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**CITISPYCE**

Combating inequalities through innovative social practices of, and for, young people in cities across Europe

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## **REPORT ON CITISPYCE FINAL CONFERENCE**

**Aston University**

**3 & 4 December 2015**

Jill Robinson & Helen Higson

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## **1. Introduction**

The CITISPYCE Final Conference took place in Birmingham from the evening of 2 December to lunchtime on 4 December 2015. The conference was organised by the Project Coordinator, Aston University, in conjunction with Birmingham City Council, one of the CITISPYCE city partners. The main conference events on 3 and 4 December were held at Aston University and the welcome reception and site visit were organised by Birmingham City Council at the Impact Hub, an independent socially innovative initiative launched in 2015 by young people to provide space and networking for young social entrepreneurs in the city.

The Conference was intended to disseminate the main findings of the project but also to provide a space for further debate and reflection between academics, policy-makers, practitioners and young people on:

- the changing nature of inequalities facing young people across Europe today
- the potential of socially innovative approaches and practices to overcome these inequalities
- the key issues arising from the findings that need to be addressed in recommendations to assist policy-makers at all levels to improve support for social innovation by and for young people to combat inequalities.

### **1.1 Conference participants**

Given that the Conference was to serve a double purpose – dissemination of findings and final input to the shaping of Strategic Recommendations – promotional efforts were directed to a range of external policy stakeholders in addition to the academic community. We recognized that it would be a challenge to get officials from the European and national levels to attend. We had, therefore, engaged with Commission officials in a seminar in Brussels in September 2015 to discuss our findings and initial thoughts on recommendations, and individual partners had engaged in dialogue during the course of the project with national as well as local government stakeholders. Nevertheless, the eflyer was widely circulated and registrations were monitored via the online event management website Eventbrite.

The capacity for the conference was 100 and a total of 98 people were pre-registered to attend. Apart from the project partners (academics from seven universities, two NGOs and three municipalities), those registered included academics from non-participating universities and representatives of a range of small and medium sized social enterprises; members of public sector institutions, including local government and the police; social policy research and lobbying organisations working in fields related to the Conference themes (e.g. the Joseph Rowntree

Foundation); charitable trusts and foundations working with and for young people (e.g. the Prince's Trust); community associations and 'young social innovators' and social entrepreneurs.

In addition to attending the Conference in person, it was possible to participate virtually via social media, notably twitter and follow the live streaming (via Periscope) of the main sessions.

## **1.2 Main Conference Programme**

When planning the structure of the conference sessions, partners felt that it was important for young people to play a prominent role throughout, since the project findings highlighted the failures of public institutions across Europe and at all levels to pay sufficient attention to the voices of young people who had direct experiences of inequalities. Thus, Immy Kaur, the dynamic young co-founder of the social innovation, The Impact Hub, Birmingham, was invited to chair the main plenary sessions and to close the conference. Young people from some of the socially innovative practices which were the subject of detailed Case Studies participated as members of Plenary Panels and as leaders of several of the social innovation workshops.

The programme was built around four plenary Panel sessions, each devoted to one of the project's key themes. The Panel sessions were introduced by the leader of the relevant Work Package and then opened out to Panel members and the audience (both inside the Conference centre and outside via social media). Panel leaders were asked to devise a set of three questions which they felt would both stimulate debate and elicit further feedback from stakeholders. In addition, partners ran a set of six parallel interactive workshops to share key aspects of the potentially innovative social practices uncovered during the project. Each workshop was based around one of the social innovations included in the set of 21 detailed Case Studies undertaken by partners during the action research phase of the project.

The keynote speaker for the Conference was Indy Johar, renowned internationally as a leading thinker, innovator and founder of multiple social ventures but the final words at the conference were given to the young people who had participated in testing the feasibility of transferring socially innovative practices from one country and context to another.

## **1.3 Additional Conference events**

Two optional conference events took place on the day before the main conference sessions:

- i. A site visit/study tour was arranged by Aston University to one of the two neighbourhoods selected for the Fieldwork phases of the project, Lozells and East

Handsworth. The guide for the visit was Aftab Rahman, the founder of Legacy WM, an innovative social enterprise aimed at bridging the divide between an area perceived as an deprived inner city area with multiple problems and the wider city and region through a focus on its heritage and its significance in the history of Birmingham.

- ii. Birmingham City Council arranged a Welcome Reception for conference delegates at the Impact Hub, Birmingham. This was to showcase a recently launched example of social innovation by and for young people. The project is based in a refurbished factory in the heart of the oldest industrial area of the city. It also provided an opportunity for City Council officials and the politician who is the Council's Youth Champion to meet delegates and learn more about the project's findings. The delegates also had the opportunity for a tour of the site and to find out more about this socially innovative enterprise.

