URBAN SOLUTIONS

tapping the talents of urban youth

INCLUSION FOR ALL!
WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET

A research conducted by
Eddy Adams and Robert Arnkil for SALTO Inclusion.

SALTO-YOUTH
INCLUSION
RESOURCE CENTRE

Education and Culture

URBAN SOLUTIONS

Tapping the talents of urban youth

SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...

…'**S**upport and **A**dvanced **L**earning and **T**raining **O**pportunities within the **Youth in Action** programme'. The European Commission has created a network of eight SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Youth in Action programme, which provides young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO's aim is **to support European Youth in Action projects** in priority areas such as European Citizenship, Cultural Diversity, Participation and Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, in regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe or Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with Training and Cooperation activities and with Information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers. Most of these resources are offered and disseminated at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net. Find online the European Training Calendar, the Toolbox for Training and Youth Work, the database of youth field trainers active at European level (Trainers Online for Youth or TOY), links to online resources and much, much more…

SALTO-YOUTH actively **co-operates** with other actors in the European youth field, among them the National Agencies and Co-ordinators of the Youth in Action Programme, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers and training organisers.

THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION RESOURCE CENTRE
WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/

The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre (in Belgium-Flanders) works together with the European Commission to include young people with fewer opportunities in the Youth in Action programme. SALTO-Inclusion also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing the following resources:
- training courses on inclusion topics and for specific target groups at risk of social exclusion
- training and youth work methods and tools to support inclusion projects
- practical and inspiring publications for international inclusion projects
- up-to-date information on inclusion issues and opportunities via the Inclusion Newsletter
- support for policy and strategy development regarding inclusion topics
- an overview of trainers and resource people in the field of inclusion and youth
- bringing together stakeholders to make the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities more effective and easier

☞ For more information and resources, have a look at the Inclusion pages at
www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

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LIVING FOR THE CITY INTRO

1.1 The push and pull of the city

In our imagination, cities are places where dreams come true. From Athens, birthplace of European democracy, through Florence, seat of the Renaissance to Birmingham, hub of the industrial revolution, urban spaces have been cauldrons of invention, enterprise and opportunity.

Cities bewitch us as they bewitched our ancestors. Magical places where people can fulfil their promise and potential – make their fortunes, find their soul mate and live whatever life they choose. They offer freedom. They offer excitement. They offer everything.

It is not surprising then to find that we Europeans are increasingly an urban species. **More than one in four EU residents lives in a city with a population of 250,000 or more** (*European Commission, 2011*) and cities continue to attract newcomers. In particular, cities – especially the larger ones – act as magnets for young people, and for incomers from every corner of the planet. Consequently, city populations are younger and more diverse than the EU average.

Our major cities – Paris, London, Barcelona and Berlin amongst them –continue to attract incomers. In most EU member states (with the exception of Poland and Romania) the immigrant share of this new urban population has grown, as the flow from rural areas to cities has decreased. Consequently, **in many EU cities the proportion of inhabitants from migrant backgrounds exceeds 20%** of those less than 25 years old.

But let's not forget that Europe is a wide canvas. Not everyone lives in these major cities (only 12.3% live in cities with a population of over one million) and in some parts of Europe, the scenario for young people is very different. In much of Eastern Europe, cities struggle to retain young people and there the challenge is demographic decline. For those who are footloose – especially the highly educated – it is the lure of other cities – often in the West – which draws them away from home. During the crisis, this phenomenon has become even more acute.

1.2 The impact of the crisis on city life

The crisis facing Europe since 2008 has disproportionately affected young people. **Across Europe, youth unemployment rates have rocketed in recent years**. Within the EU 27, there are wide variations both between and within member states. In Germany and the Netherlands unemployment rates in 2010 were below 10 per cent whilst in several countries the rate was 30% and in Spain touching 50% (*Dietrich, 2011*).

Inevitably, with higher proportions of young people in cities, **the drama of the crisis has unfolded on their streets**. We have seen the *Indignados* protesting in Puerto del Sol, Madrid and clashes with police in other Spanish cities. For these young people, the best-educated generation in Spain's history, there is a feeling that the big lie has been exposed. "Stay in school, study hard and you will have a good life" the older generation told them. But this has not been their reward.

In Italy, the *Alternativi* shun the labour market and mainstream society, preferring to live a bohemian existence surviving on their wits and focusing on the short term. In Greece, young people have been in the vanguard of demonstrations against policies that they perceive to be discriminatory and unfair.

On the streets of London we see the *Occupy movement* protesting against the bankers and the Government's austerity measures. In 2012 we have seen burning cars in the Amiens suburbs, and in the summer of 2011 English cities – London, Birmingham, Bristol and Liverpool – exploded in scenes of violence aimed at the establishment. In Eastern Europe, young people have been agitated for political change in Russia, leading to the trial of the punk rock trio Pussy Riot, in August 2012.

This is not the first time young people have taken to the streets – far from it. In the early 1980s the youth of Brixton, London and Liverpool staged violent angry protests during an earlier period of recession and austerity. And in 2005, young people in French banlieues took to the streets, damaging shops and burning cars in a fit of anger against the lack of opportunities and the heavy-handed treatment of the state agencies.

1.3 Policy and resources

The two principle themes of this work – "Urban" and "Youth" are also high on the policy agenda within the European Union – and amongst all EU Member States. The EU reform agenda, the Europe 2020 strategy, promotes the concept of **smart, sustainable and inclusive growth**. It includes specific targets aimed at young people, most notably a commitment to reduce school drop out rates to 10%.

Within the strategy there are flagship initiatives such as "An agenda for new skills and jobs" which promotes many of the priorities identified in this report. For example, it stresses the importance of supporting young people to make a **positive post-school transition**, and emphasises the importance of wage levels that make work more attractive than welfare.

"Youth on the Move" is another Europe 2020 flagship. This specifically addresses the **youth unemployment** crisis, and provides funding to enable young people to study, train and work. Previously, many of these funding streams were only available to people in formal education – via institutions. There has been an emphasis in the new generation of programmes to be more flexible, enabling a wider pool of participants.

These initiatives complement the Youth in Action programme, which has traditionally placed more emphasis on **supporting youth work and informal support mechanisms**. Other funding programmes – such as Daphne which funds projects tackling violence – also provide resources for transnational activity that may be of interest to youth workers in urban areas.

The current round of European Structural Funds – ESF and ERDF – is drawing to an end in 2013. The new programme model for 2014-2020 is under discussion and in October 2011 the European Commission published Draft Regulations relating to this. These contained some very relevant messages for those with an interest in urban matters. They also include some encouraging messages about **Community Led Local Development** (CLLD), which are consistent with the co-production focus in this report.

In the Draft regulations, the Commission acknowledges the important role of urban areas for Europe's future economic and social progress. Cities are at the heart of the principles set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. Consequently, it proposes that a proportion of funds are ring-fenced for use in urban areas, which is a significant breakthrough for cities. In addition, the draft regulations promote the concept of Community Led Local Development, whereby local stakeholders have a say in how resources are assigned. Finally, it is worth noting that the regulations also include plans to financially **support social innovation** for the first time. Again, this will provide resource opportunities to engage in the sort of service modernization discussed in this report.

Finally, it is important to note that the EU funds **transnational exchange and learning** programmes that specifically support regions and cities. The Interreg Programme funds collaborative activity between regions across Europe whilst the URBACT II Programme funds cities to work on shared problems. In the third call for URBACT projects, three city networks focusing on young people were approved.

Further information can be found at:

- http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/
- http://ec.europa.eu/youthonthemove/
- http://ec.europa.eu/youth/
- http://ec.europa.eu/social/
- http://ec.europa.eu/esf/
- http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/daphnetoolkit/
- www.interreg4c.eu
- www.urbact.eu

1.4 So, what's all this about?

The youth disturbances across Europe provided the catalyst for this publication. The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre's mission is the inclusion of all young people, within the European Commission's Youth in Action Programme. Its work aims to strength the skills and capacity of the youth work sector through exchange and learning opportunities.

In response to the violent outbreaks of 2011, SALTO Inclusion decided to focus its efforts on the social challenges faced by young people in (sub)urban areas. Even though urban challenges go beyond the borders of youth work and the Youth in Action programme, SALTO Inclusion still wanted to contribute to make disaffected urban areas a better place for young people.

Consequently, SALTO Inclusion organised several activities to give youth workers (everybody working with young people) tools and background to successfully address social challenges in urban areas.

- **A research project**, whose results are published here, tempts to give an overview of the issues at stake in cities and analysed a variety of urban interventions to extract criteria for success.
- **A seminar** in Birmingham brought together stakeholders (including youth workers, educationalists, youth workers, NGOs and the police), young people and funders from countries across Europe to discuss the urban issues and inspire interventions.
  See www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/UrbanSolutionsSeminar/.
- **A long-term training course** (2011-2013) for urban youth workers allowed to exchange and reflect on youth work practices and set up innovative youth work in cities across Europe.
- At the same time, SALTO Inclusion brought together **inclusion officers** of the Youth in Action national agencies, to debate how they could stimulate positive action in urban areas within the Youth in Action programme.
- **The Youth and the City publication** from 2007 was updated with more recent good practices to stimulate youth workers to take urban action, within or without the Youth in Action programme.

This 'Urban Solutions' research publication is aimed at all of the stakeholders above. It gives a detailed snapshot of the issues young people face in urban areas across Europe. More importantly, it celebrates their energy, talent and enthusiasm and considers ways in which we can more support more young people to reach their potential. We hope it inspires all stakeholders to set up or reinforce urban actions for the benefit of young people and the urban communities they live in.

So, in the following pages we examine:

✗ The most important social issues facing young people in urban Europe (page 12)

✗ The key issues relating to the exchange of good practice (page 36)

✗ Good practice themes and examples (page 46)

✗ Recommendations for different stakeholders based on the research outcomes (page 70)

The content of this report has been drawn from our desk research, evidence gathered form the Urban Solutions stakeholder seminar held in Birmingham in May 2012, the Inclusion Colleague Support Group in Budapest in March 2012 and consultations with key stakeholders. Youth in Action stakeholders across Europe have contributed to the process, and we are very grateful for their contribution.

Finally, in terms of format, whilst doing this work, we were struck by the importance of music for young people. For many, it is the defining art form for each generation, with the associated styles and messages reflecting the values and concerns of contemporary youth. Consequently, there are musical references throughout the report, including each of the chapter headings. There are bonus points available for anyone who gets all the titles and artists…without the help of Google!
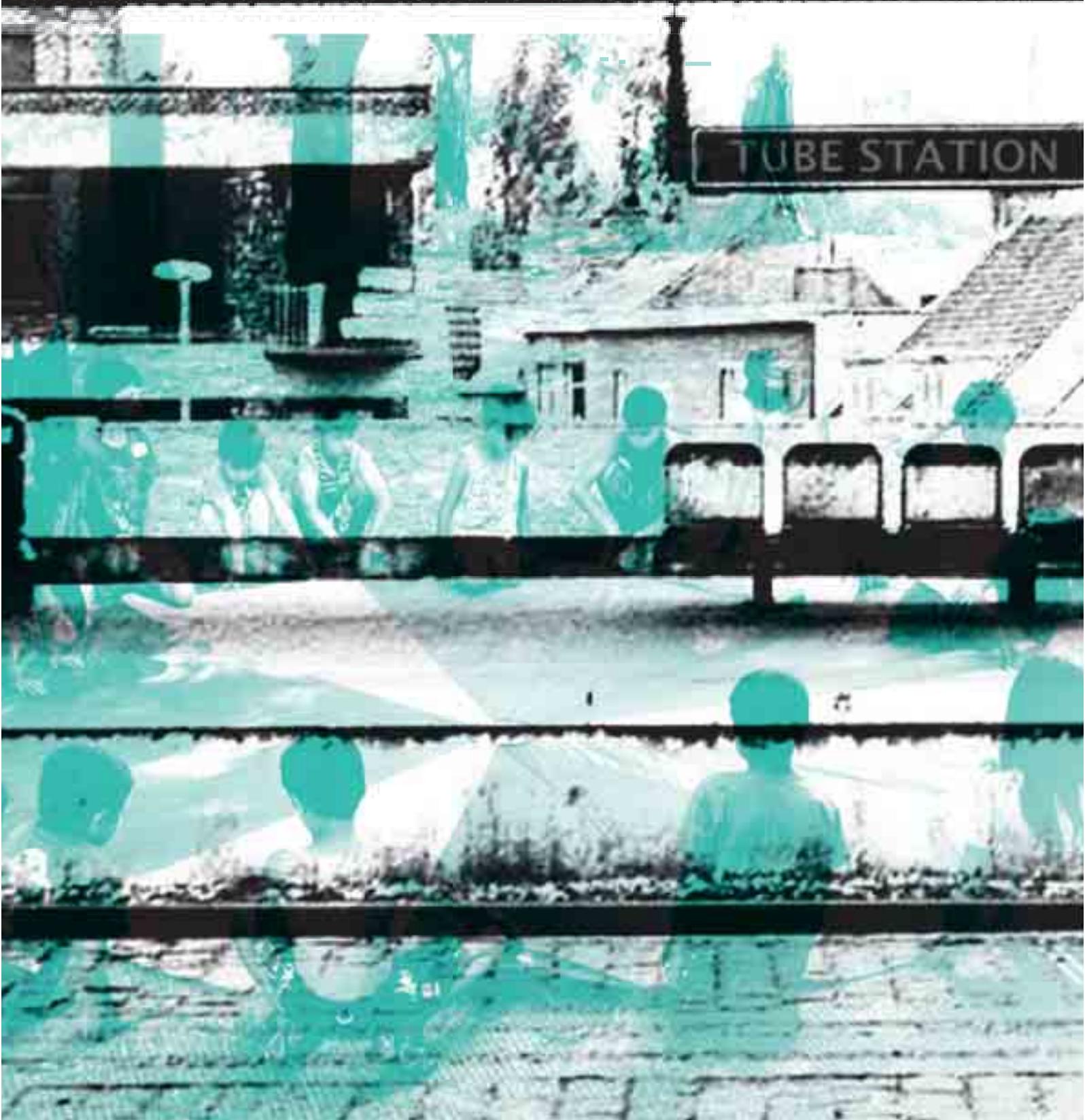
TUBE STATION

DOWN IN THE TUBE STATION AT MIDNIGHT

THE URBAN ISSUES

2.1 Wot u on?

Many young people living in Europe's cities today face tough challenges. Parents may tell them how lucky they are, while knowing in their hearts that our youth will not have a smooth path. For the first time in several generations, today's parents feel that their children's lives may actually be worse than theirs.

