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EU-CIEMBLY Experts' Workshop Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an account of the Experts' Workshop on the topic of 'Designing Intersectional Citizens' Assemblies', organised and hosted by the University of Essex EU-CIEMBLy team in Colchester, UK during the second year of the project, on 9 and 10 July 2025. The workshop brought together researchers and practitioners to explore citizens' assembly design and implementation through the lens of intersectionality. Discussions in the workshop considered the relationship between intersectionality and citizens' assemblies and resulted in feedback and suggestions from the invited experts for the next steps of the project.

The first day of the workshop consisted of five sessions which included a welcome from Karen Bowlby, Inclusion Manager at the University of Essex that reflected on power and privilege. The University of Essex team then gave a presentation on the EU-CIEMBLy project, giving an overview of work conducted so far and initial findings from the recently concluded collection of empirical data. The experts' panels that followed were split into two themes: 'Marginalisation and Participation' and 'Democratic Innovations and Citizens' Assemblies'. The panels brought together contributions on various aspects related to the topic of the workshop such as intersectionality research in EU law; reaching marginalised communities; involving civil society and community organisations in the design of citizens' assemblies; and the intersectional approaches that have been, or could be taken in practice when designing citizens' assemblies. The final session of the first day engaged the project team and experts in small-group, deliberation-inspired discussions around the next steps of the project and particularly the pilot design at the local, national, and transnational levels. A full participant list can be found in Appendix 1.

The second day of the workshop brought together the project team to reflect on the panels and discussions of the first day. The first session encouraged project team members to share their reflections on the previous day's deliberation activity concerning the pilot design. While discussions varied across the pilots, cross-cutting findings related to recruitment and approaches to sortition, the significance of a well-tailored facilitation technique, and the use of language. The day concluded with a deep-dive into the local pilot providing an insight into the preliminary thematic analysis of the interviews from Deliverable 3.1 in order to encourage the project team to reflect on potential interventions in the local but also the national and the transnational pilots.

The workshop provided a rich platform for interdisciplinary dialogue, connecting theoretical frameworks with practical applications. The atmosphere of the workshop over both days was lively, positive, and collaborative as demonstrated by the insightful discussions which will help to inform and shape the next stages of the project.

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I. Introduction

On 9 and 10 July 2025, the University of Essex team organised and hosted the EU-CIEMBL Y Experts' Workshop, which brought together the project consortium and external expert guest speakers to disseminate, communicate, and discuss the project's findings to date.

The workshop, titled '**Designing Intersectional Citizens' Assemblies**' took place at Wivenhoe House Hotel and the University of Essex Colchester campus across two days.

The first day of the workshop featured presentations by the invited experts in two interrelated panels relevant to key project themes. The theme of the first panel was 'Marginalisation and Participation' and the theme of the second panel was 'Democratic Innovations and Citizens' Assemblies'. Eight guest speakers shared their work and reflected on prompts related to intersectionality and citizens' assemblies.

The second day included only project partners and offered the opportunity to reflect on the discussions of the first day and to develop further ideas on the project's pilot model citizens' assemblies. The invitation was extended to all project partners within the consortium; most partners attended the event in person with only a few attending online. A full participant list can be found in Appendix 1.



The participants of the Experts' Workshop at Wivenhoe House Hotel.

The timing of the workshop was beneficial to the project as it followed the conclusion of the collection of empirical data under Work Package 3. The project team was able to share initial findings on the empirics and how these have been informing the planning for the pilot models. We received valuable feedback on the next steps, which will feed into the upcoming Deliverables 3.3 and 3.4, which will mark the conclusion of Work Package 3.

This report provides an overview of both days of the workshop, including brief summaries of presentations, discussions, key reflections, and feedback.

II. Agenda

The experts' workshop was held over two days and the agenda was as follows:



EU-CIEMBLY
Creating an Inclusive European Citizens' Assembly
DESIGNING INTERSECTIONAL CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES
Experts' Workshop 9 and 10 July 2025
AGENDA

Day 1: 9 July 2025

Venue: Wivenhoe House Hotel

09:00-09:30: Coffee

09:30-09:45: Welcome from Dr Niall O'Connor (University of Essex) and Karen Bowlby, Inclusion Manager at the University of Essex

09:45-10:45: EU-CIEMBLY Project Presentation

10:45-11:00: Break

11:00-12:30: Expert Panel 1: Marginalisation and Participation

Guest speakers:

Sanna Elfving, Natalia Rodriguez Vicente, Ewen Speed, and Melisa Ross

Chair: Niall O'Connor

12:30-13:30: Lunch

13:30-15:00: Expert Panel 2: Democratic Innovations and Citizens' Assemblies

Guest speakers:

