

Plan Einstein Research and Evaluation Findings

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Evaluation aims:

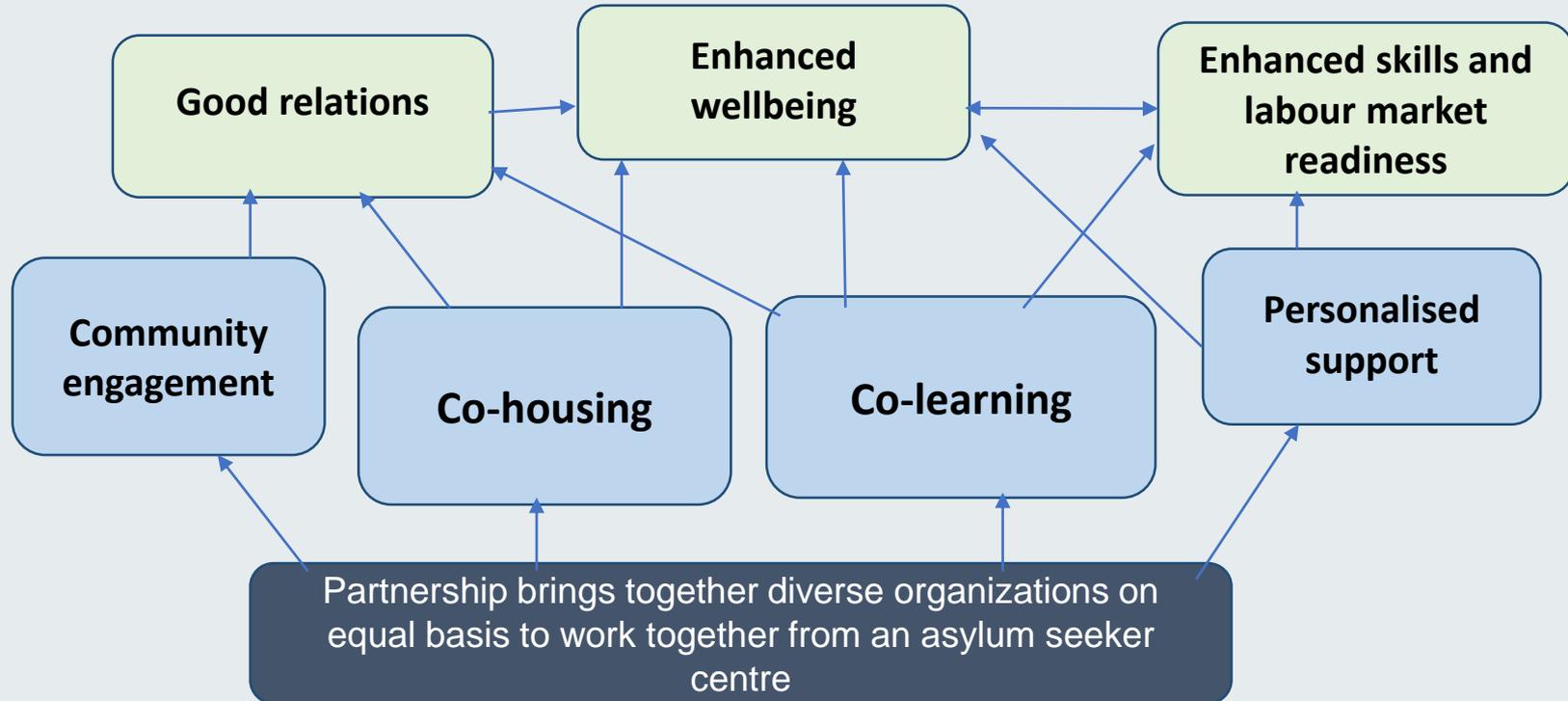
- **Accountability:** *effectiveness, benefits and early outcomes*
- **Learning:** *evidence-based recommendations*



Plan Einstein's Theory of Change



Vision: An inclusive AZC engaging the neighbourhood, creating (futureproof) labour market activation from day one and reframing broken narratives of asylum seekers



Co-housing:

- **53 young people**, average length of stay 535 days, living alongside **904 asylum seekers** (62% adult) average length of stay 132 days;
- **Mixed social activities** including **65** by different organizations bringing people together in the incubator space, and **52** from Welkom in Utrecht

Co-learning and personalised support

- **296 asylum seekers** engaged
- **522** places and 281 unique participants on 38 **English courses, 50% neighbourhood;**
- **200** places on 13 entrepreneurship courses & 10 on web design; **43% from neighbourhood;**
- **229 participants** engaged in business incubation activities, from 32 one-off events, to 63 coaching partnerships, 178 network matches, and 4 challenge and 4 start your own business programmes.