The **SALTO Inclusion Urban Strategy** (www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/UrbanStrategy/) sets out to address some of the big issues young people face in urban areas across Europe. This research at the basis of the strategy, captures the reality on the ground, which varies from country to country, and from city to city. In this chapter, we discuss the main themes, drawing upon various sources and from a range of relevant stakeholders including young people; youth workers; other service providers (local authorities, educators, the police) and funders.

To understand the problems, it is important to show the extent and range of issues which young people face in Europe's cities today. And it is a long list, which reflects not only the current crisis – but also long standing problems relating to city life.

However, before we do that, we would like to add a health warning. Although we need to understand the issues, let's not allow them to blind us to the fact that young people represent the future of cities. They are **passionate, resourceful, full of energy** and **alive with talent**. As we argue in the final chapter of this work, this should be our point of departure. Adopting an approach which **focuses on the assets** of the young – rather than the problems they face – is the way forward.

So, as we read the following pages, let's keep that thought at the front of our minds – and remember that the young are resilient, endlessly creative and our hope for the future.

2.2 The world of work or "Ok - where did the jobs go?"

Today, in many of Europe's cities, young people struggle to find jobs. Now, work is not everything, and young people have long grappled with the key issue of *living to work against working to live*. However, with one eye on the crisis let's start by considering the jobs question.

Being in employment is important for most of us. For a start, it provides an income to pay for the basic things we need – shelter, food and clothing – and if we are lucky, more than that. Work can also help define who we are. However, this 'developed' society notion is now coming under threat as the jobless numbers rise across Europe. ***Just because I do not work, does not mean that I am no-one***.

Traditionally, work has been an important aspect in young people's transition to adult life. If you are working you have money and a degree of financial independence, which can allow you to assert your own identity in relation to others – most notably your nuclear family. You also have a sense of **self-esteem** that comes from being useful, and from having your skills recognised. Through work, you can **feel valued** as a contributor to your community and the economy – a fully active citizen.

Most young people want to work. They want fulfilling jobs that reward their efforts and recognise their talents. They want to contribute to society and to have their independence from their parents. But nowadays work is not always easy to find. In many parts of Europe, job availability is at a historic low, due to the on-going economic crisis.

In the Mediterranean countries, where the issue is most acute, the national youth unemployment rate is above 50%. Even in wealthier cities such as Barcelona, the rate is 35% - with more than 1 young person in 3 unemployed. And few cities are immune from the problem. In the wealthiest cities, although the rate is lower, youth unemployment is rising – in Copenhagen it has doubled to 6% in the past year. And even Germany, Europe's powerhouse, has its challenges. For example, the national capital, Berlin, has youth unemployment rates of 13% - double the national average – in the summer of 2012.

Much has been written about the jobs crisis (*Dietrich, Scarpetta, etc*) – particularly in relation to young people – and our purpose is not to repeat this. Instead, we will discuss the key structural changes taking place within the labour market which pre-date the crisis but which have been highlighted by it. In practical terms, these trends are important for everyone working with young people to understand.

TRANSITIONS INTO WORK..."DIRTEE CASH"

Back in the day, most young people finished school and went straight into work. In cities, there were plenty of opportunities and a wide variety of threshold entry-level jobs. If you were fortunate enough to have attended university or college, your prospects were even better, and you could often pick and choose your preferred professional career path.

That's all changed now, and the transition into employment has become longer and, for many young people, less direct. Moving straight from education into employment – particularly permanent stable employment – is becoming less typical for young people. Instead, **their initial experience of the workplace is less predictable, often fragmented and prolonged**.

A notable new phenomenon in the work transition process is the inexorable rise of the **internship**. Increasingly, young people will undergo a number of experiences as an intern, as a prerequisite to finding a 'real' job. However, the regulation of internships is highly uneven across Europe and many of these opportunities are unpaid. As Howker and Malik note, this places poorer young people at a huge disadvantage:

"Internships can last for months at a time and are usually unpaid. This means that the young people who work for nothing at the start of their careers need wealthy parents to subsidise them. And, ultimately, for popular jobs… this means that the main barrier to entry is money – you simply can't get them without experience, and you can't get the experience if you're from a poor background."

CALL THAT A JOB?
NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CITY

Once young people are ready to take up employment they find that urban work opportunities look quite different to how they looked a few years ago.

Economists speak about the **'hour glass' labour market** in cities, which consists of many very high-level specialist professional jobs and at the other end significant numbers of low-skill threshold entry jobs. Driven by technology and organisational restructuring, many of the mid-tier jobs have now gone.

This latest shift follows a long period of **deindustrialization** in cities where many of the traditional manufacturing and heavier industries have disappeared. They have either vanished completely or the jobs have gone overseas. Although some cities – most notably in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands – have managed to retain much of their traditional industry base, this is not the case across Europe. In many European cities, this deindustrialization process has seen a break in the long-established connection between specific industries (shipbuilding, metal working, etc.), particular companies and the communities within which they were based. An affinity between families, communities and employers no longer exists – as the new sectors operate differently. Permanent, high skilled jobs for life have long been a thing of the past.

THE GENDER DIMENSION - "MAN DOWN"

In those cities with this heavy industry heritage, it played a particularly important aspect of the transition to adulthood for young men. The impact of this shift was masked in the 1990s and 2000s by the long boom in the construction industry across much of Europe. For many males wishing to leave school and go straight into manual work, construction offered an open door. But the crisis has affected this sector more than most, so that pathway is now less easy.

Young men saw their fathers, uncles, brothers and cousins in these industries. And they also had the support of a mentor as they underwent an apprenticeship experience in these traditional sectors. As a consequence:

"Historically, young men had role models to help them into manhood. They were presented with a virilising idea. They would look after their parents, earn enough to be able to support a wife and children, and end their life as respected elders. It was sexist and patriarchal, not a structure to applaud, but ingrained over generations. Now there are few realistic role models for working-class young men to emulate that would gain them self-respect, and their prospects of being a future family 'breadwinner' are dim."

The reshaping of urban labour markets that have replaced these sectors forms part of what has been called the ***feminization*** of the city. In this analysis the triumphant service sectors that are now prevalent, require a very different set of skills and competences; communications; teamworking; people skills and emotional intelligence.

On a positive note, these changes have created new opportunities for young women. But this picture varies dramatically across Europe. Female labour market participation rates are inconsistent and highest in the Scandinavian countries whilst lowest in several Mediterranean Member States. And within communities there are differing cultural attitudes towards women in the workplace. For example, many young Muslim women wishing to work in the open labour market must struggle hard to convince their families.

THE ETHNIC MINORITY PERSPECTIVE

And for some young people from minority backgrounds – or amongst the less well-connected indigenous community – lack of social capital is a significant barrier to finding work. The old phrase **"It's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know"** remains relevant despite the advances made in equal opportunity legislation. In our socially networked society, having access to networks and knowing people on the inside (for example, for access to internships, which are not always openly advertised) remains increasingly important. For young people new to an area, or living in a family with weak social connections, breaking into the labour market can be that much more difficult.

And knowing people can be particularly helpful in deterring stereotypes. One of the disadvantages of networks is that they can be self-perpetuating and for employers this can mean a tendency to recruit "people like us."

"All the people like us are We, and everyone else is They." (Kipling)

This is bad news for **young people from minority groups**, who have to struggle to overcome prejudice. A good example of this self-perpetuating recruitment model comes from the Port of Rotterdam where the workforce was disproportionately made up of middle-aged white men – in stark contrast to the city's wider population profile. Rotterdam Port has now introduced an innovative recruitment model to diversify its workforce in response to this skewed situation.

These negative assumptions amongst recruiters can also apply to '**bad neighbourhoods**', which have reputations for worklessness that makes employers wary of their residents. In this respect, the bad neighbourhood-no jobs syndrome is also self-perpetuating. How can you shake off a bad postcode when applying for work?

SO, WHY DOES ALL THIS MATTER?

All of the evidence indicates that prolonged periods of inactivity have **long-term effects on young people**. OECD experts have defined this as *'scarring'* because of the sustained impact that youth unemployment has on these people in later life.

And this goes beyond the economic sphere, as an important UK study showed. Data from the 1970 British Birth Cohort Study indicated that being NEET (*Not in Education, Employment or Training*) for six months is likely to mean that by the age of 21 a young man is more than four times more likely to be out of work; three times more likely to have depression and mental health issues; five times more likely to have a criminal record; and six times less likely to have any qualifications.

2.3 "school spirit"

SCHOOLS IN THE CITY AND THE LINK WITH SOCIAL MOBILITY

Many of the voices contributing to our report have referred to the important role of schools in preparing young people for work and for adult life. Apart from their home environments, schools are the **second biggest influencers** in the socialization of most young people. Yet, it is in Europe's cities that we often find the very best schools, but also where we find those where standards are lowest.

In some European countries, the quality gap between schools is limited and this applies equally to their cities. In these cases, levels of social cohesion are high and an ethos of fairness underpins the entire education system. As a consequence, there are high rates of **social mobility** linked to education (*Wilkinson and Pickett*). Unfortunately, such systems are in the minority, and in most countries urban schools combine the best and worst examples nationally.

DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOLS AND WHITE FLIGHT

The pattern of failing schools in **deprived neighbourhoods** is a widely recognised urban phenomenon. An established pattern is one of decline involving negative spirals where deprived neighbourhood schools are subject to:

- Declining quality in teaching
- High staff turnover and failure to attract good candidates
- Sinking reputations and poor results

Once this decline starts, it can be hard to arrest as those with choices undertake a 'self-sustaining flight' (*Szalai)*. In some cities there is a strong ethnic dimension to this debate, where middle-class (usually white) families move out under the impression that standards fall as a neighbourhood becomes more diverse. Obviously, this is disastrous for schools that need the most support. A factor in this is the fact that school budgets are based on local population data and in neighbourhoods with significant numbers of new overseas arrivals, it may take some time for these changes to be registered and fed into the system. In the meantime, withdrawal of middle-class children (usually from indigenous families) can further skew the balance.

Certainly, for new arrivals, particularly those lacking the host language, succeeding in school can be a challenge. However, the evidence indicates that attitudes towards education within families and communities are key determinants here, as is the educational level of children's parents. And it is important to note that educational performance of different migrant communities varies dramatically. Evidence from those EU Member States tracking such data makes this clear. For example, in the UK the highest performing (male) pupils in terms of results are those of Chinese and Indian origin whilst white boys and African-Caribbean boys are amongst the poorest achievers (*Cassell*).

SO, WHAT'S ACTUALLY GOING ON IN THERE?

Alongside this debate about inner-city schools, is the wider one relating to the relevance of the contemporary school curriculum. Time and again we hear that schools are just not preparing young people for the world of work. Here at least, there seems to be a consensus between employers and young people!

In our "**advanced economies**", the prevalent culture is one where return on investment must be measured by results. This is especially so as money gets tighter and competition for public sector funds increases. For schools, performance is usually measured by qualifications achieved, and they are rewarded for the numbers they get through the system. As we know, **behaviour follows funding**, so this is another self-perpetuating pattern, where schools that succeed in getting exam results continue to focus narrowly on that.

This results-based model has a number of drawbacks. First of all, unless the curriculum it relates to reflects what employers need, then there is a risk of significant rupture in the education-labour market interface. The education curriculum for schools is set at the national level, and in some cases – for example those countries with the **Dual System** model – employers have a strong influence. This is not the case in most European states however.

Secondly, this formal education model does not take sufficient account of the other skills and characteristics young people possess. This rigid framework will narrowly capture academic or vocational competencies but will fail to reflect a much wider skillset that young people might have. In this respect, the system is a product of an earlier era when the labour market was more static, more predictable and it was much easier to understand what the job market was looking for.

THE CORE PURPOSE OF SCHOOLS?

Although schools and career guidance professionals might pretend otherwise, any concept of a perfect education-labour market fit has been turned on its head. Take for example the impact of social-media and ICT on every transactional area of life. The Internet was already rewriting the business rule-book before the advent of social media. Since then, businesses have been playing catch up as new ways of engaging with clients come on stream almost daily. The long-term impact of tools like **YouTube** and **Facebook** for the labour market are barely understood. In the meantime, what were once safe professional sectors – Banking, IT, the public sector, construction – are shedding jobs across Europe whilst "bad-boy" hackers have the kind of skills most companies would pay a lot for.

In reality, as the pace of change increases, schools will struggle further, and they will need to decide the extent to which they provide a basic education – literacy, numeracy, core ICT skills etc – rather than trying to second-guess future labour demand. Or they might even adapt the curriculum to take better account of young people's passions and talents. What Sir Ken Robinson has called the **Learning Revolution** (on www.ted.com). That way, we will have more young people leaving school aware of their own talents and confident in their own abilities.