Lucy Parry, James Organ, and Juliet Kilpin

Chair: Anastasia Karatzia

15:00 - 15:15: Break

15:15 - 17:30 Workshop on the EU-CIEMBL Y Pilot Citizens' Assembly Models

19:00 Dinner

Day 2: 10 July 2025 (for project team members)

Venue: University of Essex Room CTC.1.01

09:00-09:30: Coffee

09:30-11:30: Taking Stock of Feedback

11:30-12:30: Lunch

12:30-13:00: Consortium Meeting

13:00 - 14:30 Deep Dive into the Local Pilot from Dr Rebecca Warren (from the University of Essex team)



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III. The Experts' Workshop: Day 1

The first day of the workshop was split into **five sessions**, including the welcome and presentation of the project's progress to date. The two panels were organised by theme with the first panel focusing on '**Marginalisation and Participation**' and the second on '**Democratic Innovations and Citizens' Assemblies**'.

In advance of the workshop, the experts on each panel were provided with the following prompts to reflect on during their presentations:

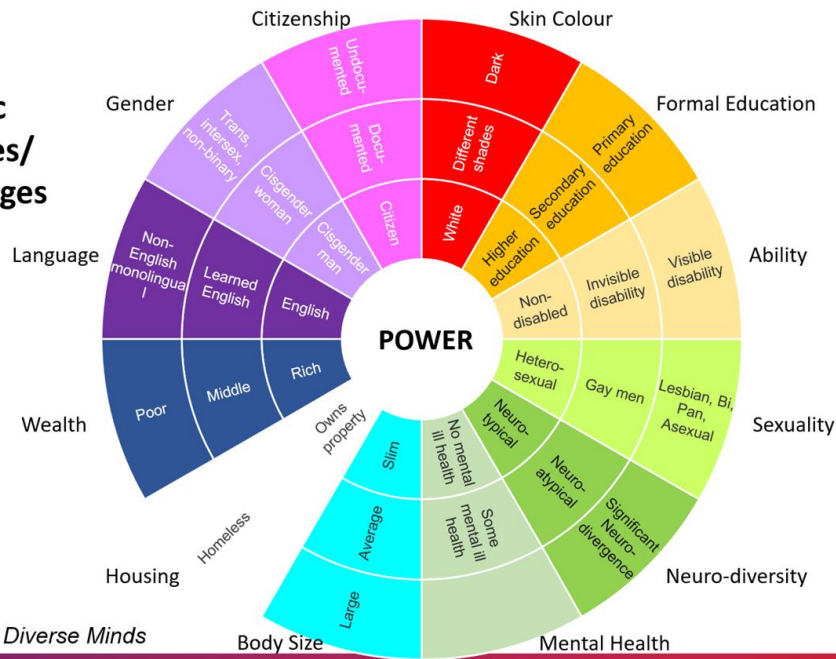
- Do you think that an intersectionality lens can have added value in the context of your work? Would it make you think differently about existing concepts or approaches?
- For deliberative mini-publics, such as citizens' assemblies, what new perspectives can be gained from intersectionality that might challenge existing practices such as sortition?
- What is the one thing that your research can bring to the design of participatory mechanisms that seek to reach those that are traditionally unrepresented or unheard?

Each speaker was given fifteen minutes to present before opening the floor to questions and discussion within the room. Following the panels, the University of Essex team gave brief presentations on the plans for the local, national, and transnational pilots before breaking into small groups to discuss the opportunities and challenges of each pilot and reflecting on the day's discussions.

1. Introductions and Welcome

The introduction and welcome to the experts' workshop was given by [Niall O'Connor](#) from the University of Essex and one of the leaders of Work Package 3. [Karen Bowlby](#), the inclusion manager at the University of Essex, welcomed guests to the event with a presentation on '**Power. Recognising Privilege, Creating Change**'. This presentation spoke to key themes of the day, getting participants to consider **power, privilege, and intersectionality** and raising challenges around sharing privilege and power, such as self-recognition, and common pushbacks, that continued to fuel reflection and discussion throughout the day.

Systemic Advantages/ Disadvantages



Credit: Leyla Okhai, Diverse Minds

Slide

Karen Bowlby showed a version of the wheel of power when discussing systemic advantages and disadvantages, and which reflects concepts also used in Deliverable 2.2 of the project.

2. EU-CIEMBLY Project Presentation

Following the welcome, Niall O'Connor gave an overview of the project and the theoretical framing that was developed under Work Package 2. The presentation introduced the project to the experts and took stock of the work conducted so far. Niall built on Karen Bowlby's introduction to power and privilege, outlining how intersectionality should run through the design choices of a citizens' assembly. He also shared details of the models for operationalising an intersectionally inclusive citizens' assembly that were produced at an earlier stage of the project under Deliverable 2.3.

