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THE ACADEMIC FOOTPRINT OF MISTRA URBAN FUTURES GOTHENBURG REPORT



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FUTURES GOTHENBURG
REPORT**

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SUMMARY

In this report, Ramböll Management Consulting (RMC) has summarised up the academic footprints of Mistra Urban Futures (MUF) on the individual and on organisational level, as well as in research in general. On an *individual level* it is clear that the purpose of MUF to contribute in developing new knowledge that could solve complex societal challenges is appealing to all the involved researchers. Furthermore, the participation in MUF has led to new networks and collaborations that have been beneficial for the researchers. These benefits include new empirical data, new research ideas, dissemination of results and access to funding. On the *organisational level*, this study shows that MUF has contributed to promote co-production processes that are characterised by interdisciplinary collaboration. These processes have resulted in new knowledge that is now being used in practice. These processes have also led to new knowledge regarding co-production processes. The footprint that MUF has made *on research* has to do with high relevance of the knowledge produced within the projects connected to MUF.

Moreover, RMC has identified different challenges and concerns. In the interviews, it has become evident that the offer and objectives of MUF are perceived as unclear. MUF would benefit from developing its communication of results and increasing transparency regarding partnerships. In order to strengthen MUF and to handle the challenges presented in the report, RMC puts forward some recommendations for MUF.

There is a need to find new ways to define the prominence and the excellence of MUF as a co-production and trans disciplinary arena between researchers and practitioners, which focuses on solving complex urban development issues and thus contributes to societal transformation. The role of MUF needs to be clarified and communicated. Furthermore, there is a need to develop new ways to measure and communicate the prominence and excellence of MUF. Once such methods have been developed, MUF may communicate the full complexity of the working methods of the Centre and the type of change that MUF has the ambition to achieve.

In order to increase synergies between projects and research as well as to increase the visibility of the results, the research produced within MUF needs to be consolidated and communicated more strategically. The offer and objectives of MUF are still unclear to some researchers. Between partners at the MUF Gothenburg platform there is a need to clarify what the platform can offer and how different partners can cooperate. The offer and objectives need to be clarified and communicated both to researchers and to partners. As the platform has developed over time, 2015 might be a good time to rephrase certain overall goals. This should be done together with the partners.

The national and global dimensions of MUF could be strengthened further. MUF as an arena has contributed to developing and creating strong local and regional cooperation. This study shows that both researchers and practitioners believe that there is a potential for MUF to strengthen the national and global perspectives. Moreover, the researchers also believe that the role and cooperation could be improved.

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Appendix 1

Respondents – interviews december 2014 and november 2015

Participants workshop in Gothenburg 12th january 2015

1. STUDY OF THE ACADEMIC FOOTPRINT OF MISTRA URBAN FUTURES

1.1 Background and purpose of the study

In November 2014 Ramböll Management Consulting (RMC) was assigned by Mistra Urban Futures (MUF) to conduct a study describing the academic participation in MUF. The scope of the study was to investigate one of the different platforms that are part of the MUF network, namely the one in Gothenburg. The primary purpose is to show in what way the Centre has created value for the involved researchers and research institutions as well as research at large. Prior to this report, a societal outcome report that showed the different ways that the Centre has contributed in terms of benefits to the society and to the respective public organisations had been conducted (henceforth *societal outcome report*).

The ambition of this study has not been to evaluate the impact of the Centre, but rather to illuminate and analyse different kinds of perceived outcomes and benefits, and if possible, to illuminate areas of development. This report, as well as the societal outcome report, has been produced alongside a Progress Report of the Centre. The Progress Report sums up the first years of operations of MUF. These reports are made to prepare for the international evaluation of the Centre (scheduled 2015).

When reading this report and assessing the value of the analysis, it is important to consider that MUF is still in the early phases of development in relation to the overall ambition of the Centre.

1.2 Method and questions

The data collection of the study consists of 21 telephone interviews that were conducted in December 2014. The respondents were selected by MUF¹ and represents researchers from Chalmers University of Technology, IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute, University of Gothenburg and SP Technical Research Institute. In January 2015, a workshop with ten researchers from the involved academic partners was conducted. The results of the workshop are integrated in this report.

Primary research questions for this study are presented below:

- What is the relevance of MUF related to the needs in research?
- What are the benefits of participating in the work of MUF?
- Have new networks and cooperation been established as a result of the participation in MUF?
- How has the participation in MUF affected research?
- How have the working methods influenced research?
- What results in practice can be observed (according to involved researchers)?
- What activities create value?

¹ From a list of 99 researchers a random selection of 27 researchers were selected. 21 researchers from this selection believed that they were relevant in relation to the subject

- How can MUF be developed in the future?