"(CAN'T GET NO) SATISFACTION"

In the meantime, satisfaction levels with schools in urban areas remain a serious concern. Although they should be a key mechanism to help young people to realise their hopes and dreams, too often they operate like people factories focusing only on numbers and results. For example, following the English city riots, a major Neighbourhood Survey of areas affected was conducted. A key finding was that only 43% of residents felt that schools prepared young people adequately for work (Riots Communities and Victims Panel). So, looking to the future, we should ask how **youth workers** and other stakeholders can work more effectively with urban schools.
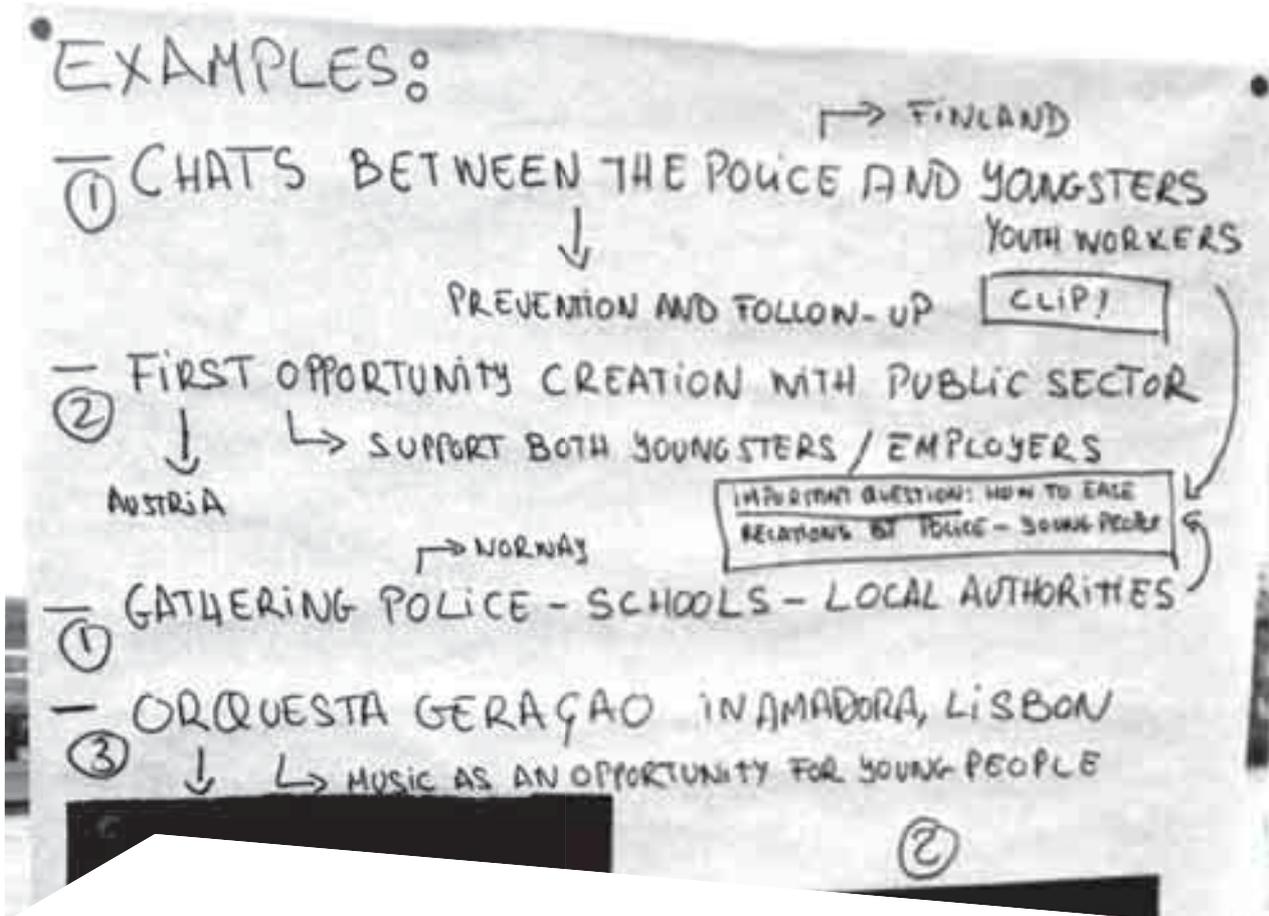
2.4 life on the street...

Many of Europe's cities are characterised by large post-war housing estates, which are often located in the outskirts of the commercial centres. Once seen as the solution to slum housing in the west, many of these high and medium-rise neighbourhoods now house the city's poorest residents. In the former Communist states, large residential blocks are also commonplace. Many of these have **bad reputations**, and are home to cities' most deprived communities, including the Roma.

Across Europe, these large residential blocks create a number of social problems for all residents, including young people. Amongst these are the **weak transport links** between many peripheral areas and the city centres. Particularly in those cities where bus services have been privatized, the frequency is poor – with late evening buses an anomaly – and fares high. This makes it difficult for young people to engage in the social and cultural life of the city. It also limits the access to labour market opportunities outside core business hours.

Another basic environmental issue is the simple **lack of outdoor space**. Young people living in overcrowded accommodation with their families can struggle to find open areas where they can hang out with friends or kick a ball around. And the erosion of community trust means that older people can feel concerned when they see groups of youth congregating together. This derives from negative perceptions of young people – often **fuelled by the media** – and in some places has resulted in municipalities legislating against young people being on the street at night. In June 2012 the local authority in Bangor, North wales placed a curfew on young people aged under 16 being in the town centre unaccompanied by an adult after 2200h.

In cities where **gang activity** is prevalent, young people may only feel safe in their own immediate neighbourhood. In many cities, gangs operate in strictly defined geographical areas, with intruders straying into opposing territories at their peril. Consequently, young people have a mental map of the safe and 'no-go' areas in their town. For some young people, joining a gang is a logical step when there is little support or **role-model** behaviour in the family home. Another factor can be negative peer pressure, where youngsters are pressured into joining a gang. Recent investigations into gangland activity in South London heard from young people who considered it unsafe not to join a gang – and had done so as the only means of guaranteeing protection from others.

EXAMPLES:

① CHATS BETWEEN THE POLICE AND YOUNGSTERS → FINLAND
YOUTH WORKERS
↓
PREVENTION AND FOLLOW-UP   CLIP!

② FIRST OPPORTUNITY CREATION WITH PUBLIC SECTOR
↓ ↳ SUPPORT BOTH YOUNGSTERS / EMPLOYERS
AUSTRIA

IMPORTANT QUESTION: HOW TO EASE RELATIONS BETWEEN POLICE - YOUNG PEOPLE

→ NORWAY

① GATHERING POLICE - SCHOOLS - LOCAL AUTHORITIES

③ ORQUESTA GERAÇÃO IN AMADORA, LISBON
↓ ↳ MUSIC AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

②

In neighbourhoods with bad reputations, relations between the police and young people are often difficult. In November 2005, French President Jacque Chirac proclaimed that **normality** had returned to banlieues across France, which he defined as between 50 and 150 cars being torched every night. After extensive rioting, where the number had escalated to almost 1,500 vehicles being burnt every night, this was hailed as a significant achievement. What is normality on the streets of Europe's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods? Hooded youths openly dealing drugs in the streets? Older people staying indoors from late afternoon onwards? No go areas for outsiders and the police?

Analysis of the French riots of 2005 indicated that relationships between the police and the *'sans-papiers'* were widely perceived to be a factor in the involvement of young minorities in the French banlieue disturbances.(Fauroux) This has also been a consistent message from successive generations of urban unrest in England. For example, research into the causes of the English 2011 riots identified **lack of trust in the police** as a key contributory factor. One in three people surveyed thought that the police were corrupt. This damaging perception was exacerbated by findings that local satisfaction rates with the police were much lower amongst ethnic minority respondents (64%) than amongst white ones (77%). This coincides with previous investigations of English city riots – most notably those in Brixton and Toxteth in the 1980s. Despite thirty years of police reform and attempts to tackle this issue, it remains problematic.

2.5 "family business"

We've heard about young people joining gangs because it's what their mates have done. This is a risky business, but the transition to adulthood is a time when people often feel impelled to **take risks** and to **push boundaries**. Assessing and managing risks is a feature of responsible adulthood, so this is appropriate and welcome. However, when negative peer pressure comes into play, the stakes in the risk game become much higher. Consequently, many young people in urban areas are exposed to examples of dangerous and irresponsible behaviour.

Where alcohol and drugs are ubiquitous, young people can feel under pressure to show that they are 'hard enough' to indulge. Pushing the boundaries can extend to other antisocial behaviours, such as vandalism and petty crime. Bored young people looking for excitement can get a short-term rush from engaging in this kind of activity. For most, this is a passing phase, confirmed by the fact that crime statistics in most countries peak around the age of 19. But for those who are caught, a criminal record can harm their future prospects and some who enter the criminal justice system for more serious offences find it hard to break out of a cycle of criminal behaviour.

For both genders, there is a pressure to indulge in risky sexual behaviour. In a society where sexualized images are everywhere, this is hardly surprising. For young women in particular, the consequences can be severe, and rates of teenage pregnancy remain high in many EU Member States. Where they are lowest – for example in the Netherlands – is where quality sex-education is built into the curriculum. Unfortunately, many cultures across Europe remain ambivalent to this type of intervention, with damaging results for young people.

Having the strength to **resist negative peer pressure** is not easy. Young people who do not conform to social norms risk isolation and bullying. It is easier to go with the flow than to step back from the crowd – particularly if you are alone. Being different can be frightening, and standing up for who you are can take guts. For young gay people, life can be particularly difficult – and frequently dangerous due to homophobic behaviour. Standing tall is not always easy. Young people who are sure of themselves and who have positive role models are better placed to do this. Their ability to draw upon what sociologists call *resilience* equips them to make the right decisions and gives them the strength to stand up to others.

2.6 home values...

Many young people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods do not have the kind of life-start that exposes them to positive role models. Rough neighbourhoods have more than their fair share of dysfunctional adults whose children start out with significant obstacles. The neediness of the parents – who themselves have often been poorly parented – means that they struggle to give their children the levels of support they need. This **negative intergenerational** cycle is a familiar pattern across Europe.

In the past this was less of an issue. Neighbourhood residents would assume responsibility in the raising of every local child – akin to the African saying "**It takes a village to raise a child**." Neighbours would tell children off for misbehaving – for example by asking youngsters to keep their feet off the seats on a bus. In some parts of Europe adults will now shy away from this responsibility – afraid of the consequences. This is partly due to a loss of social cohesion, whereby people are less likely to know one another, due to resident turnover – and increased diversity. Alongside this is a fear of the unknown, and a growing reluctance to 'get involved'.

In cities where this shift has taken place, there is a greater expectation that public servants – teachers, the police and social workers – will assume this social controlling role on society's behalf. This makes it hard for these civil servants to meet society's expectations, and they will complain that they have to make up for the **failure of parents** to do their job properly. In turn, young people can feel that there are no boundaries and that no-one is checking their behaviour – which can be an invitation to push the limits further.

Walking through the streets of Birmingham with a Spanish police officer, we spoke about this issue of formal and non-formal control. He noted locals' reluctance to get involved in the UK, compared to Spain where adults are still likely to intervene in relation to delinquent behaviour. However, he felt that the Birmingham situation may become the norm in Spain in future years.

A strong theme therefore was the importance of parents fulfilling their adult responsibilities to their children. We have already referred to the link between parents' educational achievement and that of their offspring. As well as low levels of educational achievement, the poorest urban areas are often characterised by **intergenerational worklessness** where it is the norm within families – sometimes entire neighbourhoods – not to have a job.

As well as leaving children with **negative role models**, this limits their horizons and has a direct impact on their health. Research indicates close correlation between unemployment and incidences of poor mental health and there are few parts of Europe where families living on welfare can afford to properly nourish their children.

And what about young people's prospects of setting up home on their own? Traditionally, the patterns of children leaving the parental home were geographically split in Europe. Broadly speaking, in the South where family structures tended to be stronger, it was not unusual for young adults to stay at home with their parents until they were financially secure and/or about to marry. In Northern Europe, the picture was different, with young people more likely to leave the parental home as soon as financially possible – and in some cases even sooner!

However, a central feature of the wider economic crisis has been a shock to the housing system in many parts of Europe. This has disproportionately hit cities with a number of consequences for the young. The net effect has been a severe reduction in the availability of affordable housing in many urban areas and an increase in levels of **youth homelessness** (*Quilgars*) – particularly in a small number of EU states. The reasons for this are complex, but they include rising housing costs, domestic violence and inter family tensions.

As a result, there are more young vulnerable people living on our city streets, in several Member States. At the same time, others are reluctantly living in their parental homes placing families under huge pressure.

2.7 socially connected and staying in the loop

Living in an **integrated safe community** is something that most people enjoy. Feeling part of that community – and sharing its values - is an important factor in social cohesion – the strong bond between people and place. In fact, the evidence from the EU URBEX project suggests that within low-income areas these **social bonds** are stronger because people have fewer travel options and rely more heavily on their neighbourhood. So, although this may limit their horizons, on a positive note it means there are higher levels of community solidarity.

However, the **growing diversity** of Europe's cities can lead to communities living in isolation alongside one another. There is an established pattern where particular groups settle in parts of cities – a phenomenon that is attractive to newcomers seeking emotional, social and economic support. This can be a vital benefit to minority residents, however it can also have disadvantages.

In some cities, different cultural and ethnic groups live parallel lives where there are low levels of interaction between communities. Young people growing up in such neighbourhoods may have limited access either to the mainstream host culture – or to other minority communities living in other parts of the city. Sometimes this can be other communities living a few streets away. In such cases the risk of intercommunity tension is ever present:

"A city can consist of socially cohesive but increasingly divided neighbourhoods,. The stronger the ties that bind local communities, the greater may be the social, racial or religious conflict between them. The point is that social cohesion at neighbourhood level is by no means unambiguously a good thing." (Kearns and Forrest)

Analysis of the 2011 English city riots explored the possibility that in some cities – most notably Birmingham – **intercommunity tension** was an issue. This focused on the death of three young Asian men after being hit by a vehicle driven by African-Caribbeans. Investigations of earlier urban disturbances – for example of the Northern English cities in the early 1990s also indicated that this lack of integration between communities was a root cause of the tension. In the wake of these disorders, cities like Leeds have invested heavily in **"community partnership"** models, which support community leaders to engage directly with local authority heads.

