration of a question, which can lead to a certain bias (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010). It is important to consider the degree to which bias was prevented in order to make an informed assessment of the quality of the results. Bias occurs when “systematic error is introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others” (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010, p. 1). Biases can occur at different phases of the research project. In this section the focus is on biases that can occur during the selection, data collection and data analysis phases of research.

<sup>2</sup> The welfare organization has a specific department that focuses on the wellbeing of refugees with a residence permit

Selection bias can occur at the phase in which the study population is identified (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010). When a certain group or certain groups of the study population are not identified and therefore not included in the study, this can cause a systematic error in the findings. I have tried to make a comprehensive list of involved stakeholders based on document analysis and checked by asking employees from the municipalities who is involved during the semi-structured interviews. The possibility exists that some involved stakeholders were not on the list made and therefore were not contacted. Therefore selection bias might have occurred, but I tried to make the possibility of selection biases as limited as possible.

Another possible bias that is taken into consideration is information bias. Information bias is a umbrella term for errors that occur in the measurement of a variable. One form of information bias is interviewer bias. Interviewer bias is a “systematic difference between how information is solicited, recorded, or interpreted” (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010, p. 3). Interviewer bias was tried to be minimized by using the same topic list for every interview, by trying not to use the information heard during one interview during another interview, by recording the interviews in the same way and by using the same coded for coding all the interviews.

### 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected during the semi-structured interviews was transcribed. Codes were assigned to the data for identification of parts that relate to the research question, the sub-questions and the theoretical expectations. The data was coded in three rounds. The first round of coding is called open coding. Open coding can be defined as the process of “breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data” (Strauss & Corbin, 2007, p. 61). Open coding was used to structure the data and capture the elements needed for answering the research questions. The codes are notes for a piece of textual research data that expresses the content of that piece of information. The result of open coding is a list of codes, a so-called code tree. The code tree can be found in Appendix 6. Axial coding was used as a second round of coding. Axial coding can be defined as “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 2007, p. 96). Categorising is about looking for patterns in the codes that were assigned to the data in the first round of coding. The goal is to integrate the codes into categories of codes. The last round of coding was selective coding. Selective coding can be defined as ‘selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development’ (Strauss & Corbin, 2007, p. 116). The result of this round of coding is a description of the most important concepts, a comprehensive story that contains the relations between the concepts and answers to the research questions. Nvivo is used for the coding of the data. The results of the data analysis can be found in the results section. In the findings section are the results of the empirical part of the research combined with the results of the theoretical part of the research.

### 3.6 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND GENERALIZABILITY OF THE DATA

Multiple measures are taken to increase the reliability of this research. All the steps that were taken during the research are reported in this paper, which offers the possibility to assess the level of reliability. Topic lists were used to increase the level of similarity of the different interviews and thereby increase the level of reliability. The measurement of the theoretical concepts was based on the way in which established researchers measured the theoretical concepts. The respondents that were contacted for the semi-structured interviews and the documents that were analysed were purposively chosen. The reasoning behind the purposive selection is described above in this chapter.

The internal validity of the topic lists used was tested before the topic lists were used as tools for the semi-structured interviews. The test was done to make sure that the questions that were going to be asked during the semi-structured interviews were clear and would lead to the information that I was looking for. The goal of the semi-structured interviews was to get a clear image of the situation and to collect information about people’s opinions and views. The topic lists were tested to see whether the questions used would lead to that information. During the interviews rephrasing of the answers given was sometimes used to make sure that the answers given by the respondents were correctly understood by me. Before every interview it was asked whether the respondents would give the permission to record the interview. Recording the interviews made it possible to make transcripts of the interviews held. By recording the interviews and making transcripts I was able to get most out of the information given by the respondents. Besides getting most out of the information that was given, offers the recording of the interviews the possibility to check whether the information given in the results section matches with the collected data.

Similar results were found within the different municipalities. Statements about whether this means that similar results can also be found within other context can not be made with any certainty. The context in which the results were found are stated to give some possible insight into whether the results could be found in similar contexts as well. Within this research the emphasis is more on internal validity than on the external validity, because first more research is needed to figure out what works when talking about local integration policies, before that can be tested or researched on a larger scale. The results of this research are relevant for Dutch municipalities that want to involve stakeholders in the policy process surrounding integration policies or want to know more about involving stakeholders in the policy process surrounding integration policies. This research examined what works surrounding stakeholder involvement and what is important to keep in mind when the policy makers of a municipality decide to involve stakeholders in the policy process at certain moments.

### **3.7 ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The data collected during the research is analysed and reported in an anonymous way, the data cannot be linked back to the person that was interviewed. All the respondents received a form containing the question whether they would give their consent to use the data that was gathered during the interview. In the form it was stated that the respondents could withdraw their approval for the use of their data at any moment. The informed consent form can be found in Appendix 3. Before the start of every interview the respondents were asked whether they would give their permission to record the interview so that I would be able to make transcripts of the interviews. The recordings of the interviews and the transcripts are kept in a safe digital environment. The respondents were informed beforehand about the goal of the research, the way in which the data was going to be used and the distribution of the data to my thesis advisors. It must be mentioned that true anonymity can only be achieved if even the researcher can not link data back to the respondent who said it. Therefore true anonymity can not be achieved when face-to-face interviews are used as a way to collect the data. The goal concerning confidentiality and anonymity is for everyone beside the researcher not to be able to link the data back to the respondents. All documents containing data and the recordings of the interviews will be deleted within three months after graduating from the safe digital environment.

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## 4. RESULTS

This chapter contains the results of the empirical part of this research. Data was collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were held with policymakers, managers, project supervisors, coordinators, and case managers.



### THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL PART OF THIS RESEARCH

### 4.1 CASE DESCRIPTIONS

This section describes the three cases that are studied within this research that focuses on the involvement of stakeholders in the policy process of local integration policies.

#### 4.1.1 Municipality A

Municipality A is one of the larger municipalities within the Netherlands. The municipality started with the current approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit in 2016. Two reasons for the designing of the current policy are the policy brief about the integration of refugees written by the Scientific Council for Government Policy and published in 2015<sup>3</sup> [R1; D5; D6; D8] and the increased amount of refugees with a residence permit that came to live in the municipality [D2; D6].

#### The approach to the integration of refugees with a residence permit in municipality A

The approach to the integration of refugees with a residence permit in municipality A involves more than the obligations that the municipality has regarding refugees with a residence permit that are assigned to the municipality. Municipality A offers newcomers more than a house to live in, support when they apply for social benefits and information about the

<sup>3</sup> The following was stated in document 5: “In this policy brief was demonstrated, based on prior experience with former refugee cohorts, how difficultly the labour integration of refugees is proceeding. The labour market hardly comes into sight, particularly in the first few years after settling. The reasons for this include (long) waiting time during the stay at the Centre for Asylum Seekers after being granted a residence permit and the sequential design of the local re-integration policy, in which learning the language through a civilization trajectory is the main activity. Combined with mental health problems, the appreciation of foreign diplomas and learning the Dutch language, makes that refugees fall behind in the first couple of years and are not fully able to catch up over the course of time. Municipality A decided to focus on further acceleration and intensification of its policy with regard to refugee partly as a result of this problem analysis.”

Dutch health care system. The following section provides a brief overview of the approach of municipality A to the integration of refugees with a residence permit.

The approach is described by respondent 1 as “very active and proactive”. The aim of the approach is to start with integration as soon as possible [R1] and make sure that the efforts lead to long term integration [R1; R14]. The goal is not to get newcomers a job as soon as possible. It might be easy to quickly get someone a certain job, which might not suit that person and will not lead to long term integration. Finding someone the right job at the right level might take some more time, but it is believed to lead to positive results concerning someone’s level of integration [R14]. The municipality believes that this can be done by offering refugees with a residence permit help with finding a job, an education or other form of participation as soon as they arrive at the municipality, in combination with learning the Dutch language [R1]. A dual and integral approach, so to say [R1]. A concrete goal that is set by the municipality is that 50% of the newcomers should not receive social financial aid anymore after three years [R1]. Those 50% should be able to earn their own income and pay for their own costs after those three years. The philosophy behind this is that people are independent and self-reliant as soon as they are not dependent on social benefits anymore.

The main aspect of the approach of municipality A is to start with intensive guidance as soon as possible. That guidance is given by specialised case managers with a relative low caseload of 50 refugees per case manager. The caseload of the case managers is low on purpose, to make sure the case managers have can spend enough time on and give enough attention to each individual [R1]. The municipality hired people who were refugees themselves as case managers. Among the case managers there are case managers that speak Arabic, Farsi or Tygrinya, which helps a lot with the communication between refugees and case managers that do not speak either of those languages [R1]. The case managers can use specific instruments that are developed to help newcomers towards a job, towards education or towards another form of participation [D3; D4; D7; D10].

The trajectory consists of two phases. The first phase of the process is meant for creating a clear image of what an individual is capable of, who he or she is and what he or she would like to accomplish. The municipality developed an assessment to help collect information about the new inhabitants. The assessment was made in collaboration with the Municipality of Social Affairs and Employment and Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers. Case managers use the assessment to gather information about the motivation of newcomers, the language level, prior work experience, education, and the psychological and physical condition of an individual. The results of the assessment are used to make an action plan for the newcomer. If possible the assessment is done when the refugee with a residence permit is still at the centre for asylum seekers [D4; D5; D8]. In one of the documents written by the municipality is stated that time is lost during the period that newcomers stay at one of the centres for asylum seekers. The municipality wants to use that time by starting with the integration while the future residents are still living in a centre for asylum seekers [D4; D8]. This way the capacities and the talents of these people will not go to waste during that time [D4]. If that is not possible, the assessment is done when the newcomer arrives at the municipality [R14].

Phase two consists of six months of intensive guidance by a case manager [D5; D7]. Case managers offer intensive guidance to newcomers above the age of 18. The case managers formulate tailor-made action plans for and together with their clients based on information that is retrieved by the use of an assessment during the first phase. The action plan contains short term and long term goals that will be worked towards [D3; D4]. The case manager can refer a client to health professionals in case health care is needed [D3; D7]. Health care professionals are part of the approach by offering newcomers information about the Dutch health care system and other subjects related to public health as well [R14].

After the action plan is made, the refugee gets intensive guidance for six months. The idea is to integrate and participate at the same time. The municipality has certain instruments that can be used by case managers [D3]. A language boost can be used to help newcomers improve their language skills needed to find a job or to get back to school. The language boost is a short and intensive language course tailored to the needs of the students. The municipality offers newcomers a language and orientation program (TOV) to help them integrate into society. The program contains mandatory and voluntary components. The beforementioned trajectory surrounding the declaration of participation is a mandatory trajectory, as well as the components about the healthcare system and personal hygiene. The voluntary components contain information about the municipality and a language and learnability test [D3; D7]. A third instrument that can be used are the jobhunters. Jobhunters work for the municipality and offer help to find a match between a newcomer and an employer who is looking for employees [D7]. The jobhunters work from the same location as the case manager, which makes collaboration easier [R1].

Naturalization and passing the naturalization exam are individual responsibilities of the refugee. The case managers of municipality A offer the refugee help to eventually pass the naturalization exam. The case manager does this by looking for the right naturalization course and encouraging the refugee to integrate [D7]. Case managers collaborate with consultants who work for an organization that offers social support to refugees throughout the country. That organization is an advocacy organization for the interests of refugees. Refugees are offered social support for two and a

half years by the organization. The case managers of the municipality and the consultants work from the same location, which makes it easier to collaborate and communicate, and to fulfil their roles as case managers and consultants [R1]. After six months the newcomers are handed over to other teams of case managers that will guide the newcomers towards education, a job or active participation. One team offers help to refugees above the age of 27 and one team offers help to refugees who have not reached the age of 27 yet. Both teams have the same caseload of 50 cases per case manager [D3; D7].

One of the aspects of the approach is that if something does not seem to be working, it will be quickly changed [R1]. The municipality wants to learn from the experiences and make changes when that is necessary. What is discussed today could be changed tomorrow, according to respondent 1.

### The results of the approach

The expectation is that the approach of municipality A will have a positive effect on (the pace of) integration and on the level of participation. Municipality A asked an economic advisory organization to perform a social cost-benefit analysis to see whether the approach has a positive result on society. The results of the social cost-benefit analysis were made public in 2017. The organization was only able to perform an indicative social cost-benefit analysis, because it was too early to do a systematic analysis of the effects of the results. The result of the analysis is an approximation of the possible future effects of the approach of municipality A. The aim of the analysis was to examine whether the approach of municipality A resulted in higher levels of participation through work, education or voluntary work among refugees with a residence permit [D2]. Based on the results of the approach in 2016 is the expectation that the approach will have a positive societal return on investment. The expected benefits are twice as high as the costs. The financial return on investment is positive even when the immaterial benefits like quality of life are left aside. The expectation is that people will sooner get a job because of the approach. These positive results lead to less money spend on social benefits by the municipality, a higher income for the municipality and an increased quality of life for refugees with a residence permit. Other benefits are less expenses in the social domain and a higher amount of money received by the national government through income taxation [D2].

Another research institution examined the approach as well. The aim of that research was to develop knowledge about effective approaches of local governments with a focus on advancing the participation of refugees with a residence permit. The research started in December 2016 and ended in November 2018. The research was aimed not only at giving an insight into the effectiveness of the approach of municipality A but also explain why it works and for who. The researchers did not only look at the effects of the interventions, but also tried to explain the connections that were found<sup>4</sup> [D5].

The research showed that refugees are activated at an earlier stage than they were before. Refugees start at an earlier stage with integration activities and different trajectories. Newcomers are more often actively participating and doing multiple activities at the same time, in comparison to the newcomers who arrived at the time of the old approach. One in ten refugees already receive counselling when they are still at the centre for asylum seekers. Newcomers in municipality A more often find a job within a year in comparison to newcomers who live in other municipalities in the Netherlands. 28% gets a job within 12 months after they start receiving guidance from a case manager. One concern is that only one third of the newcomers that gets a job within a year, keeps that job for over a year without dropping out [D8].

The approach offers more personal attention for the newcomers by their case manager. The newcomers appreciate the new approach and feel that they are heard and supported by their case managers [D8]. A side note is that the approach is not for every group of refugees as beneficial. This is not typical for the situation in municipality A. The groups of refugees that benefit less in comparison to other groups are nationally seen as specific groups and as more vulnerable [D8].

Societal and economic factors have contributed to the results of the approach in municipality A. There was a lot of public support for the approach. Initiatives to help newcomers integrate into the society came from different organizations and groups of people. The willingness to help these people to become members of society had a positive effect on the approach and the results of the approach [D8]. Another important contextual factors was the economic growth in the period between 2016 and 2018. The amount of vacancies increased, and more and more employers were looking for employees. This probably contributed to the increased amount of newcomers that found a job relatively quick. To what extent the approach and to what extent the economic growth explains the results concerning the amount of people that got a job and are not part of the social benefit system anymore be stated with certainty [D8]. Laws and regulations made is sometimes difficult for case managers to influence the choices of newcomers and to make a true integrated approach

<sup>4</sup> The combination offers the opportunity to produce knowledge that can be used by other municipalities as well. It is easier to replicate an intervention effectively in another context when the reasons why it works are known (Pater, Sligte & van Eck, 2012).

[D8]. But that is about to change with the implementation of the new national law in 2021.

The goal that is set by the municipality is that 50% of the refugees with a residence permit will be independent and self-reliant after three years. That is measured by whether someone still receives social benefit after three years [R1]. Respondent 1 expects that of the group of newcomers that arrived in 2016, three years ago, more than 50% will not need social financial support anymore after this year. Now the municipality needs to monitor whether the approach leads to long term integration and a sustainable situation. The municipality wants to know whether an individual can keep a certain job or get another one and stay out of the social benefit system [R1]. It is too soon to draw conclusions on the durability of the results of the approach. But the goal of the approach is achieved.

### Who are involved?

The municipality works closely together with multiple partners. Respondent 1: "Everyone that does something with re-integration or education is involved". Municipality A is a relatively large municipality and the municipality has therefore the luxury position to be able to choose which stakeholders the municipality wants to involve [R1]. The municipality wants to connect stakeholders and bring them together [D4]. The partners that the municipality collaborates with are the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Community Health Services, housing corporations, educational institutions, wellbeing organizations, refugee agencies, employers and other private initiatives [D3].

The covenant that the municipality signed with 27 organizations is one of the examples of the way in which stakeholders are involved in the approach. Agreements are made between the municipality and organizations about the contribution of the organizations to the approach of the municipality for the integration of refugees with a residence permit [D4]. Multiple companies have designed initiatives to help refugees with a residence permit towards a job. Many of these companies have come to the municipality with their ideas [D4]. The companies were looking for new employees, or wanted to contribute to the integration of newcomers by offering their services, expertise or financial means [D4]. The partners that have signed the covenant offer for example extra support to newcomers to find the right education or get a job. That support be given by offering intensive language training, organizing matching events with employers, offering access to vacancies, coaching, an internship, trainings, accelerator programs and/or health care if needed. If possible and needed, other relevant organizations can get involved as well. The covenant is not exclusive, other parties are welcome to contact the municipality and contribute to the approach for the integration of newcomers [D4].

Refugees with a residence permit who want to get a certain education are capable of getting a certain degree are guided towards education. The municipality does this in collaboration with different educational institutes [D3; D5]. An organization that is established with the goal to help refugees find the right education has an collaboration agreement with the municipality [D3; R1; R4; R5]. The aim is to offer refugees with the ambition to get an education that possibility. The refugee needs to have the potential to get that education and/or prior work experience. The philosophy is that offering refugees the opportunity to study will enable them to participate in the society at the for them right level [D5; D10]. There is a group of refugees that have obtained a degree in their country of origin and would like to practice what they practiced in their country of origin in their new home country as well. The organizations helps the newcomers to figure out whether and how that could be made possible [D10]. The municipality offers refugees with a residence permit the opportunity to study because it is also an investment in the own municipality [D10].

Social guidance is given to the refugees with a residence permit by an organisation that also represents the interests of refugees at all levels of government [R9]. The organization is responsible for giving refugees information about the local society and to help them be able to be independently part of that society [D3].

Community Health Services offers information to refugees with a residence permit about the Dutch health care system and personal hygiene. Community Health Services makes sure that refugees know where to go when they need health care. The information is given by peer-educators. These peer-educators are newcomers themselves and give information to people from the same country of origin [R14]. But in municipality A the Community Health Services offers extra activities that are paid for by the municipality [R14]. Respondent 14 said that this is something special, other municipalities in the region do not offer those extra activities. An example of those extra activities is the psycho-social screening that Community Health Services does in municipality A. The aim of the psycho-social screening is to identify at an early stage whether refugees with a residence permit that are assigned to municipality A have psycho-social issues and therefore need help.

Housing corporations are involved as providers of places to live for refugees with a residence permit. Multiple housing projects are set up by housing corporations. These projects are meant to facilitate and stimulate integration by for example bringing refugees with a residence permit and students together. Refugees with a residence permit and students live in the same building and organize activities together [R11]. Housing corporations have therefore a bigger role than

the role of provider or places to live in municipality A.