MUF asked RMC to incorporate quotes from the data collection in the report (the quotes were translated by RMC from Swedish to English). To provide the respondents with a minimum level of anonymity, identities of the respondents are not revealed.

1.3 Analytical framework – assessing the academic footprint of Mistra Urban Futures

In order to sort and present data, RMC has developed an analytical framework that entails the questions that this study aims to answer. As previously pointed out, the ambition of this study is not to assess or to evaluate results of MUF, but rather to illustrate its main benefits and outcomes. The description of the benefits and outcomes are based on the information retrieved in the abovementioned interviews.

Below the three levels of the analytical framework of this report are presented. The three different levels have been used in order to illustrate the academic footprint of MUF, particularly in the inception phase of development. The achieved benefits and outcomes have been analysed for each of the levels. The three different levels include:

- **The individual level** –perceived benefits among the researchers participating in MUF activities
- **The organisational level** –the way MUF influences participating academic institutions and organisations
- **Research level** –the contribution of MUF in research at large

2. MISTRA URBAN FUTURES

2.1 The organisation of Mistra Urban Futures and the activities provided

2.1.1 The uniqueness of Mistra Urban Futures lies in co-production as a method to solve complex societal challenges

The initial aim of MUF was to be an international research and knowledge Centre for sustainable urban development that primarily focused on joint production of knowledge between researchers and practitioners². The Centre was set up in 2010 and became fully operational 2012. Since its inception, MUF has been under continuous development. The ambition of the Centre is to become a world class excellence Centre and a hub of knowledge with regards to issues relating to sustainable urban development. The knowledge developed within the Centre is expected to contribute in developing solutions to meet complex societal challenges. One person says:

"The idea with complex societal challenges means that we don't know the result of the co-production. That is part of the complexity."

The work of the Centre is both theory and practice oriented. The cooperation between research and practitioners is viewed as an asset for the development of new knowledge. This approach differs from many other research and knowledge Centres.

2.1.2 Mistra Urban Futures is an arena in the space between two structures

MUF consists of four international platforms; Gothenburg (Sweden), Manchester (UK), Kisumu (Kenya) and Cape Town (South Africa). The Secretariat and the Gothenburg platform are hosted by Chalmers University of Technology.

Operations are financed by Mistra³, Sida⁴ and the seven consortium partners in West Sweden. These consortium partners represent academia as well as local and regional public bodies. In addition, the Centre has a number of associated partners representing national Government agencies, research institutions and private firms. The consortium partners include The University of Gothenburg, Chalmers University of Technology, IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute, City of Gothenburg, Gothenburg Region Association of Local Authorities, Region Västra Götaland and the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland.

MUF is described as an arena for communication, discussion and as a platform for disseminating results among researchers and practitioners. One of the interviewed researchers describes MUF as an interactive platform between actors and another researcher says that the platform has contributed to breaking up organisational silos and that it has increased collaboration between

² Professionals within urban development and urban planning

³ The Swedish foundation for strategic environmental research

⁴ Sida is a government agency working on behalf of the Swedish parliament and government, with the mission to reduce poverty in the world.

different actors. MUF is described as an arena that plays in the space between two surrounding structures; one academic and one in practice. These both structures are characterised by different discourses that need to be developed in order for complex societal problems to be solved.

MUF is described as an arena that provides the opportunity to rise above the everyday operations. This goes for both researchers and for practitioners. The aim for MUF is to be an arena that researchers and practitioners can enter and exit during their careers. The platform of the researchers and practitioners is expected to be their original environment. One interviewee expresses this as follows:

"Mistra Urban Futures is an arena where researchers and practitioners can operate during a period in their career in order to gain new perspectives, but with close connection to their original research environments and organisations".

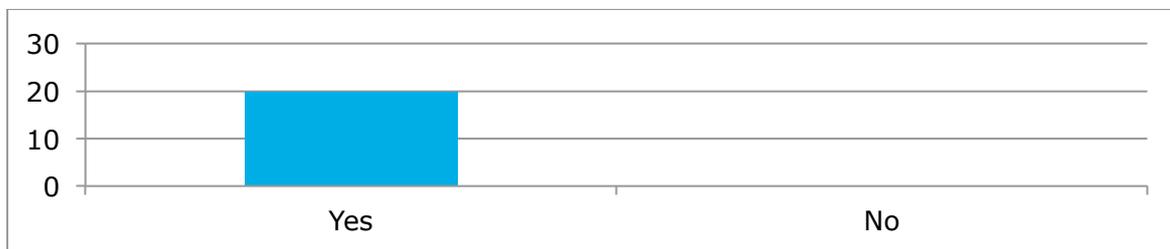
3. THE ACADEMIC FOOTPRINTS OF MISTRA URBAN FUTURES

3.1 Footprints on the individual level

3.1.1 The ambition of MUF to focus on complex societal challenges appeals to the participating researchers. In the interviews, the respondents were asked about the main benefits that MUF creates for the individual researcher. Responses often included words as “motivating” and “meaningful”. More precisely, MUF is described as meaningful to participate in as it builds an arena and contributes to meaningful research. For researchers, working together with practitioners increases the basis for understanding societal challenges in a broader sense. It has helped researchers understand real problems in practice in relation to urban development and change processes in society. MUF is further said to have contributed to the enhanced understanding of co-production with practitioners.