[Anastasia Karatzia](#) then gave an overview of the project's approach to designing the pilot citizens' assemblies and how the empirical work conducted under Work Package 3 is informing and shaping the relevant design choices. She explained the methodology with which the project team has been collaboratively designing the pilots. As shown below in the slide from the presentation, under Task 3.5, five project team meetings took place from February to July 2025, each on a separate aspect of the pilot design:

Our methodology for pilot design under Task 3.5



Anastasia Karatzia showed the methodology of the project's pilot design.

After this general overview, Anastasia conducted a more in-depth discussion on the topics of language and facilitation, which featured as specific discussion topics in team planning meetings. These two cross-cutting themes were selected because they are of particular interest to the project: on the one hand, language and multilingualism is particularly relevant especially in relation to the transnational context, and on the other hand facilitation is a key aspect of how citizens' assemblies attempt to address power imbalances within the deliberating group.

Subsequently, some preliminary findings from the empirical work were shared, including quotes from the anonymised transcripts of interviews and selected methodological findings from the secondary data analysis. The team shared interview quotes relating to the challenges of recruiting participants from marginalised social groups, practices for centring lived experiences of participants, and strategies for bring intersectionality into the deliberations. Examples can be found below:

Bringing in the intersections

[...] Sometimes there's like cognitive load that comes with a lot of new information. [There are] different strategies to avoid that. And I think kind of low (i.e. fewer) information is one way. I don't think again. It's not a good fit for all topics, but I think for some topics, and depending on the objective, it might not be a bad option.

To give another example, we had one day to tackle the question of intersectional impacts of climate change. Humongous topic. (...) And so that's where, like again, that, like low information approach, worked really well. We were able to give them a report that the city had already created about it was like a University-commissioned report that had identified a number of intersectional challenges around climate change. And we were like, this is the information that already exists.

We gave a brief overview of it, and then we just did storytelling circles in a "fish-bowl" model with different folks with different lived experiences.

So first we had youth at the center, then we had seniors at the center. Then folks who had experiences of mental health and physical disabilities, and we had one with people of color and Indigenous people and and we just heard their stories for four hours, and the stuff that came out of those stories were so different than what was in the reports.

There is wisdom in the group that can kind of surface if we give it enough time. And I think that's kind of **the trade-off**. When we have sometimes too much information, we lose time to surface and lived experiences, and all of that information that is sometimes not caught in an existing report. And so I think that would be again like where I feel like that's innovative is just like finding a different way of accessing knowledge and and creating conditions where that knowledge can surface which sometimes is just talking for four hours about people's stories. (Interview 2)



Anastasia Karatzia shared some of the preliminary thematic analysis of the interviews from Deliverable 3.1.

Some of the most interesting findings concern the evaluation / data collection process itself

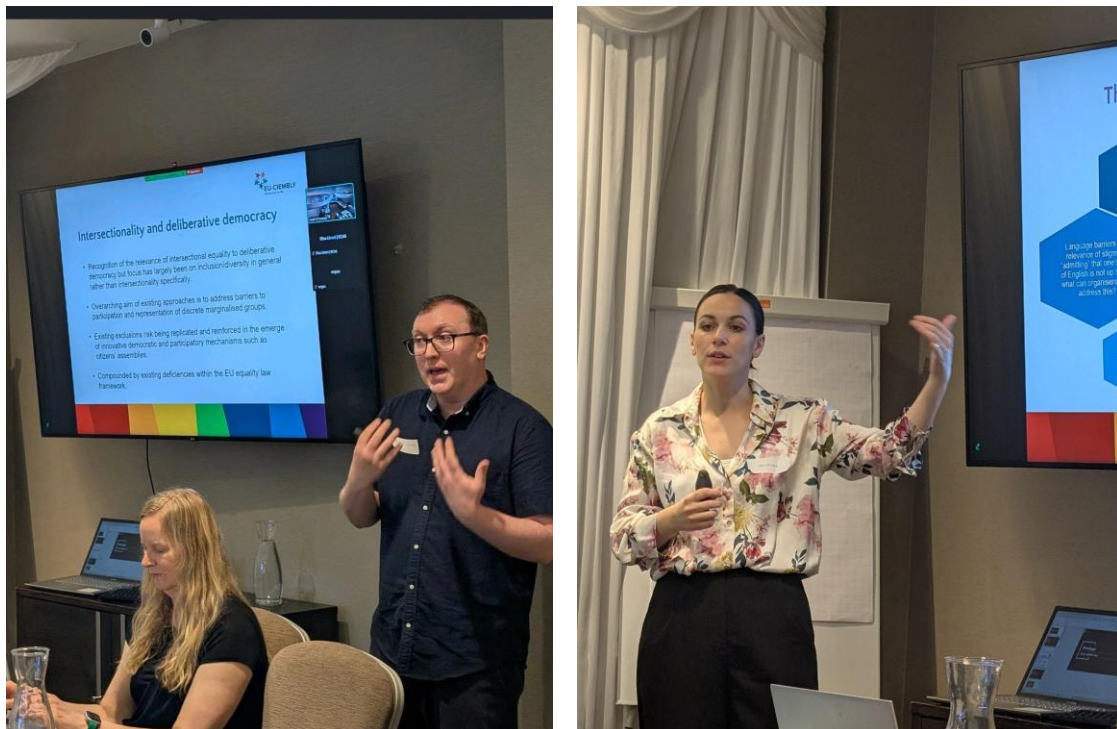
1. The current understanding from the dataset scoping efforts is that it does not seem to be essential standard practice to link demographic data to participant responses in citizens' assemblies' evaluations. This precludes basic analysis based on demographic characteristics, let alone a more complex intersectional analysis.
2. Even where demographic data was collected, there were vast differences and little consistency in the types, number, and response options within the demographic variables included in evaluations, the scope for an intersectional analysis. For example, while both the datasets used a diverse set of demographic criteria to recruit participants (e.g., disability status, socio-economic background) these characteristics were not reported in either evaluations.
3. Thirdly, because the CAs we were able to evaluate used a sortition approach to their sampling and recruitment, the numbers of people with particular minoritised identities (e.g. ethnic minorities, people of non-conforming gender identities, people with less formal education) were very small, limiting the strength and generalisability of the findings about these groups.



