



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

**WP7 Case study: Innovative Practice  
'Creativity, art and sport for young people  
empowerment (Beatfreeks)'**

Date: June 2015

**City: Venice**

Authors: Francesca Campomori, Irma Pinocchio, Laura Zuccon, Francesco Della Puppa

## Cover page

<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICE/PROJECT TITLE</b>	
<b>From Birmingham to Venice: Creativity, art and sport for young people empowerment</b>	
<b>City</b>	Venice
<b>Pilot type</b>	Transferred from Birmingham (Beatfrecks)
<b>Type of target group</b>	“Motivated for integration into mainstream society but in need of support” and “Living day by day opportunistically”: something in between.
<b>Type of practice</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offering opportunities through stimulating co-creation, “communing” and developing their skills;</li> <li>2. Empowerment: developing ambition, competences and social network</li> </ol>
<b>Aims/objectives in brief</b>	<p>Enhancing self-esteem and entrepreneurial capacity in a target group which is in between “motivated to integrate into mainstream society but in need of support” and “living day by day opportunistically”.</p> <p>Improving young people’s trust in public institutions devoted to youth, or at least narrowing the distances between young people (the mentioned target group) and the public institutions.</p>
<b>What needs, what inequalities</b>	<p>Need of a free and open space where young people could express themselves and promote their skills.</p> <p>Inequalities linked to the isolation and to the breaking up of social ties.</p> <p>Need to strengthen the communication and connection among young people, the public services and the various associations engaged in youth issues/policies/interventions.</p>
<b>What (activities in brief)</b>	<p>8 meetings with a group of young people</p> <p>Use of social networks (facebook, twitter, instagram ...) to better connect the group and let it widen spontaneously</p> <p>Organization of a public event for and with young people</p>

<b>Who (actors)</b>	A group of young people (about 30), 2 facilitators from Citispyce; associations, Department for Youth Policies and Etam.
<b>How (involvement of the actors, their roles)</b>	Group A (8-10 young people) with a leading role in the organization of the event, under the coordination of the 2 facilitators. Group B (30-40 young people): they have specifically been involved to perform their art in the final event
<b>Scope: number of the participants of practice(s)</b>	Group A and B number approximately 50 participants.
<b>Duration (when the project/practice started)</b>	3 months and a half. Start date: end of December 2014. End date: end of March 2015.
<b>RESOURCES</b>	
<b>Financial</b>	230 euro: equipment (Camera); 200 euro: rent for the location of the final event. Some other equipment (such as the projector) has been provided by <i>Politiche Giovanili</i> office for free.
<b>Personnel</b>	1,690.33 euro for each of the two members of the Citispyce staff who implemented the pilot
<b>Other</b>	Know-how, premises in a specific location etc.

## Contents

Introduction.....	5
1. Methodology .....	5
2. Project Design .....	6
2.1 Social Issue(s) addressed .....	6
2.2. Project goals and plans.....	7
2.3 Competences and resources required.....	8
2.4 Degree of organization.....	9
2.5 Logic of intervention.....	9
2.6 Transfer adaptations.....	9
3. Organisational context of implementation.....	10
4. Project implementation and outputs.....	11
4.1 Targeting of the program .....	11
4.2 Addressing needs .....	12
4.3 Empowerment, engagement and choice .....	12
4.4 Stakeholders involved.....	13
4.5 Competences and resources involved .....	14
4.6 Process evaluation criteria .....	14
4.7 Innovativeness.....	15
4.8 Success factors and conditions, critical implementation barriers .....	15
5. Project results/outcomes .....	16
6. Final reflections .....	17
6.1 The role of the pilot/project/practice.....	17
6.2 Innovation .....	18
6.3 Success factors .....	18
6.4 Policy recommendations, transferability .....	18
References.....	19

## **Introduction**

This report deals with the evaluation of the Venice pilot. It was run from December 2014 until the end of March 2015 and it transferred the activities and methods of Beatfrecks based in Birmingham. The project planned to finish in the end of March in terms of Citispyce involvement. We had to put a final date due to financial reasons (we could pay the facilitators just for three months). Otherwise it was not possible to obtain an economic support by the Municipality because since June 2014 Venice has been governed by a compulsory administration due to scandals which touched the previous city council. During the last months social expenditure has been strongly cut and it raised many complaints among the social operators. In the end of May a new City Council was elected and we planned to have a meeting with the elected local administrators to explain our project and eventually ask for their support. A very important result, however, has already been obtained as just after the end of the pilot the municipality launched a bid for hiring facilitators with a role very similar to Citispyce's facilitators. Moreover, during the final focus group some operators of the public services said that they are becoming conscious of the fragmentation and lack of communication among them.