What did we measure?

1. Good relations:

Attitudes, engagement and contact

2. Skills and labour market readiness:

Activation, increased skills, networks and new business ideas

3. Wellbeing:

Feelings of productive use of time, being connected, confidence and optimism about the future and being able to contribute



How did we measure it?

Neighbourhood surveys, tenants surveys, monitoring activities, interviews with neighbours, tenants, partners, class evaluations, observations

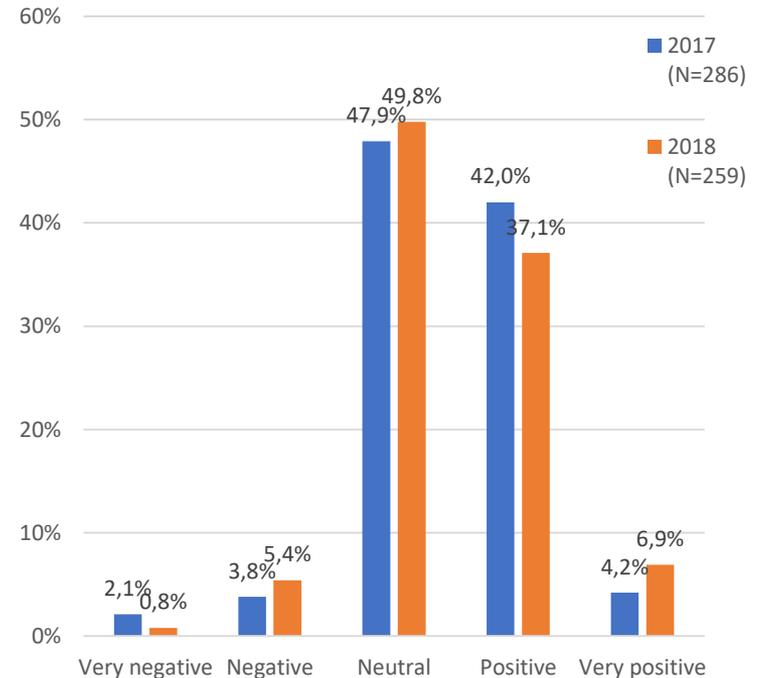
Good relations: Attitudes, Engagement and Contact

- The neighbourhood had a **neutral to positive attitude** to AZC: a **normal reaction**.
- Minority who engaged **increased (6.2-16.7%)** but visits more one-offs;
- In Plan Einstein, courses engaged especially those **with refugee and migrant backgrounds**;
- Contact with tenants **variable over time**
- 'Neighbourly' contact through shared space and classes

*At some point the first people moved in and I went by for one of those welcoming gatherings, a neighbourhood barbecue. It was a neighbourhood party with a barbecue and all kind of activities. Apart from that I have to say I don't notice much at all. **Sofie, neighbour, f, 40s.***

*We used to study together with other refugees and other Dutch people. [...] We felt that we were one group, although we are different. Although they were so different from us (like a mother who has kids), the course gave us the chance to meet and interact together. I think it was a clever idea from people who work in Plan Einstein **Fatima, f, 20s, AZC, Syria.***

How do you experience the presence of the asylum seekers' center in Overvecht?



Good relations: Recommendations

- Do not be led by dominant narrative of hostility
- Be clear on the vision for the broader neighbourhood
- Think relationally rather than territorially
- Shared, communal physical space, developed through **co-ownership and co-design**
- Give it time



*For me, the project succeeded there. And that was... oh yeah that first part went really well, so naturally, so organic, so nice, that it simply... Because you came home and somebody was smoking outside and then you had a conversation about the Quran or so.
Anton, tenant, m, 20s)*

2. Skills and labour market readiness 1: Activation, Skills, Networks and Business Ideas



1. No difference (yet) between PE individuals and other status-holder in dependence on welfare
2. In 2019 sample (n=35): half were engaged actively in activities to enter the labour market or education; half learning Dutch
2. 11 participants developing business ideas: although faster and easier for neighbourhood group
3. Evidence of enhanced **participants' skills and competencies** & networking; helps people take steps towards labour market
4. Activities less easy for those with **lower levels of education and language competencies, and higher cultural distance.**

