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Combating Inequalities through Innovative Social Practices of and for
Young People in Cities across Europe

WP7

**Draft Policy
Recommendations**

Emerging from Social Innovation Practices (SIPs)

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Introduction

The Citispyce project aims to identify the potential of social innovation to improve the situation of young people facing multiple social inequalities and living in excluded neighbourhoods in 10 European cities. WP7 builds on the previous WPs, especially WP5 where a selection of socially innovative practices of and for young people has been made, and WP6 during which some of these innovative practices – both, new project ideas and practices from other cities – were implemented/transferred from one local context to another.

The objective of WP7 was to provide evidence on the design, implementation and outcomes of these innovative practices, while paying attention to their innovative elements, as well as to their transferability. In this respect Citispyce enabled some kind of ‘experiment in vivo’. The practices from one city were transferred into other societal and implementation contexts (WP6). This way, their positive potential was examined in a creative way. The stakeholders who were involved in their transfer deliberately selected the practices in view of their potential positive effects, as well as necessary adaptations to the local conditions.

The case studies were presented and emerging policy implications discussed with stakeholders from the European Commission and other interested partners at a workshop held

on September 10 2015 in Brussels. This has enabled us to formulate a list of recommendations for future policy making.

In these materials we first explain how the social innovative practices (SIPs) are addressing the causes and symptoms of social inequalities and which target groups of young people take part in these practices. Next, we explain the success factors identified in these practices. Lastly, the list of policy recommendations is presented.

Addressing the causes and symptoms of inequalities

The Citispyce project has highlighted that the interactions of structural and individual causes of inequalities are affecting young people disproportionately within the economic crisis. In particular, five overlapping processes play a role: the first one is the growing financialisation of the economies (expansion of financial assets and activities, dependent upon consumer-led booms based on credit) bringing increasing risks and economic imbalances. Young people are affected by indebtedness, dependency, poor access to housing, deprivation etc. The second is increasing labour market segmentation, dualisation and exclusionary tendencies in labour markets where young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment, precariousness of jobs available, and are sometimes locked in the shadow economy. This is often accompanied by discrimination in the labour market and other areas in the case of immigrants or ethnic minorities. The third one is the retrenchment of the welfare state/cuts in welfare benefits and services, and/or lacking social infrastructures and support to young people at the national and municipal level, de-commodification in terms of marketization and privatisation of public services, to the greater disadvantage of young people. The fourth one is the neoliberal convergence¹ towards work-first, sometimes even workfare-like policies which are underpinned by moral/underclass discourse (MUD). In some countries young people do not have sufficient rights or guarantees in several areas or their rights become unfairly conditional while opportunities for them are narrowing. Nor have they any possibility to influence policies, separated as they are from the policy making process, while policy makers neglect their needs and perceive them as “a problem.” Fifthly, in most cities disadvantaged young people are often concentrated in the neighbourhoods where these causes accumulate.²

At the neighbourhood level young people feel neglected, distanced/separated/isolated, distrusted (they also lack trust in institutions), powerless, frustrated. The risks of disengagement and further social exclusion are increasingly accompanied by the tendencies to self-exclusion in some groups of young people.³ The structural causes overlap with the individual causes of inequalities, such as the lack of skills and work experience and lack of social capital and intensify them (a spiral of precariousness). More importantly, not only the individual deficits of young people play a role in this respect but also the ‘individual deficits’ of the policymakers, which, however, have an institutional and ideological background. The

¹ For the notion see Loedemel and Moreira (2014).

² Compare also Stigendal (2013).

³ See also Güntner et al. (2014) and Hussain and Higson (2014).

apparent inability of the policy makers (who are often ‘locked’ in the MUD discourse and work-first/workfare approach) to recognise the very causes of inequalities and neglect of the needs of young people represents a crucial policy challenge.

The symptoms and consequences of inequalities at the individual, community and societal level (like lower social competences, social distance, lack of trust, disengagement and various forms of social exclusion) overlap with the causes within the ‘spiral of precariousness’.

The innovative practices we have identified address both the structural and individual causes of inequalities and/or the symptoms and consequences. We understand social innovation practices (SIPs) to be those practices which i) meet new social needs or better meet the already existing ones of specific vulnerable groups like young people; ii) find new ways of meeting social needs which are more effective, efficient and/or sustainable than the alternatives; iii) empower people, allowing them to participate and increase their capabilities; iv) promote the awareness of rights and active citizenship; v) turn social challenges to opportunities; and vi) increase social capital, social trust and enhance society’s capacity to undertake actions at the local level.⁴ The capacity to fulfil some of these conditions stems from the understanding of the causes of inequalities in their national and local contexts.

The structural causes

In the case of small scale or even middle scale initiatives/practices of young people themselves or other actors who are not ‘formally empowered’, but close to young people such as NGOs or charities, it is not in the power of the actors to change substantially the structures of social inequalities. Nevertheless, these innovative practices are taking the structural causes of inequalities into consideration and are addressing them in several respects.

First, they develop the potential (ambitions and abilities) of young people in deprived neighbourhoods to respond to these causes and/or their consequences.

Secondly, they attempt to change (at least partially), the patterns of the causes in several respects. For example, employers and business sector are involved in the practices, in order to alleviate the impacts of widespread discrimination, at least within specific segments of the labour market (cooperating employers).

Thirdly, new opportunities for personal development and education are being promoted in situations where the mainstream policies do not provide them, or communing/sociability opportunities are provided when public spaces are not available for this purpose.

Fourth, new networks of actors are established, or multi-sectoral cooperation developed in order to address the structural problems: this increases their capacity to combat social exclusion.

⁴ Jubany and Güell (2014).

Last, but not least important, is the change in policy approach which recognises the causes of inequalities affecting young people and their needs, taking their positive potential into consideration and enabling their active participation in policy making.