Anastasia Karatzia also shared some of the initial findings of the secondary data

Workshop participants were invited to explore the empirical data further in the [project's community page in Zenodo](#), where the data will be publicly available from August 2025.

The floor was then opened for questions and reflections which prompted discussion on facilitation, measuring the impact of the design choices in the citizens' assembly pilots, information parity, and ensuring that the project does not discount good practices that are yet to feature in published literature.



Niall O'Connor and Anastasia Karatzia presenting the work on the EU-CIEMBLEY project so far.

3. Expert Panel 1: Marginalisation and Participation

The first panel on '**Marginalisation and Participation**' was chaired by Niall O'Connor and brought together experts in EU law, language and linguistics, medical sociology, and deliberative democracy to discuss access and participation of marginalised groups.

Dr Sanna Elfving, University of Lincoln

[Sanna Elfving](#), Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Lincoln, gave an introduction to **EU equality law** and the directives related to **equality and discrimination**, highlighting that many protections and provisions focus on economic issues or on the impact of discrimination in working life. Sanna discussed diverse representation in judiciaries and how it is desirable for these bodies to be representative and reflective of the wider population. The presentation then drew on lessons from courts and

tribunals to examine different types of diversity such as that of linguistics, religion, gender, and provided thoughts on how this could impact the design of participatory mechanisms including selecting people with lived experiences, focusing on ability to identify and challenge narratives and promote equality.



Sanna Elfving's presentation shares the implications of her research on the design of participatory mechanisms.

Dr Natalia Rodriguez Vicente, University of Essex

[Natalia Rodriguez Vicente](#), Lecturer in the Department of Languages and Linguistics at the University of Essex, presented insights from research on interpreter mediation in mental health encounters. Natalia gave an overview of research from a collection of projects focused on language-based [in]equalities in mental healthcare and the impact of **language and interpretation** on service users. The presentation concluded with reflections on the role of **privilege and power** in interpretation services, the need for **trust and rapport** between the researcher and participant, and the importance of avoiding tokenistic approaches towards underrepresented groups.



Natalia Rodriguez Vicente presenting as part of Expert Panel 1.

Prof. Ewen Speed, University of Essex

The presentation from [Ewen Speed](#), Professor of Medical Sociology in the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Essex discussed conducting research related to marginalised and excluded groups and critiqued trends of co-production and terms such as 'hard to reach' and 'giving voice'. Ewen identified two forms of co-production (additive and transformative) and argued that co-production should be **more transformative**: it is not enough just to give voice, **meaningful change** needs to follow. When considering participation, Ewen reflected on the ideal of 'full parity of participation' and how gaps can be narrowed between dominant and subordinate groups.

Dr Melisa Ross, University of Bremen and Global Citizens' Assembly Network (GloCAN)

Melisa Ross, [University of Bremen](#) and [Global Citizens' Assembly Network \(GloCAN\)](#) presented on intersectionality in transnational deliberation, examining three ways in which intersectionality is not explicitly taken up but is apparent through practice. Melisa highlighted examples of citizens' assemblies that engaged with different **quota and sampling methods, enclaves and safe spaces, and deliberative experience and ownership**. Melisa prompted discussion around collective and individual participation, encouraging us to think about the level of participation and how to ensure we are not

asking too much of participants, for example in relation to the frequency or duration of the assembly sessions.



Melisa Ross presenting her work on intersectionality in transnational deliberation.