3.1.2 Co-production has led to new networks between researchers and practitioners. All the interviewed researchers in the study believe that participation in MUF has given access to new networks and collaborations. Interviewees mention contacts with local actors in society, researchers within different institutions and universities in the field of urban development as well as international platforms as clear benefits. This is presented in the figure below.

Figure 1: If MUF has provided new networks or collaborations (n=20)



One question in the interviews was how the tight collaboration with practitioners has created benefits for the researcher. Here, the participation of the City of Gothenburg and the interest of doing joint research from the public organisations is one example where collaboration is seen as very positive. Some researchers say that access to an informal network (and to not be isolated) creates a value. One of the interviewed researchers explains this as follows:

"It is in the contacts that it gets to be more fun, not being isolated as a researcher. When you listen to what different people talk about and you meet people that you did not know before. This gives you an informal network."

The networks and the ways of working have enabled researchers to better understand actual problems and how they are experienced in real life. According to the interviewees, this creates a basis for understanding societal challenges in a broader sense. One of the interviewees says:

"Working closely together meant finding new interdisciplinary issues and developing working methods that can work according to these issues."

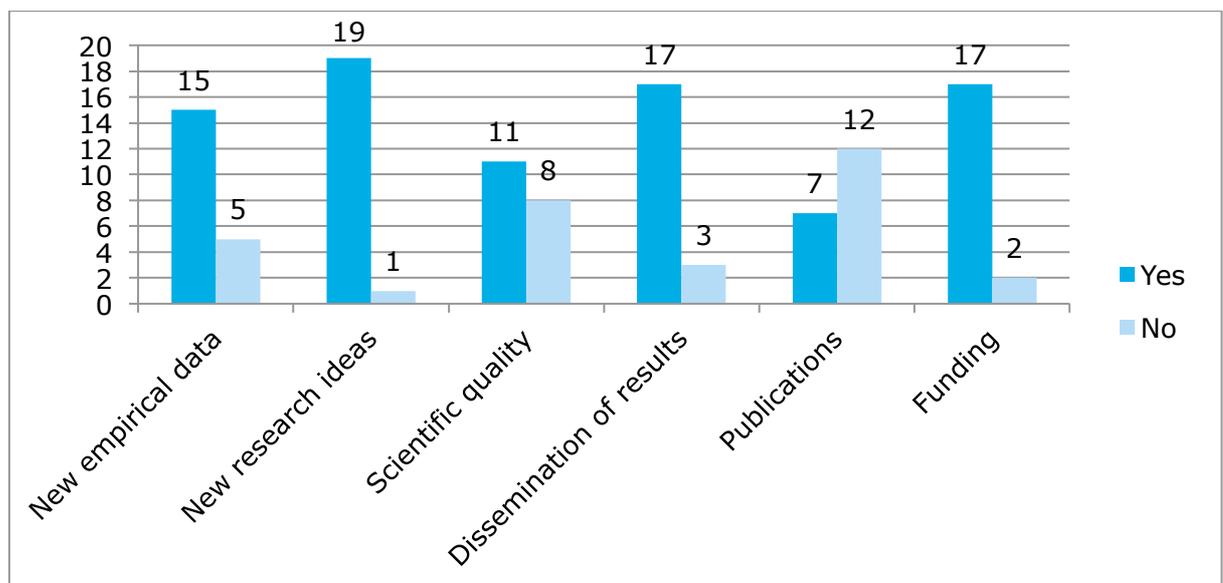
3.1.3 Clear benefits for the individual researcher

Interviewees state that co-production has been beneficial for their research and for some it has helped them in the development of their careers. A vast majority of the interviewees state that participating in MUF has led to:

- New empirical data
- New research ideas
- Dissemination of results
- Funding

This is presented in the following figure:

Figure 2: The benefits of MUF for the researchers (n=20)



A vast majority of the interviewees state that participation in MUF has resulted in access to new empirical data, new research ideas, dissemination of results and increased possibilities to gain research funding. One of the interviewees explains:

"This means that I get better access to empirical data. This is also necessary because of the complexity in these societal issues."