In the case of large scale practices, underpinned with sufficient resources, the range of opportunities offered in order to overcome the structural inequalities is broader, which includes also provision of job or training opportunities. On the other hand, there are clear limitations regarding the capacity of social innovative practices to change the structures of inequalities which are embedded in labour market structures or in welfare state/mainstream policies objectives and design. In the latter respect, however, the innovative practices and/or the principles which underpin them could serve as ‘policy models’ or ‘policy guidelines’ for broader (mainstream) public policy reforms.

The individual causes

The individual causes of inequalities are addressed more extensively and intensively. SIPs typically address issues as lack of self-efficacy, empowerment, human and social capital/potential, creativity, personal development, trust, sociability, motivation and ambition. This way, young people supported in many respects more effectively than the mainstream policies aspire to do or succeed in doing. This is an important pre-condition for the effective social inclusion in the case of young people who are seeking alternative solutions to the solutions based on the ‘standard pathways’ offered by mainstream policies or, in the case of young people who are living from day to day, without any ambition to change their social exclusion (see next section). These two groups are typically hard to address in mainstream policies.

The case studies document that an important device of the innovative practices is that they address the dimensions of social exclusion which are rather neglected in mainstream policies. Their approach reflects most of the dimensions as distinguished by Percy-Smith (2000:9): typically, the practices are unique in that they address neighbourhood, individual, spatial and group dimensions, often in a combination with political/civic and social dimensions.

Self-confidence, creativity, empowerment, sociability, trust and engagement are strongly supported through innovative approaches. The practices take into account the widespread feeling of the ‘heteronomy of life’ (Berger, 1965) on the site of young people living in the excluded neighbourhoods, leading to low aspirations and disengagement, and a lack of trust.

The other related characteristic is a highly individualised approach and emphasis on the process to balance relationship, recognition, mutual trust, empowerment and co-determination. Typically individual or group/community work based on the partnership principle is the norm/quality standard.

The target groups involved

Similarly, as socially innovative practices addressed various causes and symptoms of inequalities they involved various groups of young people and individuals, even those neglected in mainstream policies. Whilst it may be problematic to categorise young people, their variety implied that SIPs were dealing with and whether the intervention is appropriate to their particular needs (the logic of intervention). In consequence the interventions addressed different needs of young people with use by different measures; in many cases (SIPs) there was an overlap of the logics of intervention due to the complexity of needs of young people. A typology below offers possible scheme for analysing the relationship between intervention and those targeted (their needs).

Scheme 1: Typology of logics of intervention and ideal-types of participants

Italic: analytical dimensions

Bold: policies and interventions

Standard: type of person

Ambition: integration into mainstream society through school/job

<p>Learning and counselling; social capital; matching</p>	<p>Motivated to integrate into mainstream society, but lacking competences and/or social network</p>	<p>Motivated and ready for a job without further support, but lacking opportunities</p>	<p>Offering opportunities</p>
<p><i>Low ability and support</i></p>	<p>Living day by day, opportunistically. Given up hope and lacking competences, social support and motivation to change</p>	<p>Aiming for ‘alternative’ ways to get ahead, with sufficient competences and/or social support</p>	<p><i>High ability and support</i></p>
<p>Empowerment: developing ambition, competences and social network</p>			<p>Stimulating and enabling entrepreneurship; co-creation; ‘communing’</p>

Resignation or aiming for ‘alternative’ integration

law enforcement

Source: Spies (2015)

What may be considered as a specific feature of SIPs is that they included a broad variety of young people, the two groups placed in the two bottom segments of the scheme – such groups are poorly targeted in mainstream policies or the policies are ineffective.

The success factors

The following criteria were used to assess the success of the SIPs:

Implementation: implementation of the activities of the practice was consistent with the objectives. Obstacles to implementation or difficulties were solved and did not significantly impede implementation.

Outcomes: goal achievement and/or other positive outcomes. These were identified in three respects. First, addressing and meeting the needs of young people (improved access to employment, education, motivation, abilities, personal development, empowerment, trust and community building, engagement). Secondly, increased capacity of the actors (young people included) to act and cooperate. Thirdly, challenging and changing the causes of inequalities. Both objective and subjective indications of the outcomes were employed.

In all areas, the importance of the internal success factors clearly prevail over the external factors.

The internal success factors

The internal success factors include both practice/project design and practice/project implementation which are of equal significance. Regarding project design two aspects which are at the core of the philosophy (programme theory) underpinning these practices/project appear to be the most important.

The first one is the strong focus not only on the needs of the participants, but also on their potential. Recognition and respect of young people's interests is often a starting point. A highly individualised approach is consequently a norm, based on the mutual recognition, involvement, cooperation and empowerment as the principles of action. Social work becomes crucial at the levels of individual, group and community work. The second aspect (closely associated with the first) is that the method, process and approach matter the most. The method of operation consists of cooperation, co-determination, empowerment and partnership. This means that the design of the practice/project and the implementation process are merging. This is a typical feature of bottom-up practices.

The external success factors

Three factors were identified as important. The first one was the network mode of governance, or the existing cooperation networks like cooperative relationships between NGOs, municipalities, business sectors, universities, etc. This was very much influenced,

however, by the already established social capital and networks of the principal (internal success factor) and/or by the ability of the principal to find the partners and to establish networks.

The second facilitating factor was the community/neighbourhood social capital and social potential.

The third facilitating factor was the financial resources provided (for example, financing through European funds was very helpful) or some infrastructures provided (for example space for the activities provided free of charge by a municipality). The financial and personnel resources were more important in the case of larger projects which have combined several time-consuming (professionalised) activities necessary to achieve the outcomes.

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Policy recommendations

These recommendations emerge from the case studies on 21 Social Innovative Practices which have been carried out in or are connected to the deprived neighbourhoods used in our fieldwork in ten cities across ten European countries. This work was underpinned by more than 600 interviews and 30 focus groups with the young people living there as well as with the interviews with policy makers and stakeholders from the cities and neighbourhoods and mapping social infrastructures and policy processes in the neighbourhoods.