A Conference dinner took place on the evening of 3 December during which Beatfrees showcased examples of the kind of work they undertake with young people to develop their social competences and build their self-esteem. This social enterprise is one of the socially innovative practices whose approach and methods of working were transferred to Krakow and to Venice as part of the piloting phase. The welcome reception and conference dinner provided additional opportunities to raise awareness of young people and their potential to make a difference.

## **2. Conference proceedings**

### **2.1 Welcome and overview of CITISPYCE and the Final Conference**

Prof. Dr Helen Higson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Aston University, the Coordinator of CITISPYCE welcomed the delegates and then introduced Dr Yuri Borgmann-Prebil, who is CITISPYCE's project officer from the European Commission, (DG Research & Innovation B6 – Reflexive Society). He congratulated the project partners on their success in securing the support for the Commission for the project. He welcomed the links between researchers and policy-makers within the partnership and emphasised the importance of relating the findings of their research to the development of policy at EU, national and local levels. He went on to highlight the opportunities for further related research under Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016/17 Europe in a Changing World under Inclusive, Innovative and Reflexive Societies.

Helen Higson then set out the background to the CITISPYCE project: the context in which it was developed; its key aims and objectives; its research activities and some of its key findings. She stressed two overarching points in particular:

- i. The need to take advantage of the experiences, stories and reflections of young people in tackling the many and varied social inequalities confronting young people today.
- ii. The need to ensure that the recommendations emerging from this project can be adopted by policy makers and practitioners. But it is vital that we do not just “rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic”, or reproduce old ways of working. We have to go further.

She emphasised that the Final Conference provided an opportunity to share our preliminary conclusions on how innovative strategies developed for and by young people across Europe might assist policy-makers to tackle the challenge of growing and changing social inequalities. She went on, however, to remind delegates that their views on these findings would be taken into account in the shaping of the final CITISPYCE recommendations. She urged them to consider how institutions and their actors would need to change if they are to address the **causes** and not only the manifestations of young people’s inequalities.

## **2.2 Methodological approach**

Prof. Dr Olga Jubany of the University of Barcelona (the partner responsible for the Scientific Supervision for the project) explained the Consortium’s research approach and its significance in the context of the multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral CITISPYCE partnership. She pointed out that, whilst several methods have been applied, the framework of analysis has been qualitative with a strong reliance on ethnographic methods, namely as in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus groups. Secondary quantitative data has also been used prior to the fieldwork to frame the state of the art in each city. She emphasised that due to the methodological strategy set out at the beginning of CITISPYCE, the partners were able to design and assess the methods for data collection and data analysis in a trans-national research project by integrating both qualitative and quantitative data from a triangulated and complementary approach.

As an action-research project, CITISPYCE has also focused on the assessment of Socially Innovative Practices (SIPs) aimed to tackle social inequalities. This has implied the design of other methodological approaches to first identify and gather SIPs, implement and transfer some of them in pilot actions, and finally to analyse their impact and policy implications. This has posed several challenges in terms of interdisciplinary work, i.e. how to translate the needs and concerns of young

people identified during the fieldwork into policy recommendations, considering the local policy contexts, gaps and failures. Yet, it has been this unusual methodological approach what has enabled the partners to capture young people's voices from the ground and formulate recommendations at the policy level.

## 2.3 Panel Sessions Day 1

### 2.3.1 Panel 1: Inequalities faced by young people – the situation across Europe: Key causes and prospects for potentially innovative strategies

Chair: Immy Kaur

Initial presentation by: Prof. Mikael Stigendal, Malmo University

Panel commentators: Prof Phil Mizen, Head of Sociology Subject Group, Aston University, Tanya Basarab, EU – CoE Youth Partnership

Mikael Stigendal set out the approach which had been taken to gain fresh insights into young people's inequalities. He briefly addressed what we understand by 'inequality'. It could be described as a difference which is too great, limiting life possibilities of the disadvantaged; the excluded; the have-nots, do-nots and/or feel-nots. He went on to stress the importance of distinguishing between symptoms and causes of inequality and gave examples causes: financialised economies; neoliberalisation; pathological European interdependencies; isolation and neglect of neighbourhoods; inclusion agenda of youth policies.

He went on to consider the prospects for potentially innovative strategies to combat inequalities by highlighting aspects of social practices that tackle **causes** of inequality and in so doing could be innovative – potential-oriented approaches; changing views on what is knowledge; educating 'critical' citizens; quality of work incl. discretionary learning; reintegrating neighbourhoods; collective empowerment.

