

DEMOCRATIC LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATION

Vác

Pre & Post-Seminar Participant Survey Analysis

Introduction & Methodology

Part 1: Pre-Seminar Expectations

Part 2: Post-Seminar Experiences

Part 3: Comparative Analysis

Key Takeaways & Recommendations

Seminar Overview



The Vacs workshop 2025 served as a microcosm of OLA's vision, bringing together a diverse group of learners and practitioners to explore, co-create, and critically reflect on landscape democracy in an urban context.

Purpose of the Survey

Featuring 24 participants from diverse international and interdisciplinary backgrounds, the surveys were designed to capture participants' perspectives before and after the workshop to measure:

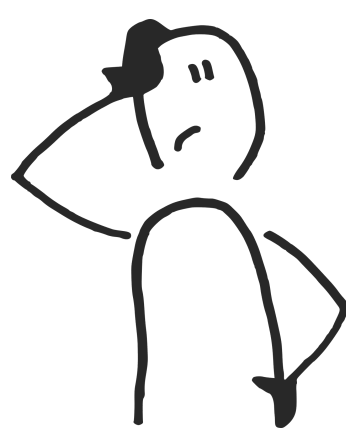
- The alignment of the workshop's outcomes with OLA's core values of openness, inclusiveness, participation, empathy, sustainability, and resilience.
- The effectiveness of the Living Lab format in fostering a "mutually transformative process" of designing with rather than for a community.
- The participants' sense of empowerment and their ability to engage with the "wicked problems" of landscape transformation.

Respondents: 24 participants.

Analysis: Responses were grouped into themes.
Frequency of mentions for each theme was calculated
as a percentage of total responses per question.

Goal: To understand participant expectations and measure
how well they were met.

Pre-Seminar Survey



PRE-SEMINAR SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What does democratic landscape transformation mean?

3. What do you expect to learn in this workshop?

2. What makes an urban landscape democratic?

4. What do you think you can bring into this workshop?



**Qn. 1 : What does
democratic landscape
transformation mean?**

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Community involvement (Shared decision making)	17	70.80%
Inclusivity serving the community	11	45.80%
Social justice, equity & human rights	7	29.20%
Accessible & pleasant for it's users	6	25.00%
Transformation of open spaces for inclusion	4	16.70%
Voice to diverse community on planning & sharing of public spaces	3	12.50%
Respect to landscape & it's biodiversity	3	12.50%
Wholesome involvement of politics, economy & environment on people lifestyle	3	12.50%
Community friendly	3	12.50%
Community engagement on advocacy for land development	2	8.30%