The key recommendation is as follows:

Young people in deprived neighbourhoods of the European cities often lack access to the measures which could help them effectively. If they are addressed by mainstream policies, support provided is conditional, accompanied with disciplining requirements, forcing them towards jobs of poor quality or workfare schemes. Young people themselves are not involved in the policy making or in co-determination of the measures at all. They often lose motivation and lack trust in public administrative institutions and front-line workers, and become disengaged, and self-excluded.

Briefly, a change in paradigm is needed in order to suppress the principles of conditionality and enforcement. Young people need to be involved instead, in order to recognise their potential, empower them, engage them, and help them with their self-development. It is important to build together with them their general and social skills, their community, thus involving them much more in designing the policies addressed to them. Education, employability and employment measures represent the next step towards this.

The related problem is stimulating and measuring “good policy making” in so-called “evidence based policy making”. Indications of empowerment, trust, personal and community development, participation, civic engagement are not considered to be a part of evaluation indicators of policies/projects. Similarly, as job quality is not assessed by job placement indicators as long as more easily available indicators are used, this is often misleading when assessing the real effectiveness of the policies implemented.

Of course, such a policy message represents a serious policy challenge, especially for national and local governments and requires probably systemic policy changes in most countries. Although the recommendations are addressing the national, regional and municipality levels of governance such changes could be extensively promoted and supported by the Commission among other through the conditions attached to relevant grant programmes and financial instruments.

General policy recommendations

- (1) It is useful to combine small scale policies/practices oriented towards empowerment, general individual and social development of young people and communities where they are living with the (larger scale) policies/practices focused more directly on

employment or formal education. Such combinations may produce more synergy as individual and social development creates important pre-conditions for improved employability.

- (2) At the same time it is necessary to establish a coherent policy framework and stable social infrastructures in deprived neighbourhoods. Multi-sectoral policy coordination at the city (municipality) level is necessary for improvement everywhere.
- (3) It is appropriate to use the innovative (even spontaneous) practices as models for larger scale practices (their principles, objectives and approach): replacing conditionality and enforcement to work principles by empowerment, cooperation and trust building.
- (4) Innovative practices (or better, the innovative ideas and approaches) can be transferred from one national context to another. The role of the context needs to be respected in terms of the tools and methods which should correspond to local conditions. The philosophy, general goals and approaches are, however, transferable.
- (5) Such innovative practices are scaled up and disseminated mainly thanks to NGOs. During our research, it became clear, however, that private organisations, public administration bodies or universities can also act as a player. Be that as it may, what is a very crucial condition of success is the development of broader coalitions of partners: public, non-profit, for-profit partnerships.
- (6) More focus on the needs of young people is required: programmes should be designed with their active participation. The civic and political representations of young people are important and should be given a greater voice.
- (7) ESF funding is very useful and helps in many cases to overcome a lack of resources for successful up-scaling of the innovative practices. It is sometimes, however, used to fund standard policy actions/instruments (such as active labour market policies) too, substituting national investment into these services and thus diminishing the potential funding for social innovations.
- (8) In some countries, where more effective public administration is available, as in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands or UK, broad partnerships/coalitions and good public management create favourable pre-conditions for social innovative practices to be implemented even on a larger scale.
- (9) The role of personalities and their individual commitment, competences, or trustworthy and competent NGOs appear to be important factors in enabling potential social innovative practices both to start up and to grow. Such actors should be recognised and supported by public administration bodies.

The European Commission could increase support to NGOs and to up-scaling SIPs at the local level. It can also support an impact of SIPs on mainstream policies by adding conditions to such policies, e.g. Youth Guarantee schemes which (a) require that they include the principles of empowerment and partnership (b) prioritise projects which combine general individual and social development with employment and education objectives (c) attempt to establish more appropriate assessment standards/indicators which capture better the qualities of ‘good policy making’.

Specific policy recommendations

Employment & Entrepreneurship

Policy failures and gaps:

1. In general, social exclusion is a symptom of the failures of the three institutions: the market (economic processes combined with societal processes increase social inequalities), the welfare state (lack of solidarity and/or mechanisms of promoting solidarity) and the family (lack of capacity/ability to counteract these effects). Neglect of the principles of solidarity, human and social rights in mainstream policies seems to be on increase.
2. In Central Eastern European countries and some Southern European countries active labour market policies are not much developed to address effectively the magnitude of the unemployment problem or the intensity/concentration of unemployment in specific groups of young people like Roma or immigrants. Welfare state cuts also restrict support to employment of the vulnerable groups in other countries (like in the Netherlands or UK).
3. There is limited or weak capacity for case-work and tailored services, especially in the deprived neighbourhoods (in some cases, such services are completely missing). Often, the involvement of NGOs helps in this respect but their role is still not sufficiently appreciated. Similarly, commitment and capacity for in-depth socio-educational counselling is not sufficient, even in countries where active labour market policies (ALMPs) are more advanced.
4. Exclusionary tendencies of increasingly restrictive welfare regimes are emerging, followed by considerable creaming-off. Some groups like young Roma are heavily under-represented in mainstream ALMP policies. There is poor access of excluded youth to standard instruments of ALMP – due to conditional offers and selectively provided information about opportunities. Mis-targeting occurs due to badly predefined/followed aims.
5. Ethnic discrimination in the labour market as well as a lack of individual employability assets in the case of disadvantaged young people are ineffectively addressed.
6. The demand side of the labour market is often forgotten. The actions to build an inclusive labour market are missing. Efforts of the cities or public employment services to promote cooperation with the employers are not sufficient.
7. Increased conditionality of services and benefits associated with the ‘activation’ policies enforced through rigid bureaucratic rules damages mutual trust and respect between young people and public administrations. The sanctions that follow the refusal to accept an offer have a dampening effect and fail to motivate young people, especially when the offer is not a meaningful opportunity for them.
8. There is a general lack of recognition of the multiple barriers/problems, as well as of the positive potentials of young people, accompanied by a lack of understanding of different cultures of young people, in particular ethnic/migrant minorities.