**Phil Mizen** responded with examples from his own research that chimed with the structural issues Mikael had set out. He emphasised the relational aspect of inequalities. It is very important to understand that some are advantaged in relation to others who are less so. Also, the operationalisation of social exclusion is being related to the characteristics of the individual. The social order is often fixed with the notion of TNA (there are no alternatives) and he suggested, that, as far as the issue of poor access to quality jobs was concerned, some young people had already internalised the discourse of precarious work and had come to accept and even desire zero-hour or short term contracts.

**Tanya Basarab** commented that Mikael's observations about neo-liberal marketization and financialisation had been with us for a long time and were very familiar. She acknowledged that the panellists had offered some nuanced accounts of how these operate in specific settings but queried where else could researchers and people concerned with social action place their energies in order to really help address inequalities as they affect young people in new ways? She pointed out that the Council of Europe is very concerned with the increasing marketization of Education and she stressed the importance of recognising formal and informal education initiatives. Power relationships are a key issue among young people: how young people perceive hierarchies, power and how they relate to them. She also felt that it was time we stopped talking about young people as the future and that the slogan of young people should be: "We are the present!!"

The Chair then opened up the discussion to the audience. For Panels I, II and III, the audience discussions were structured around three questions which each of the Panel Leaders had prepared for their session. All delegates were provided with an electronic voting device and at the end of comments on each question, they were invited to vote. Results were then displayed on the main screen. This proved to be very effective in focusing the discussions and encouraging those reluctant to express their views openly to give an opinion by using their electronic vote. The questions were also relayed to those engaging with the debates via social media and live streaming. They were able to feed in their votes via twitter.

The first audience discussion focused on the three questions below, each of which was then put to a vote to those present in the conference hall and to those engaging via social media and live streaming.

*Q. 1: Is it possible to succeed in tackling the causes of inequality?*

Some argued that it is not possible because they relate to structural issues which are difficult to change. Also there is need for more funding to combat inequalities...

Vote: 49 yes, 10 no, 5 don't know

*Q. 2: Should practices for young people favour their getting a job more than their becoming active and critically minded citizens?*

Strong feeling that, if we focus solely on jobs, we are only looking at one side and we are ignoring other important aspects. Also, it is not just about getting a job, but what kind of job? (low quality, precarious...) Ideally, young people should be able to choose their jobs and this should make them more critically minded (rather than alienate them).

Local policy-makers are ‘a bit fed-up’ with so-called innovative youth policies because they change all the time and there is no scope or time for implementing them in depth.

Vote: 10 yes, 29 no, 13 don’t know

Q. 3: *Should researchers be involved in practices to tackle causes of inequality?*

Vote: 44 yes, 5 no, 2 don’t know

### **2.3.2 Panel II: Perspectives at city and neighbourhood levels: young people caught between causes and symptoms of inequalities**

Chair: Immy Kaur

Lead presenter: Prof. Dr Simon Güntner, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

Panel members: Mashuq Ally, Head of Equalities & Social Cohesion, Birmingham City Council

Petra Borovicková, Amaro Records, Brno

**Simon Guentner** began by addressing how inequalities play out at the city and neighbourhood (meso) level. His presentation drew from analysis undertaken at the levels of neighbourhood (NH) and social services and sought to address the question: What does the existing social infrastructure do for young people? Three key concepts relating to inequalities had emerged from the fieldwork in the neighbourhoods:

1. Distance: Neighbourhoods are a) far away from centre b) distanced from other people
2. Neglect: resources are being withdrawn from places.
3. Withdrawal of trust: sense that in many places it had been better before.

It was important to move from ‘othering’ (them) disadvantaged neighbourhoods to ‘communing’ (us) with them. He gave examples:

From distance to bridging by getting closer to young people closer and really listening to them.

- From neglect to attention by paying attention to individual lifeworlds and interests of young people through listening and reclaiming space
- From withdrawal of trust to rebuilding trust by recognising individual strengths through listening and responding in educational and training opportunities offered

Addressing these issues could be innovative but he observed that many social/youth workers had said, “we don’t need new projects... we just need to go back to the basics and listen to people”...

and posed the question: “Is it actually innovative to listen or rather how come it is innovative to listen these days?”

**Mashuq Ally** based his comments on Birmingham: the youngest city in Europe in terms of its proportion of young people. He suggested that the youthfulness of the city was in part related to the histories of migration that make the city one of the most superdiverse in Europe too. It is also a highly segregated city as a result of migration patterns which have resulted in certain parts such as the inner city being more concentrated with ethnic minorities, while the outer city has more white communities, who are also affected by deprivation and in some cases two generations of worklessness. In relation to these facts he suggested that policymakers have tended to concentrate on social inclusion in the inner city which has resulted in inter-community resentment and violence based on a sense of entitlement to public resources.

Mashuq also questioned policymakers’ concept of ‘neighbourhood’, suggesting it was outdated. He proposed that young people do not think of neighbourhoods in a bounded way; they work in one, shop in another, visit the faith community in another. So they see neighbourhoods in a different way from policy makers.