Citispyce staff selected this project to be implemented on the basis of fieldwork I and II results. As a matter of fact the WP3 and 4 Venice report revealed that the Municipality was unlikely to manage to address the target group in between the young people “motivated to integrate into mainstream society but in need of support” and youngsters “living day by day opportunistically”. Youth services are more targeted at integrating people and/or mainly youngsters with music interests (there is a municipal rehearsal room in Mestre where young people can play for free), while social workers deal with young people with heavy disadvantages. The grey zone in between risks being left aside and not tackled by public policies.

The aim of the report is to make clear the pilot’s design and implementation paths, and at the same time to assess its strong and weak points in terms of drivers and barriers for the implementation of the project. The report also describes the organizational context of implantation, highlighting the policy context where the pilot took place. Moreover, project results will be presented devoting special attention to the evidence about the positive impact of the pilot.

## **1. Methodology**

The evaluation methodology is qualitative. We mainly used interviews with stakeholders and users, focus groups and an analysis of data related to implementation process and output. As regards interviews and focus groups, we carried out a final interview with 2 of Etam's operators (Etam is the Social inclusion service belonging to the municipality of Venice) and one focus group with 6 young people who have been actively involved in the pilot. We planned a further interview with the Youth Department but at the last minute they informed us that they could not come and it was impossible to find another date. As for the data related to the implementation process, the two facilitators used to write a fieldwork diary where they noticed what was happening, critical points, success in involving some other young people, and interaction within the group. Twice a month the staff met for assessing the

implementation paths. The staff included 5 people: 3 academics from the University of Venice, who carried out the supervision, and 2 young facilitators hired by Citispyce, who were involved in the concrete relation with young people and who also keep in touch with municipal operators in order to inform them of the pilot's activities.

## 2. Project Design

### 2.1 Social Issue(s) addressed

The pilot took place in the municipality/neighbourhood of Mestre, even if it has also involved some young people from the neighbourhood of Marghera. As we mentioned in the WP3 Venice report, Mestre is the largest and highest populated neighbourhood in Venice (almost 90,000 inhabitants). Since the 1950s this neighbourhood grew rapidly and untidily, so that in a few decades Mestre has been radically transformed moving from the size of a small town to the size of a large industrial conurbation. Among the young people a serious issue is **drug dependence and trafficking, particularly in some parks** and in the Piave Street, close to the rail station. Piave Street is the symbol of the decay for Mestre residents who label it as a very unsecure place, one not to go after sunset. Recently, the large part of Piave Street residents are immigrants, even if some historical residents (mainly old people) remain. Adult unemployment and young people's working poor are other problems. Since the 2008 crisis many adults lost their jobs and it led to a decrease in the condition of the households and of children within them. Young people in Venice still manage to find a job due to tourism, but it is often a temporary and precarious job, if not completely irregular.

Social infrastructures are quite numerous in terms of sport, culture and health services, but if one looks at public infrastructures specifically devoted to young people the situation is different. There are **few places where young people can go**, meet and do things together, unless they are part of a formal organization/association with a specific goal. Looking at public offices which deal with youth in Mestre, there is an office called *Informagiovani* (Young people informants) and another called the Youth Policies. The pilot's staff contacted both and tried to involve and engage these offices and their operators. The main problems in this respect have been the **amount of bureaucracy for doing everything and the offices' way of dealing with young people**, which sometimes did not seem easy at all for young people. For instance, in order to use a free room located in the Youth Policies office two weeks of advance notice were requested: it is too much for young people who normally decide at the last moment when and where to have a meeting. As a matter of fact, the project design foresaw much more flexibility than the public services could actually guarantee.

As regards the structural causes of inequalities, one is the shortage of meeting points for young people (especially for youngsters not engaged in parishes or associations or other formal organizations with a strong and/or formal membership). Another is that, as we mentioned above, the bureaucracy for using the existing public spaces is often too tight for young peoples' "style" and therefore the bureaucracy itself become an obstacle for the use of these places. Young people involved in the pilot complained about the shortage of opportunities and attention devoted to youngsters. They perceive adults and operators in the public services as not trusting them and think that they do not let them express themselves because they have a prejudice which sounds like: "they are young and finally they are not able to do nothing significant". Moreover young people complained about the adults' prejudice against the young people who attend Monteverdi room (a municipal rehearsal

room, i.e. a place where young musicians can play): as a matter of fact they are often labelled as bad boys.