9. There is a lack of financial and emotional support from the local community, city and economy to young people, in setting up their own practice to maintain their individuality and independence. Serious gaps exist in the communication between young people and local government.
10. Other gaps are identified in the co-ordination of employment and other services for young people: youth departments work separately with employment, education, etc.
11. Many young people are not ready for a job and thus the Youth Guarantee does not always work for them. Young people often do not feel these measures could bring about change. This is often also due to enormous workload and sometimes poor competences of frontline workers who may lack appropriate mentoring skills to build relationships with young people. This may lead to them offering opportunities that are not meaningful or of a suitable quality to the young persons involved. At the same time, the problem with outreach to those furthest from the labour market seems quite significant. In addition, there is the continuing problem of cooperation among public employment services, municipalities, and other actors – NGOs, employers or young people themselves.
12. Young people often feel disconnected with one-stop-shops given the fragmented approach that they encounter there. The services are brought to one place but the policies stay fragmented which is a key limitation to satisfactory provision of services that would make sense of life situations of excluded youth.
13. Social protection systems do not recognise young people as a specific target group within certain life situations which carry special risks. Some of the support schemes are not applicable to them and if so, they are offered services targeting adults and not specifically youth.
14. The lack of support (from official services, etc.) for alternative employment pathways (e.g. arts-based experiences) to assist young people not only with personal development and the acquisition of social competences but the skills and knowledge to become self-employed .

- ***Policy recommendations***

- Changing the principles of activation: substitute conditionality requirements with effectiveness requirements – both on an individual level and on an organisational level. This implies more room for professional discretion based on social work approaches, less focus on efficiency through competition (marketization), more focus on effectiveness through needs-oriented and continuous performance of the institutions involved.
- Raising the numbers and percentages of disadvantaged youth in the ALMP programmes (ESF projects included) while targeting the programmes at those who really need them. To focus the programmes even more on deprived neighbourhoods.
- Preparing better tailored programmes and ESF projects aimed specifically at supporting disadvantaged target groups of young people; provide more individualised

treatment. Capacity and trained staff for individualised support is a pre-condition, as well as including in-depth socio-educational counselling. Case management requires more and competent staff. The role of NGOs is also essential in this respect and should be promoted. All these pre-conditions deserve more support.

- Developing an employer-approach specific for ‘hard to place’ and discriminated target group (individual job-hunting starting with young person, not with collecting vacancies). Public-private partnership/pacts with the employers are needed. The role of municipalities/cities should be enhanced as they can promote cooperation with employers.
- Improving coordination between employment and other services for young people: this should not be only in front-end of the delivery (one-stop-shops), but also in the back-office (coordinated strategy/actions).
- Informal one-stop shops connected to the various initiatives of young people represent another form of advancement. Better signposting should be provided to young people at local level and outreach services should be strengthened – the role of NGOs turns out to be key.
- Developing longitudinal client monitoring (city-wide, coordinated by local authorities) where possible: at least in countries with sufficient administrative capacity.
- More opportunities/programmes for alternative pathways into economic activity, for those young people who have “alternative ambitions” (e.g. arts, media, entrepreneurial) – not aiming to “discipline” them into the soft-skills demands of low-skilled manual labour, but stimulating them to develop the soft skills required for other (entrepreneurial) economic activities. Young people, however, lack experiences and should be given coaching and mentoring.
- To focus on small scale pilot initiatives (like The Loft) to see how such innovations can support alternative employment pathways and approaches (e.g. arts-based experiences) to assist young people in personal development, acquiring of social competences and skills, networking and increasing employability.
- Better coordination at central/state level in order to reconcile the aims of different policies and to interrelate different policy levels and scale initiatives and programmes within the appropriate timeframe.

The European Commission could support the above recommendations by promoting the principles of action suggested in sufficient size, better targeting and emphasizing the focus on the needs of young people in the schemes which provide funding. Also, the capacities of the

implementing bodies need to be supported as well as involvement of NGOs. In particular, the bottom-up alternative pathways to employment deserve more support. The Youth Guarantee could take these suggestions on board and emphasise the partnership principle more strongly, in order to achieve better outreach.

Education and development

Policy failures and gaps:

1. Basic youth policies are still deficient in most of countries in tackling key needs of young people in deprived neighbourhoods related to the labour market, education or housing. The gap is bigger in post-communist countries and also in South European countries.
2. In education systems, ethnic minorities and migrants are often channelled to low level education tracks segregated from mainstream education and perceived by young people as poor and stigmatising. There is poor capacity in the system for inclusive education, and specific educational needs of young people at risk of social exclusion are not recognised.
3. There is a lack of acknowledgement of the role of informal education by official authorities as well as a lack of opportunities for informal education: acquiring social and cultural competences and skills.
4. NGOs are trying to fill in the gaps, especially in informal education but they lack resources for wider coverage and/or organizational and promotional help from the part of municipality.
5. If informal education/personal development is supported by municipalities in some countries, referral of young people by youth counters seems not very targeted, while there is a great diversity of participants (broad target group). The opportunities for tailoring services are heavily limited.
6. No longitudinal follow-up of the participants in the programmes is in place. Often, in the case of disadvantaged young people at risk of social exclusion, it is difficult to show cost-effectiveness as returns are mostly outside benefits and employment (safety, crime reduction and less use of care services). This is typical in the case of most of the young people not in employment or education (NEETs).

• *Policy recommendations*

- Systematically apply the principles of inclusive education and equal opportunities, recognising the specific needs of young people at risk of social exclusion. Tools of inclusive education should be mainstreamed in classroom education. This represents a big systemic challenge in post-communist countries but also in South European countries.