There are a lot of opportunities to work somewhere and learn at the same time in municipality A [R1]. These opportunities are created by the municipality in collaboration with employers and educators. It was already possible before to work somewhere and learn certain skills and the Dutch language at the same time, but the trajectories were “intensified” when the current approach was designed and implemented [R1].

The municipality established a focus group that gives advice about the policy, how the policy is carried out and about the communication. The focus group consist of refugees that have been here for quite a while. The focus groups gives advice when they are asked to give it and when they are not asked to give it [D3].

#### 4.1.2 Municipality B

Municipality B is a medium-small municipality in the Netherlands. Municipality B offers refugees with a residence permit that are assigned to the municipality a bit more than housing and social guidance, like is the case in municipality A. Municipality B started with the current approach in 2016. An important trigger to start designing and implementing this approach was the placement of new centre for asylum seekers within the municipality in 2016.

##### The approach to the integration of refugees with a residence permit

In 2016-2017 the amount of refugees with a residence permit that had to be offered a house in municipality B was larger than in the years before. Together with different stakeholders the municipality managed to give the refugees with a residence permit a new home and the needed help to integrate into the society. The municipality decide to offer activities in a parallel manner and not subsequent. This was done in order to fasten and improve the integration of newcomers. The approach in municipality B is an integral approach that offers integration courses at the same time as other activities like sports, information sessions<sup>5</sup> and additional language courses among others [D12]. The approach is not only focused on economic integration, but also on social integration [R7]. The goal of the approach is to accomplish that refugees with a residence permit integrate quickly and effectively into the new home society and are able to participate as soon as possible [D12]. Participating through paid work would be best, but you can participate in many different ways [R7].

The first part of the approach begins when refugees who are assigned to the municipality still live at the centre for asylum seekers. It is part of a unique, regional approach called the ‘regional opportunity explorer’. A case manager works at the centre for asylum seekers as regional opportunity explorer and performs this function for the whole region [R7]. The aim is to gather information about the refugee when he or she is still at the centre for asylum seekers. The test is available in the native languages of the refugees and provides information about different areas of someone’s life [R7]. The results of that test are used to see what the chances of a person are and to make a development plan for that person specifically. The process of gathering information before someone moves to the municipality he or she is placed at saves time, offers refugees with a residence permit a perspective sooner and lessens the chance of information being lost because the information is given to the municipality directly by the regional opportunity explorer [D13].

The regional opportunity explorer hands a refugee with a residence permit that has been assigned to municipality B over to a director from the municipality [D13]. Three directors are employed at the municipality [R7]. The director is the contact person within the municipality for the newcomer(s) from the moment he, she or they get a place to live somewhere in the municipality and until the newcomer(s) are self-reliant [D13]. The director supports the new residents during the process towards integration and participation. After a refugee with a residence permit arrives at the municipality an intake is done. The intake is about among other prior work experience, education and skills. Information gathered within the centre for asylum seekers is added [D12].

Every newcomer gets social guidance for six months. Within municipality B the guidance is offered by a wellbeing organisation and its volunteers. These volunteers operate as coaches. Every refugee with a residence permit or a refugee family has one coach. During the period of six months the coach stays in touch with the contact person from the municipality [D13]. At the end of the six months the self-reliance of an individual is measured by the use of a specific instrument. If someone is not self-reliant enough after six months, the guidance can get extended by six months. A meeting is organized with the refugee, someone from the municipality and someone from the wellbeing organization when the guidance ends. During that meeting different topics are discussed and remaining questions are answered. After the meeting, the guidance is taken over by the municipality [D12].

The declaration of participation is part of the process within municipality B since January 2016. The declaration of participation is used as an instrument to inform newcomers about the basic principles of the Dutch society. The trajectory

<sup>5</sup> For example about money handling and the health care system.

surrounding the declaration of participation is carried out by a refugee advocacy organization [D12].

Six persons with a migration background themselves are trained by health experts to become so-called 'keypersons'. The keypersons know what it is like to be a refugee. Three of them are employed by the municipality and the other three are involved as volunteers [R7]. The keypersons offer newcomers information about health and the Dutch health care system, but they also offer help with stimulating newcomers to become active participants within society [R7]. The keypersons can help bring the different cultures together and understands the differences [D12; D13]. One of the keypersons used to be a doctor and often accompanies newcomers when they have to go to the hospital to help prevent miscommunication [R7].

The municipality wants to learn from experiences and change the approach when that is needed [R7]. One thing that the municipality learned along the way was that something extra was needed for refugees who are highly educated. Together with the refugees was tried to make the services offered by the municipality more suiting to that particular group of refugees as well [D12].

The policy is about starting as soon as possible, it is an integral approach and the policy is specifically made for the target group. "That is what makes it successful I think", said respondent 7.

### The results of the approach

The approach was evaluated in 2016 and 2017. The evaluation shows that more than half of the refugees with a residence permit either got a job, started with an education or got an internship. That means that more than half of the refugees with a residence permit was not dependent on social assistance anymore [D12; D13]. Every year the municipality gets a task to house a certain amount of refugees with a residence permit. Municipality B amply achieved the target over the past years [D12].

What is seen by the municipality as a compliment is the openness of refugees with a residence permit towards people who work for the municipality [R7]. "People are very open and dare to say what they want to say and know that they are listened to", said respondent 7. It is seen as a sign of trust.

### Who was involved?

Municipality B worked together with multiple organisations throughout the process of guidance, integration and participation. The municipality functions as director, facilitator and stimulator of collaboration between the different parties involved [D13]. A lot of organisations are active in the field of integration and offer services to refugees with a residence permit. The actions taken by the different organisations are not always in line with each other. The municipality made an overview of all the stakeholders that are involved in the integration and participation of refugees with a residence permit within the municipality to see what "a customer journey looks like" [R7]. The municipality had a conversation with the involved stakeholders to talk about streamlining the process of integration and participation. The aim was to make it a continuing process for the newcomer. Without one intake after another [R7]. Another reason for municipality B to involve stakeholders is to be able to offer activities in parallel and not subsequently [D13].

The organisations that are involved are wellbeing organisations, an employment agency, social organisations, refugee advocacy organisations, housing corporations, educational institutions, the library, gyms, associations, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, the Child and Family Centre and Community Health Services [D12; D13; R7].

The municipality collaborates at the beginning of the process with the people who work at the centre for asylum seekers [R7], the regional opportunity explorer is an example of that.

As mentioned before is the social guidance of newcomers done by a wellbeing organisation and its volunteers for at least six months [D12]. The organisation is asked to offer social guidance to a refugee with a residence permit as soon as a refugee with a residence permit is matched to municipality B. A coordinator from the wellbeing organisation coordinates a group of volunteers who offer the guidance to the newcomers [R15]. The volunteers help newcomers after their arrival with all sorts of practical things. The wellbeing organisation organizes consultation hours twice a week and helps refugees with family reunification [D12]. Sporting events are organized by the wellbeing organisation to show the new inhabitants of the municipality what sports facilities the municipality has to offer [D12]. Social services offers newcomers information about handling money and making sure everything is paid for [R7].

The Child and Family Centre helps refugees with a residence permit when they have questions or problems surrounding parenting. The municipality offers workshops about parenting and raising children in two different cultures in collaboration with the Centre for Youth and Family [R7].

The municipality helps refugees with a residence permit to find a job, the right education or another form of participation

in collaboration with the employment agency of the municipality. The employment agency is an executive agency of the municipality that carries out the tasks that are given to the municipality based on the Participation law [R8]. The aim of the employment agency is to help newcomers to become independent, self-reliant and not dependent on social benefits as soon as possible. From day one the focus is on doing something, being active [R8]. First an intake is done to see what the newcomer is capable of. A practical assessment of someone's skills is done if needed. A jobhunter gets to know the newcomer after the intake and tries to find the right education, internship or job for him or her, which can be difficult sometimes<sup>6</sup>. After a newcomer has found a place to work, a coach will come visit every month or every three months to see if everything is alright and to make sure that there is long term commitment on both the side of the new employee as the side of the employer [R8].

The employment agency has a broad package of services to offer besides helping newcomers find the right job, internship or education. The organization organizes trainings meant to train so-called employee skills, like accepting leadership and being on time. Newcomers can also apply for a training about entrepreneurship [R7]. The organization organizes approximately 10 different workshops that each take about twelve weeks. The Dutch culture is talked about in those workshops and company visits are part of the program as well [R8]. The employment agency offers language courses and helps newcomers with homework assignments they get during the integration courses [R7]. A language instructor is employed at the agency to further develop the language skills of refugees based on the language they need in the workplace. Respondent 7: "So really work oriented."

Two housing corporations helped the municipality find enough places to live for the refugees with a residence permit who were assigned to the municipality. One of the housing corporations would like to also contribute to the integration of newcomers besides offering newcomers a home [D12; R12]. This will be discussed later on.

Every refugee with a residence permit has to take an integration course. There are five organizations that offer integration courses within the municipality. Some newcomers decide to take their integration courses somewhere else outside of the municipality [D13]. Municipality B has made agreements with organizations that offer integration courses. The agreement made states that integration courses will be clustered to make it possible for newcomers to combine their integration lessons with other activities, like work or other forms of participation. The idea behind this is that it will fasten the integration of newcomers into the society [D12]. The directors of the municipality are in touch with people from the language institutions [R7], for example to discuss the progress that the newcomers make concerning their language skills [D12; D13].

The municipality collaborates with the library as well. The library offers language training for refugees with a residence permit every Thursday afternoon. Newcomers can learn the language in their own pace and choose the topics themselves. Newcomers can for example practice for a parent-teacher conference [R7; D13]. The municipality works together with an organisation that offers help to refugees who would like to get an education and are capable of getting that education. The municipality supports refugees with a residence permit that want to get an education. One important aspect is that the education has to contribute to a better position on the labour market for the individual [D12; D13].

The Community Health Services has established a team that offers advice to municipality on making an action plan focused on prevention, health care and health improvement of refugees with a residence permit. The municipality has organised information meetings for newcomers about health and the health care system, with support of the team of Community Health Services. The information meetings were appreciated by the participants [D12]. Municipality B is grateful for the work that is done by professionals and volunteers to help refugees with a residence permit to integrate into the society. The municipality is aware that the work is sometimes done under high pressure and difficult circumstances [D12].

#### 4.1.3 Municipality C

Municipality C has not designed and implemented an overall policy for the integration of refugees with a residence permit. Refugees with a residence permit are seen as one of multiple subgroups within society for whom the same policy applies<sup>7</sup> [R2; R3]. The municipality implemented, in collaboration with four other municipalities, an approach to help refugees with a residence permit to find a job, get back to school or to participate in the society in other ways. This approach is carried out by an executive agency that works for six municipalities within the region.

<sup>6</sup> The impossibility of finding a 100% match is what makes it difficult. So both the employer and the candidate need to be willing to make some concessions. Not every candidate is willing to make those concessions. One candidate was a lawyer in his country of origin and wants to be a lawyer here as well and nothing else. It is more difficult to find him a job than someone who wants to be a lawyer as well but is willing to start as administrative assistant at a law firm and work his way up from there [R8].

### The approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit

Municipality C has a legal obligation as well to offer a certain amount of refugees with a residence permit a place to live within the municipality. That was a challenge in 2016 but by the end of 2017 every newcomers that was assigned to municipality C was offered a home [D14]. Another obligation is organizing the trajectory surrounding the declaration of participation that every newcomer has to sign. In municipality C that trajectory is offered and organized by a refugee advocacy organization [D14], which is similar to the way it is organized in municipality B [D12]. Other forms of social guidance are offered by the refugee advocacy organization as well [R3].

The policy makers of municipality C noticed that it was quite difficult for newcomers to get a paid job. To many refugees with a residence permit were long term dependent on social benefits and were not able to communicate in Dutch well enough to participate in the society. That was one of the reasons for the municipality to start with an approach designed for the activation of newcomers [R3].

The approach of municipality C for the integration of newcomers is carried out by an executive agency. The executive agency is a so-called common arrangement set up by six municipalities within one region. The executive agency offers the services especially designed for refugees with a residence permit to refugees<sup>8</sup> for five of the six municipalities. The other municipality has designed an own approach for the target group [D14; R13; R16]. The action plan that is carried out by the executive agency is the same for all of the five municipalities. The approach is based on legislation and rules which are the same for each of the municipalities [R13].

The executive agency works with different groups. The customers of the agency are divided over the following groups: group A, group B, group C, a group for seniors, a group for young people and a group for refugees with a residence permit<sup>9</sup> [R13]. Group A consists of the clients that will probably be able to get a job within six months. One of the tools available for that group is a service point for employers. The service point does the communication with the employers and prepares clients for job interviews. Group B consists of clients that are a bit further away from getting a job and that need some more help to get there. Clients in group B might need an internship or another way of getting some more work experience before being able to get a paid job. Clients in group C are seen as not being able to find a paid job anytime soon. "Which does not mean that these clients are not able to grow", said respondent 13. Clients in group C can for example work as volunteers at a local association<sup>10</sup>.

When newcomers arrive they are placed in the group for refugees with a residence permit. There is a particular group of case managers that only works with refugees with a residence permit and focus on helping and activating that particular group [R13; R16]. The case managers have a case load of approximately 50 cases, which makes it possible to have an intensive approach and speak to the clients every one or two weeks. The newcomers are guided by one of the case managers for six months. The executive agency, for example, works together with employers to create trajectories in which newcomers can participate and integrate at the same time by learning the language while working and training certain skills [R13]. Two translators work for the executive agency. One translator speaks Arabic and the other translator speaks Tygrinya. If necessary, the case managers can ask for their help during conversations with newcomers [R16].

The goal of the approach in municipality C is to bring people a step closer to the labour market [R13]. Part of that goal is to get people activated, even if a paid job is still out of reach [R13]. The philosophy behind it is to get people towards a situation in which they are not reliant on social benefits anymore [R2; R3].

<sup>7</sup> The so-called participating arrangement can be seen as an example of this. Multiple groups within society with a minimum income can make use of this arrangement. The arrangement can be used to become member of an association, like a sports association, without having to pay for it. The arrangement is not just for newcomers, but newcomers can make use of it [R2].

<sup>8</sup> The executive agency sees a refugees with a residence permit as someone that has not finished the naturalization process yet. Besides refugees with a residence permit that arrived at one of the municipalities in 2016 and 2017 are there refugees with a residence permit in the caseload of case managers that arrived at one of the municipalities between 2013 and 2016. Some of them are officially no longer refugees with a residence permit because they completed the naturalization process. The executive agency wants to know more about this group and offer them help to become participating members of society [D15]. The municipalities still want to continue with the approach, also after the new national integration policy is implemented [R2].

<sup>9</sup> Refugees with a residence permit mostly ended up in group C before the approach specifically made for newcomers was implemented. Not being able to work for a period of time, a language barrier, and possible psychological problems can be named as reasons for that [D15].

<sup>10</sup> The case manager and the client set certain goals together when a client starts working as a volunteer. Volunteering somewhere is therefore not without certain commitments [R13].



After the six months a newcomer is transferred to one of the other groups that were mentioned before. The current case manager gives the newcomer an advice and gives the information of the newcomer to his or her new case manager [R16]. One concern mentioned by respondent 16 was that the newcomers are offered a lot of help and get a lot of attention during the first six months and end up at the bottom of the pile of their new case manager after those six months. That new case manager does not have 50 cases that he or she has to take care of but 350. It is important to keep investing time in refugees with a residence permit after the six months to help the group of newcomers that does not get a job within six months [R13].

### The results of the approach

The approach was first tested by the executive agency by the use of a pilot. The pilot was evaluated after the six months that the pilot took place. The evaluation showed that it is effective to design and implement an approach specifically for the target group [D14; D15]. 50 newcomers were part of the intensive approach tested by the use of the pilot. 90% of that group of newcomers was activated within those six months. They got one or multiple steps closer to the labour market by taking part in activities [D14]. The newcomers for example participated by doing an internship of having a part time job [D15].

One of the aims of the approach in municipality C is to get a certain amount of refugees with a residence permit a paid job [R13]. That is going really well, according to respondent 13. "Our results surpass the targets we have set actually". The same response was given by respondent 2 who said that the results exceed the targets that were set. "It is a success". "The approach meets the expectations", mentioned respondent 3.

The approach provides more beneficial results besides achieving the goals that were set. The approach has positive effects on society as a whole as well. Newcomers get to know people and improve their language skills by participating. The network surrounding newcomers enlarges by participating. This is beneficial for both the newcomers and for society [D15].

A remark needs to be made concerning the beforementioned positive results. A caseload of a case manager needs to be 50 or less for the intensive approach to work. "Then we are able to meet everyone once or twice a week. Or every two weeks.", said respondent 16. "Larger caseloads makes the intensive approach more difficult".

The approach that is used to activate newcomers within municipality C that is carried out by the executive agency is working really well. But the municipality is not satisfied with the overall integration of newcomers within the municipality. The policy makers of municipality C are therefore very happy with the new national policy that will give them more opportunities to help newcomers during the integration process [R3].

### Who are involved

Three different kinds of organizations are involved in municipality C at the moment. One refugee advocacy organization is responsible for the social guidance of newcomers and offers the trajectory surrounding the declaration of participation [D14]. The refugee advocacy organization is the most important external partner when it comes to integration for municipality C [R3].

The design and execution of the approach of municipality C to stimulate participation and integration of refugees with a residence permit is done by and in collaboration with the executive agency that offers services to refugees with a residence permit [D14; R3]. Five municipalities gave the executive agency an assignment. That assignment was to implement an approach to help refugees with a residence permit find a job or guide them towards another form of participation. The executive agency was already responsible for the granting of social benefits and the re-integration of clients [R13]. The executive agency itself decides how the organization carries out its tasks. So the municipalities decide what needs to be done and the organisation decides how that is going to be done [R13]. The approach was prolonged after the pilot was done and the executive agency has a formal assignment to provide services to newcomers at this moment. The executive agency itself collaborates with a refugee advocacy organization, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, employers and, if necessary, other organisations that offer services concerning for example health care [D15].

The third kind of organizations are housing corporations. Housing corporations are involved in the beginning when refugees with a residence permit need to be offered a place to live [D14].

Municipality C contacts and is contacted by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers every now and then. The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers sends the municipality information about the refugee when he or she is assigned to the municipality. The municipality sends a refugee with a residence permit an invitation to come take a

look at a house and to sign the rental agreement. Employees of the municipality sometimes call to the Centre for Asylum Seekers when there are questions surrounding a newcomer or when certain pieces of information are unclear. Contacting each other does not happen on a regular basis [R3].

Language and integration institutions are not involved in the policy process of municipality C at the moment. Newcomers decide themselves where they want to take language and other integration courses. After 2021 the municipality will be responsible again for arranging the integration courses, but there is no collaboration between municipality C and integration institutes at the moment [R3].