Discussion

The diversity in the speakers' backgrounds was one of the strengths of this panel, as each of them shared insights from their own discipline and practice regarding marginalised and underrepresented groups. Each of the presentations prompted questions from the project team that engaged with themes and challenges of the project so far. As a project situated in the Global North, the examples from Melisa regarding good practices in deliberative mini-publics in the Global South prompted discussion on the tension between traditional best practice in citizens' assembly methodology. Examples of this included the position of 'sortition' as best practice, and the link between citizens' assemblies and other forms of deliberative democracy and processes that engage more deeply with activism and grass-root processes. This led to a discussion of the project's position and ability to challenge traditional views, in light of our focus on intersectionality. The role of participant 'voice' was also key to the discussion and the team reflected on how the project can ensure that participation is not just performative. We shared examples of how we are exploring avenues for the pilot citizens' assemblies to have potential for real-life impact in political life. The importance of impact was stressed to ensure that while we are experimenting with different methods, participants have a clear understanding of what their participation can and cannot lead to. This was connected to the discussion sparked by Ewen's presentation, which focused on the message that 'if you open a decision-making space

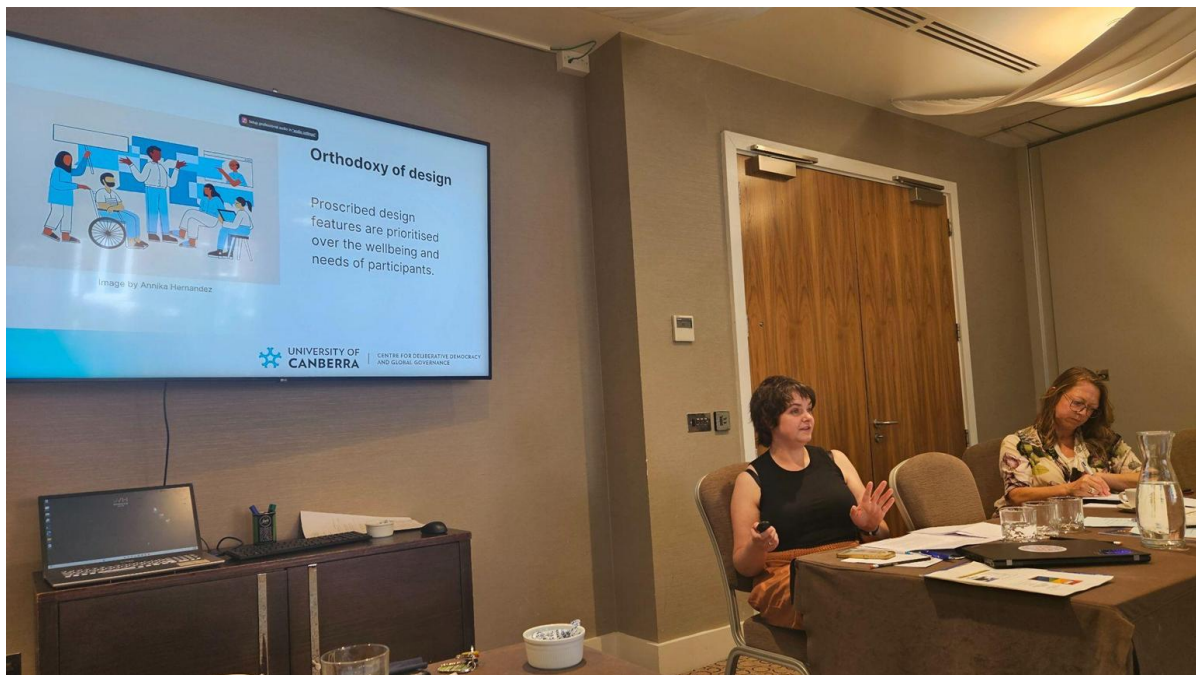
to more inclusive participation, you need to ensure impact.’ Natalia further encouraged the team to engage with marginalised communities in a respectful way, both by embedding them into the conversation, by creating safe spaces for them, and by giving back. Drawing on both the presentations of Natalia and Sanna, the group discussed legal shortcomings in engaging with intersectionality, such as the limitations in EU and UK equality law which addresses discrimination based on separate grounds, but does not address intersectional discrimination.

4. Expert Panel 2: Democratic Innovations and Citizens’ Assemblies

The second panel on ‘Democratic Innovations and Citizens’ Assemblies’ was chaired by Anastasia Karatzia and brought together experts in deliberative democracy and practitioners to discuss recent research and practice, including reflections on the opportunities and limitations of deliberative democratic mechanisms.