- Support more general personal development of young people, especially when not ready for formal education and/or employment. At the same time there should be improved specifying of target groups and/or possibilities for individual support.
- Provide more support to youth organisations providing non-formal education to young people at risk of social exclusion in order to increase their capabilities, self-confidence and engagement in society.
- Empower local communities by introducing more open governance mechanisms; minimizing restrictions on providing public education by NGOs and parents' associations.
- Bridge symbolic and spatial divides, creating trust and encouraging participation of excluded youth by establishing community centres that provide integrated and culturally tailored services (Roma neighbourhoods are the most important case).
- Implement longitudinal client monitoring - city-wide, coordinated by local authorities where possible - at least in countries with sufficient administrative capacity.

The European Commission could support more inclusive education projects/initiatives and require systemic changes in the national educational systems under the principle of anti-discrimination. More support should be provided to projects focused on general personal development and non-formal education of disadvantaged youth in need of it. More support could be provided to implementing longitudinal client monitoring at city level or by NGOs and other stakeholders dealing with them.

Recognition, empowerment, trust, engagement, neighbourhood development

Policy failures and gaps:

1. Exclusionary tendencies of increasingly restrictive welfare regimes; cutbacks in support services for young people; tendencies to blame individuals for their excluded position.
2. Labour market policies based on the increasing conditionality of support to young unemployed; work-first strategies neglecting social, cultural and personal/identity dimensions of labour market inclusion.
3. Distancing between disadvantaged young people and institutions; strong bureaucratisation of the institutions with regard to young people; lack of trust and legitimacy of public institutions in the eyes of young people which represent key obstacles to social inclusion.
4. The lack of support (from official programmes, services, etc.) for alternative employment pathways - a lack of alternative routes to assist young people in personal development and gaining access to training or self-employment.

5. Failure of locally provided public services to respond to the changing needs and problems of the young people. Rather, the provision of services conditioned on "adaptive, conforming, submissive behaviour" prevails.
6. Temporary or time-limited nature of functioning of both public- and NGO-led initiatives (financing and organization distributed on annual basis).
7. Although a number of policy measures connected to labour market, education and area development have been launched in some countries, few of these have incorporated young people in the discussion about causes and solutions to social exclusion.

- **Policy recommendations**

- Introducing a more community-focused model of policy-making combined with the provision of more individualized treatment; development of community and individual based social work, combined with various social services to young people.
- Cutting red tape in the legal provisions governing local grant competitions for NGOs; long/mid-term contracting of services to private sector (for-profit, non-profit).
- Encouraging and supporting local projects specifically aiming at recognition, empowerment, trust, engagement, neighbourhood development and linking them to larger scale programmes for providing opportunities in education and employment.
- Simplifying compliance and reporting requirements for EU funding instruments such as ESF and EASI in order to make it easier for small-scale organisations working at the 'grass-roots' with the hard to reach to access financial support. Flat rate funding and easier frameworks could be recommended.
- Facilitating increased transnational learning and transfer of knowledge through Erasmus+ by simplifying the application procedures for micro-organisations.
- Increasing use of knowledge alliances, also including young people, when shaping policy and projects aiming to combat social exclusion.
- Identifying and supporting the actors who recognise the problems of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and of diverse cultures; they may succeed in winning legitimacy among young people, including those who distrust the public institutions.

The European Commission could support more community-focused projects, long-term contracting to the private sector, NGOs working with young people in particular. It could simplify application and financing rules for grass roots initiatives, transnational learning programmes like Erasmus+; support more knowledge alliances of young people and public

sector bodies and other forms of including young people into policy making. In fact, involvement of young people in designing programmes for them might be made mandatory for relevant ESF measures.

Scheme: the clusters of the innovative practices

POLICY AREA: EMPLOYMENT

1. Top-down practices, highly formalised, in some cases inspired by bottom-up practices/models

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Integrated approach to employment of Roma PILOT (Sofia from Brno – Learning by working)	Transfer of know-how and practice from Brno; training and counselling to improve professional competencies; labour market orientation; matching with employers.	Over two thirds of the young Roma (under 30) in Bulgaria have never had a job; labour market discrimination, economic crisis, inadequate education and skills, social isolation, distrust and discouragement; very modest share of GDP spent for social protection (17.4%) and only 0.09% for ALMP.	Unemployed young Roma practically excluded from ALMP; discouraged and distrustful towards official institutions; ethnic discrimination on the labour market. Low level of education and competences; lack of skills to look and apply for a job and to communicate with employers.	Bring vocational training, professional orientation and employment counselling inside the deprived neighbourhoods; reducing unemployment among young Roma only possible if undertaken as an inseparable part of a comprehensive integrated strategy for overcoming the multiple inequalities; employers have to be stimulated to employ qualified young Roma.
Learning by working (Brno) Fieldwork case study	Provision of training, improving professional competencies, labour market orientation, involvement of employers, matching, placing clients in subsidised jobs	Existing active labour market policy works with the same instruments - training, raising professional competencies, matching, subsidised workplaces. Poor capacity for case-work and for tailored programmes and services. Creaming-off effects documented. Some ESF projects provide better quality and targeting.	Poor access of excluded youth to standard instruments of ALMP - conditional offers, selectively provided information about opportunities	Raise the share of disadvantaged youth in the ALMP programmes and ESF projects, prepare ESF projects specifically supporting this target group; provide individualised treatment; address multiple barriers including labour demand side.