## 4.2 EMPIRICAL RESULTS

This second section of this chapter is not about each municipality separately but about the empirical results found in general. This choice is made because the research is about whether and how stakeholder involvement can contribute to policy effectiveness in general and not about a comparison between three different municipalities. First will be discussed what the beforementioned results of the approaches and the perceptions of the respondents say about the effectiveness of the policies. That is followed by the empirical results found on stakeholder involvement. Thereafter the empirical results on the effect of stakeholder involvement on policy effectiveness are shown.

### 4.2.1 Policy effectiveness

The results of the approaches show that all three approaches accomplished the goals that were set or even exceeded the targets. There are of course still improvements possible, but the approaches are each able to achieve what they are designed for. To what extent can the effectiveness of the policies in municipality A, B and C be explained by the involvement of stakeholders in this policy process?

Besides analysing the results of the policies to assess the level of effectiveness of the policies of the three municipalities were the respondents asked what their perception is of the effectiveness of the policies. Respondent 11 is enthusiastic about the approach of municipality A. "It goes well", said respondent 11. Respondent 18 is of the opinion that the people who work at the municipality do their job really well. Respondent 4: "They [the municipality] have won prizes and it works doesn't it". Respondent 4 mentioned the social cost-benefit analysis that is done in 2016 and that the analysis showed that the policy seems to work. "It had an effect".

Respondent 17 believes that the approach of municipality B is effective. He mentioned that it is important to make sure that a refugee with a residence permit has something to do. Another important aspect, according to respondent 17, is the combination of learning the language and other activities. Respondent 8 perceives the policy to be very effective. One of the reasons is the possibility for refinement of the policy. The approach could be made more effective by regularly evaluating together what goes well and what needs to be changed, said respondent 8. "We are doing well", said respondent 8. "The policy is effective, absolutely", was the response of respondent 7. The municipality knows the newcomers and a lot of people are guided towards education, a place to get more work experience or a job [R7]. "But", she said, "there is still room for improvement".

Respondent 16 would say that the approach of municipality C is effective. The way he performs his job as executive contributes to the goal that the approach is made for to achieve. Making someone self-reliant is both the goal that respondent 16 aims for to achieve and the goal that the approach aims for to achieve [R16].

Both respondent 4 and respondent 14 mentioned that it might be difficult to assess the effectiveness of a policy like the approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit. It can be difficult to assess whether a certain policy is effective [R4]. Respondent 4 works for an organization that offers help to refugees who would like to get an education in the Netherlands and offers employment services. The organization does not know what happens with someone after he or she is not a client of the organization anymore [R4]. That makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the approach. Not all the needed information to make that assessment is available.

"Whether it is effective depends on the goal", said respondent 14. "That is difficult to identify". The respondent thinks that the approach is effective if you look at the way in which different actors collaborate and together make sure that newcomers get a place to live, get guidance towards work and receive the information they need [R14]. Whether an approach is effective should be analysed based on numbers and figures on the one hand and the opinion of the refugees with a residence permit themselves on the other, argued respondent 14. Respondent 14 asked me about the goal of the approach, how I assess the effectiveness of the policy. I told the respondent about the goal of the municipality, to which respondent 14 replied that in her opinion the municipality indeed achieves that goal.

Another way to assess the effectiveness of a certain policy is by looking at whether the policy was implemented in the same way as it was designed (Compton & 't Hart, 2018; Marsh & McConnell, 2010). The respondents working for the municipalities were therefore asked whether the policy was implemented as it was designed. Respondent 1 said that the policy was exactly implemented as it was designed in municipality A. The policy was implemented as designed in municipality B as well. “Because the approach was designed in collaboration it was possible to implement it as it was designed”, said respondent 8. The approach was further developed over time [R8]. The approach was first tested in municipality C and when it turned out to be working it was prolonged [R13; D15]. No big changes have been made since then. What did change are the opportunities that were developed in collaboration with for example employers to create certain projects together [R13].

The quote of respondent 8 touches upon the next topic, which is stakeholder involvement. In that quote stakeholder involvement is linked to being able to implement a policy as it is designed. More information about stakeholder involvement and other links made between stakeholder involvement and policy effectiveness will be discussed in the following sections.

#### 4.2.2 Stakeholder involvement

Multiple questions were asked about stakeholder involvement in the policy process surrounding integration policies in municipality A, B and C. In this section the results are given about which stakeholders are needed to ensure effective integration policies, why different stakeholders are involved in the policy process, and about the roles that the municipality and that the stakeholders have within the policy process.

##### Which stakeholders are needed

Respondents were asked which stakeholders are needed to ensure effective integration policies at the local level in their opinion. Figure 2 shows the stakeholders that were mentioned. The list of needed stakeholders to ensure effective integration policies at the local level is similar to the list of the stakeholders that are involved at this moment in municipality A and B [R1; R7]. Policy makers in municipality C are currently examining which stakeholders should be involved in the policy process surrounding integration policies once the new national policy is implemented and certain tasks surrounding the integration process are given to the municipality [R2; R3].

Stakeholders that are needed to ensure effective integration policies at the local level according to the respondents	(Different departments of) the municipality
	Educational institutions and language institutions
	Employers and/ or employers' organizations
	Wellbeings organizations
	An actor that finances the policy
	An actor that brings all the needed actors together
	Housing corporations
	Employment services
	Health institutions, for example Community Health Services
	Reintegration agencies

Figure 2: Overview of stakeholders that are needed to ensure effective integration policies at the local level according to the respondents

##### Why the different stakeholders are involved in the policy process

Multiple reasons were named for involving stakeholders in the policy process surrounding local integration policies in the Netherlands. One or multiple examples are given for each reason that is mentioned. More examples can be found in Appendix 7. Both stakeholders and policy makers were asked why stakeholders are involved in the policy process. Reasons both from the perspective of the municipality and from the perspective of the other stakeholders are included.

Respondent 1 said that it is useful to involve certain organisations because of *the expertise that the organisations have that the municipality does not have*. The municipality is not knowledgeable in every field. “It is useful to involve organizations that are experts on certain specific domains that can do the work, under the direction of the case manager”. According to respondent 9 can the knowledge offered to the municipality by organisations with certain expertise concerning for example the target group only result in better policies. Certain organizations have years of experience that the municipality can learn from [R9; R17].

Besides knowledge and expertise can *certain resources or services be needed that the municipality itself does not own*. “The municipality is responsible for accommodating refugees with a residence permit. But the municipality does not own

houses, we do and we can build”, said respondent 11. The municipality asked housing corporations for help to find a place to live for every newcomer that was assigned to the municipality because, as respondent 11 mentioned, the municipality does not own houses. Some stakeholders are involved because they offer the services or products needed to carry out the policy. Examples of this are employment services [R8; R13; R16], quality assessment tools [R18], and health care services [R14]. *The need for certain resources or services* is therefore a reason for stakeholder involvement.

Involving the different stakeholders that offer services or products to refugees with a residence permit into the policy process offers municipalities the opportunity to combine those activities and other initiatives into one continuous process. *That makes the process itself more clear and organized*. Respondent 2: “They [refugees with a residence permit] have to deal with so many different organisations that they do not see the wood for the trees and have difficulty understanding everything that is happening as well”. Bringing the different organizations together to make a continuous integration process offers more clarity.

One reason for organisations to want to be involved in the policy process is that *it can help the organization to achieve its goal*. One of the refugee advocacy organizations that is involved in the policy process at the local level believes in the talent of refugees and is of the opinion that their knowledge and skills should be used. The aim of the organization is making sure that refugees are able to get a job on the for them right level and in the right field so that they eventually be able to be self-reliant [R4]. The organizations collaborates among others with municipalities to pave the way for the professional development of refugees and by doing so accomplishing one of the goals of the organization [D1; D10].

Organizations want to be involved in the policy process because of *the opportunities for interest representation involvement gives*. One organization wants to make sure that policy makers know how important it is to offer newcomers the opportunity to get an education in order to participate at the for them right level afterwards [R4]. Another respondent mentioned that it is important to make sure that the municipality takes someone’s personal situation in consideration [R9]. By being involved these interests can be discussed with policy makers.

Some organizations or individuals want to be involved in the policy process because of what he, she or the organization *stands for and believes in*. Respondent 12 mentioned that quite a lot of refugees with a residence permit are dependent on social benefits. “We are of the opinion that we need to get them out of that situation together”, said both respondent 11 and 12. Respondent 12: “so that they can participate in society properly”. This is connected to another reason to be willing to be involved in the policy process, namely *the influence of the integration of newcomers on the daily activities of the organization*. Respondent 11 and 12 both work for an organization that takes care of the viability of a certain place or neighbourhood. People get opportunities to participate when they are better integrated, speak the language better and are therefore able to participate [R11]. Both respondent 11 and 12 mention the positive effect of participation on the viability of a neighbourhood. Therefore is the level of integration of refugees with a residence permit important for the work that their organizations do.

One last reason for wanting stakeholders to be involved in the policy process is that certain *organizations can detect signals and see things that the municipality or other organizations surrounding refugees with a residence permit cannot detect or see* [R11; R12; R15; R17]. Some organizations have a better perspective on what is going on in a certain someone’s life, in a family or in a neighbourhood compared to the perspective of the municipality. “We can help the municipality with our insights and knowledge to decide what should be done and when that should be done”, said respondent 15. People who work for a housing corporation enter someone’s home when something is broken, teachers know when someone does not show up for class [R11; R12; R17]. This makes educational institutes, wellbeing organization, health care institutes and housing corporations, among others, important actors in the field of integration and important partners for the municipality.

### Arrangements, contracts and agreements between municipalities and stakeholders

Multiple arrangements can be made between the municipality and stakeholders when it comes to stakeholder involvement. Two of the possible arrangements that were mentioned during the semi-structured interviews were *subsidy arrangements and buying agreements* [R1; R7; R9]. Some involved stakeholder receive subsidies in return for certain services or products [R1; R3; R9; R11; R15]. Other stakeholder sell their services or products to the municipality based on a so-called buying agreement, possibly after a tender process [R1; R7; R9; R17]. Respondent 1 said that it maybe should not be called a tender process, but that is what it is. An example of a buying agreement was mentioned by respondent 17. The organisation that respondent 17 works for was chosen after a tender process to provide a specific service for multiple municipalities [R17].

A housing corporation receives *subsidies* from the municipality in return for housing a certain amount of refugees with a residence permit. Some of the housing projects have a duration that is too short in order for the housing corporation to earn back the investment the organization made. The housing corporation is therefore compensated by the municipality

[R11]. Respondent 15 said that the organization she works for receives funding to fulfil the assignment given by the municipality. It is possible, said respondent 15, to ask for additional funding if the organization wants to offer more services to newcomers than was agreed upon before [R15]. Organizations that receive subsidies can be asked to report back to the municipality as part of the formal agreement [R3].

In municipality A the arrangements made between the municipality and involved stakeholders are always written down in *contracts*. There is always someone who gives the assignment and someone who carries out the assignment. The covenant in which the agreements between the municipality and 27 partners are written down [D4; R18] can be seen as an example of this. The aim is to structure the arrangements in a way like you are dancing with a partner, said respondent 1. The municipality always asks partners to give their opinion. It is not just handing over work that needs to be done within a certain amount of time [R1]. One of the examples of a contract between the municipality and a stakeholder are the renting contracts for housing corporations. Housing corporations in municipality A can rent a piece of land for a certain project for refugees with a residence permit for a lower amount of money than usual because the organization is carrying out a task for the municipality [R11]. Certain agreements are part of that contract, for example the agreement that a certain amount of houses or apartments that are build or created as part of a certain project are available for newcomers. The municipality decides who gets the apartment or house of someone who is moving out [R11].

The other two municipalities make use of contracts as well [R3; R7; R15; R17]. Agreements made are written down in those contracts. Respondent 15: “So it is basically said you get a x amount of money and for that amount of money you have to offer a trajectory to a x amount of refugees with a residence permit. That is our regular contract so to say. Our agreement.”

Different *agreements* can be made between a municipality and a stakeholder. Agreements can be made both at the beginning and during the time that a stakeholder is involved. Changing the agreements can be done for example after a certain project expires and a new one starts or after an evaluation of an approach or project [R13; R15]. The agreements can be made because of different reasons as well. Sometimes the agreements between the municipality and a stakeholder are made because of a certain law. Housing corporations for example have to let the municipality know what their plans are for the upcoming year because of the Housing Law. Agreements are made between the municipality and the housing corporations are based on those plans. Among those agreements are agreements about the housing of refugees with a residence permit [R12]. Respondent 11 said that it is important to make certain agreements. A house for example is a valuable object. The granting of a house should therefore be based on objective rules, not on subjective measures [R11].

Some of the stakeholders are organizations that are a part or section of the municipality, for example certain departments of the municipality and executive agencies of the municipality [R7; R8; R14]. Being an employee of a department of the municipality makes communicating with the other departments if needed very easy [R14]. Respondent 14 works for the organization that is part of the municipality and knows who to contact when. Agreements are made between the departments about what is needed and when it is needed [R14]. An example of this is making sure that there are enough doctors available to receive new patients in the area where a new housing project for newcomers opens [R14].

Respondent 8 mentioned that the organization had a buying agreement with the municipality before. At that time the organization got an assignment that the organization needed to carry out. There was not a lot of room for discussion or making agreements. At this moment the organization is able to work together with the municipality. It is more about deciding together what is needed, said respondent 8. The organization and the municipality are working together more often and collaborating based on trust [R8].

Besides the formal aspects of the relationships between municipalities and stakeholders like contracts and other written agreements do the relationships also have informal aspects. The municipalities and the stakeholders communicate with each other in informal ways as well. Finetuning, making little change are done in collaboration without needing a contract to make that happen, said respondent 3. “That is done as part of your relationship”.

### The role of the municipality in the policy process

The municipality is responsible for making and implementing policies, like in this case integration policies [R13]. The municipality has certain tasks based on the responsibilities [D11; D14; R11] that were mentioned before in the section about the context of this research. Examples of these responsibilities are the housing of refugees with a residence permit that were assigned to the municipality and offering a trajectory surrounding the declaration of participation.

When asked what kind of role the municipality has, is ‘a directing role’ an answer that given multiple times [R1; R7; R8; R11; R12; R13; R17]. “And they are taking that role”, said respondent 11. According to respondent 8 and 12 is the municipality the right actor to take the role of director. Municipalities would like to have the opportunities to take on that

role even more [R7; D4; D5]. As respondent 7 said, a municipality can offer tailor-made approaches or solutions to refugees with a residence permit when the municipality is the director of the integration process. It gives the municipality the opportunity to bring the different activities together and create a more continuous process. “At this moment it is way to fragmented”, said respondent 7. That directing role of the municipality was also mentioned in policy documents issued by the municipalities [D4; D5; D6; D11; D13]. In document 6 it is mentioned that Municipality A does not have a formal directing role, but is trying to guide both newcomers and the whole process.

Municipality B tries to be the director of the process and to facilitate and stimulate collaboration between the parties involved [D13]. *The role of connector* is another role that was mentioned during the interviews. Municipality B made an overview of all the actors that are involved in the integration and participation process of a refugee with a residence permit. It is important for municipality B to bring those actors together and form one process together. In that process every actor should be given the opportunity to fulfil its own role and every actor should take responsibility for that role [R7].

Another role that can be assigned to the municipality is *the role of investor* in this process. Respondent 1 mentioned that the government of the municipality did some sound investments in the approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit. This offers opportunities for extra activities for newcomers to fasten the integration [R14].

Municipality A offers *integration activities itself* as well. The municipality offers multiple job opportunities in for example the hospitality industry or as forklift operator through trajectories. Part of the trajectories is carried out by the municipality and a part of it is carried out by people from organizations that the municipality hires [R1]. One last role that I would like to mention is *the role of gatekeeper* of the integration process. “A lot of organizations want to collaborate with the municipality because they have nice product and want to make money with it”, said respondent 1. It is up to the municipality to decide whether the municipality could use that product or not [R1]. Respondent 14: “Every organization can of course decide itself to do something. Not including the municipality. That is of course allowed. But if you talk about buying agreements so to say, than it is of course the municipality that decides about the procurement.”. The municipality can decide about who will be involved in the policy process [R1; R14] and give demands about how a certain assignment should be carried out [R14]. The municipality is ultimately responsible and is the one to take the decisions [R9].

### The role of stakeholders within the policy process

The roles that were mostly mentioned during the interviews were the role of executive organization and the role of advisor. Other roles of stakeholders within the policy process that were mentioned are the role of advocator, the role of facilitator and the role of connector.

All of the organizations that are involved as stakeholder in the policy process and took part in this research *carry out one or multiple pieces of the integration policy in one or in multiple municipalities* [R1; R4; R5; R6; R7; R8; R9; R11; R12; R13; R14; R15; R16; R17; R18]. The assignments that the organizations carry out vary greatly but all have to do with the integration and/or participation of refugees with a residence permit. The obligations range from making sure there are enough houses available [R11; R12], to making sure there are enough doctors available [R14], to helping newcomers find a job or an education [R4; R5; R8; R13; R16] and to making sure that newcomers can find their way in society [R9; R15]. Contracts and other written agreements are used to clarify what the executive organizations on the one hand and the municipalities on the other expect from each other [R1; R7; R13; D4; D11].

Beside a role as executive organization can organizations have a *role as advisor* as well within the policy process. Stakeholders are asked their advice based on their expertise or their experiential knowledge. Moments at which policy makers include stakeholders as advisor are, for example, when a policy is evaluated or when a new policy is made [R7]. Stakeholders are, on average, willing to participate as advisor in the policy process [R7]. Twelve respondents said that stakeholders are able and get the opportunity to give advice to the municipality. Two respondents said they have not given advice to the municipality and one respondent was not really clear about this topic.

Some of the stakeholders have worked with the target group for over decades [R17] and are therefore asked by the municipality to give their advice. Both policy makers of municipality B and C talk multiple times a year with the organization that takes care of the social guidance of newcomers in that municipality. In those meetings are the results and plans for the future that the organization formulated talked about [R3; R15]. Together is discussed what is needed and how that is going to be established [R15]. Respondent 18 pointed out that her organization is most of the time part of the selection of stakeholders that gets consulted by the municipality [R18]. Respondent 18: “The documents that need to be signed [by the parties involved] are first send around with the question whether it would work for the stakeholders. Are there things we [the municipality] need to change. Along the way a version is arrived at that we can all sign”. Respondent 17 said that he used to have a seat at the table more often before. Now respondent 17 gets asked to join a

policy meeting every now and then, based on the subject of that meeting.

A third role that stakeholders can play is the role of *representative*. Some advocacy organizations are involved as both representative and as an organization that carries out a specific part of the policy [R4; R5; R9]. The advocacy organizations inform the organization when a policy does not work well in a certain situation [R9] and try to do something about it. The advocacy organizations represent the interests of the refugees with a residence permit both at an individual and at a more general level [R4; R9]. That depends on the situation [R4]. “Municipalities, like municipality A, are in general open for it. The municipality has refugees best interests at heart”, said respondent 9. Municipalities listen to what her organization has to say [R9].