In addition to this result, half of the respondents state that participation in MUF has had a positive influence on the scientific quality of their research. Also, half of the respondents state that being a part of MUF has had a positive impact on the possibility to publish research results. This is contradicted by the results in figure 2, where only 7 out of 19 researchers claim that MUF has led to new publications. Some of the respondents in the interviews mean that MUF projects focus on complex holistic issues with a trans disciplinary approach, while most international

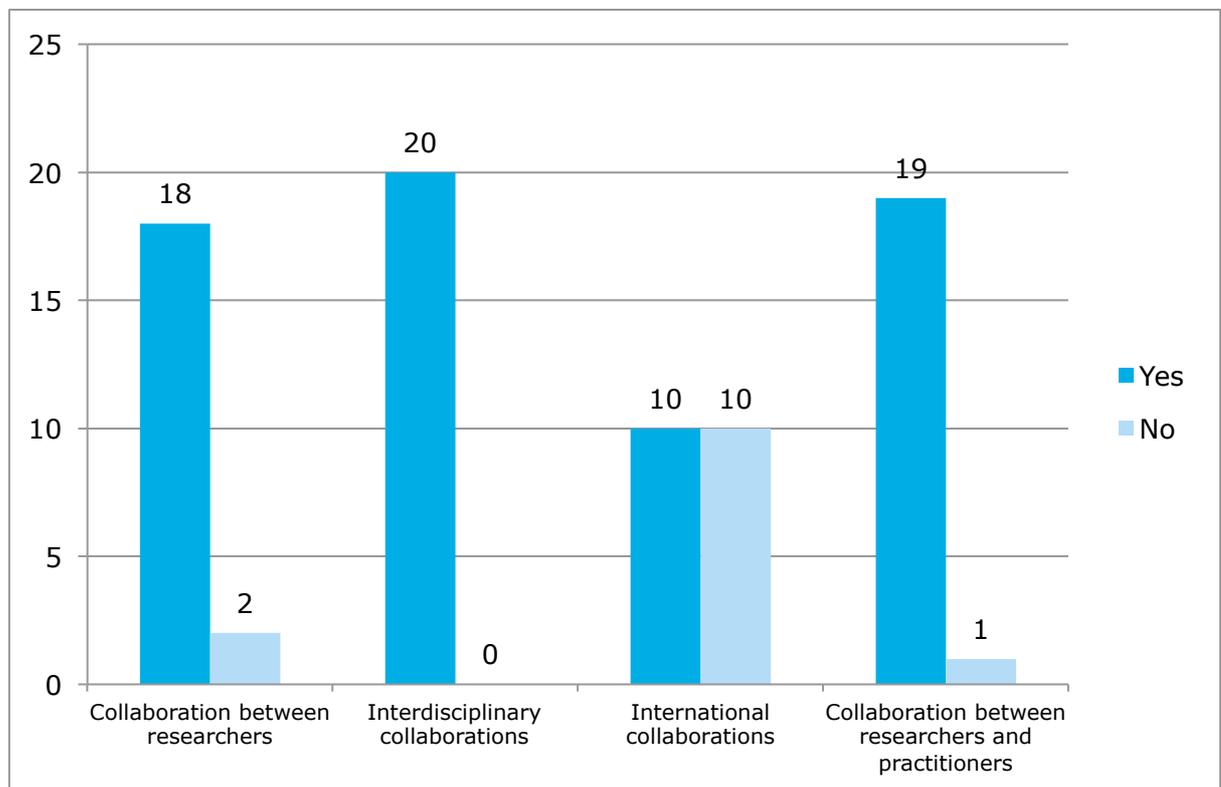
publications are more niched and focus on specific research areas. This is thus one explanation for the level of publications.

3.2 Footprints on an organisational level

3.2.1 Cooperation and co-production have mainly been characterised by interdisciplinary collaboration and collaboration between researchers and practitioners

As mentioned in previous chapters, all the interviewees state that participation in MUF has led to new contacts, new networks and cooperation. When asked about the characteristics of these networks and collaborations, a vast majority answers that networks are characterised by collaborations between researchers as well as between researchers and public organisations. All of the respondents answer that the collaborations are interdisciplinary and more than half of the respondents state that participation in MUF has led to international collaborations. In the table below these results is presented.