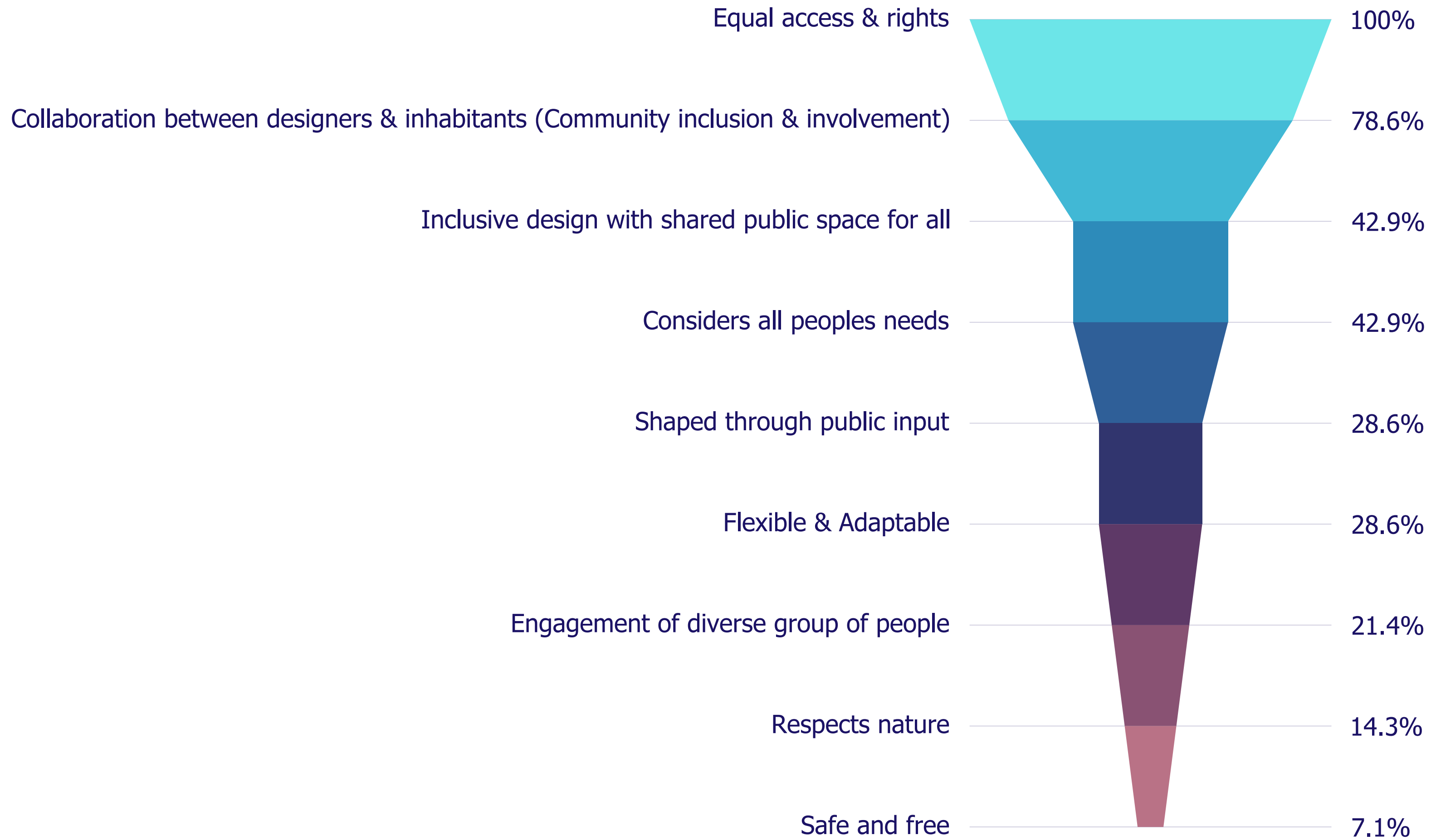




Qn. 2 : What Makes a Landscape Democratic?

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Equal access & rights	14	58.30%
Collaboration between designers & inhabitants (Community inclusion & involvement)	11	45.80%
Inclusive design with shared public space for all	6	25.00%
Considers all peoples needs	6	25.00%
Shaped through public input	4	16.70%
Flexible & Adaptable	4	16.70%
Engagement of diverse group of people	3	12.50%
Respects nature	2	8.30%
Safe and free	1	4.20%