The last two roles that stakeholders can take on are the roles of *connector* and *facilitator*. Respondent 11 talked about the ways in which his organization tries to connect the different organizations that offer services to newcomers. One example of that are the offices and other spaces that are available to other organizations in the building where the organization that respondent 11 works for houses refugees with a residence permit [R11]. This makes collaboration and communication between the different organizations easier. The purpose behind facilitating rooms for other organizations to work from is that it makes it easier for refugees with a residence permit to make an appointment with those organizations [R11]. It makes referring tenants to the right organization if needed easier [R11].

What is important is for the municipality to see what role a certain organization or stakeholder could have within the policy process. Some organizations are able to do more than what is asked of them at the moment [D12; R3; R12; R17]. This will be further discussed later on in this chapter.

Does the role that stakeholders have offer them influence on the content of the policy? There is not one answer to be given to this question. Some respondents said yes that is possible, other said yes but under certain circumstances, others said yes but indirectly and one respondent said that his organization is trying to get influence but is not able to have influence on the content of the policy yet. The four different answers are shortly discussed here.

“Yes that is possible, you can have influence for sure”, replied respondent 11. “I think that the municipality likes that”. Multiple respondents stated that they are able to share their thoughts with the municipality [R8; R11; R13; R14; R15; R18]. One example was mentioned by respondent 11. Before housing corporations were not allowed to select tenants based on for example motivation. One of the housing corporations used a pilot to see whether selecting tenants based on motivation would have the desired effect. It did. Based on that pilot and the results are housing corporations now allowed to select tenants based on motivation under certain circumstances. Rules for using selection based on motivation are now part of the policy of the municipality, thanks to one of the stakeholders [R11]. Some stakeholders are asked their opinion and can make, in their opinion necessary, changes to documents made by the municipality [R18]. The organization that respondent 18 works for was co-developer of a certain instrument for quality assessment as was mentioned before. Respondent 18: “They [the municipality] are really happy with it and therefore really willing to listen to us”. Respondent 8 made the remark that it is not always necessary to create new policy or change the existing one once the organization as stakeholder sees that something needs attention. Sometimes you just need to come together and see what can be done within the already existing frameworks of policy. Looking for possibilities does not always end up in new policy or a policy change [R8].

Sometimes stakeholders have influence on policies through umbrella organisations [R11]. This is beneficial for municipalities, because then the municipality only has to speak to one person who represents the multiple firms of a certain branch. This is not always beneficial for an organization itself because sometimes you want to make your own decisions. Not in collaboration with the other firms in the same branch [R11].

Respondent 7 and 9 said that stakeholders can have influence on the content of the policy, but with some side notes. One side note is that it is the city council that makes the decisions in the end [R7]. But if it is up to respondent 7 will decisions only be presented to the city council if the decisions are supported by the partners. Side notes that were mentioned by respondent 9 are the colour of the coalition of a municipality and the possibilities that there are financially. Not every municipality can offer the same [R9]. What influence you can have and what you can establish as stakeholder is therefore dependent on the opinions of the city council, the opinions of the coalition of the municipality and the possibilities that the municipality has.

Respondent 1 and 3 said that stakeholders can have an influence on the content of a policy, but indirectly. Policy makers take the information that they receive from stakeholders in consideration [R3]. Smart solutions or ideas that are developed by stakeholders that carry out the policy will be implemented in the policy of the municipality [R1]. “But”, as respondent 3 said, “we write our policies and they [a stakeholder] are a cooperation partner”.

Respondent 12 said that his organization is trying to get influence on the integration policy of the municipality. He is of

the opinion that his organization is not being involved enough by the municipality.

#### 4.2.3 Stakeholder involvement and policy effectiveness

This section is about the contribution of stakeholder involvement to policy effectiveness as perceived by the respondents. One respondent called it stating the obvious when the question was asked whether stakeholder involvement in the policy process contributes to policy effectiveness [R14]. First the results are given on the three aspects of stakeholder involvement that were studied. Thereafter are the results on the overall opinion of respondents about the contribution of stakeholder involvement to policy effectiveness shown.

##### Process inclusivity

Process inclusivity is about the representation and inclusion of different interests in the policy process (Compton et al., 2018). Choices surrounding process inclusivity that policy designers have to make are the amount of stakeholders that will be involved, the degree of involvement and the stage at which the stakeholders are involved (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016 in Compton et al., 2018). These are choices that were made by policy makers in municipality A, B and C.

A different *amount of stakeholders* is involved in the different municipalities. This makes sense because of the difference in size of the municipalities and the difference in the amount of organizations that offer services that are related to integration and participation of refugees with a residence permit. Over thirty stakeholders are involved in municipality A. The stakeholders all offer services or tools that have something to do with the integration and participation of newcomers. Around ten different kinds of organizations are involved in municipality B. Multiple organizations of the same kind, like language institutions, can be involved [D12, R7]. The policy makers of municipality C told me that they are currently analysing which stakeholders should be involved and are needed when the new national policy will be implemented in 2021. Three kinds of external organizations are involved at the moment<sup>11</sup>.

The different stakeholders are involved to a *different degree*. Some organizations have made agreements with the municipality about their assignment and carry out that specific assignment. Other organizations that are responsible for the execution of one or multiple aspects of the integration policy are also involved in the evaluation stage of the policy program. This offers stakeholders the opportunity to tell the municipality what works and what does not work. Some organizations were already involved at the beginning of the policy process and were able to give their opinion about the policy before the municipality decided to implement it. What influences the degree of involvement seems to be the amount of contact that the stakeholder has with the municipality, whether the stakeholder has a position close to or within the municipality, the importance of the role that the stakeholder has within the integration process and for how long the stakeholder has been in contact or working together with the municipality.

Stakeholders can be involved at *different stages of the policy process*. Some of the stakeholders played a role as *agenda setter*. Advocacy organization try to put problems concerning the integration policy for certain groups of refugees with a residence permit on the agenda of the municipality [R4; R9]. A housing corporation was not only able to put a certain topic on the agenda of the municipality, that topic ended up as a specific part of the housing regulation of the municipality [R11]. This shows that stakeholders really can have influence on the policy of the municipality.

Some of the stakeholders that are involved are a department of the municipality or an executive agency of the municipality [R8; R13; R14]. Those stakeholders were already asked about their opinion during *the preparation stage of the policy*. Other stakeholders did not mention that they were involved at this stage of the policy process.

The *decisions* within the policy process are made by the municipality. None of the respondents mentioned that anyone besides people who work for the municipality were involved in the decision-making stage of the policy process.

The involved stakeholders that were interviewed were mainly involved in the second part of the policy process. All of the stakeholders that I have spoken to are involved in the implementation phase. The different organizations all carry out a specific part of the integration policy of the municipality.

Half of the respondents said that stakeholders are involved at the evaluation stage [R7; R8; R11; R13; R14; R15; R16; R17; R18]. The opinions of the stakeholders are asked about what works and what does not work. Stakeholders get the

<sup>11</sup> The policy makers of municipality A and B were asked whether it is difficult to work together with a certain amount of stakeholders. Respondent 1 said that it is not difficult for municipality to work together with many different stakeholders. "The municipality is capable of working together with many different organizations", said respondent 1. Respondent 7 said that it can be difficult and can cause certain tensions. These tensions are discussed in the next section. Respondent 7 used the following quote: "By yourself you are faster, but together you will make more progression".



opportunity to tell the policy makers what could be changed and how that could be changed. That information is used as feedback at the feedback stage of the policy process. The feedback is used by the policy makers to make a new policy or make policy changes.

So, stakeholders in municipality A, B and C can be involved at different stages of the policy process, but most stakeholders are mainly involved at the implementation stage.

Respondent 11 mentioned that it is important to keep in mind when a certain policy issue is of concern to your organization and when it is not. You need to be careful not to be and not to want to be involved at the beginning of every policy process that maybe has something to do with the work the organization does [R11]. It is about finding the right balance between the moments that you as an organization should be involved and the moments that it is not really of the organizations concern [R11]. Something similar was mentioned by respondent 5. You have to be careful with wanting to be involved when the decisions are made, it needs to be possible, relevant and useful [R5].

Another aspect of process inclusivity that was asked about during the interviews was *the access to the policy process*. Not every organization has the same access to the policy process. Some of the stakeholders are departments or executive agencies of the municipality itself. For those stakeholders it is quite easy to get access to a certain policy process if the subject of that policy process matches with what the department or executive agency is responsible for [R8;R14]. It can be a bit more difficult for other organizations to get access to the policy process.

First is looked at the way in which stakeholders got involved. The stakeholders that were interviewed got involved in the approaches to the housing and integration of newcomers mostly by offering services to refugees with a residence permit already or by already offering services to other groups within society that were going to be offered to newcomers specifically as well [R4; R5; R8; R11; R12; R13; R14; R15; R17]. Some organizations were already involved in other policy processes and were therefore already connected to the municipality and asked for the policy process surrounding the integration policy as well [R1]. Sometimes organizations come to the municipality to ask whether their services could be of use and sometimes the municipality asks whether organizations can offer certain services [R1; R7]. Another way of getting involved is by applying for a subsidy scheme arranged by the municipality for the delivery of certain products or services [R1].

27 stakeholders in municipality A are involved in the approach to the integration of refugees with a residence permit by having signed and being a part of a covenant [R4; R18]. One of the organizations that is represented within this research is not only involved as partner of the covenant but also because the organization created a specific tool for ensuring quality of offered services together with two other organizations [R18]. One last way that was mentioned as way of getting involved was through membership of a certain team. Municipality A has a coordination team that consists of members of different departments of the municipality. One stakeholder was involved, next to other reasons, by being part of that coordination team and discussing the matter within that team [R14].

Some of the respondents gave their opinion on the inclusivity of the policy process. Respondent 15 is of the opinion that it is easy for her organization to get included in the policy process. She does not know whether that is the case for other organizations as well [R15]. Respondent 18 has a very different opinion. The municipality is of the opinion that the municipality makes its own policy, in her view [R18]. The municipality is willing to create a task force for, for example, the privacy law. That task force will give advice to the municipality. "That happens", said respondent 18. But generally the municipality makes the policy itself [R18]. Respondent 7 is of the opinion that the policy process is inclusive. "It is dynamic as well". It is not set in stone, but able to be changed [R7]. It needs to be, according to respondent 7. "If you set it in stone it will not work". There has to be room for changes to be made, for example when stakeholders tell that something does not work.

The municipality needs certain organizations because it does not have all the services or products that are needed for the integration of newcomers itself [R1; R11]. That is one of the reasons that makes the local integration policy process relatively inclusive. The municipality is not an executive agency and has to contract partners to carry out the policy. It is the municipality that decides who is included in the process [R14].

### Diversity of perspectives

The respondents were asked *whether the different organizations that are involved sometimes have different perspectives on what should be done, what is important or what is needed with regard to the integration of refugees with a residence permit*. The opinions about the subject of differences of perspectives were divided. Some respondents are of the opinion that there are no differences in perspectives between the different organizations that are involved [R1; R17]. According to respondents 1 and 17 are all the involved stakeholders on the same page. "That is very pleasant", said respondent 17.

Other respondents are of the opinion that different stakeholders can have different perspectives on certain issues or different insights [R7; R8; R9; R11; R12; R13; R15; R16; R18]. “Everyone has his or her own vision”, said respondent 7. Which makes sense, because every stakeholder has a different assignment to fulfil [R7]. Multiple examples of situations in which different stakeholders had different opinions based on the difference in perspectives were given by the respondents. Multiple examples are mentioned in this section, the other examples that were mentioned can be found in Appendix 7.

The difference between the approach of the volunteers of the refugee advocacy organizations and other stakeholders was mentioned multiple times [R7; R8; R13; R16]. The volunteers of refugee advocacy organizations and other stakeholders are not always on the same page [R8]. The reason for this difference, according to the respondents, is that the volunteers of that specific kind of organization want to take care of the refugees with a residence permit and take them by the hand. First taking the time to settle, then start with the naturalization process and then start with activities surrounding further integration and participation. Other stakeholders do not agree with that approach and want to make sure that the newcomers are self-reliant as soon as possible. Newcomers should not wait too long before starting with activities surrounding integration and participation [R7; R8; R13; R16]. This is an example of how differences in interests and assignments of organizations can result in different perspectives on what is important and what needs to happen.

Respondent 11 gave the example of a boy that was not behaving well at one of the complexes where refugees with a residence permit live. The housing corporation wanted the boy to leave the complex. The municipality was of the opinion that he should stay as long as he was not convicted. The two parties discussed the matter and listened to each other. They agreed to disagree. The housing corporation was the one to make the call and the boy had to leave the complex in the end. The two parties decided to at least help the boy as well as possible [R11]. A compromise was made. Other differences in perspectives can be about methods that should be used [R14], or to which municipality certain refugees with a residence permit should be assigned [R9]. One last issue that different stakeholders think differently about is whether someone should take a certain job that is available or first get either an education or wait for another job opportunity [R1; R4; R5; R8; R18].

Sometimes it is not just about opinions and perspectives but about possibilities. Respondent 13 gave the example of language institutes that are willing to organize the language courses for example in the evenings so the refugees with a residence permit can work or do other activities during the day. But the language institutes need a certain amount of students that want to have class at a certain time to be able to organize courses at that specific time [R13]. “Sometimes we have a certain wish that cannot be fulfilled”, said respondent 13.

The differences in perspectives can have a positive effect on the overall process. “As long as you listen to it”, mentioned respondent 7. You have to be open to the different opinions and perspectives. “This can be quite difficult”, said respondent 7, “because you look at it from your own perspective and look at things in a not objective way”. In order to benefit from the different perspectives you have to look at things from someone else’s perspective and analyse which elements of their viewpoint could be added to the approach or to the way you look at things yourself. Respondent 7: “That will bring you closer together”. Knowing each other and trusting each other has something to do with it as well, according to respondent 8. “Daring to let go and respect that someone else can do the task well as well”. “Different thoughts can be very welcome”, said respondent 13. “It is a good idea to let different people think along during such a process. But I do think that it is important that the municipality has the directing role and guides the process. But I do think that you should especially involve other parties.”

Sometimes it can be a bit unclear whether there are differences in perspectives and what the opinions of other stakeholders are [R15]. Not all the stakeholders that are involved in the different policy processes of the three municipalities communicate with each other. The lack of contact between certain stakeholders has the consequence that the stakeholders do not know what the perspective or opinion of the other stakeholder is [R15]. What could be concluded is that different stakeholders do not experience that there are differences in perspectives or do not experience the consequences of differences in perspectives unless the differences are spoken about. The more the stakeholders come together and talk about issues surrounding the integration of refugees with a residence permit, the more differences in perspectives will be experienced. More research is needed to examine whether this statement is true.

Besides the question whether there are differences in perspectives were the respondents asked whether *the differences in perspectives ever led to discussions or even conflicts*. All of the stakeholders that are part of the integration process and involved in the policy have their own vision, their own assignment [R7]. According to respondent 7 can that sometimes lead to certain tensions and difficulties. A lack of clarity of who has which role and who needs to perform which task can also lead to certain discussions about who is responsible [R13].

Just because there are differences in perspectives does not mean that those differences cannot be worked out [R9]. Different stakeholders have different interests and stakeholders have to understand that [R9]. It is important to talk about

the differences [R9; 14]. Most of the time it is in the end the one that is responsible that makes the decision [R9; R11; R18]. What can be quite difficult is to figure out who is in the lead. Who is the one that should be the one that makes the final decision. That is not always clear according to respondent 16.

Respondent 14 has not experienced any conflicts. She said that it is very important to talk about the expectations that everyone has. It is important to talk about the expectations so you can discuss whether expectations are reasonable and can be lived up to [R14]. Conflicts or discussions can be avoided by doing that.

Respondent 16 said that it is good to have discussions every now and then. Otherwise you will start acting based on assumptions and that will not work. Respondent 7 also mentioned a positive side of having discussions and conflicts. Those discussions can in the end lead to an approach that is supported by everyone, a solid approach [R7]. The result of discussions and conflict can therefore have positive effects on a policy, a programme or an approach as well. In difficult situations it is important that the municipality keeps trying to connect the different stakeholders and stimulate collaboration. Everyone should be able to take care of his or her own part of the overall process and be able to take responsibility for that part [R7].

Respondent 1 talked about a different approach to solving the issue of differences in perspectives, besides talking about it and discussing it. If it does not work out with a certain stakeholder because of vision that the stakeholder has, then the municipality should just go look for another stakeholder instead, said respondent 1. The municipality has the luxury position to choose the organizations that are most successful and that shares the vision of the municipality.

### Knowledge, expertise and resources

Knowledge, expertise and resources and whether stakeholders share these three with the municipality was talked about during the interviews. The respondents were first asked about the contact between stakeholders and the municipality and among stakeholders.

The respondents were asked about the amount of contact that stakeholders have with the municipality. Almost all of the stakeholders that were interviewed have contact with someone from the municipality, either on a regular basis or on a more incidental basis. One of the respondents does not have contact with someone from the municipality directly but indirectly [R16].

There is a difference between how often stakeholders have contact with someone from the municipality. Some stakeholders meet with someone from the municipality every two weeks [R13]; some every month [R8; R15], and some every two months [R12]. Meetings about making agreements on what needs to be achieved are held less regularly. Some stakeholders have such meetings every three months [R12], others once a year [R9]. Besides regular meetings are some stakeholders in touch with someone from the municipality weekly by phone or by the use of e-mail [R15; R17].

Different kinds of topics are discussed during meetings or phone calls. Sometimes it is just a quick question that needs to be answered or a case that needs to be discussed [R4; R5; R9; R15; R17]. Some of the meetings are about the agreements that were made, the results and/or new agreements that have to be made [R4; R5; R8; R9; R12; R13]. Stakeholders are able to tell the municipality what they have run into in practice [R12]. Meetings can be about future plans [R8] or meetings can be planned with the aim of coordination of activities to make sure that different activities for newcomers are not planned at the same time by different organizations [R17]. Stakeholders and the municipality communicate about what the stakeholders do as well, for example about the language courses that stakeholder offer, so case managers can tell their clients it [R18].

The respondents gave information about the information and knowledge that stakeholders share with the municipality and with each other. Most respondents indicated that stakeholders and the municipality share information and knowledge with each other [R4; R5; R7; R8; R11; R13; R14; R15; R16; R17; R18]. Some of the stakeholders share information with each other as well [R11]. Information and knowledge are shared when the information is relevant for the receiver [R11; R13]. Some stakeholders report back to the municipality. Information about what the organization does and the results are given, but details are most of the time not included in those reports [R13]. Respondent 13 told me that the information given back to the municipality is not extremely substantive. The municipality wants to know what is happening at in this case an executive agency, but not always in detail [R13].

Some stakeholders share all the information that is available to them with the municipality [R8]. Every information that the executive agency has can be accessed by the municipality. All of the resources that are available for the municipality are available for the executive agency as well. Agreements are made between the municipality and the executive agency about the use of those resources [R8].

One respondent said that his organization does not share a lot of information with the municipality at the moment [R12]. Not yet. Respondent 12 would like to have the opportunity to share more information with the municipality.