2. Top-down practices, highly formalised, incorporating bottom-up elements

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Youth Employment Agency (Hamburg) Fieldwork case study	Bundle services more effectively and efficiently. Create a one-stop-shop including approaching services.	Reorganisation of already existing services for ALMP. Erase double-structures, insufficient capacity for in-depth socio-educational counselling.	Many young people enter the transition system and have prolonged and unsustainable transition to adulthood/labour market	Low-threshold and in-depth socio-educational counselling missing in new services: but trustful and personal contact to counsellor and social worker is crucial for young people

POLICY AREA: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1. Bottom-up practices, originally rather informal, spontaneous, and later formalized

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
The Loft (Birmingham) Fieldwork case study	Providing physical, affordable, quality and immediate space in the city centre for young creatives / artists. Giving visibility and exposure for young people's work. Through establishing networks, this gave young people the opportunity to develop skills in	Exclusionary tendencies of increasingly restrictive welfare regimes; Increasing conditions imposed on young people seeking support to access the labour market/training. This does not consider alternative and non-traditional pathways.	Lack of financial and emotional support off local community, city and economy. Lack of support from the local / city council - support in setting up their own practice to maintain individuality and their dreams in the arts and creative industries. The Loft identified wider and national issues relating to differences between the educational and career pathways of young	To focus on case studies like The Loft to see how innovations from the pop-up addresses and supports alternative employment pathways and approaches (e.g. arts-based experiences) to assist young people in personal development, acquiring of social competences and skills, and increasing employability.

	<p>exhibiting, curation and pitching for a commission. The Loft opened space for the young creatives to develop their own work with support sessions and weekly meetings where young people could show their current work / project and receive feedback from their peers.</p>		<p>creatives, versus young people schooled in more traditional vocations and degree pathways (maths, English, sciences, law, etc.). The lack of support (from official services, etc.) for alternative employment pathways meant that there was a lack of alternative approaches (e.g. arts-based experiences) to assist young people in personal development and the acquisition of social competences and skills.</p>	
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2. Mixed practices: implementation top-down but boosting bottom-up practices

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
<p>The Loft PILOT (Athens - Elefsina from Birmingham)</p>	<p>Provision of a space for young participants to meet; engaging young people in a meaningful and creative activity that can provide a productive 'way out', particularly to unemployed young people; training to enhance entrepreneurship; creation of communication channels through the</p>	<p>Bottom up approach transferred from Birmingham, with the collaboration of the local government that provided space to host the meetings and supported the pilot activity. Although the municipality has a robust framework of social services and a cultural centre addressing to all citizens in the area, there were no such activities addressing to young people.</p>	<p>Gap in the communication between young people and local government, lack of a local policy targeting and motivating young people by enabling novel approaches. Not enough opportunities for young people to pursue 'alternative' pathways to social integration (?)</p>	<p>Design and implementation of 'out of the box' initiatives at local level, targeting young people; adoption of a multifaceted approach to tackle existing problems. Encourage bottom up efforts towards the initiation of effective youth policies and social cohesion at local level where results and outcomes are more visible and promising.</p>

	implementation of consultation sessions in the effort to bridge the gap between young people and local government.			
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3. Top-down practices, more formalised, in some cases inspired by bottom-up practices/models

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
TOPEKO (Athens - Elefsina) Fieldwork case study	Provision of training and counselling; improving professional competencies; consulting aimed at employability and employment of beneficiaries; enhancing entrepreneurship; networking between beneficiaries, employers and public actors.	TOPEKO programs 'Local actions for vulnerable groups' is a state initiative that aims to address local needs focusing on social integration of vulnerable groups of people. It aims to mobilize local authorities in order to ensure the creation of jobs and professional training for vulnerable groups of people	Poor access of vulnerable groups of people in the labour market.	1. Better coordination at central/state level so that different actions and programs to be interrelated within the appropriate timeframe 2. Ongoing external evaluation (by an external evaluator) throughout the course of the project in order to suggest improvements at central level during implementation stage and prior to the end of the program.

4. Top-down practices, highly formalised, incorporating bottom-up elements

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Buzinezzclub (Rotterdam)	Personal coaching & group counselling	Many well developed provisions and a intensive NEET-policy	Financial agreement puts an incentive on municipality to send	Use intervention for intended target group (better targeting), develop longitudinal

Fieldwork case study	focused on developing personal development and business plans Establishing networks within business communities; Long term coaching from volunteers	(outreaching) prior to economic crisis. From 2011 on heavy budget cuts on activation policies (-60% by 2015). Restructuring of provisions into a "landscape of provisions" with four main streams.: back to school, preparation for return to school, into employment, care. Contradiction between emphasis on own motivation and direction of young people, and top-down guiding them into pre-set routes.	young people with 'heavier' problems than the Buzinezzclub is set up for.	client monitoring (city-wide/youth counter). Entrepreneurship is not an obtainable goal for most participants. Rather: 'entrepreneur of their own life' to be priority.
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POLICY AREA: EDUCATION and DEVELOPMENT

1. Bottom-up practices, originally rather informal, spontaneous, later formalized

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Educational Demos (Barcelona) Fieldwork case study	Training on new technologies, literacy and expressivity skills, civil participation and engagement in socio-political issues, empowering young people	On the one hand, investment in basic youth policies (to the detriment of affirmative youth policies focused on peripheral aspects), prioritising youth emancipation and active participation. On the other hand, educational policies are also too focused on formal education.	On the one hand, basic youth policies are still deficient in tackling key needs related to the labour market, education or housing. In the field of education, non-institutional actors like NGOs are trying to fill in this gap. On the other hand, formal education does not acknowledge enough the role of non-formal education and it does not address the specific	More support to youth organisations providing non-formal education to youngsters at risk of social exclusion in order to increase their capabilities, self-confidence and engagement in society through activities where their experiences and skills become highly valued.

			needs and problems of young people at risk of social exclusion, often related to family issues, or prepare them to continue education or access to labour market. Youth organisations try to fill in this gap through non-formal education programmes, but lack resources for a wider coverage.	
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2. Mixed practices: implementation top-down but boosting bottom-up practices