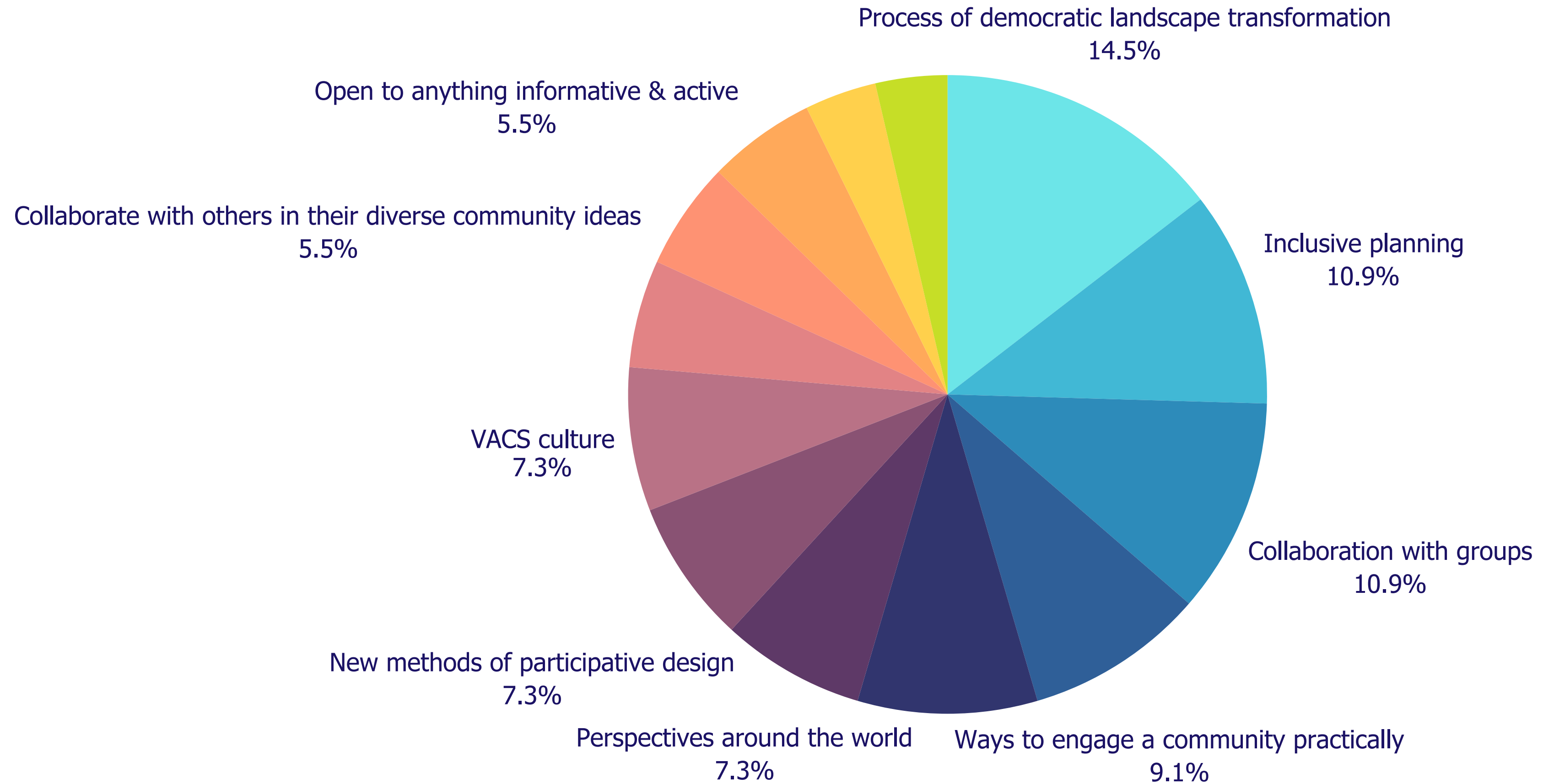
Response





**Qn. 3 : What do you
expect to learn in this
workshop?**

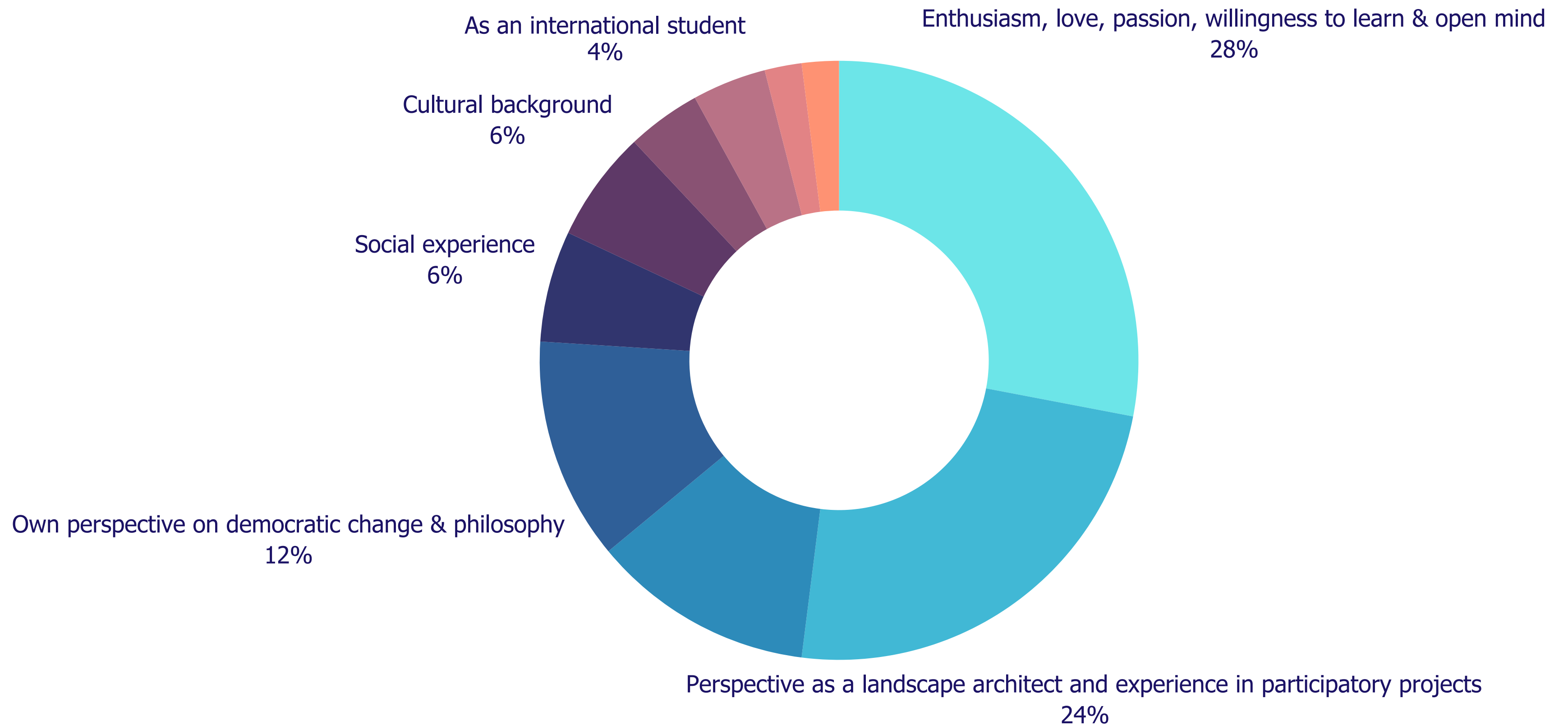
Response	Mentions	Percentage
Process of democratic landscape transformation	8	33.30%
Inclusive planning	6	25.00%
Collaboration with groups	6	25.00%
Ways to engage a community practically	5	20.80%
Unique landscaping challenges of VACS	5	20.80%
Perspectives around the world	4	16.70%
New methods of participative design	4	16.70%
VACS culture	4	16.70%
Collaborate with others in their diverse community ideas	3	12.50%
Open to anything informative & active	3	12.50%
Familiarity of the Hungarian green space	3	12.50%
Techniques to extract data from people	2	8.30%
Working with children	2	8.30%





**Qn. 4 : What do you
think you can bring into
this workshop?**

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Enthusiasm, love, passion, willingness to learn & open mind	14	58.30%
Perspective as a landscape architect and experience in participatory projects	12	50.00%
Critical thinking, collaborative spirit & curiosity	6	25.00%
Own perspective on democratic change & philosophy	6	25.00%
Social experience	3	12.50%
Cultural background	3	12.50%
As an international student	2	8.30%
Previous studies about green infrastructure	2	8.30%
Political & social views guided towards democratic landscape	1	4.20%
Background as a Hungarian student	1	4.20%



Question	Top Response	Top Response	Percentage
What does democratic landscape transformation mean?	Community involvement (Shared decision making)	17	70.80%
What makes an urban landscape democratic?	Equal access & rights	14	58.30%
What do you expect to learn in this workshop?	Process of democratic landscape transformation	8	33.30%
What do you think you can bring into this workshop?	Enthusiasm, love, passion, willingness to learn & open mind	14	58.30%