Respondent 15 used the following as an example for how information is shared. The policy maker of the municipality has to deliver a new integration policy for 2020-2021 in September of this year. Respondent 15 is asked to offer her view on what should be in that policy before the 1st of July. Respondent 15 will discuss her view with the policy makers who can use her input for the new policy [R15].

One of the respondents shares the information he has and his view with the municipality, but in an indirect manner. Respondent 16 is asked to give his opinion about the current approach by the person who is in charge of policy making within the organization. The person who is in charge of policy making within the organization discusses his view, the view of the other case managers and her own view with the policy makers of the municipality [R13; R16].

### Reasons for sharing information

Information and knowledge are shared between stakeholders and the municipality for multiple reasons. Information is shared to show the municipality what the organization has been doing and what the results are [R13]. Stakeholder can offer their knowledge based on their experiences to be used for the evaluation or for the design of a policy [R8; R14; R16; R17]. Stakeholders can tell the municipality whether they think that a certain policy will work or not before it gets implemented [R8; R17]. "A municipality has no use for a policy that once it is ready to be implemented and gets implemented turns out not to be feasible or executable", said respondent 17. Information is shared as part of the evaluation stage of the policy process to figure out what works and what does not work. Stakeholders are asked to evaluate the current situation and give their opinion and feedback to the municipality. Information is shared because stakeholders have certain expertise that the municipality does not have itself but does need. Respondent 18 said that you sometimes need each other and have a conversation about how things are going.

Four more reasons were given for why stakeholders share knowledge and information with the municipality. The first one is that the different actors can form a strong team together [R15], by bundling their knowledge and resources. The second reason is that it offers the municipality the opportunity to learn from the people in the field so to say [R16]. "A policy only works when it is well executed", said respondent 16. That makes it relevant to listen to the people who carry out the policy and what they have to say about what works and what does not work. Another reason mentioned is that figuring out together what is possible in certain situations is enabled by sharing information and knowledge [R8].

The last reason discussed here is that it enables actors to anticipate on situations that (might) occur [R12]. Different stakeholders have different positions in society and are therefore able to each see different sides of refugees with a residence permit and their lives in the municipality. A position that a stakeholder has can offer the possibility to know what is happening with a certain individual or in a certain neighbourhood [R9; R11; R12; R15; R17]. Teachers, social workers, landlords and other kinds of professionals see and meet with the newcomers at different times and in different ways. These professionals are able to see what is happening at school, at home or at other places that the newcomer spends his or her time. This information can be relevant for the municipality, but will not get there unless the municipality communicates with the stakeholders that are involved. Sharing this information offers actors the possibility to act or make changes to the approach of the municipality if needed.

### Joint meetings

One possible instrument that can be used to gather and share information are joint meetings. Respondents were asked whether joint meetings are organized by the municipality. Joint meetings offer the possibility to talk to other involved stakeholders and share information and knowledge. Based on the data can be stated that the joint meetings that are organized can be divided into two groups. One group of joint meetings consists of meetings that are regularly organized because different stakeholders belong to the same team. Other meetings are more incidental and are usually focused on one theme.

Respondent 14 mentioned the coordination team that has been established in municipality A. Different departments of the municipality are represented in that team. The team members inform each other, give some more information about certain documents and give each other input [R14]. The team meets every six weeks. One other example that was given was about stakeholders that are connected to each other because they are all involved in a certain project. The stakeholders meet every three weeks to talk about that project [R11].

Joint meetings about specific themes are organized in municipality A both by the municipality [R1; R4; R5; R11; R14; R18] and by stakeholders [R11]. One of the purposes of the joint meetings is giving partners the opportunity to indeed learn from each other [R1]. Stakeholders get the opportunity to give a presentation and have discussions [R1]. Sometimes workshops are organized about specific subjects or about how to deal with specific situations [R11; R14]. Joint meetings offer the municipality the opportunity to give information about the approach for the integration of newcomers to a large

group of stakeholders<sup>12</sup> at the same time [R14; R18]. Different actors can get more information about what the other actors do. Actors do not always know what the other involved actors actually do. Another advantage of joint meetings is that it offers the opportunity to coordinate activities and make agreements together [R9].

Respondent 7 mentioned that joint meetings offer the advantage for actors that play a role in the same process to stay in touch with each other and put the refugee with a residence permit at the centre of attention [R7]. Respondent 7 said that there are no regular joint meetings at the moment but that she would like to implement such regular joint meetings in municipality B. Joint meetings were organized before in municipality B in 2017 by the municipality and one of the executive agencies. The meetings were well attended [D12]. Respondents 15 and 17 are in favour of organizing joint meetings in municipality B. Contact between stakeholders is at the moment mainly established through the municipality and not directly from one stakeholder to the other, said respondent 15. It would be nice to have a meeting with all the different stakeholders and discuss future plans and the ideas that different stakeholders have [R15]. Having joint meetings could help to make a more continuous process of the integration process that refugees with a residence permit go through [R17].

So, stakeholders share information with the municipality and with each other. Information is shared when it is needed and when it is relevant. The information that is shared seems to be as detailed as it needs to be.

### Stakeholder involvement and policy effectiveness

The respondents were asked about the extent to which stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness in their opinion. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness [R1; R7; R8; R9; R10; R12; R13; R14; R15; R16; R17; R18; R19]. The respondents gave multiple reasons or explanations for why they think that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness.

The first reason is that stakeholders *have certain information and knowledge that the municipality does not have that can contribute to the effectiveness of in this case integration policies at the local level*. Some of the stakeholders have direct contact with the refugees with a residence permit and know what is going on in districts and neighbourhoods, at school and at home [R11; R15; R17]. The more the municipality collaborates with social partners and other stakeholder, the better view the collective has of the refugees with a residence permit within a municipality [R3]. Together the municipality and the other stakeholders can make sure that the policy is well implemented and that the right things are done at the right time by the right people [R15]. The different actors can form a “strong team” [R15] by gathering the information that all the different stakeholders have. Together, as partners, the different actors can make sure that refugees with a residence permit reach the end goal of becoming well-integrated and participating Dutch citizens. Together the different stakeholders can monitor the progression that newcomers make and find solutions when something is not going the way it is supposed to go [R17].

Stakeholders that carry out the policy are in the position to see what works what needs to be changed [R16; R18]. There is already so much information gathered by stakeholders about what works and what does not work. That information can be learned from and used by municipality to improve the policy [R11]. “If you want to make good policies you need to look at what is already happening, gather that information and incorporate that in the policy”, said respondent 11.

The second reason that was mentioned is *that stakeholders have certain expertise that the municipality does not have that is needed for the implementation of the policy and can contribute to the quality of the content of the policy*. Stakeholders can be involved because the organizations have a particular speciality that the municipality does not have but is needed for the policy to be carried out. It is for the municipality a deliberate choice to ask certain stakeholders to carry out certain aspects of the integration policy. The municipality has a particular set of tasks and responsibilities and should not want to take on certain other tasks, said respondent 1. Other organizations are way better at for example offering social counselling than the municipality is [R1].

Some stakeholders offer the municipality advice based on their expertise about how the policy should be carried out and how it should be organized [R14; R18]. Experts offered the municipality advice about what should be asked during the intake based on their expertise [R14; R18]. Community Health Services knows the do’s and don’ts of organizing information sessions about health related topics. Sometimes it is better not to say what the information session is about because some people might not want to come at first based on the topic. Knowledge like that which is based on expertise is used by the municipality to improve the policy. Every actor has experience in a certain field. Combining the expertise of the different actors offers the municipality information about the context, the target group and other important aspects. This information is needed to make a policy that is well-informed and matches the context, the needs of the target group

<sup>12</sup> Respondent 14 said that around 80 people show up at these meetings.

and the possibilities of the stakeholders [R17].

Whether a policy can be possibly carried out was stated as important as well. The third reason that was given by the respondents was *that the feasibility of the policy and the chances of achieving the goal of the policy are increased by involving stakeholders in the policy process*. In order for a policy to be effective it needs to be carried out well. A policy maker can come up with a policy from behind his or her desk, but then the question remains whether that policy is feasible and executable [R17]. Other organizations will have to carry out specific aspects of the policy. It can be difficult to decide what those organizations will have to do and how without involving those organizations and asking them for their opinion [R19]. Respondent 7: “The chance that you [as a policy maker] write something that is of any use to someone else is really small”. Stakeholder involvement increases the feasibility of a policy by giving information about what can be possibly done by stakeholders and about what the stakeholders think will work or not. Working together increases the chances of reaching the goals that are set, according to respondents 12, 14 and 15. Making an effort together increases the chances of reaching the goal you want to achieve [R12]. Together you make more progress and can accomplish more [R7; R14].

One respondent mentioned the effect on public support for the policy [R15]. Giving stakeholders the opportunity to give their opinion about a certain policy creates more public support for that policy, according to respondent 15. Involving stakeholders in the policy process offers the municipality insights into whether stakeholders agree with the position of the municipality and the policy that is being made. Stakeholders know why certain things happen and know who has which role when stakeholders are involved in the discussion about a policy. Respondent 15 is of the opinion that the chances of having a policy that works and achieving the policy goal increase when public support for the policy increases.

The last reason that was mentioned by the respondents is that stakeholder involvement in the policy process *improves the policy and therefore contributes to the effectiveness of the policy*. When stakeholders work together more closely it is possible to form a network around refugees with a residence permit and help them integrate [R13]. Every stakeholder is responsible for one aspect of the integration process of a refugee with a residence permit. The different actors need each other to be able to offer newcomers all that is needed to integrate into society [R14]. A policy only works well if it is well-designed and well executed. It is more effective if all the different actors work together towards a common goal instead of every actor by themselves [R8]. If the different actors work well together to make sure that newcomers integrate well into their new home society and get help when they need it, then 1+1 makes 3 [R14]. That is the added value of working together and finding solutions together [R17]. The municipality is able to combine all the different efforts and initiatives of the stakeholders into one integration process by involving stakeholders in the policy process. This offers among others more clarity to refugees with a residence permit and to the stakeholders that are involved as well [R2]. Collaboration between the municipality and stakeholders can result in a more integral and continuing integration process [D8]. The different actors have to work together to make sure that the whole integration process is continuous and clear to refugees with a residence permit [R17].

Respondent 4 said that there is still improvement possible concerning stakeholder involvement and its effect on policy effectiveness. Stakeholders and municipalities can make more use of the possibilities that others have to offer, like each other's knowledge and networks [R4]. More possible improvements were mentioned during the interviews. These possible improvements and the positive notes that were mentioned are shown in the following section.

### Positive notes and possible improvements

During the interviews the respondents were asked what goes well in their opinion concerning stakeholder involvement in the policy process<sup>13</sup> and what could be improved concerning stakeholder involvement in the policy process. That resulted in the following lists of positive notes and possible improvements.

What goes well according to respondent 1 is finding the right stakeholders to work with. Another positive note that was mentioned is that the municipality, and stakeholders as well, look at the environment around them to see what others could offer instead of just focusing on the own organisation [R11]. Having a large network of employers that is willing to offer the target group a job is very beneficial for the approach, just like the combination of activating refugees with a residence permit and guiding them towards a job [R8; R13; R17].

Carrying out the approach collectively, having meetings to discuss recent developments and other issues concerning the approach, direct contact, looking for solutions together and working together to achieve certain goals [R8; R14; R15; R17; R18] were mentioned as positive notes too. It is important that the different actors that are involved know where to find

<sup>13</sup> Besides possible improvements that are related to stakeholder involvement were other possible improvements mentioned as well. These other possible improvements can be found in Appendix 10.

one another when that is needed [R8]. Having a say as stakeholder in the policy process is valued and seen as a way to increase public support for the policy [R15]. One last aspect that is seen as important for positive results are customized solutions for individual newcomers [R5; R8].

A diverse set of possible improvements were given by the respondents, although some of the respondents said that there are no improvements needed at the moment.

Three respondents mentioned that *housing corporations could get a bigger role within the integration process*. Right now housing corporations are mainly responsible for having enough houses available for refugees with a residence permit. Housing corporations could be involved as actor to help with the integration and the stimulation of participation [R3; R12; R17]. Housing corporations can stimulate contact between neighbours and give information about for example taking care of your garden and interaction with neighbours [R3; R12].

The services that the different stakeholders offer should be more connected and aligned, according to respondents 7 and 8. The integration process could be made more continuous and more efficient. The integration process should be a more collective process, according to respondent 12. Sometimes it happens that a refugee family gets three different visits from three different organizations in a short period of time [R7]. Sometimes multiple intakes are done [R8]. That could be organized more efficiently. Actions taken by organizations that are involved in the integration process are not always in line with one another. Three things were mentioned that should be done to make the integration process that newcomers go through more efficient, continuous and effective. First, there has to be an overview of the whole integration process. Who is involved and what do those organizations do. Second, the different actors need to be connected. And third, what the organizations do needs to be harmonized. The different organizations have to trust each other, said respondent 8. “Dare to let go and respect that someone else can take care of certain business just as good”.

The municipality is already or will become the director of the integration process. Sometimes it might be possible *to give that directive role to another stakeholder* [R8]. Respondent 8 gave the example of the design of a personal plan for a refugee with a residence permit that recently arrived at the municipality. A professional could be asked to guide the process of the development of that personal plan. To which professional that position should be given depends on the situation, said respondent 8. A professional could be asked to be in charge of designing a personal plan and be given the responsibility to include the stakeholders that need to be included for that specific case.

A system was mentioned that is used to give information about a refugee with a residence permit from the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers to the municipality that the refugee is assigned to. Municipality C does not make use of this system yet. A possible improvement could be *to start using that system and find out whether that system is useful or not* for the municipality [R13].

Respondent 15 said that she would like *to get more information from the municipality* as stakeholder. About, for example, the different involved stakeholders and the roles and responsibilities of those stakeholders. Who knows what, when do certain documents need to be hand in and will the input given be used by the policy makers. Such information would respondent 15 like to be given or given sooner. *Involving stakeholders more structurally and not incidental and based on themes like is the case right now* is another possible improvement. This was said by the policy maker of municipality B. She plans on involving stakeholders more structurally in the policy process in the future [R7]. The last possible improvement that was mentioned is that one of the respondents would like *to become an official consultation partner* and get the opportunity to give the opinion as organization on policy documents concerning refugees [R9]. “Such a role would be ideal in my opinion”, said respondent 9.

The answers given to the question whether there are stakeholders missing at the moment that could or should be involved in the policy process as well was answered with either no or maybe. Stakeholders that could maybe get included according to the respondents are knowledge centres and groups of volunteers. Respondent 16 said that maybe an organizations should be included that can help the refugees with a residence permit that are not activated after years of being in their new home country. But which organization that should be is still a question [R16].

#### 4.2.4 Other empirical results

##### The new national law

As mentioned before is at this moment a new national integration law being designed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. In June the concept version of the law will be presented to the Dutch parliament. During the interviews I asked the respondents about the new national integration law. I asked the respondents whether they thought the new national integration law would be an improvement in comparison to the current situation and whether they thought the current approach to the integration of refugees with a residence permit could still be used in its current form when the

new law will come into force in 2021. A policy maker that works for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment gave information about the new national policy and the policy process leading up to the new national policy. A lot of organizations participated in that process and were consulted by the Ministry.

The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment will still be responsible for the integration policy. The new national integration policy entails more tasks for the municipalities. The current integration system revolves around the own responsibility and self-reliance of refugees with a residence permit. Newcomers have to take care of all sorts of arrangements. That does not seem to be working very well and will therefore be changed. There will still be a certain degree of own responsibility, but refugees with a residence permit will get more support from the municipality that they are assigned to. The municipality will schedule an intake to see what the newcomer is capable of and would like to achieve. A new responsibility for municipalities is offering integration courses to refugees with a residence permit. Newcomers will not have to look for integration courses themselves anymore, that will be taken care of by the municipalities for which the municipalities receive financial means from the national government. The municipalities will be the so-called directors of the integration process.

Based on the intake will a refugee with a residence permit be assigned to one of three possible routes. The first route is meant for refugees with a residence permit that are 28 years old or younger. In this route is for newcomers that would like to get an education in the Netherlands. The second route is the regular route that is focused on learning the Dutch language. The language requirement will be B1, which is higher than the current language requirement which is A2. The third route is called the z-route. This route is meant for people that are not able to get a language certificate at the moment. The z stands for the Dutch word 'zelfredzaamheid' which means self-reliance.

Multiple stakeholders were consulted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment throughout the formulation stage of the policy process. Examples of stakeholders that were involved are municipalities, refugee advocacy organizations, language instructors and other ministries, like the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Justice and Security [R19]. The choice was made to involve these and other stakeholders because the stakeholders are the ones to implement the policy and carry out the tasks that are assigned to them. The policy needs to be implementable. Another reason to involve certain stakeholders is because of the information and knowledge that the stakeholders can offer the Ministry.

More information about the new national integration law, about how stakeholders were involved in the policy process leading up to the new policy, the effects of stakeholder involvement on national level and the opinions of the respondents about the new national policy can be found in Appendix 8.

### The fourth municipality

One of the respondents (respondent 10) works as a policy maker for another municipality than municipality A, B or C. The interview was held to get some more information about local integration policies, the making of local integration policies and the way municipalities responded to the relatively large group of refugees with a residence permit that became residents of the municipality after 2015. Municipality D developed an approach for the integration of newcomers on a regional level. Respondent 10 said that there were a lot of initiatives within the municipality with the aim to help refugees with a residence permit that came to live within the municipality. Municipality D tried to combine all the initiatives and involved the initiators in the policy process [R10]. A lot of stakeholders were therefore involved throughout the policy process. The approach of municipality D is a regional approach because it was set up in collaboration with and will be implemented in multiple different municipalities within the region. The approach offers different routes to the newcomers. The right route will be chosen for each newcomer individually based on an assessment of what the newcomer is capable of and would like to do [R10]. More information on the policy of municipality D, the policy process and how the statements of the respondent from municipality D support the claims made in this and the following chapter can be found in Appendix 9.

### External factors

Multiple external factors that influence the policy effectiveness or the possibilities of stakeholders to be involved were mentioned during the interviews. These are called external factors because they are not the factors that this research specifically focused on. These are interesting results and therefore mentioned in this research report.

The first external factor is about *the opportunities that a municipality has*. What a municipality can accomplish is among others influenced by the possibilities that the municipality has. Some municipalities have more resources than others. Those resources can be for example money, staff, or expertise [R9]. Not every municipality can offer newcomers the same. Besides differences in resources can there be differences in size. A solution to size-related issues can be regional cooperation [R19]. Resources can be combined and opportunities can be created by cooperating with different municipalities in the region [R19]. Another factor concerning the municipality that can influence what can be accomplished are political choices. Just because a municipality has certain resources does not mean that those



resources will be used to improve the approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit. The executive board of a municipality and the city council need to be willing to spend certain resources for this purpose [R1; R7]. That is a political choice that is not made within every municipality [R19] and that is not solely based on whether there are certain resources available or not. One last aspect concerning the municipality that is of importance for stakeholders and what they can possibly accomplish are the civil servants. Not all civil servants have the same opinion about the integration of refugees with a residence permit. Not every civil servant has the same amount of knowledge about the topic [R18]. And not every civil servant wants to involve stakeholders to the same degree [R9; R15]. It is something that could be labelled as a human factor and says something about the importance of interpersonal connections and relations when talking about working together.