Figure 3: The characteristics of the collaborations and networks (n=20)



3.2.2 The co-production has resulted in new knowledge used in practice

In the interviews, respondents were also enquired if the achieved knowledge has been transferred to new solutions. The results mentioned by researchers include:

- The development of cooperation model for Älvstranden in Gothenburg
- New knowledge about social aspects in city planning processes, including social housing as well as improving dialogue and interactivity between municipalities and citizens

- Different aspects of energy efficiency in the development of city areas such as the Östra sjukhuset (hospital) in Gothenburg where private partners in the project have developed results in the shape of business models for energy efficiency
- Business driven city development used in municipalities
- Climate strategies for the Freeport of Gothenburg were mentioned as a concrete result and where knowledge from research was used in the city planning process of the area. The climate programme in the city of Gothenburg is identified to be an example of close cooperation between researchers and civil servants.

Four researchers claim that the results related to sustainability not would have been achieved without MUF as a research and knowledge Centre. Researchers also assumed that civil servants would have lacked the tools and possibilities to take initiatives to solve complex societal issues without the existence of MUF. One person states that MUF has reduced the time frame for implementation:

"It takes much longer time to develop sustainable solutions. The time to turn knowledge from research can be up to ten years. (...) There has not been an institutionalised way to do it right. MUF can shorten the time to turn knowledge into practice. "

3.2.3 Involving students was a success factor in order to create sustainable footprints

In the interviews the researchers were asked about the footprints of MUF when it comes to teaching. Six respondents perceive that the Centre has had a positive impact on their teaching. These researchers believe that they are now able to use examples from practice, something which makes the content of the teaching more relevant. There are examples of students who write essays on topics connected to projects funded by MUF. One respondent states that presenting local examples connected to sustainability makes it more interesting and motivating for students.

In this study it has become evident that students are important in order to create sustainable footprints on teaching. Not only can the students contribute with new knowledge through writing essays, but they can also function as initiators of changes. For instance, in the project being carried out in Kenya, students play a central role. One researcher explains:

"Teaching is a prerequisite for the work we do in Kenya and the students are a prerequisite that change can occur. They have an ability to challenge and can function as a bridge between research and practice"

The importance of understanding that students play an important role in the interdisciplinary transformational processes is emphasised by several researchers. Students can also help in building networks. One interviewee expresses this as follows:

"Once you are established you already have the networks. Young people are the ones that can build and establish new the networks. "

3.2.4 Several success factors at play in co-production

In the interviews several respondents touched upon success factors related to the co-production of knowledge between researchers and practitioners. Below is a summary of the success factors that were mentioned in the interviews:

- *Motivation and joint interest from both practice and research:* Shared motivation and interest from both researchers and practitioners is viewed as an important success factor when it comes to developing new knowledge that can lead to new solutions. The motivation and interest need to be sprung out of a joint understanding that the co-produced knowledge is relevant.
- *Relevant research for practice:* In order for the knowledge to be implemented and useful it is of great importance that the involved practitioners view the developed knowledge as relevant
- *Mutual understanding of knowledge development and production:* One success factor is to develop a mutual understanding of the joint work. Both researchers and practitioners need to develop shared goals and a shared agenda for co-production for knowledge and research. It is important that all parties pursue the same aims.
- *Mutual respect for working methods and knowledge between research and practice:* Mutual respect between researchers and practitioners is important in order to achieve results. There has to be respect that researchers and practitioners work in different ways and that different actors have different types of knowledge and expertise.
- *Co-production where users are part of creating knowledge:* The co-production in itself, where practitioners take an active part in the process, is important in order to achieve results and to assure that the results are being used in practice.
- *Willingness to implement knowledge in home organisations:* In order to achieve the desired results, there has to be willingness and readiness to accept new knowledge in the recipient organisations.
- *Competence of the people involved:* In order to obtain the desired results, it is important to attract the relevant competences.
- *Knowledge/research can be used in city development planning processes:* Projects connected to concrete urban development processes increase the possibilities for new knowledge to be implemented in practice.

- *An interdisciplinary approach:* Complex societal challenges demand interdisciplinary solutions that can be sprung out of interdisciplinary co-production processes and result in the development of new knowledge.
- *Organisational learning and learning from co-production:* in order for the co-production to result in sustainable long term knowledge it is important that there is a knowledge exchange and learning between research and practice.
- *Continuity in participation among involved researchers and practitioners:* The possibilities to achieve strong results increase with continuity, i.e. the time that researchers and practitioners are involved. To be able to keep competent staff is thus a success factor.
- *Political legitimacy:* The legitimacy and acceptance from the political level increases the prerequisites for results to be implemented in practice.

3.3 Footprints on research

3.3.1 The relevance of the research increases by the co-production

In the interviews it became obvious that researchers in general believe that MUF has had a positive effect on research. One researcher mentions that the capacity of the academic world needs to be better used and that the research community benefits from being more community oriented. Another researcher says that MUF contributes to acknowledge experience based research and thus to ensure that the produced knowledge is relevant.

"Research becomes more relevant to society and there is a dialogue that supports the diffusion of results."