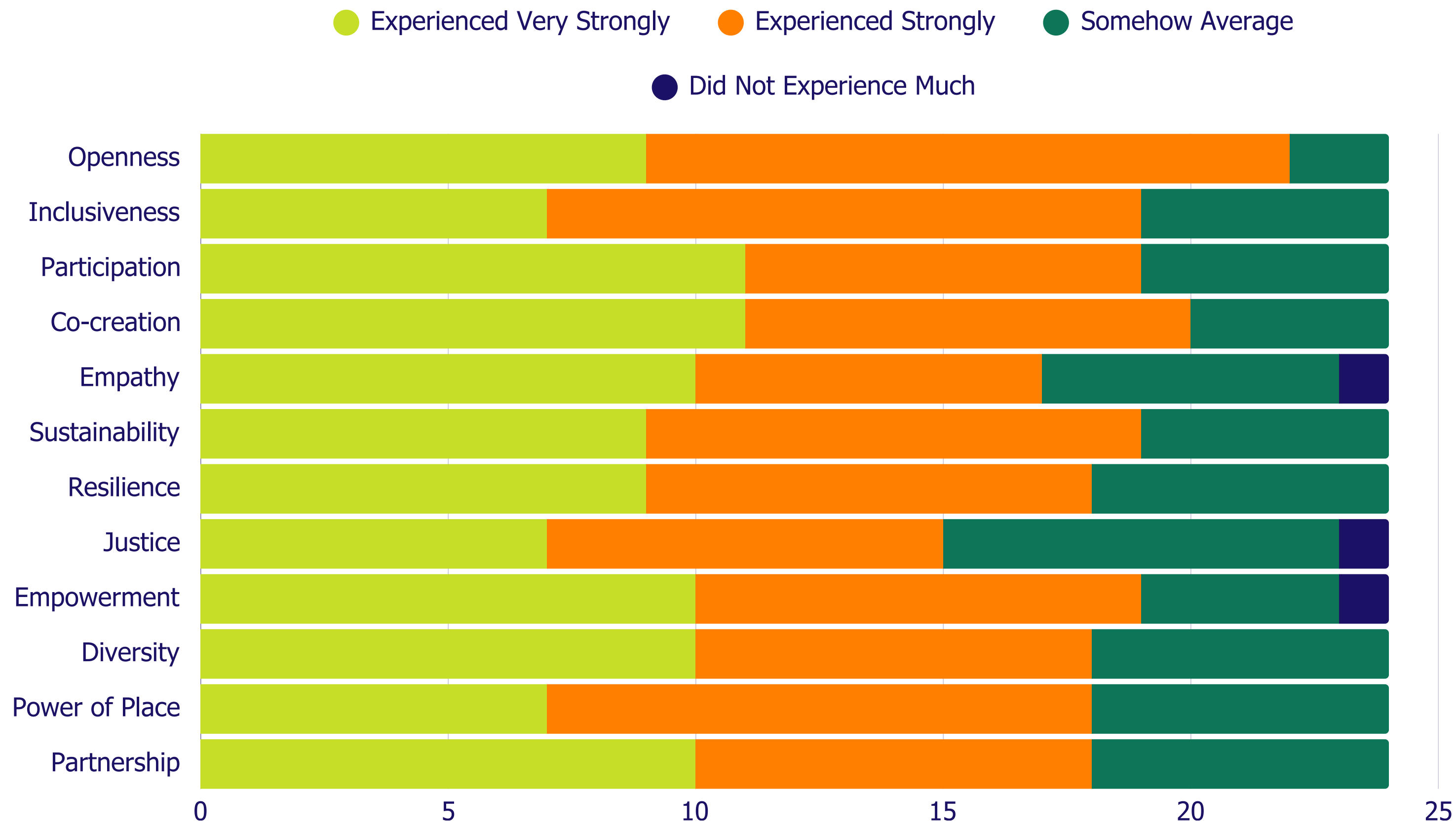
Post-Seminar Outcomes

Based on OLA's mission to build capacity for democratic landscape transformation, the purpose of the survey was to evaluate the effectiveness of its intensive programme in instilling its core values and methodologies, and to gather critical feedback to refine its future educational offerings as a tool for empowering practitioners and communities.

1. In relation to the OLA Charta of Values, how did this workshop support OLA Values? Please reflect on the basis of your personal experience and perspective.