What turned out to be an important factor concerning stakeholder involvement and policy effectiveness is *role clarity*. Who is involved and what roles the different stakeholders have are not always clear for the different stakeholders [R9; R11; R14; R15]. It can be difficult to keep an overview of all the different stakeholders that are involved and all the different networks of organizations that are active in the field of integration of refugees with a residence permit [R14]. Different stakeholders sometimes perform similar tasks. Lack of clarity about whether a task is already performed sometimes leads to a task being done twice [R11]. Sometimes the lines between who is responsible for what can be a little bit blurry. Having more information and clarity about who is responsible for what can prevent the occurrence of tasks being performed multiple times and questions about who is responsible for what.

Another issue that was mentioned by multiple respondents was whether there should be a specific policy for the integration of refugees with a residence permit or not. Arguments for whether there should be a specific integration policy or not can be found in Appendix 7.



## 5. FINDINGS

The findings of the theoretical part of this research and the findings of the empirical part of this research are combined in this chapter. Are the theoretical and empirical results in line with each other or not? First a short summary of the expectations based on scientific theory is given, followed by the hypothesis and whether the empirical results support that hypothesis or not.

### Process inclusivity

The expectation was that the involvement of different actors would contribute to the effectiveness of policies by making the policy process more open and inclusive. Enhanced inclusivity can result in bringing in a more diverse set of perspectives into the policy process. These different perspectives can shed light on new solutions, new issues and new opportunities. New ideas and options can result in more effective ways of reaching the desired policy goal and in that way lead to a higher level of policy effectiveness. Therefore the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: Stakeholder involvement at any stage of the policy process increases inclusivity and thereby improves policy effectiveness.

Stakeholder involvement indeed made the policy process more inclusive and open to different perspectives. Most involved stakeholders that were interviewed have the opportunity to give advice to the municipality and in that way share their opinions with policy makers. Some of the respondents mentioned that new solutions or new ideas that stakeholders come up with and that seem to be working can be noticed by policy makers who sometimes choose to incorporate those new, smart ideas in the policy.

The inclusivity of the process was not directly linked to increasing policy effectiveness by the respondents. Some stakeholders did mention that stakeholder involvement leads to an increased chance that the policy goal will be achieved. One of the reasons was that the information from stakeholders about what they can possibly accomplish and about whether a certain plan will probably work or not helps to design a policy that will, once it is implemented, achieve its goal. The policy process needs to be open to the reception of such information in order for policy makers to be able to use it during the design or evaluation of a policy.

Whether there is a direct link between the level of process inclusivity and policy effectiveness cannot be stated with certainty. More cases need to be studied to get a better insight into the relationship between process inclusivity and policy effectiveness. The hypothesis is therefore not completely and convincingly supported by the data. More information is needed to say whether this hypothesis is true. But the hypothesis should not be rejected already based on what was found during this research. Research on a larger scale will help to be able to say more about the effect of stakeholder involvement on policy effectiveness through process inclusivity.

### Diversity of perspectives

The expectation was that the level of diversity of perspectives of the stakeholders involved in the policy process can both have positive and negative consequences with regard to the effectiveness of public policies. Having a diverse group of people will contribute to having a diverse collection of perspectives and ideas that can contribute to finding solutions for issues that need to be solved. A diverse range of arguments can be considered when it comes to determining the policy content and its implementation. But many different opinions and preferences can also lead to misunderstanding, friction or even conflict. Therefore communication is considered as an important factor to take into consideration. Expected is that diversity of insights and viewpoints will less likely lead to misunderstanding and friction when people are aware of the differences and are able to talk about it. To test these expectations the following hypotheses are formulated:

H2: Stakeholder involvement at any stage of the policy process increases diversity of perspectives and thereby improves policy effectiveness.

H3a: Stakeholder involvement at any stage of the policy process increases diversity of perspectives and thereby reduces policy effectiveness.

H3b: The negative effect of diversity of perspectives on policy effectiveness is lessened by clearly communicating about the differences in insights and viewpoints.

Stakeholder involvement increases the diversity of perspectives according to most respondents. Different stakeholders look at certain issues in different ways. This can, according to the respondents, be explained by the different assignments that stakeholders have, the difference in expertise and the different interests of the different stakeholders. Having different perspectives can have positive effects on the results of the policy process by bringing in a diverse set of views and opinions based on a diverse set of experience, knowledge and information. Bringing different perspectives together leads to more information and knowledge that can be used when designing and evaluating the policy. It is important for the different stakeholders to listen to those different perspectives in order to benefit from it and learn from each other. Combining different perspectives into one policy can be difficult, but it can result in a solid approach that is well-considered and supported by everyone involved.

Stakeholder involvement lead in each of the three municipalities to a more diverse set of perspectives on the integration process of refugees with a residence permit and on integration policies. Mentioned is that diversity of perspectives can be beneficial and desired. It can lead to a policy that is solid and supported by the actors that are involved. Whether a solid policy that is supported by the involved actors means that the policy is effective as well cannot be stated based on the results. One of the respondents is of the opinion that a policy that is supported by the involved stakeholders will have a higher chance of achieving its goals in comparison to a policy that is not supported by the stakeholders. Whether this is true needs to be further studied. Diversity of perspectives might have a positive effect on policy effectiveness, but to what extent and with what level of certainty cannot be stated. What can be said based on the results is that it is important to listen to the different perspective in order for the diversity of perspectives to have a positive effect on policy effectiveness. Hypothesis 2 is not completely supported by the empirical results.

Diversity of perspectives can have negative consequences as well, by leading to discussions and even conflict. There can be discussions about what the next step should be, the actions that should be taken or the instruments that should be used. In some cases these discussions can result in conflict, although most respondents said that he or she has not experienced any conflict yet between actors within the policy process surrounding integration policies at the local level.

Hypothesis 3a is not completely supported nor completely rejected by the empirical results. Difference in perspectives can indeed lead to discussions or even conflicts in certain cases, but that is not always seen as something negative. Discussions are not always linked to policy effectiveness in a negative way. Discussions can be very useful and help to avoid that actions will be taken based on assumptions about what the other thinks or will do. More nuance is needed when it comes to hypothesis 3a. Discussions and conflict can have a negative impact on policy effectiveness, but that does not always need to be the case.

It is important to keep talking about the different perspectives and about the reasons behind certain opinions. Communicating about the expectations that different actors have that work together or is going to work together can avoid discussions or conflicts and contribute to mutual understanding. But communication is not the only solution to ending a discussion. Sometimes actors have to agree to disagree and let the actor who is responsible make the call. Sometimes is the choice made by the municipality to quite working together with a certain stakeholder if a discussion cannot be ended and a compromise cannot be found.

Hypothesis 3b is partly supported by the empirical results. Communication is important to end discussions and resolve conflict, but it is not the only way to do that. There are other mechanisms that influence the effect of discussions and conflicts on policy effectiveness.

### Sharing knowledge, expertise and resources

The expectation was that the involvement of different actors in the policy process will lead to a diverse collection of knowledge, expertise and resources. Expected is that combining the knowledge, expertise and resources of the different actors will lead to a policy design that is based on a solid base of knowledge, that is well-considered and that fits the context of the policy. The expectation was that combining the different resources will make it more feasible to reach the policy goal because more resources can be used to reach the policy goal. I expected therefore that the involvement of different stakeholders in the policy process will lead to more effective policy through the bringing together of knowledge, expertise and resources. To test these expectations the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Stakeholder involvement at any stage of the policy process improves policy effectiveness by bringing knowledge, expertise and resources into the policy process which increases the possibility of designing and implementing a policy that is feasible and suits the policy goal.

Most of the reasons mentioned by the respondents for why stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness are in line with hypothesis 4. When asked why stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness answered multiple respondents that stakeholder involvement contributes to bringing information and expertise, that the

municipality itself does not have, together that can be used to improve the policy and the effectiveness of the policy. Stakeholders know what the do's and don'ts are in their field and know what they can offer for the integration and participation of refugees with a residence permit. Policy makers can use that information to design policies that are feasible to implement and that have goals that can be achieved.

Stakeholders and the municipality have more opportunities to monitor the integration process together. Sharing information about how refugees with a residence permit are doing in a neighbourhood, at school or at work can help improve the policy if needed. Together the different actors can make sure that refugees with a residence permit reach the end goal of being able take care of yourself without being dependent on social benefits.

Some resources, knowledge and expertise that stakeholders possess are needed to achieve the goals of the integration policies and make the policies effective. The different actors need each other to be able to offer everything needed for the integration and participation of refugees with a residence permit. Based on the results can be stated that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness through sharing the needed knowledge, expertise and resources between the different actors involved. Hypothesis 4 is therefore supported by the empirical results.

Only hypothesis 4 is for sure supported by the empirical data. None of the other hypotheses should be completely rejected based on the results of this research. More research and research on large scale is needed to give clear insights into whether these hypotheses are true or not. Besides examining the hypotheses of this research on a larger scale could the findings of this research be used to formulate new hypotheses that can be tested in the future.

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## 6. CONCLUSION

The research question of this research is: *To what extent does stakeholder involvement in the policy process contribute to the effectiveness of integration policies on the level of the municipalities in the Netherlands?* Based on the results of this research can be stated that stakeholder involvement contributes to the effectiveness of integration policies of the municipalities that were part of this research as perceived by the respondents. None of the respondents is of the opinion that stakeholder involvement does not contribute to policy effectiveness.

Six different reasons were given for why stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness according to the respondents.

1. Stakeholders have certain information and knowledge that the municipality does not have that can contribute to the effectiveness of local integration policies.
2. Stakeholders have certain expertise that the municipality does not have and that is needed for the implementation of the policy and can contribute to the quality of the content of the policy
3. Stakeholder involvement increases the feasibility of the policy which increases level of policy effectiveness
4. Stakeholder involvement increases the chances of achieving the goal of the policy
5. Stakeholder involvement increases the public support for the policy which increases the chances achieving the policy goal and therefore increases the level of policy effectiveness
6. Stakeholder involvement improves the policy and therefore contributes to policy effectiveness

The reasons given by the respondents are in line with the expectation that combining the knowledge, expertise and resources of stakeholders contributes to designing effective policies. Experiential knowledge of stakeholders about what works and what does not work, the knowledge that stakeholders have based on their expertise and resources that stakeholders possess are sometimes needed and often useful for policy makers to consider when policies are being made. What is important for stakeholder involvement to contribute to policy effectiveness is making sure that the right stakeholders are involved. It is useful for municipalities to know who are already active in the field of integration and participation of newcomers and to get an image of the total integration process that refugees with a residence permit go through. It might be stating the obvious, but is it important to listen to the information that the different stakeholders have in order to benefit from it. What turned out to be of importance for some of the stakeholders is knowing who is involved and knowing who has which role within the integration and participation process. Stakeholders can more easily collaborate and send refugees with a residence permit to the right person when help is needed if the stakeholders know who is involved and who has which role. Knowing who is responsible for which part helps to avoid that things are being done twice and helps to clarify who has to take care of certain tasks. The last point that I would like to mention is talking about the expectations that different actors have. According to both theory and the empirical results is it important to sit down at the beginning of a partnership or other form for stakeholder involvement and talk about what each actor expects from the process and from each other. This can help to avoid discussion, ambiguity and conflicts.

Stakeholder involvement is needed to create one integration process for refugees with a residence permit who arrive at the municipality that they are assigned to. It is useful to involve the different stakeholders and to combine the different pieces of information and kinds of expertise to create an effective policy for the integration and participation of refugees with a residence permit. Different stakeholders are also able to see different aspects of the process and of refugees with a residence permit as individuals. Educational institutions can pick up certain signals and so can housing corporations and welfare organizations. Those organizations together can create a more comprehensive and clear picture of someone's situation than when they only have their own information available. The respondents agree with each other that the municipality is the right actor to be the director of the process and to bring the stakeholders together to create a continuous and effective integration process for newcomers. Creating one, continuous integration process is perceived to create more clarity for refugees with a residence permit and for the other stakeholders involved as well.

Whether the contribution of stakeholder involvement to policy effectiveness is a significant effect and whether this effect can be found in other municipalities as well cannot be stated based on the results of this research. More research is needed to examine whether stakeholder involvement is necessary and/or sufficient to achieve policy effectiveness within the context of local integration policies. More about what is interesting for future research is mentioned in the following chapter.

One of the respondents said that the goal for him is to create a change for someone. He mentioned that giving someone a

more positive mindset is the most important [R16]. My personal observation is that there are a lot of people who want to do just that, help someone and make a change. Conclusions that can be drawn based on this research are that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness according to the respondents for multiple reasons. What is important is that the municipality involves the stakeholders that are needed to make the policy effective; that the different actors listen to each other in order to be able to learn from each other; that the different stakeholders know who is involved and what role the different stakeholders have within the policy process; and that clear agreements are made about what each actor expects from the other. Then 1 + 1 will be 3.



# 7. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 7.1 DISCUSSION

This is an interesting period to study local integration policies in the Netherlands. Municipalities are currently deciding how to go about designing and implementing a new integration policy for the municipality. Reasons for designing and implementing a new local integration policy are or were the arrival of a centre for asylum seekers within the municipality, the arrival of a relatively large group of newcomers within the municipality and/or the new national integration law that will be implemented in 2021. Different municipalities have reacted differently to these circumstances. Some municipalities have already designed and implemented a new approach because of one or multiple of the beforementioned circumstances. Others are waiting for more information about the new national integration policy and the tasks that the municipality will get before starting with the design of a new local policy. Three municipalities that have already designed and implemented an approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit were the context of this project.

For this project documents were analysed and respondents interviewed to provide an insight into the contribution of stakeholder involvement in the policy process, and how this involvement contributed to the effectiveness of local integration policies in the Netherlands. The results show that stakeholder involvement positively contributes to policy effectiveness for multiple reasons. The reasons given by the respondents were not all in line with the expectations formulated based on scientific literature. This research was partly exploratory with the aim to find out whether stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness in a particular context and, if so, why stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness. The exploration of reasons why stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness in the particular context resulted in reasons that are in line with the expectations based on scientific literature and some reasons that are not in line with the expectations that were formulated. The reasons why stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness that are not in line with the expectations that were formulated can be used to formulate new hypotheses that can be tested in the future to see whether the results can be found in other contexts as well.

One of the reasons mentioned by the respondents was that stakeholder involvement leads to increased public support for a certain policy which increases the likelihood of achieving the policy goal. This important function of public support was mentioned as well in an article about an interview with an integration expert (Groen, 2017). The integration expert said that public support is the key to successful integration. Future research could look into how public support influences policy effectiveness in the context of local integration policies.

The research gave some new insights into the effect of stakeholder involvement on policy effectiveness. Multiple external factors play a role when it comes to the possibilities that stakeholders have to be involved and to contribute to the effectiveness of a policy. What stakeholders can accomplish in collaboration with the municipality depends on, among others, the opinion of the local government and the city council, the means that are available to the municipality and the willingness of civil servants to collaborate and involve stakeholders. These contextual factors need to be taken in consideration when examining stakeholder involvement in the policy process and the effects that stakeholder involvement can have on among others policy effectiveness.

Stakeholders are at the moment mostly involved as executives that carry out a specific part of the integration policy of the municipality. An interesting insight is that this seems to be changing. The different policy makers of the different municipalities all said that they want to involve stakeholders more and give the stakeholders a more participating role within the policy process. The policy makers are open to listening to the opinions of different stakeholders and asking them to discuss the current or future integration policies. There is a desire to involve stakeholders more and more often throughout the policy process so the ideas and opinions of the stakeholders can be taken into account by policy makers. This change can be linked to the view of Altman and Petkus (1994) on the policy process and the role of stakeholders in that policy process. Altman and Petkus (1994) made an argument for the importance of involving stakeholders in the policy process, especially when the policy process concerns policies for complex issues like integration. Altman and Petkus (1994) conceptualized the policy process with a consultation stage in between the agenda setting and formulation stage of the policy process. During the consultation stage are the different involved stakeholders consulted. The information that is gathered during the consultation stage can be used to formulate different alternatives for the policy

issue at hand. A consultation stage is one possible way to include stakeholder in the policy process to a higher degree. How the different policy makers that were interviewed are going to involve stakeholders more in the future was not clear yet at the time of the interviews. It is interesting to see what the effect will be on the level of policy effectiveness when stakeholders are involved more. An interesting research that could be conducted in the future is a research that examines two situations in which stakeholders are involved to different degrees to see whether the effect on policy effectiveness is different in the two different situations.

A second interesting finding is the importance of role clarity when it comes to whether stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness. It is not always clear to the different stakeholders who are involved and who have which role. This makes it sometimes difficult to decide who should take action. Another consequence is that some tasks are being done twice. Future research could examine the importance of role clarity in policy processes in which stakeholders are involved. Examined could be what information should be shared with the different stakeholders about the different stakeholders and the effects of role clarity. Role clarity in this context is not about only about the own role, but mainly about the roles of other stakeholders are part of the integration policy process.

The last remarkable insight is the discussion about whether there should be policies specifically for the integration and participation of refugees with a residence permit and other immigrant groups or whether there should be more generic policies that are not only focused on this specific target group but on the whole society or multiple groups within society. To what extent are they different and to what extent are they similar to other vulnerable groups in society.

To what extent should stakeholders be involved? This research focused on whether stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness, not on the possible different effects on policy effectiveness of different degrees of stakeholder involvement. Some respondents mentioned that a stakeholder should make conscious decisions about when that stakeholder should be involved and when a meeting or a discussion is not about the business of that stakeholder. Not too much time should be spent on talking instead of on doing what you are supposed to do as an organization. Future research could look into whether different degrees of stakeholder involvement have different effects on policy effectiveness. When should stakeholders be involved and when should they not be involved.

Besides the degree of stakeholder involvement might the stage of the policy process at which stakeholders are involved make a difference as well. At this moment it is not clear whether stakeholder involvement at different stages of the policy process has a different effect on policy effectiveness. At what stage of the policy process should stakeholders be involved in order for stakeholder involvement to make the most beneficial contribution to policy effectiveness? Another interesting question is whether different stakeholders should be involved in the same way. Should different stakeholders be involved at different stages of the policy process? Should different stakeholders be involved to a different degree? A lot more interesting research can be done to find out more about the relationship between stakeholder involvement and policy effectiveness and about stakeholder involvement in the policy process.

The selection of the cases and of the respondents went well. That gave the opportunity to analyse multiple cases of policy processes surrounding integration policies at the local level. Two aims were formulated about the selection of respondents when this research was being designed. The first was to speak to people who work for different organizations that play a role within the integration policy process of the municipalities that were studied. The different stakeholders might have different views on the topics that were discussed during the interviews. Luckily I was able to speak with people from different kinds of organizations that are part of the integration policy process in each municipality. I spoke to fewer people in municipality C, because fewer organizations are involved in the integration policy process in municipality C. The second aim was to speak to stakeholders from similar organizations in each municipality to be able to make a valid comparison and combine the results found into one result section. The similarity of stakeholders that were spoken with offers the opportunity for a valid comparison of the data found in the different municipalities. The groups of respondents that were interviewed in each municipality are not exactly the same. But the respondents from municipality A and municipality B work for similar organizations which offered the opportunity to compare what the respondents from similar organizations said about the a certain topic.