Dr Lucy Parry, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance and University of Edinburgh

[Lucy Parry, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance](#) and University of Edinburgh, presented selected findings from the report titled ‘[Deliberative Integrity: Risks and Response in Mini-Public Governance](#)’ and reflected on ongoing interview analysis from EU-CIEMBLY’s sister project [INSPIRE](#). Lucy described the distinction between **deliberative quality** and **deliberative integrity**, defining deliberative quality as the ‘front stage’ of a deliberative mini-publics and deliberative integrity as the ‘backstage’. She then focused on two of the five risk areas for deliberative integrity that were identified in the report and which are particularly relevant to our project: **economic pressure** and **orthodoxy of design**. The risk associated with ‘economic pressure’ was identified in organisations that rely on securing funding through commissioned processes which may lead to organisations ‘over promising’ and pushing deliberative mini-publics as solutions, rather than other processes that may be better suited to achieving the task at hand. When considering the risk area of ‘orthodoxy of design’, Lucy highlighted issues with organisers of deliberative mini-publics who may prioritise design features over the wellbeing and needs of participants, for example focusing on ‘best practice’ of the industry rather than the needs of individuals or the community.



Lucy Parry presenting on design integrity in deliberative mini-publics.

Dr. James Organ, University of Liverpool

The presentation from [James Organ](#), Reader in Law at the University of Liverpool, drew on a range of participation projects, highlighting key design and discussion points that had emerged throughout the workshop. James discussed the role of **empowerment** as a common thread through all his research projects, whether through civil, social or political rights. The presentation reflected on the [Citizen's Assembly for the Renewal of Engagement in Europe project](#), and particularly the experience of recruiting through Civil Society Organisations, and the importance of being transparent with participants around the potential for follow-up actions. James also drew on his recent project experimenting with local legislative theatre activities to explore creative methods and to **challenge power dynamics** by giving agenda setting power to participants and having power holders in the room.

Juliet Kilpin, Citizens UK

Juliet Kilpin, Senior Organiser from [Citizens UK](#), was the final presenter of the experts' panels and gave an overview of Citizens UK's use of citizens' assemblies and community organising methodology. Juliet described how the community organising methodology **builds power through collective leadership**. She talked about the role of broad based organising, which is to listen to individuals about the issues that they and their community are facing across intersections, and to negotiate and make change. The presentation concluded with reflections on the role of organising and

intersectionality and ways in which the community organising methodology can promote and empower different intersections of society by bringing diverse groups of people together.



Reflections on organising and Intersectionality:

1. **Building** independent relational power to hold decision-makers to account doesn't happen by accident!
2. Build the alliance - All are welcome at the table. But do organisations/groups of intersectional people know?
3. **Listen** – Leaders listen to their members, those at the alliance table get to decide.
4. **Plan** – Assembly – The action is in the reaction. Turn private shame into public power. Stories, clear asks, non-partisan, fun, agitational.
5. **Act** – Turn out of trained and prepared leaders - Public accountability.
6. **Negotiate** – Match top-down power with relational power
7. Organising together across diversity - Weaving Trust



Juliet Kilpin's presentation reflected on organising through the community, and intersectionality.

Discussion

Drawing on the experiences and examples raised by the speakers, the vibrant discussion that followed this panel focused on the practical considerations of designing and running citizens' assemblies. Building on the discussion from the first expert panel, recruitment was a key topic alongside different methods for implementing - or questioning - sortition. Lucy reflected on some of the findings of a recent workshop on sortition held by the ISWE Foundation and the diversity in how people implement sortition, such as open calls through civil society organisations, and that there was increasing openness in the community of practice in terms of inclusion, inside and outside the room. James built on Lucy's reflections, describing recruitment through civil society organisations as a 'shortcut' in the selection process and highlighted the importance of getting people in the room that have experienced the issues, drawing on Juliet's presentation on community organising and in-depth listening. The importance of building relationships with both participants and powerholders was also raised as important to bringing different groups together within the assembly, and the group discussed the stage where it is most appropriate to do so. Juliet emphasised the importance of organising, over mobilising and building long-term relationships that help individuals and organisations to tackle common issues. The discussion of practice

and implementation provided a strong foundation for the afternoon workshop session where the three pilots were examined in detail.

5. Workshop Session on EU-CIEMBLY Pilot Models

The session began with a brief overview of the local, national and transnational pilots given by [Samantha Woodward](#), [Anastasia Karatzia](#) and [Niall O'Connor](#) respectively. Each five-minute overview introduced key features and aims of each pilot such as the number of participants, ideas on recruitment and topic, and some of the design choices that are being explored.