As for employment inequalities, young people involved in the pilot (ones who were not in education) had a job, or even two or three. As it is well known youth unemployment in Italy is very high, as in all southern European countries. Nonetheless, it has not to be forgotten the huge differences between southern and northern Italy. In the southern regions the unemployment rate is even more than 50%, while in northern regions (included Veneto where Venice is placed) the situation is slightly better. Nevertheless, a problem emerges of **precarious and low skilled jobs** with no fixed and well defined schedule. Young people are often forced to accept these jobs since their parents became unemployed and they need to help their family. Looking at the individual causes, economic problems due to parents unemployment were frequent and also the difficulty for some of them about the conciliation between jobs and school. Two of the guys were “border” in the sense that – according to the 2 facilitators- they have problems in relationships.

Overall, the project aimed at addressing the symptoms of inequality linked to young peoples’ perception that they are not to be heard and considered by adults and institutions, but also the economic difficulties which most of them are addressing and which make them become less trusting in future and therefore resigned.

## ***2.2. Project goals and plans***

In terms of the typology built in WP6, this pilot focuses on the **co-creation of new forms of togetherness**. Members of the target groups are mainly young people motivated to integrate into mainstream society but in need of support. Some of them are also young people living day by day opportunistically, people who lack social support and motivation to change.

The official goals have been related to empowerment, social inclusion and communing. The pilot also had two main operational goals which are inspired by Beatfreaks in Birmingham:

- 1) To **build a network which comprehends various youth associations and informal groups** in Mestre (and partly in Marghera);
- 2) To give birth to **an event which had to be built *with* and *for* young people, an event where they could express themselves and show their talents** (the building process of the final event has been considered an output itself).

We believe that the goals are **quite concrete as they foresee precise actions**, such as collecting young people, inviting young people to take part in the project and also to be protagonists of the project designing itself; organizing the event with the youngsters already involved and with other young people who come across the project later on. Goals are measurable in the sense that one can count approximately how many people have been involved, what kind of event has been organized and how many people actively took part in that. The social issues addressed were mainly related to **giving motivation to young people and better integrating a specific group of young people** in a “grey zone” (not the less integrated but the not even already integrated). Therefore the foreseen target group is something in between the “motivated to integrate but in need to be supported” and the young people “living day by day opportunistically”.

The crucial activities are related to **building relations and networks among young people**. It means organizing meetings where people could interact *vis a vis*, stimulating the use of a digital platform (Facebook and other social networks) where they could strengthen and widen those relations and where they could show their skills and talents by posting photos or videos. The practice addresses the area of *social integration and education in a wide sense*. The activity can eventually have an indirect effect on employment and or education since the young people involved had the chance of strengthening their skills from both the social or technical point of view (interactions can improve skills and abilities).

The pilot started in November when the youth previously interviewed for the field work related to WP4 have been contacted again in order to have a starting group for the pilot implementation. There have been two strategies: in a first time (two weeks approximately) a core group was collected (8 youngsters), which was supposed to be the driving force for the designing of the event with and for young people. In a second moment, new young people and public services (*Informagiovani, Youth Policies and Etam*) were involved. Facebook, flyers and most of all word of mouth have been the means for enlarging the young peoples' network. When the staff contacted public stakeholders they explained the project and asked for their supporting role e.g. letting them use a meeting room; giving advice, and so on. The pilot also aimed to shorten the distance between public services and young people. The pilot has been designed in 3 interrelated phases which correspond to a progressive involvement of actors. The first phase aimed to build a sense of belonging in the young people and make them trust the facilitators. In the second phases a work of "public relations" was promoted in order to widen the people involved in the pilot and to build a public/private network to deal with. The third phase was devoted to strengthening the network and organizing the final event.

### ***2.3 Competences and resources required***

As for young participants, the wish to take on a challenge has been the main requirement, which has been reached during the 10 meetings. A large part of the participants have some sport or artistic skill/passion which has been useful in order to build a group with quite defined goals (express themselves through art and or/sport).

The stakeholders were requested to be supporting, flexible and possibly to have an in depth knowledge to share with the staff about the identity of young people in that area. Overall, required competences of stakeholders are the capacity of delineating the problem setting, i.e. mapping the scenario of young people using both their professional experience and statistical data. Implementing actor's competences (i.e. Citispyce staff's competences) relating to relational capacity both towards public institutions and young people. Moreover, organizing capacity has been essential in order to afford the bureaucracy implied in the realization of the final event.

Monetary resources were necessary for purchasing a camera, hiring the space for the event (430 euro approximately) and for the personnel (2 people: 1690,33 euro in total for each of them for a period of three months).