There are certain limitations to this research with respect to generalizability and validity. For this research was only spoken to a selection of involved partners. This is not enough to get an insight into the whole process and the ways in which stakeholders are involved within the multiple municipalities. The choice was made to only study cases of effective integration policies to see whether stakeholder involvement contributed to the effectiveness of the policies studied. The idea behind this choice was to figure out what works when talking about local integration policies. A limitation of this choice is that it does not offer the opportunity to compare a case of an effective integration policy with an ineffective one to analyse the differences between the cases. Another limitation is that most of the information gathered is about perspectives of people which can be subjective to different degrees. The effectiveness of the policies can be proven by the use of numbers and other kinds of data gathered by research institutes and municipalities. The information about the



effect of stakeholder involvement on policy effectiveness however is about opinions and perspectives.

There were some worries about whether the positive perspective of this research with the aim of figuring out what works would influence the data. The data gathered by the document analysis could not be influenced by my own perspective, only the selection of the data could. In Appendix 4 a list can be found of the documents that were analysed to make the selection process as transparent as possible. The topic lists used during the semi-structured interviews and the questions that were asked did not keep the respondents from telling what does not go well in their opinion. It is difficult to assess what the influence of the interviewer is on the interviewee, but the influence of the positive approach of this research seems to be limited.

One last difficulty was the use of the right terms. Both the term 'stakeholder' and the term 'involvement' can be used differently. The aim was to make sure that the different respondents were all talking about the same concepts. The reasoning behind this aim was that it would make it possible to combine and compare the information that was given by the different respondents. During the course of the interviews I learned which terms should be used and how certain questions should be asked. That is one of the multiple things I have learned from doing this research. During the analysis of the data I made sure that the information that was combined and compared was indeed covering the same topic and the same concepts. Parts of the data that were not about the topic or about a specific concept were not used. This choice was made to enhance the validity of this research.

As mentioned before will in 2021 a new national integration law be implemented. It is interesting to see how the different municipalities are going to deal with the new national [integration](#) policy and the new responsibilities. In a few years research can be done to see whether the new national integration policy and the new role of municipalities within the integration process will have led to better integration of immigrants into the Dutch society.

What can be learned from these cases of effective integration policies focused on the integration of refugees with a residence permit? One of the aims of this research was to figure out what works in the case of local integration policies. According to the respondents is it important to include stakeholders in the policy process. Municipalities do not have all the necessary knowledge and expertise that is necessary to create an effective integration policy and carry it out the way it should be carried out in order to have the results that are aimed for. The municipality can together with the other stakeholders offer refugees with a residence permit a complete package that will help them integration into their new home society. Another advantage of including stakeholders in the policy process is that the stakeholders can help the municipality with monitoring how refugees with a residence permit are doing and what is working or not working concerning the integration policy.

The respondents mentioned that it is important to offer refugees with a residence permit different activities that stimulate integration and participation at the same time instead of in sequence. Another important aspect is starting with offering services and activities as soon as possible. Starting early on, for example when newcomers are still living at a centre for asylum seekers, helps to avoid that a lot of time is wasted at the centre for asylum seekers. Although it must be mentioned that it is sometimes not possible to already take action at the centre for asylum seekers. Offering integration and participation activities in parallel instead of sequential contributes to fastening the integration of refugees with a residence permit and is therefore of importance.

Lastly I want to mention the importance of the dedicated case managers that are working at each of the three municipalities to help newcomers integrate. These dedicated case managers learn more and more about working with refugees with a residence permit and spend a lot of time working with and for newcomers. Having a group of case managers that focus specifically on this particular groups seems to work really well, because refugees with a residence permit do not end up somewhere in a large case load but get the specific attention that seems to be necessary. Investigating cases of effective integration policies can give us information about what works when talking about the integration of immigrants into society. Future research can tell us more about what works and whether the results are context-bound or not. That way we can learn from cases of effective policies. For now it can be stated that it is possible to work together towards more effective integration policies at the local level in the Netherlands.

## 7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on both the scientific literature and the empirical results of this research are the following recommendations formulated. The recommendations are meant for municipalities that want to involve stakeholders in the policy process concerning integration and participation of refugees with a residence permit in order to increase the level of policy effectiveness.

### Recommendation 1:

**Make an overview of all the stakeholders that are involved in the integration process of refugees with a residence permit within the municipality**

Making an overview of the stakeholders that are active in the field of integration of refugees with a residence permit gives municipalities an insight into the integration and participation process that refugees with a residence permit go through. It gives an insight into which stakeholders are needed to create an effective integration policy and should be considered to get involved in the policy process. Having an overview of all the different actors that have a role in the integration and participation process offers the opportunity to create one, continuous process, as long as the different actors are willing to cooperate and to coordinate the activities they do. Having one, continuous integration process will create clarity for the municipality, for refugees with a residence permit and for the stakeholders that play a part in the integration process.

### Recommendation 2:

**Make sure that the different actors involved know who the other involved actors are and what these actors do within the integration process of refugees with a residence permit.**

The second recommendation follows up the first one. Different stakeholders that are involved in the policy process surrounding integration policies at the local level, play a different role within the integration process. The respondents mentioned that tasks are sometimes done twice or that families are visited multiple times by multiple organizations that ask similar questions. Knowing who does what within the integration process offers the opportunity to coordinate actions and make sure that tasks are not done twice if that is not necessary. Knowing who is involved in the integration process and who has which responsibilities within the integration process makes it easier for stakeholders to refer refugees with a residence permit to the right organization if needed and for organizations to work together when that is needed. One possibility could be to use a digital system that all the different stakeholders that need to have access, can get access to. That system could be used to share information and to see whether a particular task, like filling out tax forms, has already been done or not. An advantage is that all the needed information can be put in one system, a disadvantage might be the amount of work it takes to put the information in the system. The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers already uses a system to store all the information of each individual asylum seeker. Explored could be whether this system could be used on a bigger scale.

### Recommendation 3:

**Consider the information and knowledge that other stakeholders have that can be useful to the municipality during the policy process and gather that information.**

Based on the results can be stated that gathering relevant information from the stakeholders contributes to making (more) effective policies. Stakeholders possess information about refugees with a residence permit or about different aspects of integration that the municipality does not possess. Stakeholders can see how refugees with a residence permit are for example doing at school, at home or at work. It is useful for municipalities to consider the information that stakeholders possess and decide what information is useful for the municipality to know.

### Recommendation 4:

**Listen to each other and try to understand the point of view of another person or organization.**

This might be seen as stating the obvious, but it is very important to listen to each other and to understand each other in order to work together and learn from each other. It will contribute to having the same understanding while talking about a specific topic, which is important for the process of collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2007). It can be difficult to look at something from someone else's perspective, but that is needed to take advantage of the positive effects of bringing together different perspectives on policy effectiveness in the end. Asking stakeholders to put their opinion in writing before discussing it face-to-face can be useful. It gives the reader the opportunity to take the time to think about the perspective of the other person before formulating a reaction on that opinion. This approach is only useful if there is enough time available.

### Recommendation 5:

**Talk about the intentions, assumptions and expectations that the different actors have when it comes to being involved in the policy process**

This recommendation is made based on what is stated by Huxham et al. (2000) in their article about the challenge of

collaborative governance. Huxham et al. (2000) state that multiple stakeholders might have different expectations concerning being involved in the policy process. By talking about the intentions, assumptions and expectations that stakeholders and the municipality have can situations of dissatisfaction, situations of unclarity and discussions be avoided. By avoiding these situations are the negative effects of these situations on policy effectiveness avoided as well.

**Recommendation 6:**  
**Look at what stakeholders have to offer to the municipality**

Stakeholders have sometimes more to offer than what might be seen as their core business. One of the respondents who works for a housing corporation said that his organisation can offer more with regard to the integration of refugees with a residence permit than what the organization is asked to do by the municipality. This might be the case for other (kinds of) organization as well. Stakeholders might have resources, information or networks available that could be of use to the municipality. The municipality could take advantage more of the involvement of certain stakeholders by looking at what the stakeholders can offer the municipality and the integration process.

**Recommendation 7:**  
**Monitor how refugees with a residence permit are doing after refugees with a residence permit are not a client of a case manager anymore**

One of the respondents told me that it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the policy because the refugees with a residence permit are not spoken to or monitored anymore when they are not a client of the organization anymore. How refugees with a residence permit are doing after a couple of years could be very useful information for the assessment of the effectiveness of certain approaches. Therefore it can be useful to explore the possibilities of monitoring how refugees with a residence permit are doing after a while. The monitoring can be done both by the municipality and by stakeholders, depending on which aspect of the integration policy is being evaluated.



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# APPENDIX 7: ARGUMENTS AND EXAMPLES SUPPORTING THE STATEMENTS MADE IN THE RESEARCH PAPER

## Reasons for wanting stakeholder involvement in the policy process

In the result section is mentioned that one of the reasons for wanting to be involved in the policy process as an organisation is that it can help the organization accomplish its goal. One example that is not mentioned before is the goal of one of the health care organizations and how the goals are incorporated in the approach. The goal of one of the health care organizations is to offer information to newcomers and indicate as soon as possible whether someone has psychosocial problems and needs to be referred to another organization that can help him or her with those problems [R14]. Both offering information on the health care system and hygiene, and screening early for psychosocial problems are part of the local approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit.

One of the reasons to involve certain stakeholders in the policy process is because of the expertise that the organization has. Different organizations are specialised in different fields. One of the organizations that is involved in multiple municipalities is an organization that is specialized in helping refugees find the right education [D10]. Another organization knows a lot about refugees and is therefore important for municipalities and included in the policy process [R9].

Another reason for stakeholders to want to be involved is because being involved helps the organization to achieve its own goals. One of the stakeholders that was interviewed offers language courses on B2 level. Being involved in the policy process offers the organization the possibility to tell the municipality and convince the policy makers that it is important to offer refugees with a residence permit the opportunity to learn Dutch on B2 level if they have the capacities to learn the language on that level instead of level A2 or B1 [R18].

Stakeholders see things and can pick up signals that the municipality cannot see or pick up. Involving stakeholders in the policy process can give municipalities information about refugees with a residence permit and how they are doing at home, at school or at work for example. That information might otherwise not reach the municipality, while it can be very important information about the policy and its effects. Housing corporations meet with refugees with a residence permit relatively much. Someone from a housing corporation comes by when something in somebody's house or apartment is broken or when there is a nuisance. That gives housing corporations the opportunity to get information about what is going on at home. Information that can be of use to the municipality but cannot simply be gathered by the municipality [R11]. This makes housing corporations important partners for the municipality, according to respondent 11.

One housing corporation decided to ask a social worker to accompany a repairman of the housing corporation on house visits. The social worker talked with the resident while the repairman was checking whether something was broken and needed fixing. This turned out to be a functional approach for finding out what is going on with someone and whether someone needs help [R11]. This kind of information makes certain stakeholders of importance to the municipality.

## The influence of stakeholders on policy

One example was mentioned by respondent 14 who said that her organization came up with some questions of the assessment that is used when refugees with a residence permit arrive at the municipality. That assessment is part of the policy of the municipality. Therefore it can be stated that the Community Health Services of the municipality had influence on the integration policy of the municipality.

Sometimes new policies or policy changes are not needed to create a solution for a certain situation. Sometimes stakeholders can have an influence on the situation by examining the possibilities within the existing framework of policies together with policy makers. Respondent 8 gave an example of the way in which executive agencies and municipalities can work together to make certain things possible and to find solutions for situations that occur. A group of refugees was offered a job at a car manufacturing company in another city. The refugees with a residence permit had



to work different shifts at different times and did not have a car to drive to work. The different shifts made it sometimes impossible to use public transport to get to work and to get back home. The municipality and the executive agency that is responsible for helping newcomers get a job came together to come up with a solution for the situation. The municipality and the executive agency made arrangements for the transportation of the newcomers from the city they live in to the city they work at. At the same time were refugees with a residence permit encouraged to use the money they earned partly to get a driver's license and a car. This example was used by respondent 8 to show that different actors come together to make things possible or at least look at what the possibilities are [R8].

### Diversity of perspectives

One difference in perspectives between stakeholders and municipalities can be to which municipalities refugees with a residence permit should be assigned to. Some stakeholders are of the opinion that refugees with a residence permit should not be assigned to the smallest municipalities where there is for example no public transportation. While some small municipalities have houses available for refugees with a residence permit and would like to offer those houses to newcomers [R9]. In this case do different interests lead to different preferences.

#### *Differences in perspectives and conflict*

One example of a difficult situation was given by respondent 11. 225 refugees with a residence permit were assigned a place to live in a building that would be closed after two and a half years. This meant that limited time was available to find those 225 people a new home. At a certain point in time said someone from the housing corporation to the municipality that the municipality had to take its responsibility. The housing corporation came up with a solution. The municipality replied by saying that that is not how it works. In the end the municipality agreed with the plans of the housing corporation because of a combination of events that occurred. The different parties came close to a conflict, but that conflict was avoided in the end [R11]. The question remains what would have happened if those circumstances did not occur at the same time.

Respondent 11 mentioned a conflict that he expects to arise in the future. After a renting period of five years the refugees with a residence permit that not have found a new home yet in the meantime have to be accommodated somewhere. A certain level of urgency is needed to give them priority, but will the newcomers be labelled as a group that urgently needs to be given a home [R11]. Difficult issues like that one might cause conflict.

### Should there be a specific integration policy or not

One issue was mentioned during multiple interviews. It was the issue about whether or not there should be a specific policy for the integration of refugees with a residence permit [R11; R13; R14]. There are so many different vulnerable groups within the society, what makes this group different from the others? Why not use policies that already exist for other vulnerable groups within society for this particular group as well? The group of refugees with a residence permit is a special group, but there are so many special groups that need attention as well [R13]. That is a discussion that policy makers and other involved stakeholders will probably have over the upcoming years. What will be done for this target group specifically and what will be offered to vulnerable groups in general?

Respondents 13, 14 and 15 agree that refugees with a residence permit that arrive at the municipality need extra attention. They are not used to the culture here and what is expected from employees for example. Some guidance is needed to help newcomers integrate [R13]. It is quite clear that this group is different from other vulnerable groups if you look at what the people that belong to this group have experienced [R15]. But you cannot give them certain privileges over other groups within society [R14]. Refugees with a residence permit form a vulnerable group, but they are not the only vulnerable group. There is a certain tension between offering help to newcomers and giving them certain rights that other groups do not have [R14]. Respondent 14 said that it is therefore important to be able to explain why certain choices in favour of a certain group are made.

One of the aims mentioned by a policy maker is that the approach to the integration of newcomers will eventually be part of the policy that is made for vulnerable groups in general [R2].

# APPENDIX 8: THE NEW NATIONAL INTEGRATION LAW

One of the reasons that municipalities are designing and implementing new integration policies at this moment is the new national integration law that is being designed at this moment. Of the respondents that was interviewed works as policy maker for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Respondent 19 gave a lot of information about the new national integration policy and the policy process surrounding that new national policy. Information about the new national integration policy, the policy process and how stakeholders are involved at the national level is given in this section. The appendix closes with opinions and expectations of the other respondents of the new national integration law that will be implemented in 2021.

## The new national integration law

As mentioned in the introduction is the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment still responsible for the integration of immigrants once the new national integration law is implemented. Decided is to give more tasks to the municipalities. One of the aims of the new national integration law is to prevent immigrants from becoming long term dependent on social benefits. The Ministry wants to invest in this particular group of people so they can become self-reliant and take care of their own life [R19].

The current national integration policy focuses on self-reliance and the responsibility of immigrants themselves. Own responsibility and self-reliance will not completely be dismissed once the new national integration policy is implemented, but immigrants will be given more help from the government. Municipalities will be the directors of the integration process of immigrants. Municipalities have the right position and capacities to take on that role. Municipalities will be responsible for the intake at the beginning. Another responsibility is arranging the different integration routes that immigrants can take. The right route will be chosen based on the intake. Lastly are municipalities responsible for supporting newcomers and offering help when that is necessary [R19].

Another change that is made is the required language level to pass the integration exam and become a Dutch citizen. Someone should be able to use the Dutch language at A2 level at this moment to pass the integration exam. Once the new national integration law is implemented the required language level will be B1. That choice is made because the Ministry believes that a lot of people are able to reach B1 level, they are just not stimulated to reach that level at this moment. People who are not able to reach language level B1 do not have to. During the intake a learnability test will be done. This test will show whether someone is able to reach either language level A2 or language level B1. Being able to use the Dutch language at B1 level will increase the chances of an immigrant within society. This is one of the reasons why the Ministry wants to change the required language level [R19].

Besides testing someone's learnability is the intake meant to gather information about what someone would like to accomplish and whether there are certain obstacles for someone to reach a certain goal or perform certain tasks. Questions are asked about the education that someone has had and about the languages someone is able to use. That and other topics are discussed in order to get an insight into what someone is able to accomplish, what someone wants to accomplish and what would be the best route to take [R19].

Three different routes are designed to help immigrants towards a job, an education or another form of participation. The three routes are similar to the three routes that are set up and being tested by the policy makers of municipality D. The intake and learnability test are used to decide which route an immigrant should take [R19].

The first route is a trajectory for immigrants under the age of 29<sup>14</sup> that are able and want to get an education in the

<sup>14</sup> Immigrants who want to take this route need to be 28 years old or younger because you can only apply for a student loan when you are 29 years old or younger. The integration courses that are part of this route take one and a half year. If you are older than 28 when you start with the integration courses, you will not be able to apply for a student loan when you want to start with an education after taking the integration courses because you will have reached the age of 30 [R4; R5; R19].

Netherlands. The trajectory takes one and a half year. Immigrants that choose this trajectory will get language courses and other courses like math and career orientation. After taking the courses of the trajectory for one and a half year someone should be ready to get an education at a Dutch educational institution like university or community college. The second route is the regular route with a focus on reaching language level B1 and participation within society. The third route is the so-called z-route which is focused on helping an immigrant to become self-reliant. A group of immigrants that are living in the Netherlands has never passed the integration exam. The learnability of people who take the third route is relatively low, some of them are illiterate. The Ministry is of the opinion that this group should be given more attention and help to try to learn the language and to participate in society [R19].

Every newcomer will get a personal plan that is made by someone who works for the municipality. A personal plan is made for each immigrant in order to be able to take someone's personal situation into consideration [R19]. That way the activities that someone has to do as part of the integration can be matched with what someone is capable of at that moment.