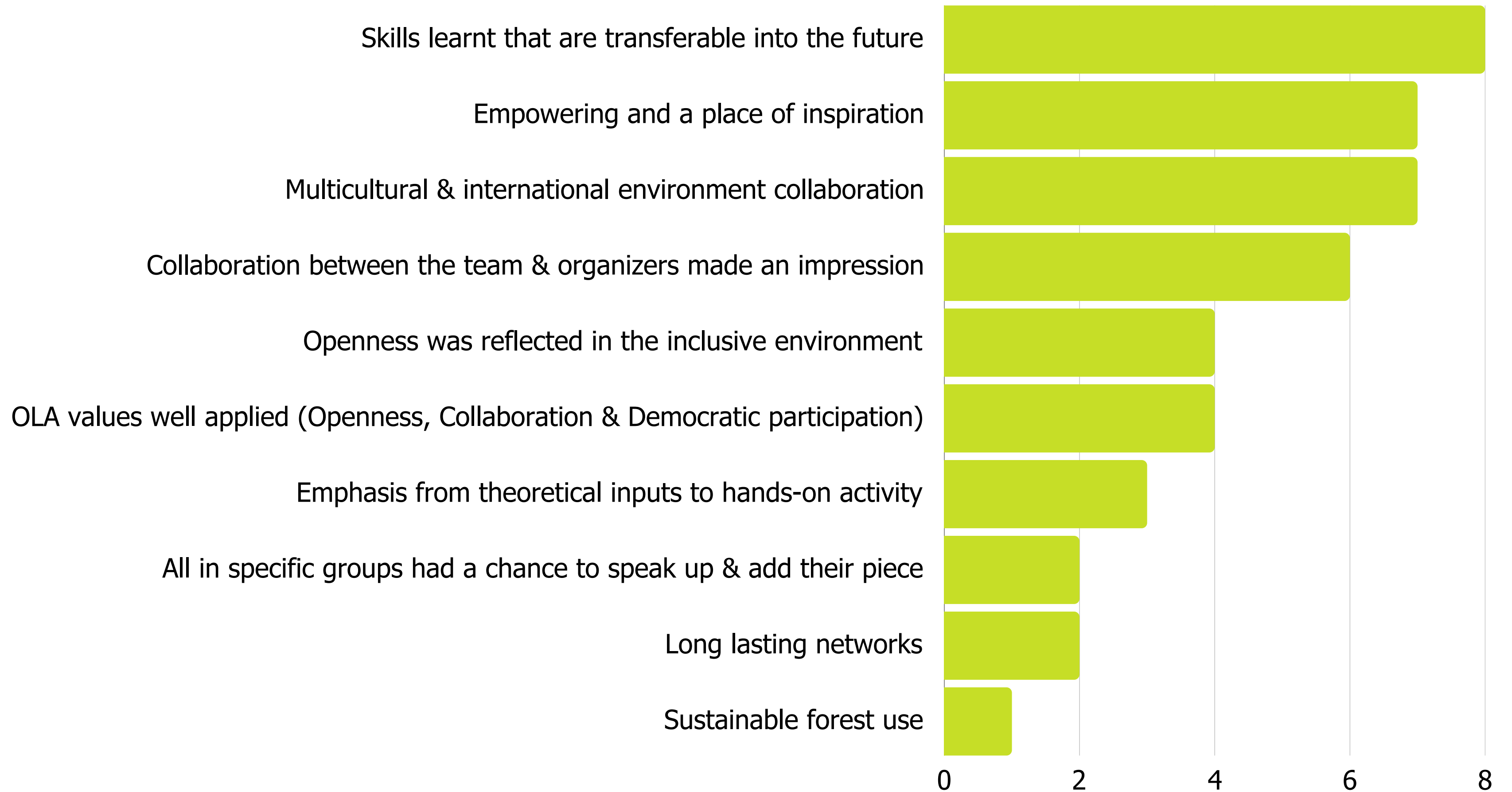
(Noted values: Openness, Inclusiveness, Participation, Co-creation, Empathy, Sustainability, Resilience, Justice, Empowerment, Diversity, Power of place, Partnership)

OLA Value	Experienced Very Strongly	%	Experienced Strongly	%	Somehow Average	%	Did Not Experience Much	%
Openness	9	37.50%	13	54.20%	2	8.30%	0	0%
Inclusiveness	7	29.20%	12	50.00%	5	20.80%	0	0%
Participation	11	45.80%	8	33.30%	5	20.80%	0	0%
Co-creation	11	45.80%	9	37.50%	4	16.70%	0	0%
Empathy	10	41.70%	7	29.20%	6	25.00%	1	4.20%
Sustainability	9	37.50%	10	41.70%	5	20.80%	0	0%
Resilience	9	37.50%	9	37.50%	6	25.00%	0	0%
Justice	7	29.20%	8	33.30%	8	33.30%	1	4.20%
Empowerment	10	41.70%	9	37.50%	4	16.70%	1	4.20%
Diversity	10	41.70%	8	33.30%	6	25.00%	0	0%
Power of Place	7	29.20%	11	45.80%	6	25.00%	0	0%
Partnership	10	41.70%	8	33.30%	6	25.00%	0	0%



2. Please add a short written reflection with regard to your personal experience of the OLA values in this workshop.

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Skills learnt that are transferable into the future	8	33.30%
Empowering and a place of inspiration	7	29.20%
Multicultural & international environment collaboration	7	29.20%
Collaboration between the team & organizers made an impression	6	25.00%
Openness was reflected in the inclusive environment	4	16.70%
OLA values well applied (Openness, Collaboration & Democratic participation)	4	16.70%
Emphasis from theoretical inputs to hands-on activity	3	12.50%
All in specific groups had a chance to speak up & add their piece	2	8.30%
Long lasting networks	2	8.30%
Sustainable forest use	1	4.20%