Another person says that the method of involving practitioners leads to better research questions as these are developed in collaboration with practitioners. In the process, the common formulation of questions also improves the actual method of collaboration.

3.3.2 Mistra Urban Futures is a cohesive platform for a research area under construction

Six of the interviewees believe that there would not have been as good research results if MUF would not have existed. Two of these respondents claim that there would have been another focus in research and that other research questions would have been posed without the existence of MUF. Another three respondents believe that their research projects not would have been feasible without MUF. One of the respondents explains this as follows:

"I think my PhD thesis would have been so poor without MUF. I have a hard time believing that any municipality would have accepted a deal where I would just have been part of the process. [With MUF] This meant a clearer contract regarding cooperation. It would otherwise have been difficult. For me it has created great results."

Two interviewees believe that research would not have had the same impact. One of the interviewees explains:

"The research would have resulted in less footprints both in Sweden and overall. I think the conducted research would have focused on other issues."

One interviewee says that MUF "unites a research area under construction" and another respondent says that MUF contributes to research that is driven by real societal challenges. One person describes MUF as a storefront for new research within this field in Sweden. According another respondent, MUF has contributed to push the research front forward within the field of applied research. This is that has been possible thanks to co-production. A few of the interviewees state that MUF provides a mandate that opens doors towards other societal actors. MUF enables researchers to connect with new people; it gives legitimacy and shows a belonging.

There have also been comments regarding how MUF contributes to scientific prominence/excellence. One of the interviewees suggests that MUF might need to develop how research production in the form of publications can be strengthened. One future challenge, according to one researcher, is to raise the common awareness of the sustainable urban issues. Today, only a small fraction of international publications consider the complexity and the interdisciplinary aspects of sustainable urban issues. Another interviewee claims that MUF needs to clarify how MUF intends to develop the quality of research.

4. CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS GOING FORWARD

In this section, researchers' views concerning challenges and opportunities of MUF are discussed. Questions associated to the importance for sustainability and for reaching the full potential of MUF have been asked in the interviews.

On an overall level, the researchers are interested in the development of MUF and in the success of the Centre. There is also an understanding that research and knowledge centres are not created overnight. There is moreover a comprehension that MUF has been in a development phase when it comes to organising its activities and developing the role of the Centre.

In order to investigate the perceived challenges and opportunities, RMC has asked the following questions:

- How to define, explain and measure prominence?
- How to develop the national, international role and network?
- How to develop the offer and objectives of MUF?
- How to develop the communication of results?
- How to handle time consuming co-production processes?
- How to be clearer towards partners?
- How to handle the experience of administrative burden?

In the following chapters we elaborate these topics.

4.1.1 The offer and objectives of MUF is unclear

Respondents have been asked if they perceive MUF as a prominent research and knowledge centre. The majority of respondents are uncertain about how far MUF has reached in this aspect. It is said that MUF has developed over time but that there is still development to be made regarding research excellence and diffusion of results among stakeholders. Some of the respondents state that the ambition to be a prominent research and knowledge Centre might not be accurate. It might be more relevant to state that the ambition of MUF is to be a prominent centre for applied interdisciplinary research through co-production between researchers and practitioners, rather than being a prominent centre connected to a specific research area. More precisely, the uniqueness of MUF lies in the working methods. MUF as a research and knowledge centre should therefore be evaluated. Such an evaluation should not only with focus on research prominence but also on results in society and on aspects concerning co-production.

Quite a few interviewees identify the need to be even clearer about the goals with MUF and the role of the Centre. One person says:

"I think it is not clear what benefit and goal they have, if you know the benefit you would probably be more interested in putting time into MUF "

Some researchers have perceived the role of MUF in research as not clear enough. There is a need to be more specific about the role of MUF and the agenda of the Centre. According to some of the interviewees, now is the time to define the role and agenda. One of the interviewees identifies that a focus on two or three research areas would be sufficient.

"I think that there should be a focus on two or three areas. It is too broad right now."

Other interviewees talk about the focus on co-production as the uniqueness of MUF. Many of the respondents are however clear on that the initial goal of MUF needs to be redefined. The co-production and transformational aspects as well as the ambition to contribute to solving societal challenges, need to be part of the aims of MUF.

One of interviewed researchers identify that MUF needs to be more distinct about what the platform can offer when it comes to arranging meetings and hosting different events. This interviewee believes that it is important to be supportive of partners' initiatives if motivation is to be sustained.