In the **globalized city**, telecommunications have added another layer to the debate about network engagement and communal connection. People can now live in one city but be in continuous contact with other communities around the world. Again, there are many positive aspects to this – particularly for those with ties to overseas cultures. Access to television and news services means that people can physically live in one place but psychologically inhabit another.

Social media tools and web-based telephony also support these possibilities. In doing so they nourish and strengthen cultural roots – but at times at the cost of diluting the sense of attachment to the host city. Young people, comfortable with social media tools – and often equally comfortable with notions of dual identity – are particularly subject to this phenomenon.

And the option to 'opt out' through ICT is an option that is open to all young people. For some, **PlayStation** is an easier reality to cope with than the one they find on the streets. Gaming has its strengths – for example it can equip them with skills that have workplace relevance – but it can also discourage socialization. This is a relatively new phenomenon, whose long-term impacts are not yet fully understood. However, people speak of the effect of **'e-solation'** where young people's levels of engagement with gaming encourages behaviours which are anti-social and which may, ultimately, be bad for their mental health.

In such cases, youth become less visible. This can mean that their support problems go unidentified and unsupported. This issue of visibility and connection to the outside world is a recurring theme in modern life. In cities across Europe, support agencies can struggle to maintain relationships with those young people who have limited or no connection with their neighbourhood and its networks.

2.8 "Tabloid junkie"

Images of young people gaming are widely used by the media to suggest that the younger generation is **disconnected, antisocial** and, in some sense, less willing to work than earlier generations. This negative image of young people is used to imply that they would rather lie around than work. This feeds the perceptions that they are 'undeserving' and 'feckless', a popular word used by the UK media to describe young people, which means 'unthinking and irresponsible'.

This caricature overlooks the blurring in mainstream society between work and play. Widespread use of technology – particularly mobile devices used for work and social life – and the **flexibilization** of working hours have driven this. With young people it is assumed that they are always 'up to no good' therefore unlikely to be working. The stereotype of young people being lazy is reinforced by rising levels of youth obesity, which is used to suggest that young people are less active than previously.

Again, young people are products of the society that adults have created. The ubiquity of fast food – a root cause of the problem – is a wider societal challenge whose solution requires education around **healthy diets and lifestyles**. Indeed, it is lazy simplification by the media, which ignores the wider social trends at work here.

In fact, in our society you don't have to look far to find **negative images of young people**. Thanks to the media they are everywhere! And accusations of laziness are not the worst of it! Images of hooded young people hanging out in dimly lit city corners is one of the strongest media images and the language of the media feeds fears of immoral youth gangs out of control. During the English riots of 2011 the national media almost emptied their stock of the worst adjectives describing young people on the streets, as follows:

- **British youths are the most unpleasant and violent in the world** (Daily Mail 10 August 2011)

- **Flaming morons** (Daily Express, 9 August 2011)

These powerful words underline some important underlying sociological messages: That young people are **wild, uncivilized and untamed**; That their values – or lack of them – are totally at odds with the wider society they inhabit; and that they are apart from – not part of – mainstream society – the dangerous 'other' rather than a product of ourselves. We are encouraged to forget that these youngsters are our children, siblings, neighbours and friends. If they are demons – they are demons that we have all had a hand in creating.
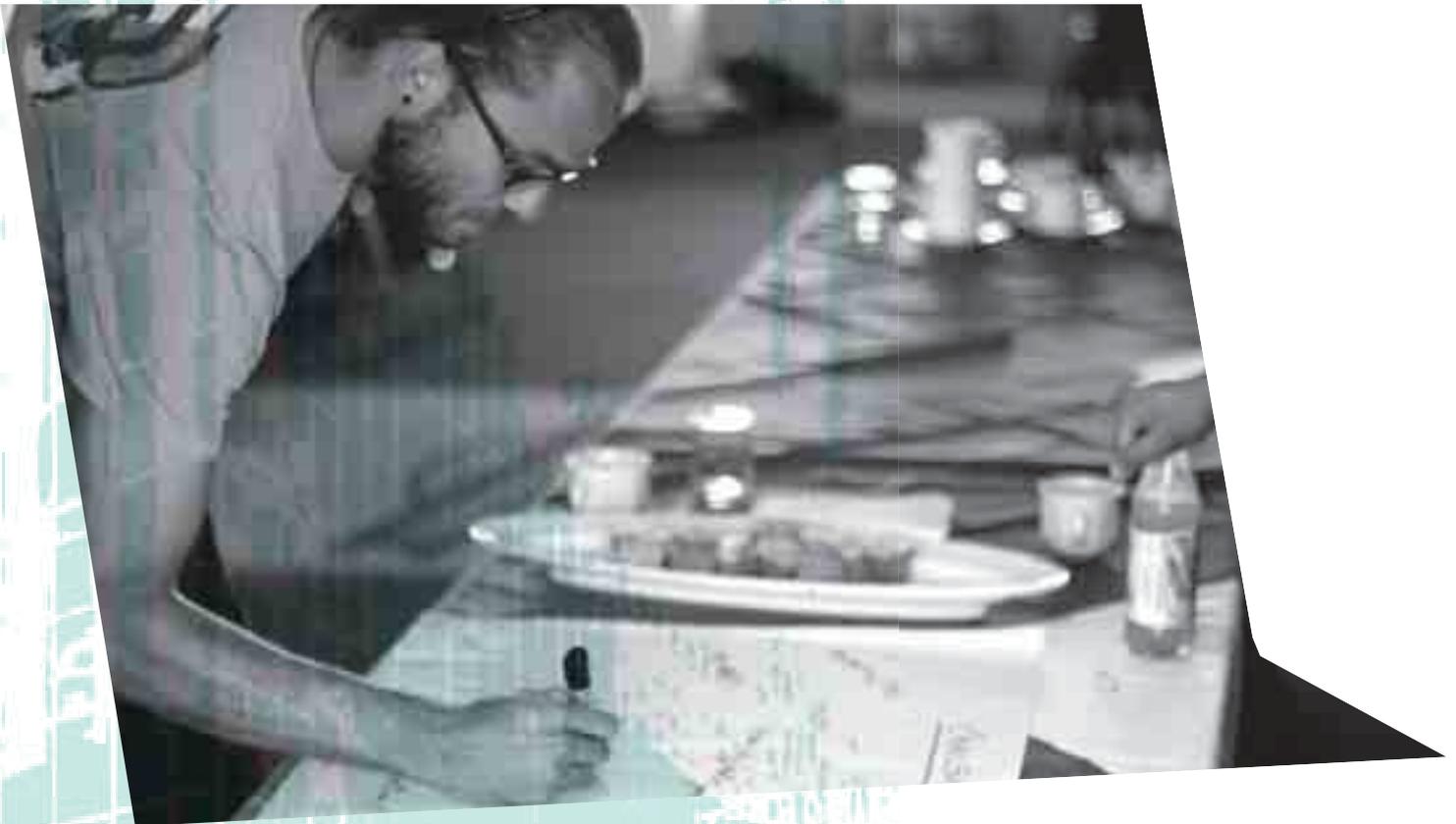
2.9 Finding the youth voice

In all this media cacophony around youth, who actually speaks for young people themselves? What we find in many of our cities is that young people struggle to make their voices heard. In particular, there are challenges to getting their perspective heard in **formal political channels**.

Few administrations have transversal youth departments – with youth issues covering a variety of policy areas. The formal political system – usually consisting of long established parties – pays little or no attention to youth issues. As many have no votes, it is easy to ignore their concerns. Across much of Europe, youth has felt the full force of the economic crisis, with savage cuts in education and support services commonplace across the continent. Young people have found it hard to respond through the established channels.

So, the crisis has only thrown light on the long-standing problem of youth political representation. **Disillusion with the mainstream political parties** amongst the young is not a recent phenomenon. Participation levels amongst young eligible voters have sharply declined in many EU countries over past decades. It appears that young people have responded to the unsatisfactory offer from the mainstream parties in several ways.

These include staying away from polling booths and leaving the old established parties for single issue and protest-based groups. For example, the rise of the Pirate party in Germany, a largely urban phenomenon, has largely been fuelled by the disillusion of the young. Worryingly, in several member states this has seen a rise in youth votes cast for extremist parties, including those with **xenophobic perspectives**. This underlines the risk that at difficult times people of all ages seek scapegoats.

Others have abandoned the formal political process altogether – but this does not mean that they have no political views. Rather that they no longer have faith in the mainstream framework. The *'Occupy movement'* is a good example of this. The economic crisis threatens to trigger full-scale political crisis unless voters can be persuaded of the effective leadership of the established parties. Young people are amongst the most sceptical that this can be achieved, and unless they are actively encouraged to participate in the political process, increasing numbers will opt out or turn to minority extremist parties.

2.10 "On the road to nowhere"

Reading through this long list of issues, it's not hard to understand why so many young people feel angry, depressed and disconnected. An important message from the English and French city riots was that many of the young participants felt that they had **nothing to lose**. They broke the law and set fire to their own neighbourhoods because they felt little or no connection to it, and felt that mainstream society had nothing to offer them. Young people in Athens, Barcelona and Moscow have taken to the streets through frustration and lack of faith in the system.

How can we support urban youth in such difficult times? What is the role of youth workers, teachers, social workers and others working with the young? And what can young people themselves do?

In the following chapters, we will explore the scope for new partnership models and will highlight effective work that is already in place, which Youth in Action and other programmes can help disseminate further.

DANCING IN THE STREETS

ABOUT GOOD PRACTICES

3.1 "Dance in the dark"

How can we shine a spotlight on the answers to these challenging urban problems? Many of them are deep-seated; structural issues that have defied solution for decades. How can we still "dance in the dark"?

Our approach is two-fold:

- In this chapter, we explore the key questions around good practice – looking beyond individual examples to consider the learning processes involved.
- In Chapter 4 (page 46) we will then discuss the underlying elements of successful work that this study has identified, and we refer to specific examples, which illustrate these in practice.

So, what works, or what is good practice in promoting social innovations and cohesion in urban environments? How can we shift practice to get better results? Critically, how can we work more effectively *'with'* young people to improve and develop services and opportunities?

There seems to be a common idea running through the entire innovation debate concerning the core of good practice. The basic model has so far been **co-creation** between science, public sector and business. This model now often includes a fourth strand: real and deeper **customer and citizen involvement**, into the process at all stages – ideas, planning, piloting, developing and executing.

So, upfront, the key message for the re-invention for strategies, policies and practices is developing good practices for co-creation with citizens and customers. For us, this means **new ways of working directly with young people** in (sub)urban areas.

3.2 What is ' good practice' ?

There is general agreement in the good practice debate, that at the end of the day, practice is always local and contextual, locally "**embedded**", and in this sense there is no '**silver bullet**' of good practice that solves all issues for young people in urban areas. But there are plenty of examples of practices, policies and approaches that do work and make a difference.

Continuing our music analogy, all good songs consist of the same chords and notes, but in unique combinations. There is no end for creativity in creating new songs from those same chords and notes. And what is more, those chords and notes are only the 'script' of good music. A living band is needed to breathe life into it, and perform it – for and with audiences.

Much in the same way the essence of good practice is not in separate tools, methods or concepts, but rather in the unique combination of them, fit for purpose and circumstances, and first and foremost, in the activity of teams, 'communities of practice' , to make them work.

Any good idea of promoting cohesion needs to be fitted into the local circumstances, and it can only be done by "**communities of practice**", the 'bands'. Even the best and most ingenious of individual practices is always embedded in a community of practice, and can only be sustained in it. In this sense the practices are not "components" or commodities, but rather manifestations of a "**community whole**"(*Senge*), very much like the chords, notes and bands do not exist in a vacuum, but constitute a living network. To perform and be on a tour, a band needs players of different instruments, singer(s), composers, writers, managers, producers, record contracts, roadies, bus drivers, technicians, sound technicians...and so on.

DIFFERENT SHADES OF "GOOD"

What is "good"? Good refers something effective, valuable and useful in a particular context. Whether it is good in another context, is a question of trying it out and fitting into the circumstances. What is good, or indeed best, is relative.

We can distinguish different '*stages*' of good practice, depending on their maturity, evidence, and the learning process needed to assimilate it.

1. Interesting practice: 'That sounds interesting for our purposes'
2. Promising practice: 'That could work in our circumstances'
3. Good practice: 'This is how it works with necessary connections in our circumstances'
4. Sustainable good practice: 'This is how it is sustained and re-invented in our circumstances'

The first stage is '*hearing the dog whistle*', becoming interested in something (often by chance). This is '***interesting practice***'. Digging into it further – reading '*scripts of practice*', speaking to people who have actually practiced it, imagining what this could mean in my own context, discussing with colleagues and teams, it becomes '*promising practice*'.

But there is still considerable distance from this to actually practising it in one's own context. This calls for **active assimilation** through a learning process. The practice needs to be embedded in your context with active engagement and co-creation of a wide variety of stakeholders. Then it can become '*good practice*', which really exists on the ground. If it survives the rough road of changing circumstances, political terms and the roller coaster of the economy, it might even become '*sustainable good practice*'. But this calls for good enabling and supportive governance, management and policy frameworks.

3.3 Dancing together on different floors

There is different activity on the different 'floors' of the city. Youth work is not the only one to dance on the urban dance floor. Young people are in contact with a variety of people and with different public, private and voluntary services. Good practice exists on all these floors. Co-operation between different teams and in cross-sectorial partnerships is more likely to work than interventions on your youth work island. Add to that the co-production with young people and true co-governance to build bridges in decision-making.