## ***2.4 Degree of organization***

The practice mainly aims to address micro- and meso-levels. We believe that it addresses the micro- level because it actually devoted a special attention to each single person and tried to put each one together in a common project. Each of the young people involved (8-10 the core group or Group A) has been supported by our staff, who tried to give personal attention and also listen beyond the planned meeting (e.g through a phone call or a chat on Facebook). Micro-level also includes the improving of individual skills (mainly relational and organizing) and the empowerment of participants. As for the meso-level, we believe that the pilot also touched this level in terms of the governance, i.e relations among public/private stakeholders, which managed to build in this area. The meso-level also includes the building of connections among different groups of young people and various third sector organizations. This new informal network has positive effect in enhancing trust.

The venice pilot is a deliberate practice which has been designed with the specific goal of building social innovation for the purpose of combating youth inequalities in a specific target group (in between the young people “motivated to integrate into mainstream society but in need of support” and youngsters “living day by day opportunistically”). It is semi-organized in the sense that it involves more people and organizations, but not always with a demarcated tasks and not in a structured and formal fashion. The pilot used a mixed approach, i.e it is bottom up and top down initiative, since the two moderators are paid. Public services are supporting actors but not the leading force.

## ***2.5 Logic of intervention***

The practice can be classified as aimed at **social integration and elevating moral**. It deals mainly with offering opportunities and chances for meeting (RED) new people who share a common wish, i.e. doing something for positively expressing themselves, improving self-confidence, trust in the adults’ world and motivation in social integrations (SID, MUD or ‘anti-MUD’), this is:

3. Stimulating and enabling entrepreneurship, co-creation; “communing”.
4. Empowerment: developing ambition, competences and social network

## ***2.6 Transfer adaptations***

This is a pilot transferred from Birmingham (project Beatfrecks). Beatfrecks is a structured organization with many young people who work on the projects. In Venice we transferred the practice on a smaller scale with a less ambitious project. Furthermore, the guys who took part to the project in Venice were not actually a well organized group and the Citispyce’s facilitators had to take this into account in order to be more flexible in assigning tasks to the young people involved.

### **3. Organisational context of implementation**

The practice did not take the shape of a formal organization. The group was informal and led by the two people from Citispyce, even if the staff did not intend to assume a role too much directive, as we preferred to improve young peoples' capabilities and let them become protagonists of the practice. As regards the roles, during the weekly meetings each person engaged in a specific role according to his/her skills and preferences. Citispyce staff had a coordinating role and they guaranteed the continuity of the project encouraging and stimulating the group. The participants did not manage money, as the staff purchased the equipment and paid the rent for the place where the event took place. All the young people were volunteers and did not get paid for their participation. Citispyce staff were composed of 5 people: 3 academics and 2 facilitators. The academics had a role of supervision of the pilot and the legal responsibility for the project (including the financial issues), while the 2 facilitators actually implemented the pilot and kept in contact with both young people and stakeholders.

The pilot was implemented for 4 months according to the initial plan. No significant changes in service design occurred over the project run.

The pilot has been implemented following the operative strategies used by Breakfrees in Birmingham, even if it has been a small scale project in comparison to Birmingham one.

There are no specific quality standards for the services provided. As for us, a quality standard has been the care in the human relations who attracted young people who tended to feel they were not considered much by adults.

The financial and personnel resources were not abundant but they were sufficient for the implementation because it was intended as a small-scale project.

Citispyce staff spent a lot of energy in trying to build a network both with other organizations and associations and with public institutions and services related to youth.

The governance has been improved during all the pilot length and it took some time to gain stakeholders' trust and their interest in the project. However, in the final event many associations participated and the same for the local public offices related to young people (except for the Civil Services office which has been contacted but did not answer).

As we mentioned above, this area has infrastructures both in terms of sport and art/culture. What is lacking in our view is a service/practice which can work as a bridge between infrastructure and young people and the various stakeholder and infrastructures, especially for the young people belonging to our target group. Since the end of the pilot the municipality was governed by a compulsory administration whose main goal has been to restore the financial situation. Social policy, which has traditionally been important and advanced in Venice, has been frozen and partly cut. That was the reason why it was difficult until now for the municipality to plan any similar project. Nevertheless, as we mentioned, the municipality launched a bid for hiring facilitators in youth policies and reading the bid it is clear that they have been somehow inspired by our pilot, even if it is not explicit.

We did not find a practice which can be compared to our pilot in Mestre, but the pilot had the deliberate aim of linking itself to the already existing practice/organization/services devoted to young people. The existing scenario of practices related to young people reveals a quite high fragmentation. The activities tend to be implemented in parallel with a low degree of integration.