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Amaro Records PILOT (Educational Demos from Barcelona to Brno)	<p>Providing opportunities to development and communing, self-expression. Learning and training in music making. Offers an alternative way to get ahead to those who are struggling to find employment with no success and might perceive music making as a valuable alternative to spend time and to possibly earn money.</p> <p>Making creative achievement transparent to the wider public.</p>	<p>There are large gaps in municipality services for young people: this concerns even very basic services like housing, education (formal, informal) employment services.</p> <p>Low opportunities for personal development. Specific services addressing their interests, communing and leisure/cultural activities are provided effectively by pro-Roma NGOs, however inefficient in accessibility and variety.</p> <p>These opportunities are very much needed considering lower efficacy of family support.</p>	<p>Young Roma do not have any other suitable place where they can record music, recording equipment is too expensive to buy. Lack of opportunities for personal development.</p> <p>Neglect to interests of young Roma and lack of trust between public administration and young Roma.</p> <p>Lack of resources for similar 'small projects', beyond the standardised educational pathways.</p>	<p>More support to NGOs in order they could develop similar 'small scale' initiatives which may increase personal development of young Roma, increase both their capabilities and self-confidence and engagement in society through activities where their experiences and skills become highly valued.</p>

3. Top-down practices, more formalised, in some cases inspired by bottom-up practices/models

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Free remedial tutoring (Krakow) Fieldwork case study	Provision of tutoring for young people with learning deficits - an education programme as well as a values change programme	Some similar programmes systematically introduced in elementary and lower-secondary schools (integration classes), underutilization of pupils competences and willingness to offer tutoring by most public schools	Educational 'rat race' leaves behind those who are not able to pay for educational tutoring; systematic offer for excluded youth perceived as of low quality and stigmatizing; segregation of pupils by system of public education, leading to exacerbation of inequalities and of problems of pupils with learning deficits; low capabilities and incentives for public schools to develop integration class	Empowering local communities by introducing more open governance mechanisms; minimizing restrictions of providing public education by NGOs and parents' associations; approaching systematically the problem of balancing district lower secondary schools and schools admitting on a merit basis; stronger benefits for public schools which conduct integration classes.
Social and Health Centre (Sofia) Fieldwork case study	Breaking the vicious circle of poverty and social isolation through educational support, life skills learning, professional orientation and employment support, family planning, health education, promotion of gender equality.	Socially and economically deprived neighbourhood with practically no social infrastructure. State institutions inefficient and/or disinterested to implement effective policies. NGOs trying to fill the gap, but there is a problem of sustainability and financing.	Poor access of excluded Roma youth to standard instruments of welfare state, distrust towards official institutions, very limited access to information and opportunities.	Bridging symbolic and spatial divides, creating trust and encouraging participation of excluded youth by establishing community centres that provide integrated and culturally tailored services inside the Roma neighbourhoods; Inclusion and active participation of well-trained and motivated young people from the community.

4. Top-down practices, highly formalised, incorporating bottom-up elements

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
<p>Challenge Sports (Rotterdam)</p> <p>Fieldwork case study</p>	<p>Sports for fostering a healthy life style, group training (behaviour, presentation & communication skills, intakes for schools, job application, resume-writing, etc.), individual support (plans, debts).</p>	<p>Many well developed provisions and a intensive NEET-policy (outreaching) prior to economic crisis. From 2011 on heavy budget cuts on activation policies (-60% by 2015). Restructuring of provisions into a "landscape of provisions" with four main streams: back to school, preparation for return to school, into employment, care.</p>	<p>Very diverse participants (broad target group), referral of young people by youth counter seems not very targeted, no longitudinal following of participants; limited opportunities for tailoring services.</p> <p>Contradiction between emphases on own motivation and direction of young people, and top-down guiding them into pre-set routes.</p>	<p>Specify a more specific target group or more possibilities for individual support, longitudinal client monitoring.</p>
<p>The New Opportunity (Rotterdam)</p> <p>PILOT (own original project)</p>	<p>Intensive (4-6 months) programme in day centre containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intake/introduction phase: motivation & stabilisation (1 month) • transformation & socialisation phase (1-4 months) • outflow/placement phase: finding and keeping a job or a place at school (1-3 months) • after care <p>Multi-modular day programme:</p>	<p>Many well developed provisions and a intensive NEET-policy (outreaching) prior to economic crisis. From 2011 on heavy budget cuts on activation policies (-60% by 2015). Restructuring of provisions into a "landscape of provisions" with four main streams: back to school, preparation for return to school, into employment, care.</p> <p>Contradiction between emphases on own motivation and direction of young people, and top-down</p>	<p>Difficult to get participants into employment, difficult to show cost-effectiveness as returns are mostly outside benefits and employment (safety, crime reduction and less use of care services)</p>	<p>Investigate/show cost-effectiveness, develop employer-approach specific for this target group (individual job-hunting starting with young person, not with collecting vacancies).</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooking (breakfast and lunch), sports, culture. • education & behavioural training • working on Personal Development Plan with personal coaching • individual assistance from social worker • job training. 	guiding them into pre-set routes.		
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POLICY AREA: RECOGNITION, EMPOWERMENT, TRUST, ENGAGEMENT, NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT

1. Bottom-up practices, originally rather informal, spontaneous, later formalized

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Beatfrecks (Birmingham) Fieldwork case study	Based on a co-creation approach where young people are encouraged to develop skills, networks and personal competences within a supportive community of like-minded peers	Exclusionary tendencies of increasingly restrictive welfare regimes; labour market policies increasing conditionality of support to young unemployed; cutbacks in support services for young people;	Tendency of employment programmes/services to focus on the least disadvantaged; lack of signposting re: opportunities; distancing between disadvantaged yp and institutions; The lack of support (from official programmes, services, etc.) for alternative employment pathways means a lack of alternative routes to assist young people in personal development and gaining	Simplify compliance and reporting requirements for EU funding instruments such as ESF and EASI in order to make it easier for small-scale organisations working at the 'grass-roots' with the hard to reach to access financial support. Simplify the compliance and reporting requirements for charitable associations working with young people furthest from the labour market. Facilitate increased transnational learning and transfer of knowledge through Erasmus+ by simplifying the application procedures for micro-organisations.