A big challenge is **get the young people onto the dance floor** to dance their own dance. The whole debate about good practice is about re-inventing and repositioning young people's activity towards the system, the available services and us, the professionals (youth workers, community workers, teachers, educators, sports coaches,…).

All good practices emphasise the importance of identifying the real societal and individual *needs* in a sensitive way, and to validate the practices against the needs and the context. In good practice young people are no longer just objects of activity, or targets of "ready-made" products, but more and more co-creators of the service or product.

This means a **paradigm change** in perceiving the role of youth work and other urban interventions. It means, that methods need to activate, empower and engage the young people and the communities they are part of. Citizen activity, participation projects and voluntary activity are strong themes in good practice. Many different methods have been developed for this purpose, like cultural mediation, one-stop-shops, different kinds of citizen fora and devolving responsibilities and decision making to citizens (like Youth Parliaments, Young people's Juries,…).

It all comes, at the end of the day, to the question of an active civil society and **enhancing democracy and participation.**

3.4 what does this mean for youth work?

The paradox here is the best services and youth work would make the young people more and more competent to handle their problems themselves, without these services. So good youth work is something that first and foremost **empowers and activates the young people**.

The contact with the young people is of biggest importance. Without good contact, without rapport, there is no good practice. The old model emphasised that the "**youth worker knows better**" than the young people. The professional was equipped to know "what", and to know "how" and then find a solution. The new approach has become "**knowing from within**" because of the good contact with the young people (and other stakeholders), co-creating solutions.

This has meant also, that the "**interface**" with the young people need re-inventing and co-creation. This is particularly true with disengaged young people. Many of the old ways of youth work simply don't work. Multiple and alternative methods and channels of communication (street work, good examples, metaphors, social media) are used more and more. The services must be taken to the communities, where the young people hang out. And we need convincing, 'street savvy' young ambassadors to establish rapport and contact with the young people.

Another paradox is the combination of increased specialisation but at the same the need for a more holistic approach to young people's issues. Co-operation between different people and teams with specific expertise becomes more and more important. Peer learning and support offers youth workers and teams the opportunity to learn from others and assimilate the influences and impressions from around (partners, other teams, management).

Border *crossing* becomes more important than *drawing borders*. The most interesting things seem often to happen "on borders", either across internal or internal-external borders. New creative "border systems" appear, like fora, meeting places of different stakeholders, multi-professional teams, co-operative projects and mutual "learning spaces" (*Takeuchi*).

3.5 learning new dances from others

The aim of good practice learning and workplace development is to reach broader, rather than individual or micro-level changes. The aim is to spread the practices for those, who have not directly participated in the process.

But it is a common finding that good practice does not travel well. Never mind about the challenges of "dancing on the different floors" – how about taking your dance, or band, on a tour?

When creating and developing good practice, often disproportionate attention is paid to the "what", instead of "how". The "what" is knowledge of the design of the innovative practice. The "how" is the knowledge of the *process and dissemination* of the good practice (*Alasoini*). It is the 'how' where we are weak.

- **Design knowledge** is knowledge about the key 'components' of the good practice – in our musical context, the chords and notes.
- **Process knowledge** is building and rehearsing the band to breathe life into those chords and notes. Dissemination is taking the band on a tour.

Alasoini argues that what is needed on top of design knowledge is *process knowledge*. The change processes are either *expert-driven or participatory*, either *monologue-oriented* or *dialogue-oriented*. Alasoini states: "This means that the interaction between the parties can generate solutions that are genuinely more evolved than would be possible through the independent effort of any one party". This is the essence of good co-creation: **finding solutions that work better**.

A **dialogue-oriented approach** means that in their mutual interaction, the parties are prepared to genuinely listen and understand each other and consequently also prepared to critically analyse their own starting points and adjust them (*Gustavsen*). Research has also proven, that the adoption of an innovation via a dialogic process and 're-invention' locally is more sustainable than expert-driven top-down practices.(*Rogers*)

There are different **strategies to enhance dissemination**, which range from traditional linear models to non-linear learning networks.

- The traditional linear strategy focusses on the dissemination to particular target-groups and audiences through information campaigns, websites, workshops and lectures to the receivers of those good practices.
- *Overlapping* the creation and the reception of good practice, by using various arrangements of 'masters', 'journeymen' and 'apprentices' has a far larger impact. The apprentices (of the receivers of good practice) already participate in the conceptualisation and creation of the new practice. This means that the 'up-and-coming' band has a chance to play with the old hands, and learn the blues.
- Dissemination can also be enhanced by enriching actual 'demonstrations' of good practices with a variety of methods to communicate and illustrate them such as storytelling, metaphors, play, pictures, sound,… It is different to learn to dance from a book than to actually dance with someone.

3.6 An enabling urban framework

It is fine to create new practice here and there, but at the end of the day, cities need a well-functioning framework to enable positive agency and transitions for the young people at the critical points in their lives. This calls for not just separate good practices, but a set of interconnected good practices, where, again, the 'borderlands' – the transitions from one activity to the other, both for the young people and to the actors and services helping them.

A strong message coming from the investigation is the need for **honest and sustainable commitment** from decision-makers to promote the youth cause in urban environments. They need to create a framework to enable effective youth work interventions in our cities and make co-creation with young people possible.

Another strong message is delivering **crosscutting services in and with communities**. Solutions delivered with hands-on and within-communities approaches work better. This calls for nothing less than re-inventing and re-structuring youth work, public services and partnerships. Here particularly, the role of (non-formal) education, guidance, coaching and hands-on brokerage to prevent drop out, and secure positive transitions stands out.

There is a whole new set of intermediary activities, professions and businesses evolving. **Peer brokerage and coaching** by young people is particularly successful. This holds true for both providing second chance re-launches for young people dropping out of education, but also for finding work or developing skills.

In the following chapter, we explore these and other good practice themes in more detail, and refer to interventions that provide good examples on the ground.

Then, in the final section (page 70), we return to key structural questions raised here to consider the implications for your youth work and SALTO Inclusion's urban youth strategy.
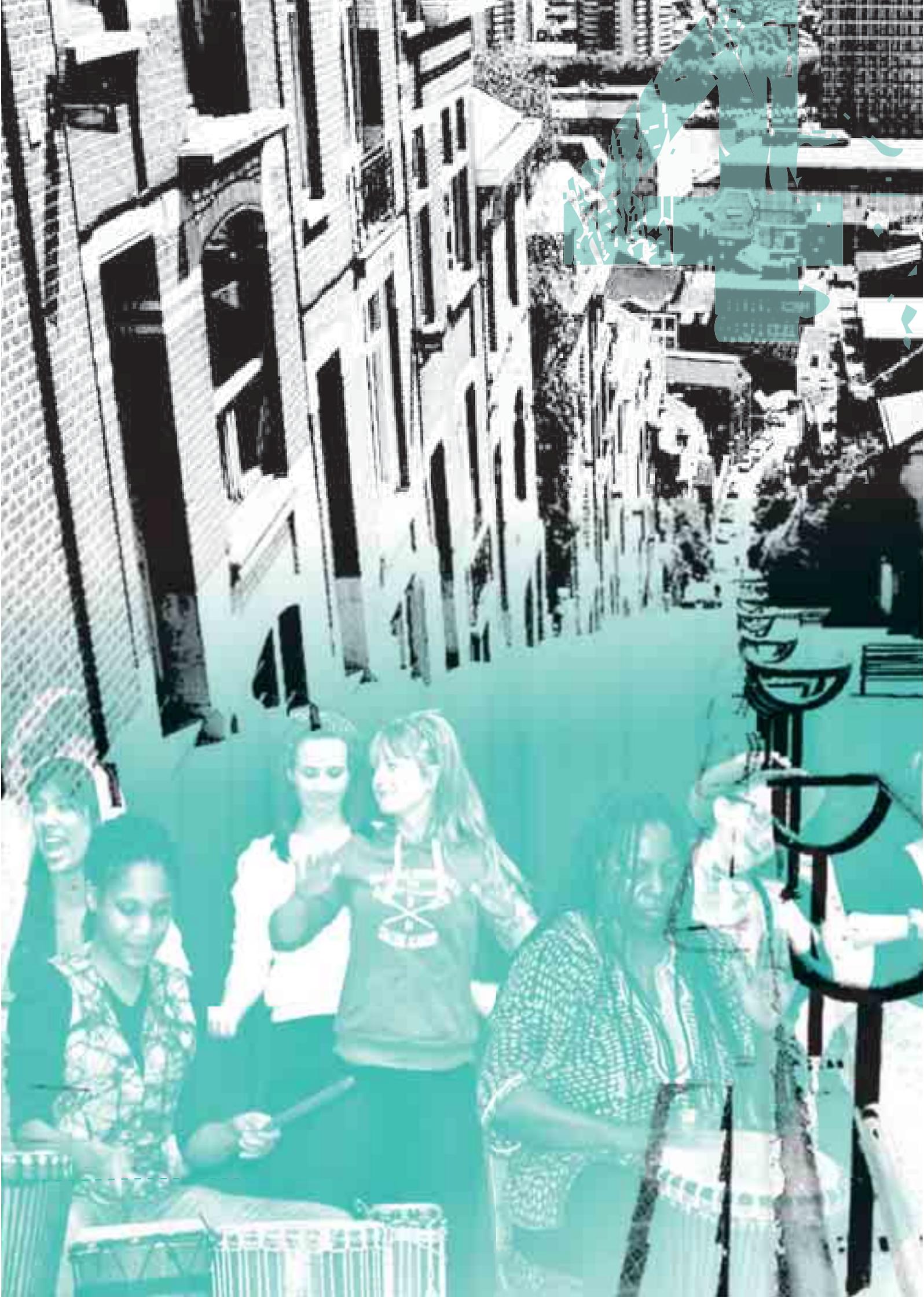
THESE STREETS

SUCCESFUL URBAN INTERVENTIONS

4.1 Start to make a difference

In the previous section we talked about how practice should be to be good. We explored the deep-rooted issues of how we can "dance in the dark" and make a difference. What new moves do we need to learn to embed new ideas and practices in our youth work interventions. We spoke about the distinctive nature of each song – each example of practice – and the challenge of simply transposing that somewhere else and expecting it to sound the same. The rich ecosystem around each practice means that when that same song is repeated somewhere else, it never sounds exactly the same.

Youth in Action provides a framework for transnational exchange and learning. Its core aim is to build capacity, improve practice and, ultimately, to have a greater impact on young people. Lots of good practice has been developed within and outside the YiA programme. Youth in Action even provides the possibility to share and disseminate good practice with other youth and community workers.

☞ More info about Youth in Action at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/

But, as we've already pointed out, it's not enough to simply copy a good practice and expect it to flourish. **'Good practice' is a relative concept** – something which is effective, valuable and useful in a particular context. In this chapter the good practice themes – our musical chords – are recurrent in the effective interventions that we see out in the field. They underpin much of the successful work that takes place already across Europe. Looking ahead, there is much to build on, and these foundations are tried and tested.

The themes discussed below are the elements of good practice that came through from the 'Urban Solutions' stakeholder seminar in Birmingham, as well as from our wider research work. Where these are in place, effective work with young people is going on. Where it is missing, organisations struggle to support young people effectively. So, in each section we consider one of these good practice themes – the song chords – and refer to specific practices where we can see them in position.

4.2 Investing in young people

That we need to **invest in young people** may seem like an obvious thing to say. However, in times like this it is a central point to make, because this is no longer a universal perspective.

Sitting in Birmingham, speaking with young people and those who support them, a strong message came through. This was that an initial response of the UK Coalition Government to the crisis was to cut public sector investment in young people. They felt that they had been abandoned, and that decision-makers had demonstrated how little they mattered.

Across the Channel there are other cities which are making important statements about continuing to invest in young people, even where money is incredibly tight. In Barcelona for example, youth unemployment levels stand at 35% (2012) and the city council has had to make significant and difficult decisions around budget cuts. However, the administration has fought to retain much of its youth budget to support its 332,000 young people. Recognizing that the city cannot create jobs for the young, the new Youth Plan 2012-2015 will focus on supporting young people through the crisis years – encouraging healthy lifestyles, cultural pride and so on – until the turnaround takes place. Even though the economy is damaged, young people in the city have the feeling that it continues to take them seriously – and that they remain a political priority.

Decision makers in Barcelona have understood the importance of getting this message across. **It is not enough to invest**, but critical to ensure that this is effectively communicated. One way of doing that is to collaborate with youth organisations to produce visible results. **Actions** always speak louder than words.

There are good examples of this across Europe, but one which is most interesting comes from Lithuania, where the economic crisis has had a significant impact on the economy. There, as in other Baltic states, one of the issues is how to support the most disadvantaged young people, whilst ensuring the most highly skilled and educated do not leave.

Art Pit is an organisation which began life in Vilnius, Lithuania, but which has recently established a new outlet in London. Structured as an NGO, it supports young artists – across all disciplines – and uses **culture as a means of building relationships with youth**, nurturing talent and establishing partnerships with potential partners in the public and private sector.

It also engages in the renovation and reutilization of public space in cities. As such, its working model provides a good example of the new type of operating that we discussed in the preceding chapter.

The *discography* below describes their "Art Square In a Fountain" activity in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Song title
(project)

ART SQUARE IN A FOUNTAIN

Band
(organisation)

Art Pit

Recorded in

Kaunas, Lithuania

Song chords
(good practice features)

✓ Engaging young people in collaborative creative activity
✓ Regaining abandoned urban public space
✓ Recycling products
✓ Developing the skills and capacities of young people

Producers
(funders & partners)

Art Pit, Kaunas Municipality and an independent design team

Audience
(target group)

Young people engaged in the project – end users: entire city population

Arrangement
(method description)

Art Pit designs and executes collaborative art projects. They employ a team of young artists and volunteers to deliver these assignments. The Art Square project involved reclaiming a disused public fountain from the Communist period and converting it back into useful social space. Using old baths to make the furniture for the area retained the 'water' theme and other waterproof materials were used over the 3-month project period.