*All these things that we found I did with the help of [coach from Berenschot]. I had no idea that I had to take this gap year and other such things. And nobody knew, like people would...ask. It's not something the average person knows anything about [...] The normal way. So we had no idea, and we had to search for a lot, make a lot of phone calls and things like that to make it work. So for sure. If it wasn't for him, I don't know what would have happened. **Salman, former AZC, m, 20s, Iran.***

*[...] is difficult to do something, because of time [...] Yes, because in the camps no problem. I have full days free. [I can take] as many courses [...] and voluntary work. Now is moeilijk [difficult]. **Wondimu, former AZC resident, 30s, m, Ethiopia***

Key findings and Conclusions: Wellbeing



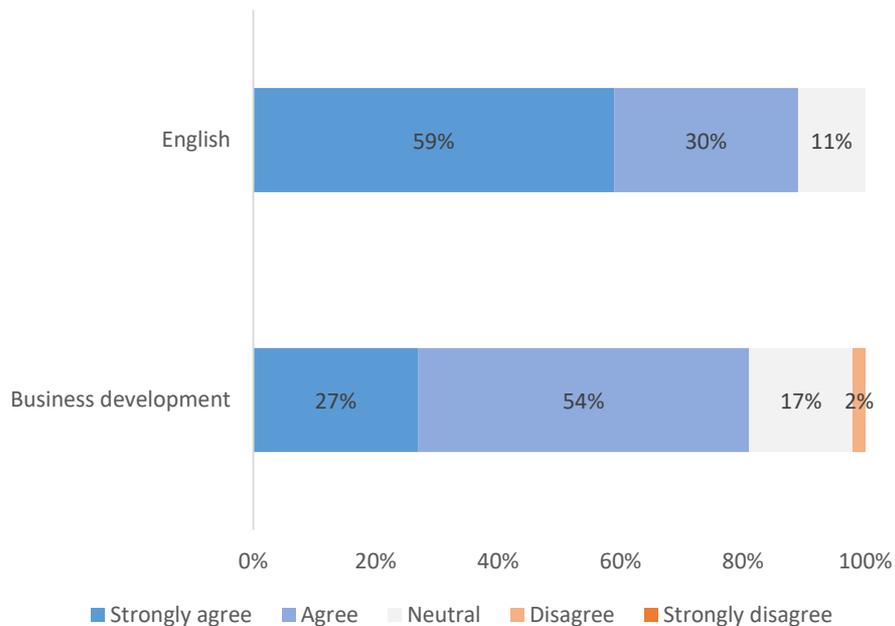
- 1. Feelings of productive use of time:** More productive than at other AZCs (before and after Plan Einstein)
- 2. Feelings of connectedness:** 'safe', 'relaxed', understanding Dutch; (more enduring) bonding capital.
- 3. Ability to think optimistically about the future, develop confidence and contribute to society:** one year after, confidence still evident.
- 4. Limits to impacts** because of the condition of asylum seeking and AZC system; **nostalgia** after Plan Einstein

*When we gather with our mothers, we **remember** the social atmosphere of Syria. We **miss** this atmosphere of the big family. Such gatherings **remind** me of my aunts and my cousins. Although we are not relatives, we spent a lot of time together in the camp.*
Amal, AZC resident, f, 20s, Syria.

*Before I come in contact with the people of Plan Einstein, I was a little bit depressed. I could not find a job, everywhere you go 'no you're too old, too this, too that'. It's not nice to hear that. **It's like you are with one leg in the grave, that is how I felt at that moment. So now it's good, I have no depression anymore, every day I go out of my bed at seven o'clock.***
Frans, Neighbour, m, 50s, Dutch.