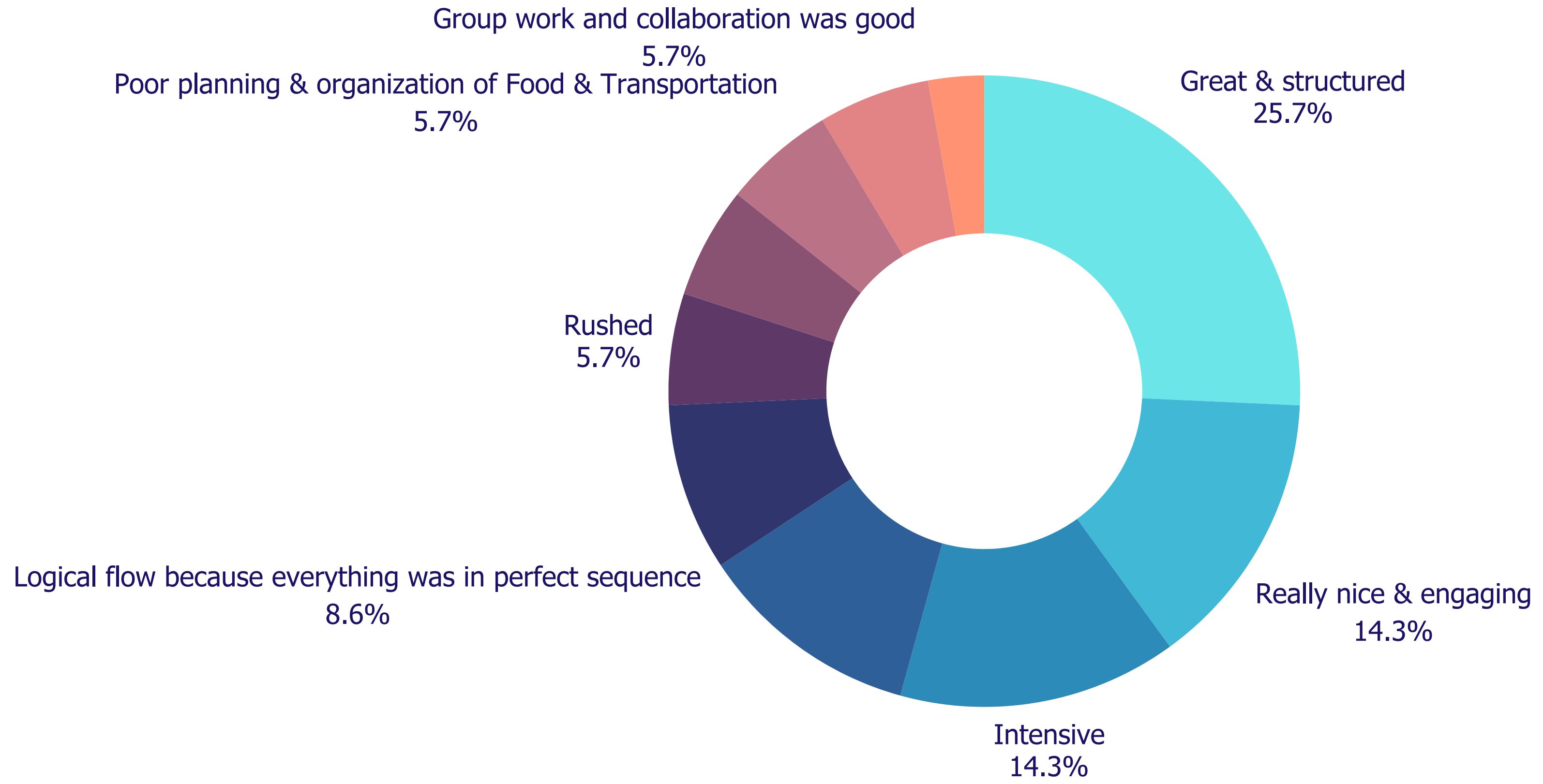
3. Having gone through this experience, do you think you are more competent now to advance democratic landscape transformation?

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Perception of participatory planning	9	37.50%
Working with children added a new dimension in design experience	7	29.20%
Collaboration with others	6	25.00%
Developed Ideas, comprehensive skills & evolved competency	4	16.70%
Communication (Listening, Speaking up & Sharing ideas)	3	12.50%
Interdisciplinary team work & stakeholder engagement skills have improved	2	8.30%
Working with others from different countries	2	8.30%
Collaborating with local people in their natural environment	1	4.20%
Techniques of public participation & aspects of co-creation	1	4.20%
It hasn't	1	4.20%



4. What were your thoughts on the methodical approach of the workshop week?

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Great & structured	9	37.50%
Really nice & engaging	5	20.80%
Intensive	5	20.80%
Confusion on some instance (Unstructured at times)	4	16.70%
Logical flow because everything was in perfect sequence	3	12.50%
Rushed	2	8.30%
Poor planning & organization of Food & Transportation	2	8.30%
Group work and collaboration was good	2	8.30%
Theoretical part should be stronger and more complex	2	8.30%
Difficult to do in real life	1	4.20%



5. What were your thoughts on the activities?

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Hands-on and participatory activities	6	25.00%
Masterly planned	7	29.20%
Super impressive	7	29.20%
Intensive & rushed	5	20.80%
Loved activities with the children	5	20.80%
Encouraged collaboration	4	16.70%
Transportation issues	2	8.30%
Bad timing for the activities (In the afternoon, too hot)	2	8.30%
No proper organization	1	4.20%
Some stakeholders didn't respond to some request or participate with enthusiasm	1	4.20%



6. What do you think went well / was good about this intensive study programme?

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Involving the community and children in the park	9	37.50%
Working as a team	6	25.00%
Collaboration & Openness	5	20.80%
Field visit & stakeholder interaction	5	20.80%
Collaboration and working with people from around the world	4	16.70%
Intensive study was amazing	3	12.50%
Interdisciplinary collaboration	3	12.50%
Group dynamic & background organization	2	8.30%
Well scheduled & organized	1	4.20%



7. What did not work so well during this intensive programme?

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Time was a bit stressed / Tightly scheduled, Sessions felt rushed	10	41.70%
Overly intensive schedule	6	25.00%
Little time for rest or deeper reflections	5	20.80%
Amount of walk in the heat	3	12.50%
Give opportunities to local citizens to participate from the go	1	4.20%
Having interviews with children in the forest instead of the park	1	4.20%
A German tutor playing football on his phone during all presentations, very unprofessional	1	4.20%
Local authority collaboration	1	4.20%
Most topics discussed were already determined leaving no room for new ideas	1	4.20%
Short time with the children not enough to provide a meaningful conclusion	1	4.20%
Scheduling didn't factor weather conditions	1	4.20%
A tutor was very disrespectful & replied very rudely when his authority was questioned	1	4.20%
Walking in the forest	1	4.20%
Recommendation on train tickets & accommodation weren't very practical	1	4.20%