Wow factor

Whacky legacy for the city of Kaunus

www.artpit.org

The output from this type of activity is an urban space, open to everyone, and created by talented young people. It recycles materials, **re-energises a dead** area and introduces humour at the same time. A winning combination! In times of uncertainty, this willingness to take risks and be bold in working alongside youth projects remains vitally important.

Just as important during these times in the need to better integrate services to make money go further. Often youth issues are diffused across numerous public policy areas, in so-called 'silo structures'. Often, this fragments resources, encourages service duplication and fuels competition between differing professions. The losers in the end are the young people needing services.

As resources reduce, there are pressures across Europe to save money. In most places this includes cutting youth budgets – as we saw in the English example. But this can provide opportunities to drive the sort of service changes we spoke about – encouraging **new ways of working and fresh collaboration models**. As well as between local authorities and NGOs, this can also mean *within* local authorities.

In Oulu, Finland, we have seen interesting examples of the way that municipal services can combine to work more effectively. In the district of Bystrom, all youth services targeting clients aged 16-25 have been collocated in a single location. The *All In One House* model has several obvious advantages. For young people it means they avoid several visits to different city buildings – particularly if they are being supported by a number of professional services.

It also means that they can avoid repeating their core information, as agencies working together share access to data under agreed professional guidelines. For the professional staff, collocation gives them an opportunity to better understand how other services and colleagues in other disciplines operate. Evaluation of this approach across Finland has highlighted the fact that co-location is not an end in itself – and that much of the hard work starts here. Unless it is accompanied by investment in staff training - for example in relation to joint case management models and shared working practices – then little service benefit is evident.

A by-product of this close service collaboration in Oulu has been the development of the Jepari Chat Service. This is an **online chat service** offered on a weekly basis to young people seeking advice on a range of law-related topics, which might include bullying, intimidation, racism or theft.

Advice is provided by the local juvenile crime squad, and the chat service is moderated by a youth worker. The service is popular – attracting around 200 users per session – cheap to provide and a good example of inter-agency collaboration. It also provides a low-threshold mechanism for the police to build a trusted relationship with local youth.

Song title
(project)

OULU JEPARI CHAT

Band
(organisation)

**Oulu Police &
Oulu Youth Work Service**

Recorded in

Oulu, Finland

Song chords
(good practice features)

✓ Police/youth work collaboration
✓ Support service for young people suffering bullying etc
✓ Mix of web-based and face to face service
✓ Building trusted relationship between young people and police
✓ Anonymous service

Arrangement
(method description)

On line chat services provided on regular basis every week. A youth worker hosts the chat and the juvenile crime squad provides guidance and advice.

Producers
(funders & partners)

Youth Affairs Department, City of Oulu

Audience
(target group)

All young people in Finland (web service goes beyond Oulu)

Wow factor

Low threshold, conducted in real time and engages with young people wherever they are.

http://urbansolutions.
posterous.com/jepari-chat

So, what are the key points from this good practice? One of the principal lessons from the English city riots was the importance of continuing to invest in young people – and being seen to do so. One way of doing this is to **effectively communicate with young people** using all of the available channels – including social media, which is increasingly a key tool. Another is to support projects that are in the public eye and where the results are visible – such as the Art in Fountains work in Kaunas.

Finally, investment in young people is more likely to continue if limited resources can be stretched further. The Oulu model provides an insight into two different ways to do this – by co-locating and combining services in order to promote more effective collaborative working.

4.3 Focus on talent

In Chapter 2 (page 12) where we focus on the challenges, a lot was said about schools. In particular, a frequent message is the way in which too many young people from city schools leave with low confidence and self-esteem. Rather than help them **identify and nurture their key talent**, it seems that the education system places too much emphasis on what young people can't do. Consequently, many young people leave the school system feeling deflated and let down.

In fact, an important principle for working successfully with young people is to be **reliable, non-judgmental and encouraging**. Those who work effectively with young people place great emphasis on creating low-threshold services which are easy for them to initially engage with. No huge commitment is required, and the environment and activities are ones that allow young people to come in on their own terms – for example, they are neighbourhood-based and offer activities that are attractive.

In Antwerp, the Youth Competence centres provide a good example of this. In Flanders, the city has the largest share of inhabitants with a foreign nationality or background – almost one third – for whom unemployment rates are double the mainstream level. School dropout rates are high amongst the migrant community and 59.6% of those in secondary school are held back for one or more years (OECD).

The minority communities are concentrated in two particular city districts. To tackle the challenges faced by local youth, a consortium including the local authority, NGOs and youth groups established 3 Youth Competence Centres (YCCs). These were based in the heart of the communities, and they offered a safe space for young people to get support with homework, play sports and pursue creative activities. The centres rely heavily on the services of young advisers – some professional some voluntary – who are often themselves local and from minority backgrounds.

Through tools like the well-known C-Stick (a USB stick to record young people's competences), the centres develop trusted relationships with the young people and focus on their capabilities and ways to express these. In doing so they help build confidence and counter some of the negative messages that may have come from their experience of formal education.

This neighbourhood-based model, focusing on young people's assets, is working well across many European cities. As we discuss in Chapter 2, strong levels of **social cohesion at the local level can be valuable commodities** here. Although they might limit young people's horizons at a later stage, they are helpful initial engagement platforms.

So, if we hop from Antwerp to Berlin, we can see another creative way in which local actors have built upon the talents of young people. There, each neighbourhood has a long-standing local management structure, through which partners collaborate. Like Antwerp, Berlin also has significant proportions of young people from migrant backgrounds and some districts are using this **diversity as a positive feature**.

Across the city, neighbourhood teams working with schools and young people have created a series of local walking tours – Route 65 – which build on their local knowledge. The youth involved will design a walking tour around their neighbourhood that gives the visitor an insight into their reality. For example, in the district of Wedding, two young Pakistani brothers lead a walk entitled "Rap and Religion" which reflects the two mainstays of their adolescence. In nearby Neukolln, visitors can take part in Route 68, which is led by a group of young Turkish women.

Song title (project)

BERLIN YOUTH CITY GUIDES

Band (organisation)

Berlin Neighbourhood Management teams

Recorded in

Berlin, Germany

Song chords
(good practice features)

✓ Building on young people's interests and assets
✓ Young people taking the lead on design and delivery
✓ Providing experience of collaborative work with public sector partners
✓ Strong neighbourhood focus
✓ Provides an insight into careers in the tourism/creative industries

Route 65 is delivered by two Pakistani brothers who focus on their primary interests of "Rap and Religion". Route 66 covers the district of Wedding, but every one is different. Route 68 in Neukollne provides an insight into the lives of young Turkish women.

Producers
(funders & partners)
Berlin Senate and local schools

Arrangement
(method description)
Across Berlin, young people (aged 14-18) from minority backgrounds have designed and delivered walking tours of their neighbourhoods aimed at visitors. This is a partnership project between local schools and Neighbourhood Management teams. The tours reflect the young people's own perspective of the neighbourhood, for example

Audience
(target group)
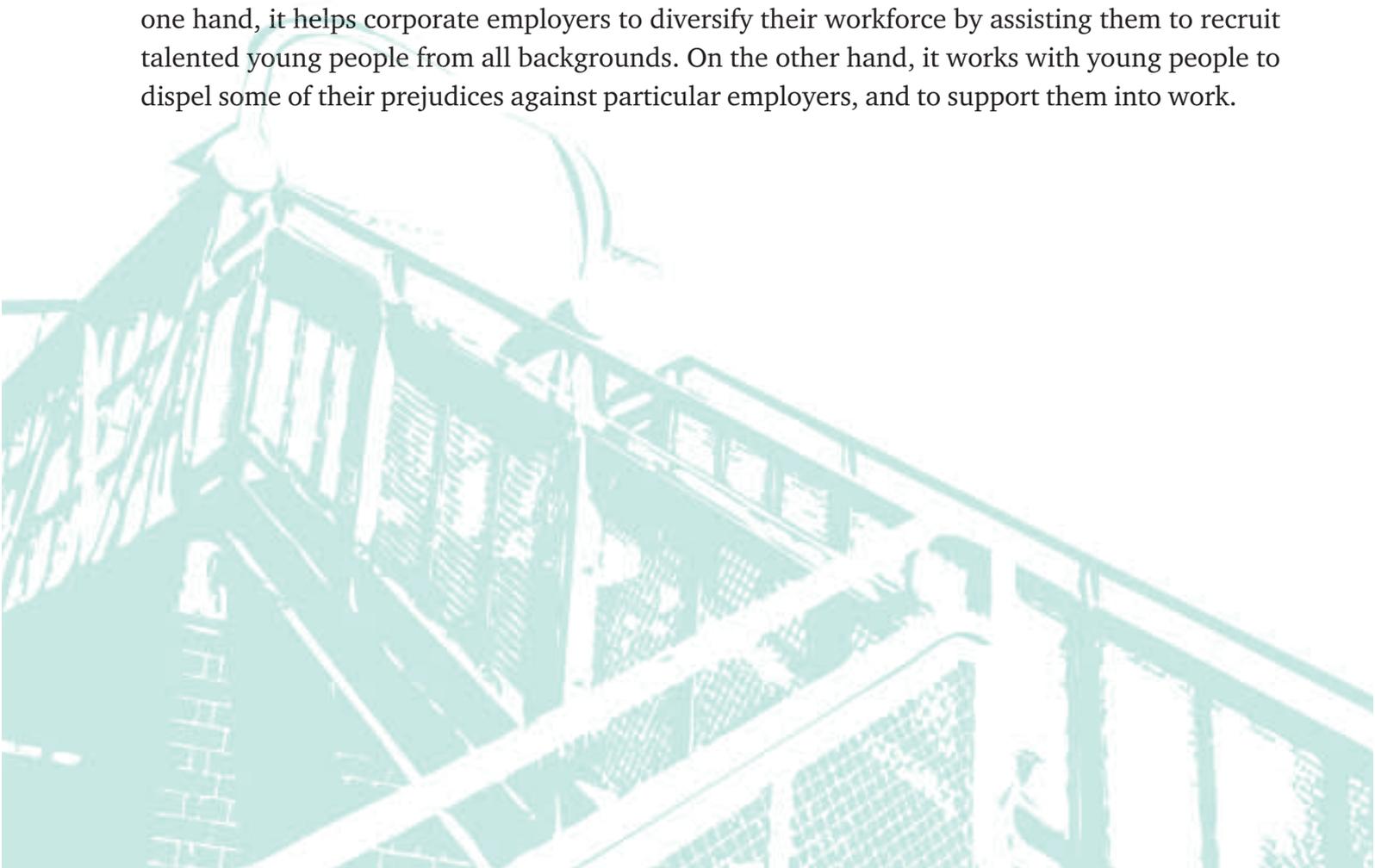Young Berliners from minority backgrounds

Wow factor
Highly innovative project empowering young people and providing real work experience

www.route65-wedding.de com/

The Route Guides model acknowledges the **value of the local knowledge** held by these young people. Through their involvement, they acquire a wide variety of skills and aptitudes (planning, dealing with the public, communications, team-work etc.) that are helpful in the labour market – but also strong skills for life.

As we discussed in Chapter 2 (page 12), employers often have unhelpful assumptions about young people, and frequently complain that they are not **equipped for the world of work**. In Rotterdam, we have already spoken about the city's port, and the difficulties it faced in attracting a younger and more diverse workforce. As an employer, they could not seem to attract candidates from a minority background, whilst young people would look at the corporate workforce and decide that this was not the type of workplace for them. How to break out of this negative cycle was a key issue.

Large employers in Rotterdam now have a great service to address this in the form of Hi 5. This is an NGO that is led and run by young people and which works with two client groups. On the one hand, it helps corporate employers to diversify their workforce by assisting them to recruit talented young people from all backgrounds. On the other hand, it works with young people to dispel some of their prejudices against particular employers, and to support them into work.

Song title
(project)

RHYTHM FOR SUCCESS

Band
(organisation)

Hi 5

Recorded in

Rotterdam, Netherlands

Song chords
(good practice features)

✓ Brokering relations between employers and young people from minority backgrounds
✓ Positive focus on young people's assets
✓ Promoting business case to employers

Producers
(funders & partners)

Blue-chip employers, including TNT and Randstad

Audience
(target group)

Employers and young job seekers from ethnic minority backgrounds

Arrangement
(method description)

Hi 5 works with employers to spot talent and fill their vacancies. The organisation bridges the gap between employers and young jobseekers from minority backgrounds. A core aim is to dispel misunderstandings and negative perceptions amongst both of their core client groups.

Wow factor

Strong focus on the positive and making the business case for changes to recruitment practices

http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/ Projects/My_Generation/ documents_media/Hi5_ at_My_Generation_ Network.pdf

Hi5 provides an innovative and inspirational model. The organisation has avoided support from public funds in order to remain **independent and flexible**, and as such it provides an example of one of the new-breed of players in the complex and evolving environment we described in Chapter 3 (page 36).

MEDIA OPPORTUNITES

The focus on talent can also provide scope for cities to specialize in particular industrial sectors. Media is an obvious area where young people can demonstrate their **talents**, both in relation to **social media** and in the wider arena. In Italy, the city of Bologna has demonstrated its commitment to supporting youth talent through its financial support for the Flashgiovani project. This initiative – managed in partnership with local schools, colleges and youth organisations – gives young people responsibility for the design and management of the city's **digital youth portal**.

Song title
(project)

FLASH-GIOVANI

Band
(organisation)

Bologna Municipality

Recorded in

Bologna, Italy

Song chords
(good practice features)

✓ Giving trust and control to young people
✓ Using ICT as magnet to attract young participants
✓ Investing resources in young people
✓ Young people directly providing useful public service to their peers

Working in partnership with the university and local schools, it provides opportunities for young people to gain technical skills and to display their artistic products.