## 4. Project implementation and outputs

### 4.1 Targeting of the program

Since November, Citisyce's staff re-contacted the youths met during the WP4 research and took new contacts. The selection mechanism has been to involve people already contacted for the fieldwork II and their friends, since we noticed that they belonged to this grey zone not actually touched by youth policies. Actually, we did not place conditions or criteria, but in a natural way the people who took part in the pilot shared this profile.

They worked according to two different strategies. Initially, they created an organizational group (called Group A) of 8 youngsters from different backgrounds who did not know each other, or who had just a superficial acquaintance. This “leading” group helped the staff to reach new guys and therefore widen participation, turning to their friends and also to people who were members of organizations which the group was willing to involve.

During the pilot's implementation, the staff kept in contact with them on an almost daily basis through Facebook and they organized a weekly meeting with all of them.

This Group also dealt with updating Facebook and Instagram and shot some videos to give visibility to their interests and to promote other realities where young people were active. We can say that the self-selection mechanism has been the wish to show skills and talents to the group.

In a second stage (some weeks later), staff started to involve new young people (called Group B) and stakeholders from public services devoted to youth. In other words the staff tried to widen the group and to build a network both between the various associations related to young people activities and the Group A and between the same Group A and the public stakeholders, i.e. Etam (as Inclusion Services despite not specifically focused on young people); *Informagiovani* and *Politiche Sociali* which are included in the Department of Youth Participation and Peace Culture (*Partecipazione giovanile e cultura di pace*). Compared to Group A, Group B was mainly composed of young people who were members of formal organizations/associations and willing to build a network even if with a more external role. The participation of Group B was mainly motivated by the realization of the final event, while for Group A the process and the relations among them has been even more significant than the final event.

Actually, the implementing actors from Citisyce put the first input (arts, music, sport as a means for expressing themselves) and then young people activated a self-selection mechanism.

The tools used for giving visibility to the project have been Facebook, Instagram and word of mouth (which has been very effective)

The members of the program are young people aged 19-26. They are mainly Italian. The staff tried to involve some guys with an immigrant background (young people from China, Bangladesh, Romania), but finally they gave up. The problem in their participation was mainly due to the difficulty in conciliating job and study. They were forced to work since their parents lost their job. Anyway they have been involved in the first stage and they made some of the videos posted on Facebook.

## **4.2 Addressing needs**

The pilot especially addresses the need of making young people heard, as well as the need of feeling they are important, significant and capable are the better addressed. Also, the need of meeting and sharing a project, of socializing and to taking part to meaningful activities has been addressed.

The Citispyce staff tried to keep a high degree of individualization of the service, in particular by devoting individual attention to each participant of the Group A. In particular, the two facilitators keep in touch almost daily with the Group A through Facebook chat or WhatsApp. Facilitators encouraged the participants and individually suggested how they could put at stake their skills and talents in the project.

Actually, no structured monitoring of the success factors has been designed, but we can anyway make an evaluation since we have implemented the project.

Group A' s participation to the 10 meetings was high and during the 3 months it **become evident the growth in autonomy of the group, which has been able to solve practical problems linked to the final event organization** without the help of the Citispyce staff. Moreover, a number of participants used facebook for stimulating further participation (in particular inviting people to the final event for exhibit themselves) and they left on Facebook comment like that: *“Thanks to all the Citispyce staff. You are making a nice job because you work with head and with heart...two elements which are not often found together”*.

During the final event (March 28<sup>th</sup>), which has been called Show and Tell (*Mostra e dimostra*), approximately 150 people came, mainly youth. Many associations (related to culture, music and sport) and the representatives of public offices (related to young people) took part in it and they had their own space for giving information about their activities. During this event (from the early afternoon until the night) the youth could perform their artistic, music and sport talents. At the same time, the representatives of the Municipality of Venice informed young people about the existing services, projects and activities where they could involve themselves.

## **4.3 Empowerment, engagement and choice**

Each step and decision has been shared and built with Group A. The staff started from their capabilities and their interests. For instance, if someone liked making videos or photos she/he was asked to use this passion to build something together. Everyone has been invited to say her/his idea. The message that the staff tried to launch has been: *“Everybody is important and each one is a unique piece of a puzzle: the project can take a concrete shape only by sharing competence and ideas”*.

Young people appreciated this style of communication as it can be seen looking at their comments when the pilot ended.

The young people of Group A have put a huge effort in engaging themselves. Nevertheless, it has been necessary to adapt the implementation to some typical features of young people. For instance, it happened that participants said just at the last minute that they could not take part in the weekly meeting or they simply forgot about the meeting. Moreover, sometimes they assumed some tasks but later they forgot about them and did not do anything. A certain

degree of flexibility has been necessary and in general we believe that adults need to be quite flexible if they wish to involve young people. Overall, young people used the opportunities and choose to engage if they felt that adults were willing to adapt to their view and not always the opposite.