Another aspect of the new national integration law is helping immigrants with taking care of the finances. Immigrants will get help with the finances during the first six months after arriving at the municipality. The municipality will take care of the finances instead of giving newcomers a loan and telling them that they have to take care of for example paying rent themselves. This approach is called 'unburden'. The immigrants will be unburdened by not having to take care of everything themselves. After six months is examined whether someone is able to take care of paying the bills and taking care of the finances. The aim of this approach is to prevent people from becoming indebted. Some people will be able to take care of their own bills from the beginning. Then it is not needed for the municipality to take care of the finances of a certain person. The unburdening is not mandatory, it is a service [R19].

The municipality will be responsible for making the arrangements that are necessary to provide the three routes to the newcomers that live within the municipality. The municipalities will be provided with means to make the arrangements and provide the services they are responsible for. How and in collaboration with whom the municipality chooses to provide the three routes and other services is up to the municipality. Some municipalities might choose to collaborate with other municipalities in the region. Whether the municipalities work together to offer what is needed and with which municipalities they want to collaborate is up to the municipalities as well. The Ministry had meetings with some of the smaller municipalities. The municipalities mentioned that they would like to decide for themselves with which municipalities they collaborate. Some networks of municipalities already exist. The Ministry does therefore not feel the need to decide whether municipalities should collaborate and if yes with which municipalities [R19].

The policy makers of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment want to test the different elements of the new national policy by the use of pilots. Six different elements of the new national policy will be tested by municipalities that signed up for the pilots. The municipalities will get resources from the Ministry to test the elements of the new national policy. The intake is one of the elements that will be tested by a group of municipalities. The pilots will be monitored and the information that is gathered through monitoring the pilots will be shared with all the municipalities. Every municipality can use the information for the design of the local integration policy. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment wants to evaluate and monitor what is happening in the different municipalities in order to learn from experience. Parts of the rules and regulations are written down in statutory instruments which can be changed more easily if changes are necessary in comparison to a law. The Ministry is very happy with the approaches to the integration of immigrants that have already been tested and are being used in multiple municipalities, like municipality A, B and C.

It is not possible to start with an integration approach when immigrants are still living at a Centre of Asylum Seekers on a national scale. The reason is that immigrants who live in a Centre for Asylum Seekers in the east of the Netherlands will be assigned to a municipality in the west of the Netherlands. That makes it difficult for municipalities to take action when someone is still living in a Centre for Asylum Seekers on the other side of the country. Some municipalities made the arrangement that at least 80% of the refugees that live in a centre for asylum seekers within the municipality will also be assigned to the municipality once they get a residence permit. Such arrangements make it possible to start with the integration approach when newcomers are still living at the centre for asylum seekers because the municipality knows that these individuals will become new residents of the municipality. That is not possible on a national scale. Respondent 19 expects that there will be an intake at the centre for asylum seekers in the future, but it is not possible at this moment [R19].

### Stakeholder involvement at the national level

Besides involving stakeholders at the local level in the policy process surrounding integration policies, were stakeholders involved in the making of the new national integration policy as well. At an earlier point in the process were stakeholders involved then in similar processes before. That did not happen before, according to one of the respondents [9]. It was not a new way of working for the policy makers of the Ministry who were used to working in collaboration with stakeholders

on other topics. Respondent 19 did mention that other stakeholders, beside respondent 9, were surprised by the approach of the Ministry to design a policy together with stakeholders as well.

The new national integration policy has been designed over the last couple of years by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment in collaboration with multiple stakeholders. A team was established in which municipalities, refugees advocacy organizations, other ministries and executive agencies were represented. From the beginning the choice was made by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to include stakeholders in the policy process. Everyone is of the opinion the current integration policy needs to be changed, said respondent 19. "There is a lot of public support for changes". Other stakeholders that were involved by the Ministry are experts, like language teacher. Experts meetings were organized to discuss the plans of the Ministry [R19]. Experts were able to give their opinion, offer ideas and tell the Ministry what they thought was going to work or not. The Ministry is able to learn from and use the expertise of experts by involving them in the policy process. Stakeholder involvement led to a policy that is generally supported by the stakeholders that were involved [R19]. Therefore can be stated that stakeholder involvement had a positive effect on public support for the policy.

What was mentioned during the interviews multiple times is the fact that stakeholders can see things that the municipality cannot see and can pick up on signals that the municipality cannot pick up on. The same goes for the national level. Respondent 19: "There are a lot of things that we do not see here at the office. So we had to make arrangements to do receive such signals.". A lot of research is done over the last couple of years that the Ministry can make us of. It is important to gather all the knowledge and information in order to make the right decisions. The Ministry really needs the municipalities to get all the needed information [R19]. So, one of the reasons for the Ministry to involves stakeholders in to gather the needed information in order to make the right decisions.

One of the issues that played and plays a role within the policy process at the national level is to what extent matters should be written down as part of the national law and to what extent municipalities should be given the freedom to make certain decisions. To what extent should national uniformity be desired and to what extent should municipalities be able to design a local integration policy that fits the context of that municipality. The Ministry wants to offer municipalities space for accentuations. Different municipalities have different local governments and city councils that have different political wishes. But the Ministry also wants some guarantees that arrangements will be made, services will be delivered and some guarantees about the quality of the services and arrangements. Therefore, a minimum of what should be delivered by municipalities is set and what that minimum is will be incorporated in the law. There have been quite some discussions between different stakeholders about this issue. But those discussions are a good thing and part of the whole process [R19].

The process in which stakeholders were involved from the beginning has been a positive experience for respondent 19. Respondent 19 thinks that the representatives of the municipalities are in favour of being involved in the policy process like this as well. People wanted to be involved and share their opinions during the joint meetings that were organized. The Ministry received useful input from the stakeholders that were involved [R19]. The future will tell whether stakeholder involvement in the policy process surrounding the new national integration policy will contribute to the effectiveness of the integration policy.

Respondent 19 was asked as well whether she thinks that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness in the case of integration policies. Respondent 19 is of the opinion that stakeholder involvement contributes to policy effectiveness. Municipalities and other stakeholders need to be involved within such policy processes. For example because of the expertise and knowledge that different stakeholders have. It is important to talk with stakeholders and to ask them to give their opinion. Municipalities are going to have to carry out the policy made at the national level. It is difficult to make a policy that has to be carried out by another stakeholder without consulting that stakeholder. What needs to be done and what can be done need to be brought together [R19].

### The expectations of the new national integration law

Respondent 19 thinks that the municipalities are thinking positively about the new role that municipalities get when the new national policy is being implemented. Municipalities are in favour of the change that is going to happen. The Ministry knows this because of the meetings that were organized with municipalities and representatives of municipalities. There is a lot of support for the new national policy as it has been designed over the last couple of years.

Every respondent is of the opinion that the new national integration law will be an improvement in comparison to the current situation. Respondent 9 even said that it cannot become worse than it is at this point. One of the reasons why respondents think that the new national integration policy will be an improvement is that it will offer the municipality more possibilities to help refugees with a residence permit [R3; R13; R14; R17]. Municipalities will get the responsibility for the integration courses so refugees with a residence permit will not have to look for an integration course themselves [R1;

R3; R10; R13]. This offers municipalities the opportunity to make deals with organizations that offer integration courses and create, for example, trajectories in collaboration with educational institutions and employers in which integration and participation are combined [R1; R10; R13; R17]. Demands concerning the quality of integration courses can be made by municipalities from the moment the municipalities are in charge of arranging the integration courses [R10]. Municipalities can offer help to refugees with a residence permit when it comes to finances [R3; R14]. Municipalities will, if needed, take care of some of the finances in the beginning which can avoid financial problems in the future. The rent will for example be taken care of by the municipality [R14]. Respondent 3 is of the opinion that refugees with a residence permit will have better chances of finding their way in their new home society and of feeling well because of the help they will get. Giving the municipality more control over the integration process will enable the municipality to create one, continuous integration process instead of a process that consists of different elements that do not always match [R7]. It will offer the possibility to make personal plans that match the individual for who the plan is made [R7].

But there are also some concerns. Respondent 10 is worried that the new national integration policy made include certain rules that every municipality has to comply to that might not work in practice in every municipality. Respondent 10 hopes that there is room for municipality to decide how to implement the policy so that it fits the situation of that municipality. Respondents 4, 5 and 18 hope that when the new national integration law is implemented that refugees with a residence permit will still get the opportunity to get an education or take language courses on the for them right level. One last concern that was mentioned is whether every municipality will be able to offer refugees with a residence permit was is needed [R9].

So, the overall opinion is that the new national integration policy will be an improvement, but some respondents have certain concerns about what will happen once the integration policy is implemented.

The explanatory memorandum is being written at this point. The explanatory memorandum will be send to the stakeholders for consultation during the summer. The new integration law needs to be ready at the beginning of 2020 so it can be send to Parliament. The new national integration law will hopefully be implemented in 2021.



# APPENDIX 9: THE POLICY AND POLICY PROCESS IN THE FOURTH MUNICIPALITY

In this section more information is given about the policy and the policy process in municipality D. The information was gathered during a semi-structured interview with a policy maker of municipality D. As mentioned in the methodological framework is the information about municipality D not included in the results section because the policy in municipality D is not implemented yet. Therefore cannot the effectiveness of the policy not be assessed yet.

## The integration policy of municipality D

The approach was designed because of the relatively large amount of refugees with a residence permit that arrived in 2015. The municipality decided to take action and do something for this particular group of people. Two centres for asylum seekers were opened within the municipality. The municipality made a deal with the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers that every newcomer that was placed at one of the centres for asylum seekers within the municipality would also be assigned to the municipality once they were given a residence permit. That arrangement gave the municipality the opportunity to start with a certain approach to the integration of the new residents when they were still living in one of the centres for asylum seekers, because the municipality knew that the newcomers would be assigned to the municipality [R10].

There were many initiatives by all kinds of individuals and organizations within the municipality to help refugees with a residence permit during the time that a large amount of newcomers arrived. The municipality decided to design an approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit together with the different parties that took the initiative to organize something to help this particular group of people. From that point on has the municipality designed an approach in collaboration with many different organizations and in collaboration with multiple other municipalities. The approach of municipality D is a regional approach that is developed together with and implemented by eleven other municipalities in the region [R10].

Municipality D applied for European grants. Those grants will be used to launch pilots and to start implementing the approach that has been designed over the last couple of years. The new national policy is being designed at this moment, which means that municipalities do not have to have an approach for the integration of refugees with a residence permit yet and therefore do not get funding for such an approach from the national government yet. Municipality D is able to start implementing the approach because of the European grants that were given to the municipality [R10].

The municipality started working with so-called directors in 2017. Those directors guide refugees with a residence permit, the clients, once they arrive at the municipality and help them with integrating and finding a job [R10].

The municipality wanted to design an approach in which the municipality is able to start sooner with the guidance of refugees with a residence permit than in the old situation. The approach starts with an intake and orientation. The intake and orientation happen at the centre for asylum seekers. Doing the intake and orientation early on offers the possibility to send newcomers already to university, for example, while they still live at the centre for asylum seekers. Why wait with getting an education until someone is assigned a place to live within municipality D when that individual can travel to university from the centre for asylum seekers? Less time will be wasted if the time that newcomers spend at the centre for asylum seekers can be used for integration and participation. The intake is done in collaboration with a refugee advocacy organization that takes care of the social guidance in the municipality. Therefore only one intake needs to be done, instead of multiple intakes [R10]. Working together as organizations makes it possible to integrate multiple intakes into one. The orientation is meant for refugees with a residence permit who do not know what kind of job they would like to have. The aim of the orientation is to give refugees with a residence permit information about the job market, about different jobs and about what is expected of someone with a certain job. The information is offered in multiple languages, for example in Arabic, in English and in Tygrinya. The intake is meant to gather information about a refugee with a residence permit and the orientation is meant to give information to a refugee with a residence permit [R10].

The municipality designed three different integration routes that each take about 30 hours a week. These routes are designed in collaboration with the different stakeholders and the other municipalities in the region. The different routes are made to suit the needs of the refugees with a residence permit concerning their integration. The intake and orientation offer information that can be used to make a customized action plan for each newcomer [R10].

The first route is called the fast track towards education. Refugees with a residence permit that take that route start with a pre-bachelor that consist of language courses for the duration of three times ten weeks to get to language level B1. After half a year the newcomers are supposed to be ready to start an education on the for them right level. This route is set up in collaboration with different educational institutions [R10].

The second route is an integration plus route with a focus on a certain sector. Sectors that, for example, can be chosen are hospitality and health care. Refugees with a residence permit that take that route get language courses and combine these courses with different forms of participation within a certain sector, like an internship at an organization where a newcomer would like to work in the future. The different forms of participation are the plus within this route. That plus offers refugees with a residence permit to get to know people and to learn more about what it is like to work at a certain organization in their new home country. The newcomers learn the jargon that is used within the chosen sector during the language courses. The idea is that the combination of learning the language, learning the specific jargon and participating in a sector will fasten the integration of newcomers and will enable them to find a job afterwards [R01].

The third route is called the z-route in which the 'z' stands for the Dutch word 'zelfredzaamheid' which means self-reliance. That route is meant for refugees with a residence permit that will not be able to get a job in the near future. The aim of this route is to make individual self-reliant. Refugees with a residence permit that take this route get language courses that are focused on certain situations in which the newcomers need to be able to communicate with someone else. Examples of such situations are doctors' appointments, parent-teacher conferences and visits to the supermarket. This route is about empowerment. The z-route has a plus component as well. This plus component is meant to encourage refugees with a residence permit to participate in society [R10].

The fast track already exists and some elements of the other routes are already being tested as well. The pilots are used to implement parts of the approach and to further develop the parts that are already being carried out. The approach will, once it is implemented, be monitored and evaluated by a research institute. This offers the municipality the opportunity to monitor closely what works and what does not work and should be changed. The policy maker of municipality D mentioned that it is important to keep improving and to keep developing the approach. The characteristics of the groups of immigrants that arrive at the municipality change every now and then. A flexible approach is needed to be able to deal with those changes [R10].

The goal of het policy in municipality D is to let refugees with a residence permit participate within society as soon as possible. The municipality believes that refugees with a residence permit will integrate faster and will pass their naturalization exam earlier by participating soon and well within their new home society [R10].

The municipality started a year ago with bringing together all the different stakeholders and with discussing the approach to the integration of refugees with a residence permit. Among those stakeholders are employers, educational institutions, social work and health care organizations. The municipality discussed the issues that stakeholders have to deal with and what can be done to solve these issues. The municipality wants to use the knowledge that the different stakeholders already have to develop the approach [R10].

Many parties are necessary to carry out the approach of the municipality. That is one of the reasons why the municipality chose to involve the different stakeholder in the policy process. Another reason is that stakeholder involvement is needed to create an integral approach. Another reason for stakeholder involvement is the knowledge and expertise that stakeholder have. The municipality wants to use the knowledge and the networks that are already established instead of reinventing the wheel [R10]. Some of the stakeholders are better at doing a certain job than the municipality is. One last reason that was mentioned is that a policy maker could make a policy from behind his or her desk, but then he or she might not be sure whether that will work and whether the executive agencies or other organizations will be able to carry it out [R10].

The municipality actively seeks collaboration with different parties that are active in the field of integration and participation of refugees with a residence within the municipality. An organization can get involved when that organization wants to get involved. Joint meetings are organized by the municipality and everyone that wants to come to these meetings is welcome at the meetings. The joint meetings are organized every six weeks. All the involved stakeholders are invited to discuss the approach, talk about issues and successes, and to give input on plans made by the municipality. The municipality wanted to include stakeholders from the beginning to make an approach together.

Together with the stakeholders does the municipality want to look for an alternative when a stakeholder says that something does not work. The approach is designed in collaboration [R10]. Therefore can be said that stakeholders are able to influence the integration policy of municipality D.

The municipality established an advisory board. The members of that advisory board are refugees with a residence permit themselves. Members of the board give their opinions to the municipality about the plans that are designed by the municipality based on their own experiences [R10].

The municipality is the director of the policy process. At this moment is it difficult to take the role of director because the municipality has not officially been given that role yet. The municipality tries to take that role to the extent that is possible. Two other roles that the municipality has within the policy process are the role of facilitator and of stimulator of collaboration between the different stakeholders. The municipality facilitates and stimulates collaboration by organizing joint meetings and sharing information with all the different stakeholders about the local approach and developments on the national level [R10].

Most organizations that are needed to carry out the integrated approach are involved at this moment, according to respondent 10. It can be a challenge to find all the stakeholders that are needed. For example figuring out which health care organizations offer services to refugees with a residence permit is quite difficult, and so is finding enough employers. Some challenges remain [R10].

The local government fully supports the integration policy as it has been designed over the last couple of years [R10]. The results have shown the importance of the opinion of the local government for the services that the municipality offers or will offer to refugees with a residence permit. Municipality D calls itself a social and compassionate municipality and that shows in the approach that the municipality has designed for the integration of refugees with a residence permit.

Having a lot of stakeholders involved in the policy process means that there are a lot of different perspectives involved as well. Respondent 10 was asked whether that has ever led to discussions. Respondent 10 mentioned the discussion that the municipality has with organizations that offer integration courses to refugees with a residence permit. It is a free market, the municipality cannot demand anything from these organizations yet. But organizations that offer integration courses are more and more willing to work together with the municipality, mainly because of the role that the municipality will get once the new national integration policy is implemented [R10]. Working together with the municipality at this point increases the chances of being hired by the municipality in 2021 to offer integration courses.

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# APPENDIX 10: POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS THAT ARE NOT RELATED TO STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

As mentioned in the results section were some possible improvements mentioned by the respondents that are not related to stakeholder involvement and the effect of stakeholder involvement on policy effectiveness. A separate appendix was made to present the information that was given about what could be improved in the future concerning local integration policies.

One of the respondents is of the opinion that the specific approach to activate refugees with a residence permit in Municipality C should take longer than six months [R16]. At this moment are refugees with a residence permit guided by a case manager that specifically focuses on the target group refugees with a residence permit for six months. After those six months will a refugee with a residence permit be placed in one of the regular groups where he or she most of the time ends up on the bottom of the pile again. Respondent 16 said that the trajectory should take one year instead of six months, which will give case managers some more time to accomplish more together with the clients [R16]. After that year the client will become part of one of the other, regular groups. Respondent 13 agrees with respondent 16. Her idea is to place a case manager in group B and in group C that specifically focuses on refugees with a residence permit. Case managers in group A already have a relatively low case load, therefore is no special case manager needed in that group. It is hoped that what is accomplished in the first six months will not get lost afterwards by implementing this change.

Another possible improvement mentioned by respondent 13 is offering more dual trajectories. Dual trajectories are meant to further integrate integration and participation by offering language and integration courses in the workplace [R13]. It is difficult to organize such trajectories at the moment because refugees with a residence permit choose where they want to take integration courses. It is not possible to make arrangements with all the different integration institutes. But that is about to change with the implementation of the new national integration policy which makes the municipality responsible for offering integration courses to her new inhabitants.

One respondent hopes that when the new national integration policy is implemented that municipalities still offer refugees with a residence permit the opportunity to take language courses on B2 level instead of saying that B1 level is enough [R18]. That is not a possible improvement, but more a possible setback that will hopefully not occur.