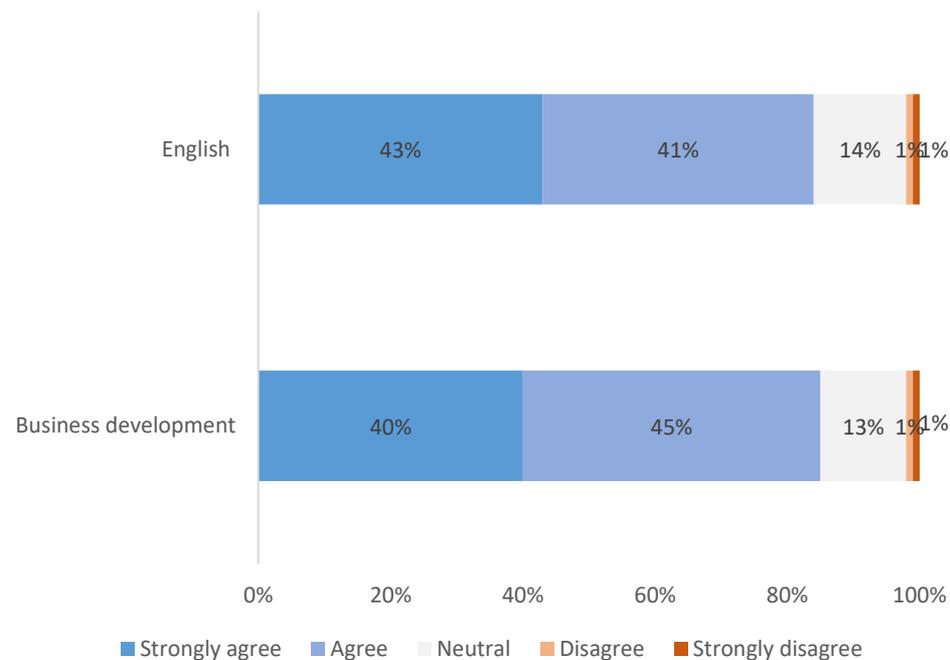
English classes and business development programme evaluations

'Attending the course/activity has made me feel that I am **using the time well**'



English classes and business development programme evaluations:

'The course/activity helped me to feel **connected to other people**'



Build on personalised approach of Plan Einstein:

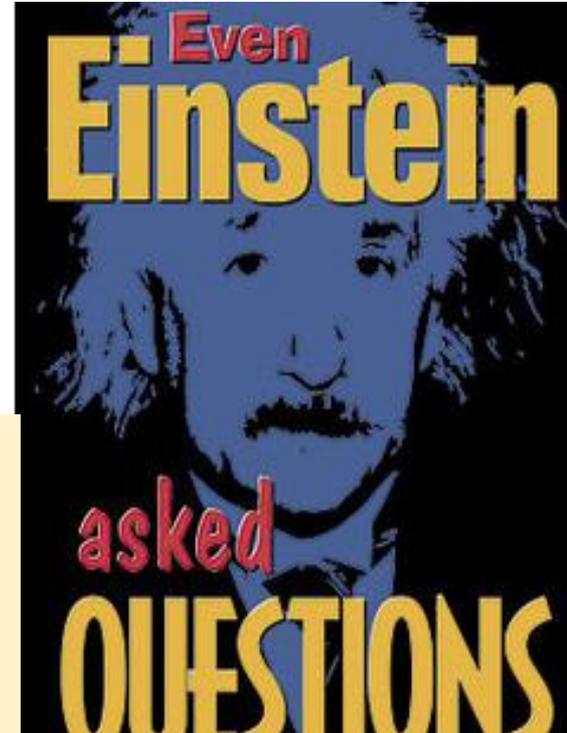
1. **Diversify educational offer to reach 'at risk' groups**
2. **Differentiate provision:** e.g. highly educated, or where legal status *is* significant;
3. **Extend support and assistance:** prolonged support to create a bridge from Plan Einstein's warmth to the coldness of the labour market
4. Develop opportunities for **co-designing, co-teaching and co-organizing activities:** create Plan Einstein as a real 'community of practice', rather than participants as consumers.
5. **A future-proof orientation** to allow participants to acquire proficiency in the national language too.

Challenges of multi-level governance:

- 1. Principle of horizontal governance right for complex problem; but challenges**
 - **in clarity** around goals and intended impact, roles, coordination;
 - **in learning culture:** high-profile public exposure increases risk-avoidance.
- 2. Contested and fraught 'local turn' of integration policies**

Recommendations:

- Develop strategic vision and clarify aspirations for impact;
- Create a learning ethos open to 'learning by doing'; facilitative leadership style to support critical reflection;
- Empower policymakers to address vision upstream (e.g. on inconsistencies of AZC system).



Plan Einstein is an emerging solution to challenges in asylum seeker reception:

- It could have achieved more in some areas

But, it has tried out a new alternative approach to the current reception model by:

- trialling **a relational approach** to asylum seekers which attends to their relationships and networks.
- Improving their **skills, but - as importantly - raising their confidence**, know-how and feelings of hope as necessities, not luxuries.
- It helps with the **first steps towards activation**, from 'knowing no-one' and 'having no idea', to 'knowing some one' and having 'some idea'.
- **It does not change the bigger institutional process of reception**, but challenges its logics.

When you feel that there is someone who is trying to get you out of your bubble, you have the desire to go outside and try new things

Amal, AZC resident, f, 20s, Syria

Thank you and good luck....