4.1.2 The national and international position of MUF could be strengthened further

Respondents have also been asked how they perceive MUF as a national and international research and knowledge centre. Five respondents find the question difficult to answer. Four respondents believe that MUF so far mostly can be seen as a centre that focuses on being a regional platform for co-production. This is also considered as one of the strengths of the Centre. In the interviews it is mentioned that MUF has come a long way towards becoming a national arena. This is shown in the more nuanced discourse regarding complex sustainable issues in West Sweden as compared to other parts of Sweden. Another interviewee points at different research centres in Sweden (that also work with sustainability issues) as competitors. At the same time, there is a willingness to establish cooperation with these centres.

According to one interviewee, MUF is also known in other parts of Sweden. Two respondents mean that the Centre is more acknowledged internationally than in Sweden.

It becomes evident in the interviews that MUF has worked with global cooperation. The interviews reveal that teaching- and research collaboration within the fields of marketing and design has been developed between research- and teaching actors in Gothenburg and in Kisumu. The collaboration was initiated through a common master's course in Reality Studio between Chalmers, Maseno University and JOOUST. The first course was held already in 2006, and in 2010 the cooperation was deepened through the development of a concept for an East African Urban Academy. The Swedish Trade Council (since renamed to Business Sweden), HDK and UN Habitat all participated in the development of the concept. A common feasibility study then showed the possibilities of working with knowledge clusters. That study also showed the opportunities of creating collaborations between academia, companies and society. The areas marketplaces and eco-tourism were identified as important out of both an environmental and a growth perspective. During the initial phases of MUF in 2012, the collaboration with Centre for Tourism at the University of Gothenburg was initiated. Simultaneously, collaboration with various

local researchers was initiated. The cooperation today consists of a development work based on the two thematic areas as well as a common and an individual production of research. The academy is viewed as a particularly strong contribution to change. Here both locally developed knowledge and international research become important. Three doctoral students from the University of Gothenburg work with circa 20 doctoral students in Kisumu.

"In the global cooperation it becomes evident that MUF has made a big difference. Kisumu Local Interactive Platform, KLIP, is a free zone for new mindsets"

A few of the interviewees claim that it will be important to strengthen the national and international dimension of MUF. In order to strengthen international links and cooperation interviewees suggest that there is a need for more cooperation with other international research settings that focus on urban development and/or co-production. One of the researchers points at the importance of using the international platforms within MUF. This should be done, according to the researcher, in order to utilise the potential in knowledge exchange and in order to develop new methods for co-production as well as for research.

One of the interviewees suggests that it will at this point in time also be important to collaborate more with international organisations like the United Nations and the European Union. Other interviewees identify a need to maintain the strong focus of West Sweden and at the same time to strengthen the national perspective. One of the respondents states that it would be desirable to involve other universities in Sweden.

4.1.3 MUF could benefit from developing the communication of results

Several areas of development mentioned in the interviews have to do with communication and information issues. Some researchers point out that there is an information gap between the researchers most involved and the researchers outside the "inner circle". More precisely, information about MUF could be more transparent and broadened to more researchers. Information about the different projects in the MUF umbrella could also be spread in a more strategic way. Furthermore, it is important to make academic research more available to practitioners and to create a format that works in practice. It is also important to communicate results, to attract more researchers and thus more funding.

"I would like to see that more projects were presented together. For instance, to report what MUF has achieved within sustainability in cities. It might otherwise be too project oriented. I believe MUF could have a role in presenting and publishing overall results."

One of the researchers points at the possibility of improving communication about research results from MUF. This should also, according to the researcher, be done in order to increase knowledge transfer between researchers within the Centre.

"It would be fun to know more about the work of other researchers. They have a newsletter but once when I received the list of publications, there was a lot that I did not know of before".

4.1.4 Co-production is time consuming since it takes time to understand each other

When asked if there are less positive aspects with the way of working within MUF, five interviewees claim that the working methods are time consuming. Some researchers believe that much time is spent in meetings:

"More time is spent on organising work and on dialogue in order to understand each other. This might be ineffective but there is at the same time a knowledge exchange."

Even if the model requires more time compared to traditional research projects, respondents believe that this expenditure of time is necessary in order for the model to be successful. The challenge is thus how time is to be allocated.

Another challenge with the working methods is the different time frames in research compared to practice. This is something that was mentioned by two of the interviewees. It is described that the different time frames implicate that researchers and practitioners are behaving in accordance to different work logics. One respondent exemplifies this as follows:

"In research you can wait a year to be published or with writing an article. Academy might be lacking behind practice. In the real practical case you may have progressed further and have a different perception of time".

It also takes time to understand and to formulate the problem, since research and practice are permeated with different conceptual worlds.

Several interviewees identify that time is important in order to be able to engage in MUF. Especially the time available for practitioners to engage can be a challenge.