Producers
(funders & partners)

Bologna Municipality – Urban Living Department and NGOs across the city

Arrangement
(method description)

Flashgiovani is a network of web portals run by young people for young people and supported by the Youth Office of Bologna City Council. The portals include specific sites covering a variety of topics including News, Film, Comics and Music. It also hosts a TV channel – the first one online in the city. Flashgiovani was designed to provide a shop window to showcase the talents of local youth.

Audience
(target group)

Bologna's youth population

Wow factor

Impressive web-based information portal – run by and for young people

www.flashgiovani.it

4.4 "Fight the power"

This strong focus on talent and building relationships around what young people *can* **do** can be seen in projects across Europe. However, in the Netherlands interesting work has been done to formalise this within the mainstream youth work approach. Irma van Hoorik's work emphasises the key interface role that youth workers play between **home, school and the community**.

The Dutch model also places strong emphasis on the notion of 'rights and responsibilities' and the importance of establishing and respecting boundaries. An important starting point here is the belief that young people need these clear boundaries, but for a variety of reasons (poor parenting, cultural confusion etc.) are not always given. This **'new youth work' method** continues to recognise the need to build trust with the young person, but it also places a duty on the youth worker to make tough decisions and to communicate a sense of rights and responsibilities with the young people they support. At the heart of this, is a notion of 'active citizenship' where society provides certain things but in turn places expectations on the citizen.

This reciprocal relationship is at the heart of the work being undertaken at the Talenthouse in Rotterdam. In many ways it encapsulates what many youth workers across Europe do as a matter of course, but it helps us to identify it as a set of principles to underpin work with young people. A key component of the approach is the principle of **co-production**, where young people are active partners in all aspects of service design and delivery – including having a key role to play in the feedback-learning loop. As we discussed in the previous chapter, here the young bring their unique insights into the process.

Giving young people this responsibility shifts our relationship with them and conveys important messages about **power and trust**. We are conferring significant responsibility on them, but expect things back in return. They are no longer passive recipients of a service provided by an external agency (the youth worker). Instead, they are an integral part of the service machinery, and without their valuable insights and effort, it will break down. If they don't like it, they should not complain, but instead make the changes required to make it better.

For those organisations that do not work this way, the transition process can be daunting and challenging. It requires a **fundamental change** of mind set within delivery organisations, at the heart of which is a commitment to letting go, and to the transfer of power. This requires clear leadership and direction, commitment amongst team leaders and creativity amongst front line staff. Fundamentally, it requires a belief that through these changed organisational behaviours we can improve services and support young people more effectively. There is considerable evidence that young people respond positively to having this responsibility, although it is important to support them to participate effectively.

In Birmingham, the Common Ground Foundation (CGF) offers a good example of working with young people in this way. The co-production principle is embedded in their work and CGF also offers formal support through, for example, its Young Leadership programme. It also seeks to build **youth resilience** by helping young people understand their cultural heritage – and that of others – so that they have a clearer sense of their place in the world, and a pride in their roots.

Song title (project)

THE B LONG PROGRAMME

Band (organisation)

Common Ground Foundation

Recorded in

Birmingham, UK

The organisation promotes the talents of young local residents and builds their capacity through giving them responsibility.

Song chords (good practice features)

- ✓ Intercultural learning
- ✓ Youth empowerment
- ✓ Focus on self-awareness and cultural identity
- ✓ Exploring faith and tackling prejudice
- ✓ Delivered in the local community by the local community

Producers (funders & partners)

Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, British Council. and other stakeholder organisations

Audience (target group)

Young people aged 17-25 resident in Walsall area

Arrangement (method description)

CGS is an independent Non-Governmental Organisation based in Birmingham. It delivers intercultural learning programmes aimed at reducing levels of violence in society. The organisation provides a range of services which include cultural identity sessions, motivation/personal development, leadership and youth entrepreneurship.

Wow factor

Focus on promoting inter-community understanding

www.commonground foundation.org.uk

This is not to say that young people always have the answers! What is important is that they are supported to engage, make decisions and have the capacity to evaluate their effectiveness and how to improve in future.

The empowerment principle therefore operates at the individual and the organisational level. In addition, it can be embedded within neighbourhoods and even at the level of the entire city. Again, Berlin offers some good examples, and at the neighbourhood and city level we can see important initiatives in place to encourage **youth participation** and **decision-making**. Two of the city's twelve districts have youth parliaments where young people from schools and youth clubs debate key issues.

This is a quite common phenomenon across Europe's cities, which largely attracts the better-educated and socially connected young people. However, several Berlin neighbourhoods also operate a **youth jury model** where young people work together to decide how local resources aimed at young people are spent. This model, again supported by the city's local neighbourhood structure, includes adult professional support with the process. Nine of these juries in the Mitte neighbourhood have been evaluated, and the results show that young people from migrant and disadvantaged backgrounds are taking an active part.

Again, coming back to the urban disturbances in cities like Birmingham, young people's feelings of powerlessness were factors in the social breakdown that resulted in rioting. As we have seen, important (negative) decisions had been taken in relation to young people at the national level. No one condones riotous behaviour, however, it is not difficult to see it as the ultimate means of taking control. The frustration and sense of powerlessness, which fuelled this destructive activity, is one which urban youth work agencies continue to work hard to address.

4.5 Working with families

The important role of families was a strong theme at the Birmingham seminar. However, delegates acknowledged the very different role that families play across Europe. Generally, families are more **cohesive** in the Mediterranean countries. In Northern Europe, delegates working with young people spoke about the frequent absence of supportive families in their work with young people in urban areas.

There was consensus that the role of families is important for all young people. Ideally, family members – particularly parents – provide good role models and, as we have already noted, set strong and clear boundaries. The optimum model was referred to as *Tough Love*, where parents are prepared to take difficult decisions with their children's best interest at heart. In the words of a seminar delegate:

"We need adults to behave like adults and parents who are not afraid to parent."

But parenting is one of the toughest jobs around, and people with children face huge pressures. The media is full of images of parents whose relationships with their children is more buddy than parent. But being a friend whilst being a parent is an impossible line to walk!
A particular message from the inner cities relates to the cultural tensions amongst the generations in migrant households. Where parents have a limited grasp of the host language, their role as an effective parent is even harder. We heard of young ethnic minority men in Dutch cities who are able to cover up trouble at school through their role as the family interpreter. Parents only hear what the sons want them to hear – so poor school reports, complaints and other messages are either **lost in translation** or lost altogether without the parents' knowledge.

Beyond language, this tension extends to cultural values, where the younger generation will have standards and norms, which seem alien and inappropriate to their parents. This is a particular issue for young women, and from those cities with long-established migrant experience – in the UK, France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands - there is 50+ years of experience in this area. What is evident is the importance of having **multicultural knowledge and experience** within those organisations working with the young.
Inside this debate, the role of fathers was identified as being particularly important. The **absent father** – either literally or metaphorically – is a significant one for boys in particular. In Chapter 2, we spoke about the important question of what it means to be a man in our society, and how many of the old indicators have disappeared. As one Dutch colleague noted at the seminar:

"Being at home unemployed, speaking no Dutch, it is difficult for migrant fathers to set good examples for their sons."

Projects that try to **involve parents** were identified as being particularly important – although not always easy to establish. By definition, absent fathers want to remain just that. From the front line, youth workers spoke about using sports such as football as a shared territory to bring fathers and sons together. We heard about a unique twist in Copenhagen where attempts to engage young Pakistani men through football were unsuccessful. Instead, cricket was the eventual medium that attracted male participants from all generations – reflecting the sub-continent's obsession with this game. An amusing by-product was that it required native Danes to learn the rules of a game that was totally alien to them in order to build the connection with the communities they were supporting.

An important point was made about the opportunity to engage with young fathers. Often, young men who become fathers struggle with the responsibility and find it difficult to get support. This is particularly acute where they have been poorly parented themselves. In South London, Working with Men is an NGO offering support to young Dads. It develops and facilitates groups of young fathers to provide peer support and has found that the importance of effective fathering has often been overlooked, particularly when babies arrive and the focus of attention is on the mother and the child.

Song title
(project)

YOUNG FATHERS PROJECT GREENWICH

Band
(organisation)

REAL DADS/Young Fathers Initiative

Recorded in

London, UK

Song chords
(good practice features)

✓ Building the capacity of young fathers
✓ Peer learning and support
✓ Groupwork
✓ Engagement of hard to reach group

Arrangement
(method description)

This is a self-help group for young fathers. The group agreed their own development programme which included media skills. They have learned how to make short films and have advised a media company (MfD) on establishing a You Tube channel for young fathers (www.youngdads.tv). They have also advised on the storyline for a web-based docu-soap called 'Me and my Dad'. The group successfully bid for funds from the Starbucks Foundation for a peer education project aimed at young Dads and they are also starting to work in schools.

Producers
(funders & partners)

Working With Men, Media for Development (MfD)

Audience
(target group)

Young fathers under age 25 and young men at risk of becoming (too) young fathers

Wow factor

Young dads engaged, in charge and spreading the word!

www.workingwithmen.org

4.6 The value of role models

Professionals working with young people spoke about the frequency with which adults let young people down. At the Birmingham seminar, delegates explained that the young people they support had often been let down by their parents, their teachers, their social workers and other significant adults in their lives. Encouraging the young to take responsibility is all the more difficult when they have so few **positive role models**.

Young people who have been consistently let down learn how to protect themselves. They can become cynical, suspicious and slow to trust. Organisations that effectively support young people in urban areas understand this and embed it into their practice. They deliver services where young people are, and make it easy for them to engage. The **low-threshold model** means not requiring them to make a big commitment – particularly at the start – and it avoids judging their behaviour in ways that would frighten them off.

The work undertaken by Caritas Jugendstreetwork in Graz offers a good example of this type of work in practice. Their model of **detached street-work** will be familiar to many readers, however the organisation has recently had to adapt its approach due to significant changes in the city. Shifting public attitudes and increased surveillance levels (for example through the introduction of security cameras in the city centre) has led to the most disadvantaged young people disappearing off the city's streets. The new pattern of congregating in private places has in some respects made the organisation's job more difficult and has required them to rely even more heavily on their network of contacts and trusted relationships.

Song title
(project)

JUGEND STREET WORK

Band
(organisation)

Caritas Steiermark

Recorded in

Graz, Austria

Song chords
(good practice features)

✓ Detached youth work model
✓ Building trust and relationships with excluded youth
✓ Flexible service adapting to changing circumstances

Arrangement
(method description)

Caritas is an NGO delivering detached street work in Graz, with a population of 300,000 people. This service traditionally engaged with vulnerable young clients in public spaces. However, during the past two years there has been an active campaign to control these through CCTV etc, and as a consequence young people have disappeared from these spaces. This has made the team's job much more difficult – as they now have to locate clients in more private spaces – where they are much less visible.

Through these trusted relationships, Caritas speaks on behalf of these invisible young people in the various relevant public committees. The organisation maintains a robust information base, from which it produces an annual report on the city's vulnerable youth each year.

Producers
(funders & partners)

Graz Municipality, Youth Affairs Department and other public bodies including schools

Audience
(target group)
Young vulnerable people

Wow factor
Strong case work records – used to inform annual reporting.

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http://jugendstreet
work.caritas-
steiermark.
at

Working in city streets, detached youth workers can **build good working relationships** with troubled youth. Often, these workers are young professionals only a few years older than those they support, so they provide good role models for their clients. We have also seen how organisations like the Antwerp Youth Competence Centres provide volunteering opportunities for young people to support one another and develop their own skills. Although this is sometimes labelled 'outreach', in reality a high proportion of these youngsters actually live and work in the same community. The fact that they are embedded – living and working amongst their clients – means that they have added credibility amongst the local youth they support.

Successful organisations recognise the value of having young people on the team – in both a paid and unpaid capacity, as volunteers. **Peer support** is a powerful tool when it is well- resourced and provided as part of a comprehensive service. This delivery model, once again, is one that is commonplace across Europe. For Example, at the SALTO Inclusion Colleague Support Group in Budapest in March 2012, delegates had the opportunity to see a local project in operation, which harnesses the skills of young volunteers to reach out to young people with complex support needs. These are the least visible youngsters in the city, the ones with whom most services have no contact.

Kapocs provides a service that builds a connection through **outreach activity and empathy**, and the NGO provides a valuable link between the city's most disadvantaged young people and mainstream service providers. The peer outreach principle lies at the heart of their approach.

Youth volunteering is becoming an increasingly important way for young people to gain skills and experience during the crisis, when there are so few paid work opportunities. Neighbourhood-based peer support models – like those described here in Antwerp and Budapest – should be in place across all European cities, based on an agreed framework of quality and benchmarked practice.