			access to training or self-employment.	
<p>Teatre Pa Tothom (Barcelona)</p> <p>Fieldwork case study</p>	<p>Allowing young people to express their needs and concerns, nourishment of critical thinking, encouragement of active political participation and citizenship, learning of their own and others' cultures.</p>	<p>On the one hand, investment in basic youth policies (to the detriment of affirmative youth policies focused on peripheric aspects), prioritising youth emancipation and active participation. On the other hand, educational policies are also too focused on formal education.</p>	<p>On the one hand, basic youth policies are still deficient in tackling key needs related to the labour market, education or housing. In the field of education, non-institutional actors like NGOs are trying to fill in this gap. On the other hand, formal education does not acknowledge enough the role of non-formal education and it does not address the specific needs and problems of young people at risk of social exclusion, often related to family issues, or prepare them to continue education or access to labour market. Youth organisations try to fill in this gap through non-formal education programmes, but lack resources for a wider coverage.</p>	<p>More support to youth organisations providing non-formal education to youngsters at risk of social exclusion in order to increase their capabilities, self-confidence and engagement in society through activities where their experiences and skills become highly valued.</p>
<p>Cricket Club (Venice)</p> <p>Fieldwork case study</p>	<p>To create a self-managed Cricket team linked to all the other (formal and informal) social realities in the neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Strong cut of the resources for the local welfare and commissioning of the City Council. At the same time, long tradition of citizens' committees and associations and bottom-up activism due to the strong sense of community and the tradition of strong engagement of the citizens towards the common good of Mestre and Marghera</p>	<p>Distrust of the local population towards immigrants and young people of immigrant origin. Distrust of the migrant population towards the native population initiatives. Self-segregations propensity of a part of the Bangladeshi community associations. Distrust of youth in institutions and strong bureaucratization of the institutions with respect to activities for young people.</p>	<p>Prepare ESF and/or local projects specifically supporting this practice/project from the material and economic point of view.</p>

2. Mixed practices: implementation top-down but boosting bottom-up practices

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Beatfreeks PILOT (Venice from Birmingham)	To create a virtual and actual space where young people could express themselves, their skills and abilities; organizing (together with young people) an event where they can perform their skills, such as art, music, sport, theatre, photo.	Strong cut of the resources for the local welfare and commissioning of the City Council. At the same time, long tradition of citizens' committees and associations and bottom-up activism due to the strong sense of community and the tradition of strong engagement of the citizens towards the common good of Mestre and Marghera.	Distance between young people and local government/municipality. Distrust of youth in institutions and strong bureaucratization of the institutions with respect to activities for young people. Scarce information about opportunities for young people.	Generally, simplify the bureaucratic processes that provide access to public resources for young people
Hidden Wings PILOT (Beatfreeks - Krakow from Birmingham)	Provision of training, counselling, mentoring, building/improving competences, building intra and intergenerational networks	Public policies geared towards training competences are given stronger emphasis nowadays. Cooperation with NGOs in reaching public goals encouraged.	Still not enough exploitation of the possibility of cooperation between public authorities and NGOs vis a vis contracting services to the private sector. Failure of locally provided public services to respond to the changing needs and problems of the population. Provision of training/services conditioned on "good behaviour". Temporariness of functioning of both public- and NGO-led initiatives (financing and organization distributed on annual basis); low awareness and responsiveness of public	Introducing more community-based model of transferring cultural patterns may prove to be an interesting and effective idea; provision of more individualized treatment; cutting red tape in the legal provisions governing local grant competitions for NGOs; long/mid-term contracting of services to private sector; empowerment of district authorities

			authorities to local, sub-urban problems (also due to weak district authorities)	
<p>Multisectoral cooperation (Malmo)</p> <p>PILOT (own original project)</p>	<p>Involving actors from different societal sectors, also including young people from different parts of the city, in joint discussions about problems and solutions connected to social exclusion.</p> <p>By doing this, young people are given influence where it means something, positive potentials of young people are built on and different competences that young people have are taken care of.</p>	<p>Young people in Malmö are facing multiple challenges. During the last decades, a number of policy measures connected to labour market, education and area development has been launched.</p>	<p>That the project is driven by an NGO (Save the children), has been a virtue in the development of the project. At the other hand, the structures that the project aims to change are in the hands of the municipal authorities.</p> <p>Few or none of numerous measures have incorporated young people in the discussion about causes and solutions to social exclusion.</p> <p>There might be a challenge that an NGO constitutes the content of a project that is to be implemented by municipal actors.</p>	<p>Increased use of knowledge alliances, also including young people, when forming policy and projects aiming to combat social exclusion.</p>
<p>Brightful (Malmo)</p> <p>Fieldwork case study</p>	<p>Provision of coaching and organising workshops with different actors, like schools, trade and industry, NGOs. Discussions about equal opportunities, self-esteem, jobs and education.</p>	<p>There are organisations with similar aims - often inside a closed community based on religion or ethnicity. Brightful is open for all students in the school regardless.</p>	<p>Vulnerable as it is very person dependent. Small scaled (2 schools/areas) hard to monitor results and effects.</p>	<p>Support this kind of activities (like Brightful) with money, free travel inside the city, snacks at meetings and let the project continue its good work.</p>

3. Top-down practices, more formalised, in some cases inspired by bottom-up practices/models

Practice	Mechanisms of change	Policy context	Policy failures and gaps	Recommendations
Tours for refugees (Hamburg) PILOT (original own project)	Interviewing target group and asses their needs and interests. Involve organisations and build network for access to activities. Touring with young r. across city, bridging gaps.	provision of access to the city and organisations.	Many actors are willing to cooperate for network but sustainable framework and structural support are missing. Insufficient capacity of networks/organisations that offer access.	Helpful if policy makers and large organisations would create frameworks which enable small initiatives (and target group) easy access and sustainable conditions for support.