Local Pilot – Colchester, Essex

- 50 Participants
- Students from the University of Essex
- Members of the community from Citizens' Essex
- Mix of online and in-person sessions:
 - Three sessions total
 - First and last session to be held online using Zoom
 - Second session in-person to be held at the University of Essex
 - Potential for hybrid session using Zoom room at the University to offer in-person/online simultaneously



citizens
Essex

National Pilot – Cyprus

- 76 participants recruited from all over Cyprus
- First Citizens' Assembly in Cyprus
- Broadly relevant to cost of living / Housing / or a theme closer to the day-to-day life of the society, linked to both of these topics, e.g. Ageing population.
- Mix of online and in-person sessions (12 hours in total):
 - *First plenary session, online using Zoom*
Ice-breaking session and introduction to intersectionality and power relations
 - *Second session, face to face*
Expert presentations, sharing of lived experiences of the cost of life crisis in Cyprus and working group discussion leading to recommendations
 - *Final plenary sessions, online using Zoom*
Bringing all participants back together to finalise decisions and recommendations



Transnational Pilot – Online

- 100 participants from across Europe
- Full online Citizens' Assembly
- Aiming to build on the experience and findings of the local and national pilots
- Two options that are currently being explored:
 - A 'DIY' Approach (Option 1)
 - Creating synergies with other similar projects and efforts (Option 2)



Selection of slides from the material given to the group to support discussion of the local, national and transnational pilots.

The participants were then divided among three tables for discussions on the local, national, and transnational pilots. Experts were allocated to a pilot depending on experience, consortium members joined pilots based on interest, and each team consisted of around 8 people. The discussion was fruitful and allowed for a closer gathering of insights from the experts that would prove valuable in Day 2 of the Experts' Workshop.



Exchanging ideas and feedback: workshop on the EU-CIEMBLY pilot models.

IV. The Experts' Workshop: Day 2

1. Taking Stock of Feedback

The second day of the workshop only involved project team members and invited them to reflect on the panel and pilot workshop sessions of Day 1. In the first session of the day, each person shared their reflections or findings in a roundtable discussion which encouraged broad discussion around the pilot models. Following this, one member of each of the teams (local, national, and transnational) shared the key findings and questions that emerged through the pilot discussion.

2. Deep Dive into the Local Pilot

In the afternoon session, the team brainstormed on the basis of the 'deep dive' into the local pilot led by Rebecca Warren. The local pilot was chosen for this discussion as it is due to take place in February 2026 and will be the first of the three pilots. The deep dive drew on initial findings from the thematic analysis of interviews conducted under Work Package 3 and prompted discussion about all of the pilots, rather than just the local. Rebecca Warren led this session, which drew on initial findings from the thematic analysis of the interviews conducted by the University of Essex team. Quotes from interview transcripts were used to disseminate some of the findings from the empirical research, and to prompt discussion.

The floor was then opened to the group to discuss the local, national, and transnational pilots. This led to a lively discussion and exchange of views, with the group reflecting on issues such as **managing power dynamics within the pilots, emphasising**

intersectionality considerations during the facilitation of the pilots, and dealing with the issue of **multilingualism**.

A summary of the discussions of Day 2, when project team members reflected on the small-table exchanges of the afternoon of Day 1, is shared below:

2.1. Local

Following the discussion within the group and drawing on the lessons learned during the second expert panel on the importance of relationship building; it was agreed that we should revisit the balance between the online and offline elements of the local pilot. We had initially planned to hold only one session in-person, but will consider hosting two sessions in-person, ensuring that the first session, where participants will meet each other for the first time, will be in-person.

Hosting the first first session in-person, would enable us to design the session to be more informal, bringing participants together to meet and share food as well as participating in activities to build relationships and understanding between participants. An example of this could be a [‘weaving trust’](#) which was an activity described by Juliet in the second expert panel used by Citizens UK to encourage one-to-one conversations between participants about issues of concern. Building on Karen Bowlby’s presentation on Day 1 of the workshop, we also talked about the potential of encouraging participants to self-identify in the first session so that organisers arrange different activities across the pilot based on how participants perceive intersections as well as the intersections that are of interest to the project team.

2.2. National

Discussions on the national pilot began by reflecting on the role of language and the opportunity to test different approaches in each of the pilots. For the national pilot, we aim to embed language, not just in the assembly, but throughout the recruitment process and the group considered what this might look like for organisers and participants. The group noted the difficulties associated with traditional methods of communication at the recruitment stage of a citizens’ assembly, including the fact that certain communities may be harder to reach by post. This will necessitate the consideration of more innovative approaches during the project’s citizens’ assembly design stage.

Practical parameters of the pilot, such as the timing and how this will impact topic selection, were also key factors raised in the group discussion. For example, if the citizens’ assembly takes place over 12 hours (i.e. to minimise the time constraints, something that was highlighted during the discussions of the first day), how do you ensure a wide range of views are heard? The group considered how platforms such

as those of [Make.org](https://www.make.org/), or short surveys in online media channels could be harnessed to have wider input alongside involving organisations who work with different intersections of society. Similar to the local pilot, the group considered having participants self-identify and discussed breaking down the idea of power and privilege in the citizens' assembly as an aspect that can then be included in the evaluation of the pilot. Further questions emerged through the discussion about the role of power holders, how and if they should be brought into the space and the importance of follow up opportunities being included in the pilot design.