8. How could the OLA intensive programme be improved moving to the future?

Response	Mentions	Percentage
Flexibility in timing / Breaks between activities	6	25.00%
Give opportunities to local citizens to participate from the go	5	20.80%
Clear daily planning	3	12.50%
Be more open minded	2	8.30%
Move from outcome towards practical realization	1	4.20%
Inviting experts on chosen topics as tutors	1	4.20%
Share meals together	1	4.20%
Transparency with funding	1	4.20%
Inviting professionals remotely related to the field to be included	1	4.20%
Include more time for feedback	1	4.20%
Some social & political aspects were not at all discussed	1	4.20%
Tutors should be a guiding voice and not forcing students to follow their plan	1	4.20%
Adding short debrief or open circle at the end of intense days	1	4.20%
Better organization regarding the venue for international students	1	4.20%

9. Any further thoughts / suggestions?

Response	Mentions	Percentage
No answer	14	58.30%
It was great, thank you for everything	4	16.70%
Sending love and gratitude to the entire team	2	8.30%
Recommend organizing for the accommodation so that we focus on the programme	1	4.20%
Workshop dates should avoid exam periods	1	4.20%
Having coffee or hot water available for all	1	4.20%
Adding a day off or a lighter day in the middle of the workshop	1	4.20%
Interesting to have teams have a choice of different sites to work on	1	4.20%
Let the program expand and penetrate everywhere	1	4.20%

Top Responses from Post-Seminar Survey (Vác)

OLA Value	Top Response	Mentions	Percentage
Openness	Experienced strongly	13	54.20%
Inclusiveness	Experienced strongly	12	50.00%
Participation	Experienced very strongly	11	45.80%
Co-creation	Experienced very strongly	11	45.80%
Empathy	Experienced very strongly	10	41.70%
Sustainability	Experienced strongly	10	41.70%
Resilience	Experienced very strongly / strongly (tie)	9	37.50%
Justice	Somehow average	8	33.30%
Empowerment	Experienced very strongly	10	41.70%
Diversity	Experienced very strongly	10	41.70%
Power of Place	Experienced strongly	11	45.80%
Partnership	Experienced very strongly	10	41.70%

Question	Top Response	Mentions	Percentage
Written Reflection on Values	Skills learnt that are transferable into the future	8	33.30%
Competence (Qualitative)	Perception of participatory planning	9	37.50%
Competence (Quantitative)	Yes, my competence has developed	14	58.30%
Methodical Approach	Great & structured	9	37.50%
Thoughts on Activities	Masterly planned / Super impressive (tie)	7	29.20%
Level of Difficulty	Just right	21	87.50%
What Went Well	Involving the community and children in the park	9	37.50%
What Did Not Work Well	Time was a bit stressed / Sessions felt rushed	10	41.70%
Suggestions for Improvement	Flexibility in timing / Breaks between activities	6	25.00%
Overall Quality	Very good	14	58.30%

Comparison & Conclusion

Aspect	Pre-Seminar Survey (Vác)	Post-Seminar Survey (Vác)	Analysis & Relation to OLA Charta
Definition of Democratic Landscape Transformation	Top Response: "Community involvement (Shared decision making)" (70.8%) Focus: Strong emphasis on process, inclusivity, and social justice.	Assessment via Values: 91.7% experienced Openness; 83.3% experienced Co-creation.	Evolution: The pre-seminar understanding was highly aligned with OLA's values. The post-seminar survey confirms these values were not just theoretical but were experienced and operationalized during the workshop, fulfilling the Charta's definition of a "co-creative" process.
Definition of a Democratic Urban Landscape	Top Response: "Equal access & rights" (58.3%) Other: "Collaboration between designers & inhabitants" (45.8%)	Embodiment of Values: High ratings for Inclusiveness (79.2% strongly/very strong) and Participation (79.1%).	Evolution: The pre-seminar focus on equality and collaboration was directly translated into the workshop's practice. The high value experience scores show the programme successfully created a microcosm of the democratic landscape it aims to build.
Expected vs. Actual Learning	Top Expectation: "Process of democratic landscape transformation" (33.3%) Other: "Inclusive planning" (25%), "Collaboration with groups" (25%)	Top Learning: "Skills learnt that are transferable into the future" (33.3%) Competence: 87.5% felt more competent.	Outcome: Expectations were met and exceeded. Participants wanted to learn the process and left with practical, transferable skills, directly fulfilling OLA's mission to "build capacity".
Participant Contribution	Top Contribution: "Enthusiasm, love, passion..." (58.3%) Other: "Perspective as a landscape architect..." (50%)	Top Highlight: "Involving the community and children in the park" (37.5%)	Evolution: Personal attributes and professional expertise were successfully channeled into the core OLA activity: community co-creation. This reflects the Charta's principle of "designing with, rather than for, our partners."

The programme's greatest strength was its profound embodiment of OLA's core values. The high positive ratings for:

- Openness (91.7% experienced it strongly/very strongly),
- Participation (79.1% experienced it strongly/very strongly),
- Co-creation (83.3% experienced it strongly/very strongly), and
- Diversity (75% experienced it strongly/very strongly)

This confirms that the foundational principles of "designing with, rather than for" were not just aspirational but were operationalized in practice.