#### ***4.4 Stakeholders involved***

The Citispyce staff (especially the 2 facilitators, but in the final stage also the 3 academics) were the principal agents. Citispyce staff got also in touch with various stakeholders in order to involve them in the pilot. In particular, as for public stakeholders, the involved actors have been:

- *Etam* (Territorial and Community Animation Service, belonging to the Social Inclusion Services of the Municipality of Venice),
- *Informagiovani* (Municipal service which gives information and support to young people about job or vocational training chances in the area of Venice)
- *Politiche giovanili* (Youth policies services relates to activate services and interventions for young people particularly linked to music).

Etam has been a significant spokesperson especially for its availability in giving advice and listening to the evolution of the pilot. Since Etam is not specifically engaged with young people this kind of support (external supervision) was what we required from them. Some young people from Group A have been invited to a supervision meeting with Etam operators. During a final meeting where they were required to give their evaluation to the pilot they expressed a very positive judgement and underlined how the style of Citispyce's pilot has more than something to teach to the whole public service about how to engage the young people.

As for *Informagiovani* and *Politiche Giovanili*, in the first stage it has been difficult to get in touch with them (i.e to attain a date for explaining the project). Subsequently, when they saw the positive engagement of young people they accepted to be involved and they took part in the final event. Moreover, they permitted the free use of the meeting rooms of their offices. Nevertheless, the pilot did not undertake any formal collaboration with the social services. They have constantly been informed about what has been going on and in some occasions they were available for a feedback or for lending some needed equipment.

In the matter of social stakeholders, a large number of links have been built with many associations, such as ASD (Football Team), Apta Parkour, Casa Bainsizza (related to culture and social integration, managed by private citizens), ComuniCare (association which works with immigrants and in the most marginal areas of Marghera), Marghera Libera e Pensante (Citizens Committee), Abbey Road (Association which deals with the social problems of Piave Street in Mestre), Flat (Music Association), Teatro della Murata (Theatre), Teatro Infolle (Theatre) e Mestre Cricket Club. They all took part in the final event, even with some performances by their members.

Another type of cooperation has been agreed with the "Marco Polo System", a private company which deals with the re-development of the territory and which rented the space for the final event. Initially we had arranged to rent the space in a more informal fashion. Nevertheless, a month before the event they have retracted this informality and they us numerous documents, including a lease temporary contract and self-certification. These obstacles were only overcome after several weeks of negotiation (the formal permission for the event we got three days before). The relationship with the Marco Polo System was the

most difficult to manage because they tended to increase more and more the requests/documents, while the time for organizing was short.

#### ***4.5 Competences and resources involved***

Participants: the involved competences relate both to artistic and/or technical talents and to relational and organizational competences (the pilot itself wish to improve those skills of the young involved in the project).

Stakeholders: the involved competences relate to their in depth knowledge of the territory and their previous experience with young people. This competence relates particularly public stakeholder. As for the private ones (NGOs and third sector organizations) their skills relating to the experience with young people in concrete activities was crucial.

Limited monetary resources have also been involved, in particular 230 euro for equipment (Camera); 200 euro for renting the location of the final event. Some other equipment (such as the projector) was provided by the *Politiche Giovanili* office for free. As for the hired people:1,690.33 euro for each of the two members of the Citispyce staff who implemented the pilot

#### ***4.6 Process evaluation criteria***

One of the principal barriers for the pilot implementation has been the **excessive bureaucracy** in order to attain permits for filming municipal spaces, as well as to use the *Politiche Sociali's* free room for meeting young people (it was necessary to write a formal request 2 weeks before every meeting). In the first stage this lack of flexibility represented an obstacle because when one works with different young people with their own school or job obligations it is difficult to plan the appointments that far in advance. Often, we met young people at the last moment when they were available and we could arrange the meeting with a large participation. Flexibility, in the first stage, was very important in order to communicate with them and to build a good atmosphere in Group A.

Another obstacle has to do with the posters' printing. We needed the approval of different social services about the dimension of the logo, and its position among the other stakeholders' logo. Some public stakeholders were less permissive than others and they wanted to have a big control over the procedure. This caused a delay of two weeks as regards to the promotion of the final event. This fact could be interpreted as an excessive self-reference and lack of flexibility against young people.

Another critical element relates to the **poor communication among public departments** of the **Municipality of Venice**, even if they work in the same area (social integration, young people). The lack of communication also relates to intra-communication within the same service, despite some operators worked in the same social services, they often did not communicate to colleagues about the project, so that every time we had to repeat the full story of the pilot since the beginning.