Song title
(project)

YOUTH SELF-HELP SERVICE

Band
(organisation)

Kapocs

Recorded in

Budapest, Hungary

Song chords
(good practice features)

✓ Peer support service delivered by volunteers

✓ Low thresholds model – no participation conditions

✓ Proactive outreach service

✓ Building trust and signposting to public services

Producers
(funders & partners)

Various funding bodies, Social and Education Services

Audience
(target group)

Young people in crisis and out of reach of existing services

Wow factor

Use of peer outreach services

Arrangement
(method description)

Kapocs aims to work with young people beyond the reach of all other organisations. Volunteers are trained to identify and support peers in trouble within the community. They will then provide outreach support, offer access to the Kapocs facilities and refer young people onto appropriate public support services.

http://old.mobilitas.hu/letoltes/The_Kapocs_system.pdf
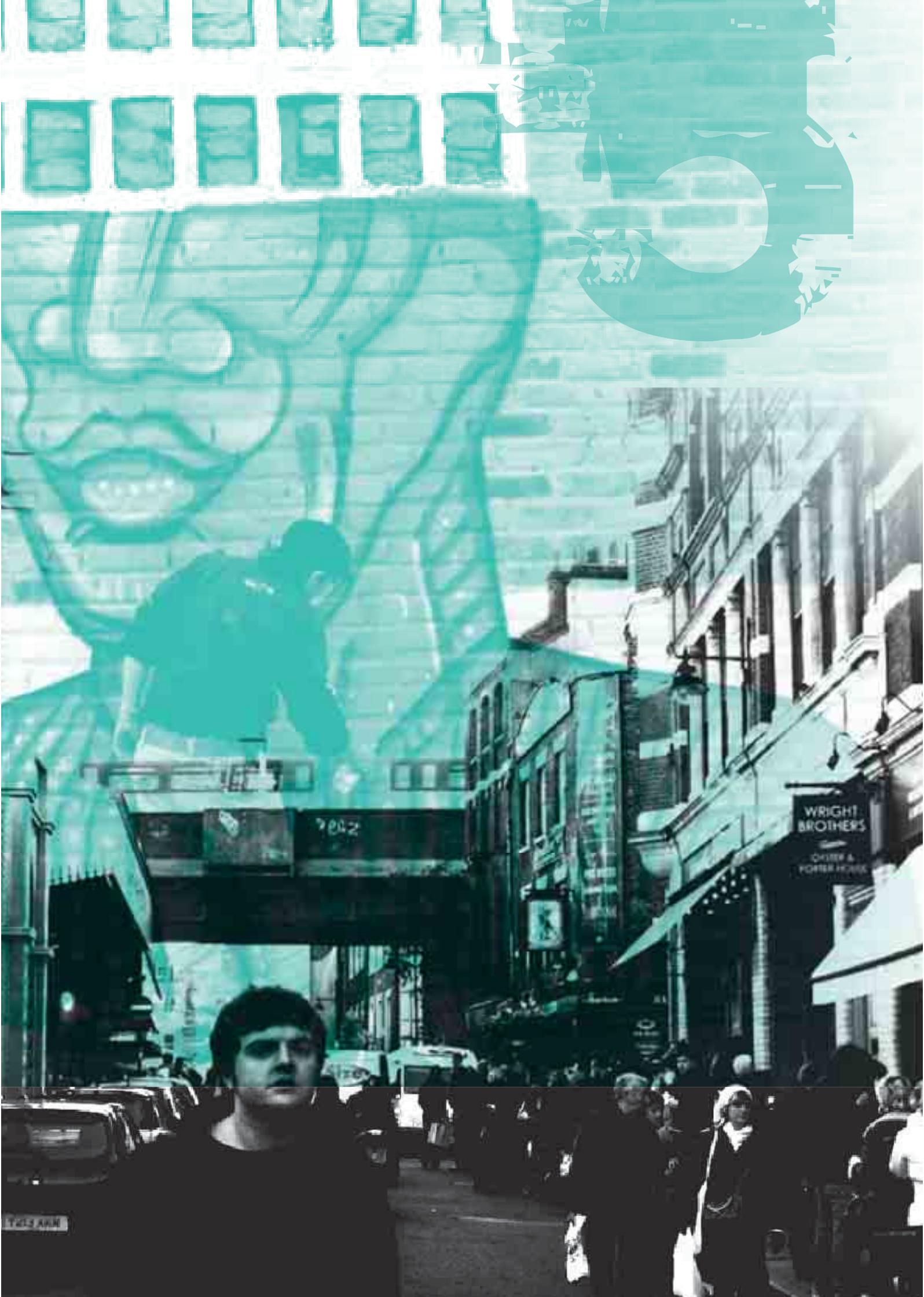
STREET LIFE

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 let's not allow
a good crisis to go to waste...

This work has considered some of the biggest issues facing Europe's cities today. Unless we successfully **address the challenge of youth exclusion**, there are serious risks to our socially cohesive city model. The summer riots of 2011 made that very clear.

It is beyond the scope of this work to solve all these problems. However, in this final chapter we will revisit some of the **key messages** emerging, and consider the key implications for stakeholders supporting young people. We will also explore how they play into SALTO Inclusion's future plans. Three key questions provide a structure for these conclusions, as follows:

1. WHAT DOES THIS WORK TELL US ABOUT THE URBAN SOCIAL PROBLEMS FACING YOUNG PEOPLE?

In Chapter 2 (page 12), we identified and examined the most important social issues facing young people in Europe's cities. The first key point is the confirmation that, despite Europe's diversity, many of the urban social issues are shared. Whether you are reading this in Lisbon, Ankara, Malmö or Naples, the story will be resonant, with local variations.

Across the continent, **unemployment** is the biggest single priority affecting young people in cities. This problem is at crisis levels for Mediterranean member states – particularly Spain and Greece – but even in the more affluent countries, there are concerns about rising levels of youth inactivity. And in most urban areas this challenge pre-dates the current economic situation.

The second point then is that although the crisis has exacerbated the identified social issues, many of them are long-standing. In the case of youth unemployment, structural changes to the urban labour markets over the past twenty years have removed many of the threshold-level jobs traditionally filled by school-leavers. Looking at other challenges – for example **school disengagement** rates – there have been stubbornly high drop-out levels in place for decades, most acutely in urban areas.

The reality is that for many years, significant proportions of Europe's urban youth have struggled in the transition to independent adulthood. Even when public resources were more plentiful and the economy stronger, this was the pattern in our cities.

The third point is that these problems are complex and crosscutting in a way that presents real **challenges to the public sector**. Although some cities have 'Youth Affairs' Departments, responsibility for young people's health, education, justice, social work tends to cross different parts of the local authority, whose structures reflect a Fordist approach to service delivery. This silo-structured model does not lend itself easily to tackling 'horizontal' problems like these.

Consequently, the departmental model is creaking and under enormous pressure. Several commentators have described the scale of the youth problem, combined with the severe reduction in public budgets as a *perfect storm*. It is a unique set of circumstances that will test the leadership, ingenuity and resourcefulness of every city in Europe.

So, the overall conclusion of our analysis of the social issues is that established approaches to tackling them have largely failed. We can keep doing what we have been doing, but this is unlikely to achieve sustained success. Knowing that this is the case, we can see the current period as one which requires significant levels of **social innovation**. There is an opportunity to mobilise the total resource dedicated to supporting young people more effectively. Failing to do this now would represent a missed opportunity.

2. WHAT DOES THIS WORK TELL US ABOUT GOOD PRACTICE IN TACKLING THESE ISSUES?

Despite this pessimistic situation, there is a great deal of effective work taking place. We have not conducted an extensive evaluation, so we must caveat our observations. However, it is clear that there are interventions which are **successfully supporting young people** as they make the transition to independent adulthood.

What is also evident is that these successful interventions share common features. In our musical analogy we have compared this to the similarities between good songs. The ability to infinitely arrange chords and musical notes means that two songs with the same basic components can sound completely different due to the order of the chords, the instruments in the line-up and so on. Equally, effective interventions often combine the same elements, but they can actually look quite different on the ground. As we explain in chapter 3 (page 36), good practice is always **rooted in the locality**.

The good practice themes identified throughout chapter 4 (page 46) – investing in young people, focusing on talent, empowering youth etc – have one other important connector. This is that they **put young people in the middle**. Effective practice with young people always starts with the young person at the centre, looking at their needs and personalizing the support in response to them.

In chapter 4 (page 46), we illustrate a number of examples of effective work across Europe where these good practice elements are apparent. Reading these, it is quite easy to understand what city actors and youth workers are doing to support young people. But, *how* they are doing it is less easy to understand. In many cases, there are **important principles of working** that are apparent – for example the Rotterdam Talenthouse's emphasis on 'tough love'.

3. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN URBAN AREAS?

Throughout this work, we have been reminded of the wide range of stakeholders involved in supporting young people in urban areas across Europe. At the centre of this we have young people themselves. Full of ideas, packed with talent and ready to assume an active role. Alongside them is a lengthy cast of professionals – and volunteers – operating within diverse disciplines: youth workers; health officials; teachers; careers guidance professionals; policemen and women; social workers; local authority officials…and so on.

Fully mobilising this **reservoir of skills**, **experience and resources** is difficult. Going back to our music analogy, we are not talking about acoustic duos here – but about conducting a full symphony orchestra – kettledrums and all!

Upfront it is also important to say that more money is not the answer. Additional resources are always helpful, but looking for extra funds to do more of the same on a bigger scale is not the solution here – even if it were possible. And 'chasing the money' tends to provide a distraction from the more important focus on getting results through improved practice and optimization of the available resources.

So, who are the main stakeholders who can take this work forward? As we note above, there is a wide cast, but this can be broadly split into two principal groups. The first is SALTO Inclusion but also the Youth in Action National Agencies. The second group goes under the banner of "youth workers", by which we mean professionals working directly with young people, although they may work in varied disciplines.

5.2 Youth in Action stakeholders

Although all urban areas are unique, this work shows that there are many shared issues facing young people in Europe's cities. As a consequence, the challenges facing those supporting them also bear many similarities. Working with young people in urban areas, facing these problems and often with limited resources, is not easy work. It requires enormous dedication and commitment. Staff working on the front line can draw great **inspiration and support** through contact with their peers across Europe.

The Youth in Action programme can fulfil a vital role at a time when budgets are being cut and professionals are inclined to look inwards. Events like the Urban Solutions seminar in Birmingham provide inspiration as well as **practical ideas and support** to staff working with disadvantaged young people in urban areas. This function will continue to be important as the crisis continues to unfold in our cities.

SALTO Inclusion and the National Agencies play a vital part in this. They provide the link between the national, international and local levels. As such, they are well-placed to:

- Promote good practice – through publications, events and the media.
- Organise events that promote dialogue between stakeholders at the national and international level.
- Actively encourage the co-production process by supporting shared development spaces connecting young people and other stakeholders – operating at a national and transnational level.
- Identify the support needs of staff working with young people in urban areas and promote activities to build their capacity.
- Implement an approach which focuses on youth assets rather than weaknesses and problems.

5.3 Youth workers

Professionals working with young people – either in a paid or volunteer capacity – already play a vital role in **supporting urban youth**. This report has underlined many of the positive features, which they bring to this role, most notably they:

✘ Provide positive role models, often for young people who have few adults they can look up to.
✘ Are reliable and don't let young people down – unlike many of the other adults in their lives.
✘ Listen and are non-judgemental.
✘ Empathise but are willing to challenge when needed – in order to push the young person when necessary.
✘ Establish clear boundaries.
✘ Are comfortable negotiating power, and encourage young people to lead and take responsibility.

Youth workers – in all their different guises – need to continue this way of working, and they can also support others to work this way.

Through the Youth in Action programme, youth workers have an opportunity to **share practice and learn** from others. They also have a platform for co-production, which allows them to work with young people to design services and support activities.

Youth workers assume an important **brokerage role**. They are trusted intermediaries between young people and formal mainstream institutions – which can include schools and colleges, the police and local authorities. This trusted role will become increasingly important if we are to make progress around co-production. Trust is at the heart of this, and without young people there will be no co-production. So youth workers must promote this aspect of their professional skillset, as we look to modernise services and make better use of existing resources.

As we said at the start of this chapter, we cannot allow a good crisis to go to waste. And although it provides huge challenges, including fewer resources, the downturn offers a real window for change – as most people agree that the status quo is untenable.

So, let's get together with young people to seize the moment.

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FURTHER READING
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OTHER SALTO INCLUSION PUBLICATIONS

- **Youth and the City (reprint 2012)** – developing meaningful international projects with young people in disadvantaged (sub)urban areas
- **Inclusion through Employability (2011)** – success criteria for youth projects addressing unemployment, research publication
- **Working on Work (2011)** – using international projects to improve the chances of young people on the labour market
- **Youthpass unfolded (2012)** – explaining the Youthpass process to make learning visible, including practical methods to do so
- **Youthpass for All! (updated 2010)** – recognition of non-formal learning through the Youth in Action programme for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Making Waves (updated 2010)** - greater impact with your youth projects through visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results
- **Images in Action (2010)** – running a positive image-building campaign for inclusion groups
- **Fit for Life (2005)** – using sports as an educational tool for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in youth-work
- **No Offence (updated 2010)** – exploring opportunities and setting up youth projects with young ex-offenders and those at risk of offending
- **Village International (updated 2010)** – setting up international projects in rural and geographically isolated areas
- **Inclusion & Diversity (updated 2008)** – how to make your youth-work and youth projects more inclusive and reach more diverse target groups
- **No Barriers, No Borders (updated 2008)** – organising international mixed ability projects (including people with and without a disability)
- **Over the Rainbow (updated 2008)** – creating sensitive projects with young LesBiGays and young people questioning their sexual orientation
- **E.M. power (2008)** – empowering Ethnic Minority young women through international youth projects
- **Going International - Inclusion for All (updated 2009)** – practical methods and advice for youth workers organising their first international project for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Use your Hands to Move Ahead (updated 2009)** – using practical tasks to increase participation by young people with fewer opportunities in short-term European Voluntary Service projects
- **Inclusion by Design (2009)** – a manual for youth NGOs to approaching inclusion in a strategic way

☛ Find them all at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/

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✗ **Quilgars, D. (2010)** - *Youth Homelessness in Homelessness Research in Europe*

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Cities can be tough places for young people to grow up. Urban areas offer great opportunities, but they can also present big challenges – especially for those with fewer advantages.

Youth and community workers play an important role to support young people in the cities, so that they can reach their full potential and make a positive transition to adult life. This research publication shares some insight and tips for anybody working with young people in (sub)urban areas:

• This study examines some of the big issues young people face in our cities today: unemployment, schooling, lacking facilities, distrust,...
• Further, it identifies the key components of working effectively with urban youth and highlights a number of successful interventions across Europe.

We hope this booklet inspires change, as any crisis can be seen as an opportunity to improve current practice. Go for it!

INCLUSION FOR ALL!
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