"Civil servants are complaining about not having enough time to spend in their daily operations. It will be important to continue investing in the time spent on MUF. "

In the interviews, there are suggestions as how to improve the involvement of practitioners. One of the challenges, according to one researcher, is that involved public organisations do not always choose the most relevant people to involve in the co-production projects.

"When one asks public agencies how much time and staff they allocate it seems somehow arbitrary. It is often not the relevant people that work in the projects and it the correct people often have too little time. This is something that needs to be taken seriously and addressed when entering into cooperation."

According to the same researcher, it is important to discuss how interdisciplinary knowledge is produced and used.

4.1.5 There is a need for transparency regarding partnerships

In interviews issues about partnership in MUF were often mentioned. Interviewees point at the importance of information about the participation in MUF - what is expected from the participants? Some interviewees perceive that it is unclear how to participate in projects and also how funding is distributed. One of the researchers talks about the importance of also increasing the knowledge about the associated projects.

"Today there is a collection of core projects that everyone knows about. Then there is a bunch of associated projects that aren't as well known as the rest."

Another respondent sees a risk in the partnership of MUF being closed and emphasise the need of a constant search for new partners.

Different aspects regarding the consortium of partners in MUF are identified in interviews. One of the interviewees emphasises the importance of having a dialogue and to listen to the needs of the involved partners.

"When everything is new it is good because you have a joint focus. After working for some time you start having your own agenda and there is a risk if you do not listen to all partners."

4.1.6 The administrative burden is too high

Issues about administration are brought up in interviews. It is mentioned that there is a lack of trust from the financier that is made visible through the high demand on reports. One interviewee says:

"The most important thing is that the trust of the financier has to be on a level that decreases the need for us to report every detail. (...) Our administrative burden is huge and the system is not appropriate."

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this study RMC has been in contact with researchers who participate in MUF. In this last section RMC has made some reflections on MUF. These reflections are based on the information that has been revealed in this study. In addition, RMC has developed some suggestions on how MUF could improve its operations in the future. Here it should be mentioned that the arguments made in this final chapter solely reflect the views of RMC.

5.1 Conclusions

In this report RMC has summed up the footprints of MUF on different levels. It is clear that MUF has made an impact on all levels investigated in this study, i.e. on the individual level, on the organisational level as well as in research. Below the footprints are concluded.

- On an individual level it is clear that the purpose of MUF to is to contribute to the development of new knowledge that may solve complex societal challenges. This aim appeals to all the involved researchers. Furthermore, the participation in MUF has led to new networks and collaborations that in turn have been beneficial for the researchers. These benefits include new empirical data, new research ideas, dissemination of results and funding
- On an organisational level this study shows that MUF has contributed to promote co-production processes that are characterised by interdisciplinary collaboration. These processes have resulted in new knowledge that is now being used in practice. These processes have also led to new knowledge regarding co-production processes
- The footprint that MUF has made on research has to do with high relevance of the knowledge being produced within the projects connected to MUF.

In the study challenges and concerns have also been identified. The identified challenges include:

- The offer and objectives of MUF are unclear
- The national and international position of MUF could be strengthened further
- MUF would benefit from developing the communication of results
- Co-production is time consuming since it takes time to understand each other
- There is a need for transparency regarding partnerships
- The administrative burden is too high

In order to strengthen MUF going forward and to handle the challenges presented in this report, RMC brings forward some recommendations. These recommendations are presented in the next section.

5.2 Recommendations going forward

- There is a need to find new ways to define the prominence and the excellence concerning the role of MUF as a co-production interdisciplinary arena between researchers and practitioners that focus on solving complex urban development issues and thus contributes to societal transformation. The role of MUF needs to be clarified and communicated. New ways of measuring and communicating this prominence /excellence need to be developed in order to capture the full complexity of the working methods applied at the Centre and the type of change that MUF has the ambition to bring about.
- In order to increase synergies between projects and research as well as to increase the visibility of the results, the research produced within the MUF needs to be consolidated and communicated more strategically.
- The offer and objectives of MUF are still unclear to some researchers. Between partners in the MUF Gothenburg platform there is a need to clarify what the platform can offer and how different partners can cooperate. The offer and objectives need to be clarified and communicated both to researchers and to partners. As the platform has developed over time, 2015 might be a good time to rephrase certain overall goals. This should be done together with the partners.
- The national and global dimensions of MUF could be strengthened further. MUF as an arena has contributed to develop and create strong local/regional collaborations. This study shows that both researchers and practitioners believe that there is a potential for MUF to strengthen the national and global perspectives. Moreover, the researchers also believe that the role could be clarified and cooperation could be improved.

APPENDIX 1

RESPONDENTS – INTERVIEWS DECEMBER 2014 AND NOVEMBER 2015

- Lars Marcus, KTH, Arkitektur och samhällsbyggnad
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