2.3. Transnational

The group discussing the transnational pilot considered existing transnational assemblies and how they could ensure that elements being tested in the project pilot would be able to provide targeted recommendations to enhance the practices of the European Commission. The group discussed the need to run 'diagnostics' on the existing European Citizens' Panels to understand the opportunities for researching and improving existing practices from an intersectional perspective. Some initial themes, such as recruitment and sortition, that emerged through discussions following each expert panel were suggested as potential options. The group also discussed possible interventions regarding multilingualism and especially whether and how multilingualism can be achieved with less resources than the ones usually available for the European Citizens' Panels. This would be useful for 'democratising' citizens' assemblies and making them more accessible as a form of public participation.

Recruitment for the transnational pilot had already been identified in project team discussions as a challenge within this project. Recognising the importance of local knowledge in reaching marginalised groups, the group explored the idea of identifying relevant civil society organisations to support recruitment in the transnational pilot. Building on the discussions of the first expert panel, impact was identified as important but the group also emphasised the need to be realistic and to not overpromise outcomes for participants.



Teamwork during the second day of the experts' workshop, led by Rebecca Warren.

V. Conclusions

Over the course of two days, the Experts' Workshop brought together experts from a range of disciplines to disseminate and inform the ongoing work of the EU-CIEMBLY project team. Each of the experts brought a fresh perspective and insights to the project that will be invaluable in the upcoming project deliverables which focus on evaluation of selected existing practices (Deliverable 3.3) and pilot design (Deliverable 3.4), as well as for the implementation of the pilots in Work Package 4. In particular, discussions on recruitment and the different methods of implementing sortition as well as the role of facilitation had a significant impact on how the project will move forward. Throughout the workshop, discussions emphasised the importance of intersectionality, inclusion and equality in citizens' assemblies and deliberative democracy more broadly. These discussions will also form the basis for exploring the potential for an edited volume for an academic journal.

This deliverable has sought to encapsulate the most important discussion points from the workshop and some of the immediate implications the workshop has had on the project. Overall, the Experts' Workshop led to a vibrant multidisciplinary exchange between our project team, and the external guest speakers which play a significant role in shaping the next steps of the EU-CIEMBLY project.

On behalf of the entire EU-CIEMBLY project team, we would like to thank our guest speakers for their insightful presentations and the fruitful exchange of ideas during the workshop.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Participant List

Day 1, 9 July 2025

Keynote Speaker

Karen

Inclusion Manager, University of Essex

Bowlby

Experts

Sanna Elfving

Senior Lecturer, Lincoln Law School, University of Lincoln

Natalia Rodriguez Vicente

Lecturer in Department of Languages and Linguistics, University of Essex

Ewen Speed

Professor of Medical Sociology in School of Health and Social Care, University of Essex

Melisa Ross

Co-lead of the Global Citizens' Assembly Network (GloCAN)

Postdoctoral researcher at SOCIUM Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy, University of Bremen

Lucy Parry

Senior Research Associate, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, University of Canberra

Research Fellow, INSPIRE, University of Edinburgh

James Organ (online)

Lecturer, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool

Juliet Kilpin

Senior organiser, Citizens UK

Guests

Giulia Gentile

Lecturer, Essex Law School, University of Essex

Consortium members

Antonis Karatzias, Aspon

Elisa Lironi, ECAS (Joined online)

Sarah Noles, IMI

Hendrik Nahr, Make.org

Maria Tazi, Make.org

Carmela Barbera, University of Bergamo

Antonella Di Masso, University of Bergamo

Fernando Borges, University of Coimbra

Dulce Lopes, University of Coimbra
Lucía Muñoz Benito, University of Coimbra
Anastasia Karatzia, University of Essex
Niall O'Connor, University of Essex
Rebecca Warren, University of Essex
Samantha Woodward, University of Essex
Ritu Roy, University of Waikato
Alica Leal, University of the Witwatersrand

Day 2, 10 July 2025

Antonis Karatzias, Aspon
Elisa Lironi, ECAS (Joined online)
Giulia Sandri, ECAS (Joined online)
Sarah Noles, IMI
Hendrik Nahr, Make.org
Maria Tazi, Make.org
Carmela Barbera, University of Bergamo
Antonella Di Masso, University of Bergamo
Maria Francesca Sicilia, University of Bergamo (Joined online)
Fernando Borges, University of Coimbra
Dulce Lopes, University of Coimbra
Lucía Muñoz Benito, University of Coimbra
Anastasia Karatzia, University of Essex
Niall O'Connor, University of Essex
Rebecca Warren, University of Essex
Samantha Woodward, University of Essex
Ritu Roy, University of Waikato
Alica Leal, University of the Witwatersrand