Some social services became more collaborative only when we offered them a space during the event. Patience and negotiation have been two important elements to obtain their attention and cooperation.

An important driver for implementation has been the informal networking built by the young people involved in the pilot themselves, especially with associations which deal with art, music and sport.

The University of Venice has been the principal agent since it led the organization of the pilot on behalf of Citispyce and managed all the financial and implementing issues as well as the relationship with the municipality.

#### ***4.7 Innovativeness***

Informal networks strongly supported by the principal identifies the level of innovative solutions and the key stakeholders.

The key dimensions which have been addressed are distance, engagement and trust.

Distance: the pilot tried to shorten the distance between young people and public services, which they see as not being in touch with them, they do not feel listened by them. The meetings have been held in *Informagiovani* and *Politiche giovanili*'s rooms for that reason.

Engagement and trust: the pilot aimed at bringing out the skills and passions of young people and to give support in order to let them organize and give visibility to them and at the same time to make it possible that they feel important and able to do something significant (improving their self-esteem).

Key dimensions related to the practice: offering opportunities through stimulating co-creation, “communing” and developing their skills; Empowerment: developing ambition, competences and social network.

Key dimensions related to the target group: a border line (or a mix) between a group Motivated for integration into mainstream society but in need of support and a group living day by day opportunistically.

The pilot has been designed by selecting an existing practice (in Birmingham) and applying that to a specific target group. As regards the hypothesis on the matching of needs and practices the pilot tends to confirm the “theory” provided in the typology, maybe with some specifications. Being a typology it sharply cut the type of person in the target group. We believe that our target was something in between the type in the upper left and the type in the lower left corner.

What is surely confirmed is that the driving forces for the development of social innovative practices in this target groups are not young people themselves but require an external actor who gives support, motivation and a concrete initiative in build a supportive social network.

#### ***4.8 Success factors and conditions, critical implementation barriers***

No significant changes in implementation have been made when compared to the project design. Nevertheless, some critical issues emerged, such as the above mentioned excessive bureaucracy and the difficulties to communicate with public services. This has slightly slowed the implementation agenda, but it has not impeded realising the designed output. As a matter of fact, staff and Group A have found a way to overcome these barriers. For example, in the first stage, we planned to organize the final event in the Bissuola Park, a public and open space where young people spend a lot of time. We thought that this location could be

ideal for involving many young people. The huge amount of permits and bureaucracy required discouraged the staff and the Group A, so that they finally chose a private location (Forte Marghera).

Other changes in implementation steps emerged when the staff started to give some responsibilities and tasks to each young person of "Group A" (i.e they had to accomplish to specific tasks for the further meeting). The goal was to make them more responsible and engaged in the project so that in the future they could become the drivers of the project. Nevertheless, the staff realized that they were still not ready for this step (i.e the young people forgot about the tasks or they gave up) and they still needed to develop their group identity and to have a coordinator to support their assignment. For this reason, we changed our mind and design and we decided to work together and become a reference figure for them. In the last weeks of the project the young people of Group A became more autonomous and enterprising and therefore it has been possible to assign to them more responsibilities.

Young people involved have appreciated both the professional attitude of the facilitators and their empathy in human relations. Many positive comments have been posted on Facebook during the pilot length.

*I am extremely thankful for what you have done because you and us managed to build a significant event with actually very few things! That cannot be taken for granted, it require engagement and communion among people. This project has been a very important opportunity . Thank you very much.  
(woman, 23 years old, student, practitioner)*

The critical success factors are the following. The financial resources have been limited (see the cover page) and the Citispyce facilitators, despite just two persons, managed to launch a high number of contacts and networks; the method of operation was successful because it has been based on a mix of supportive attitudes and testing for an autonomy of the group in a gradual fashion. Moreover, it has been a success factor as the individual attention which the staff paid to each youngsters of Group A made it possible to build an atmosphere of trust and commitment where each person felt important.

In fact, in a small-scale project the method of operation which fitted the tastes of the target group was most important.

## **5. Project results/outcomes**

We believe that the goals of the project have been accomplished. We remind readers that the goals were twofold: 1) enhancing self-esteem and entrepreneurial capacity in a target group which is in between “motivated to integrate into mainstream society but in need of support” and “living day by day opportunistically”. 2) Improving young people trust in public institutions devoted to youth or at least narrowing the distances between young people (the mentioned target group) and the public institutions.