This is further evidenced by the top qualitative highlight: **"Involving the community and children in the park" (37.5%)**, which directly reflects the Charta's commitment to community-based partnerships and inclusive co-creation.

Furthermore, the programme achieved its goal of capacity building.

A resounding 87.5% of participants reported increased competence in advancing democratic landscape transformation, specifically citing **growth in "perception of participatory planning"** (37.5%) and **"collaboration with others"** (25%).

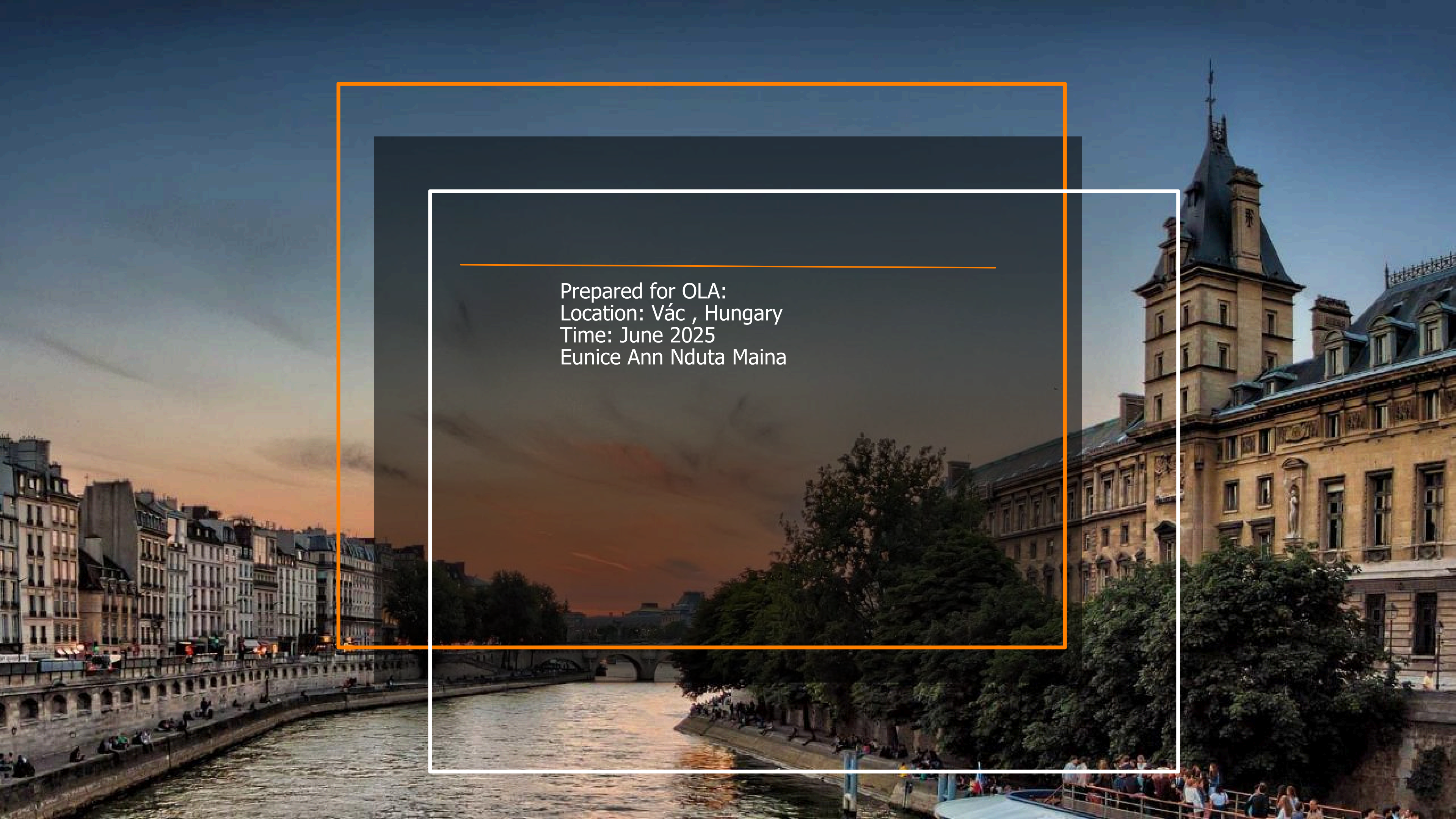
This directly aligns with OLA's vision of a world where **"all have a voice and agency in shaping what happens to our landscapes"** and demonstrates the effectiveness of its **"learning-by-doing" methodology** through hands-on activities (29.2% found the workshop "masterly planned" or "super impressive").

However, the assessment also identifies a significant tension between OLA's value of an "iterative, dialogic process" and the program's execution.

The most frequent criticism was that the schedule was "**rushed**" and "**overly intensive**" (41.7%), leaving "**little time for rest or deeper reflections**" (20.8%).

This contradicts the Charta's emphasis on dialogue and iterative processes, suggesting that the ambition to cover extensive material sometimes compromised the depth of engagement and reflective practice that are central to democratic transformation.

In conclusion, the Vác programme excelled as a powerful demonstration of OLA's values and successfully built participant competency. To fully align with its own Charta, future iterations should prioritize depth over breadth, allowing for more meaningful dialogue, reflection, and local partnership, thus better navigating the nature of the problems it seeks to address.



Prepared for OLA:
Location: Vác , Hungary
Time: June 2025
Eunice Ann Nduta Maina