The pilot is currently finished (it ended on 28<sup>th</sup> March) with the final event. On 28<sup>th</sup> April we had an assessment meeting with Etam (which has guaranteed supervision during the whole length of the pilot). They were responsible of the service and an operator. They were enthusiastic about the pilot and said that the public services should start to work with young



people in this way, reforming the current not very effective practices. Actually, a few weeks after the final event Venice Municipality published a bid (called Incubox) which intends to hire 3 facilitators for working with young people in a way very similar Citispyce pilot style, and we guess it is not just a chance. Our facilitators applied for the bid since they have all the requested skills, but currently we do not know still what will happen.

In particular, during the meeting it has emerged how the public service tends to deal with the situation of heavy marginality (using an approach based on the single case/person who became in charge of the Social workers) or, on the contrary, with the young people already motivated and well integrated. What is lacking – and what the pilot has been addressed- is attention towards young people in a “grey zone” which we think are a large proportion in Mestre. The pilot addressed exactly this target group. Operators from Etam also said that the Citispyce Pilot has reached a kind of celebrity in the area and people speak about it and young people know what it is.

As a matter of fact, young people’s feedback after the final event was very good and they confirmed the idea that what is lacking in Mestre is attention for young people in terms of activation and empowerment, which at the same time pay attention to the single person and not only the group.

As we described above, in the short term the pilot was very effective and successful. As for the long-term it not easy to say. The two persons of the staff unfortunately do not live in Mestre and it would be difficult for them to keep in touch with the group, at least in person. However, they still put efforts for stimulating the group in going ahead and engaging in some other similar projects. The bid launched by the Municipality of Venice could be a means for giving a kind of continuity to the project.

The output of the project has been the realization of an event where young people show their talents and express themselves in a wide sense. The effect is the birth of new networks among young people and a new enthusiasm about doing something together which relates to their passions.

A positive unintended outcome has been the bid launched by the municipality. Moreover, we believe it is a positive outcome that some operators of the public services became conscious of the fragmentation and lack of communication among them.

## **6. Final reflections**

### ***6.1 The role of the pilot/project/practice***

We believe that this pilot launched a small seed in changing mechanisms and patterns of inequalities because, on the one hand, the pilot made better relations between young people and public services possible. Young people could see and experience that public stakeholders can have something to offer to them. On the other hand the pilot mitigated the sense of not be listened and deemed important, while it emphasises their personal resources and encourage them to put it together with other person.

## ***6.2 Innovation***

Key dimensions related to the practice: offering opportunities through stimulating co-creation, “communing” and developing their skills; Empowerment: developing ambition, competences and social network.

Key dimensions related to the target group: a border line (or a mix) between those Motivated for integration into mainstream society but in need of support and those Living day by day opportunistically.

Key innovative elements: the method used by the staff for involving young people. They have been supportive but not pampering. They tried and managed to deal with them, bringing out their skills and making them available to put themselves at stake as a group. Gradually the staff assigned them more responsibilities so that they could perceive the project as their project and not simply a project they could take part in.

The pilot addressed the need of the target group to feel important and capable, to be protagonists of their neighbourhood and also to give legitimacy to their passions.

## ***6.3 Success factors***

Three are the following success factors identified in the WP6 report: 1) 8 young people’s concrete engagement finalized to find a chance and a channel for expressing themselves and feeling part of a group with the same aim. 2) Shortening the distance and in part filling the gap between those young people and the public stakeholder. 3) At the same time, a success factor has been the building of an informal network composed of many local associations which deal with art, music and sport and where many young people can be find.

As for the success factor number 1, it has been promoted through the weekly meeting of Group A and the encouragement and support made by the two Citispyce staff for each young person involved. As for factor number 2, it has been promoted by the staff involving Group A in the meetings with the various stakeholders and keeping in touch with all the stakeholders even when they seemed not very interested. Finally, the process and the work made for arriving to the final event has been already the success factor, since it made possible the actual test of young people in their organization skills and “forced” them to assume precise responsibilities in order to guarantee the realization of the event itself.

## ***6.4 Policy recommendations, transferability***

We believe that the pilot could be easily transferred and implemented by local public and private stakeholders. The best solution could maybe be a private-public partnership: private associations and organizations -such as those involved in the pilot- could lead the project organizing themselves in a network, while public stakeholders could have a facilitating role, e.g. making the bureaucracy less tight, giving spaces and equipment and hiring facilitators who can work full time in this empowering activity.

## References

<https://www.facebook.com/citispisce.venezia.1>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Citispisce-Venezia/819766214718357?fref=ts>

Comune di Venezia, Carta dei servizi, Partecipazione giovanile e cultura di pace (document made by municipality of Venice about the services provided for young people in the city)