New technology makes yet more differences between different ethnic and age groups. Urban planners do not take into account young people’s voices and their new thinking (e.g. why are we developing taller buildings in Birmingham instead of making more roads for bikes for young people?) In this thinking, new technologies are important. He went on to highlight the issue of the high level of exclusion in some schools because ‘we (policy-makers) don’t take into account that they often get bored, because their mindsets clash with the traditional forms of education’. In the delivery of services, we are not taking into account the mindsets of young people or the use of (new) technologies.

His final comment picked up on the Panel I discussion. ‘We manage inequalities, but we don’t eliminate them because we are not changing structural issues’.



**Petra Borovicková** spoke about the exclusion of young Roma as a particular concern in Brno. She explained the aims of the Amaro Records project and how it had been inspired by the example of Educational Demos from Barcelona. She highlighted the pluses and minuses of the involvement of public

institutions. Masaryk University was seen as a key facilitator of this pilot project whereas the municipality, in spite of good intentions, was unable to move swiftly enough to deliver the promised workspace within the time frame originally planned; it is now intended to launch the project in February or March 2016.

The Chair then opened the discussion to the audience. As before, this was structured around three questions (see below) which were then voted on:

*Q 1. Compared to 10 years ago has the situation for young people in your city improved?*

Some felt that, although the situation of young people has worsened, young people have become more empowered and engaged with civic society; they appear to have developed resilience strategies (communing, new forms of solidarity, cooperation)

Others questioned what we mean by ‘improvement’. Is it more than issues of employment e.g. senses of belonging, racism...etc

Vote: Yes 8: No 27: Don’t know 16

*Q 2. Have youth employment policies been the main focus of youth policies in your city?*

In the climate of neoliberalism, there is the danger of fragmenting even more policies and just focusing on one issue, i.e. employment

In Greece, as in other countries, it has proved to be important to bear in mind the local context.

From the European perspective, there is without doubt a greater focus on youth employment policies. The question is why??

Vote: Yes 20: No 11; Don’t know 23

*Q 3: Do you think young people in your city can influence youth policies?*

The majority thought that young people have no real power to influence public policies.

Vote: Yes 8: No 32: Don’t know 12

## **2.4 Parallel workshops**

Following the first two plenary Panels, five parallel interactive workshops took place. These were themed around Case Studies of five socially innovative practices which had been identified during the course of the project and dealt with different aspects of tackling young people’s inequalities:

1. Empowering young people (Beatfreeks' engagement approach to young people, Birmingham) - How can young people be empowered as actors in dealing with their inequalities? Leaders: *Anisa Haghadi, Amerah Saleh, Beatfreeks, Birmingham & Maria Pothoulaki, KMOP, Athens*

This session took the form of an interactive workshop to demonstrate different arts-based methods can help young people express themselves and gain confidence
2. Involving young people in policy-making (Knowledge Alliances, Malmo) - a new approach to collaborative policy-making?

Leaders: *Jonas Alwall, Martin Grander, Malmo University and Pia Hellberg-Lannerheim, Malmo City*

This session explored how young people can be drawn into policy-making in cities
3. Importance of physical and virtual spaces to young people ( The Loft, Birmingham and The Shelter of Ideas, Athens)

Leaders: *Ajmal Hussain, Aston University and Gemma Commane, Birmingham City University*

This session involved a sharing of experiences of what space means to young people in cities and how they inhabit it.
4. Youth employment policies (Improvement of employment prospects among Roma youth, Brno/Sofia) Are they fit for purpose?

Leaders: *Tomas Sirovatka, Jana Valkova, Masaryk University, Brno*

This session examined how current approaches to youth employment might be improved.
5. Bridging gaps (Moin, Moin, innovative approach to integrating refugees, Hamburg) - How can services for young people become truly inclusive?

Leaders: *Ayse Ates, Hamburg North Council & Anne-Marie Gehrke, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences*

This session was a reflection on a highly relevant project instigated by a young Syrian refugee who saw a need for a new approach to enabling refugees to which addresses a real world problem.

## 2.5 Keynote address: Indy Johar, Senior Innovate Associate, The Young Foundation & Co-Founder of 00 & Dark Matter Laboratories

In his address – **The massive challenge of change** - Indy Johar set out to challenge current approaches to social policy-making in a rapidly changing world. He urged us to re-examine our understanding of how such changes happen. “Our assumptions of how meaningful and enduring change comes about are at a crossroads. We're in a different world.” The scale of the challenges we face means that they cannot be tackled in isolation by different sectors working separately. He maintained that we are at the end of Newtonian Enlightenment and are moving from ‘silos’ to systems. We have been locked into a very particular view of cause and effect and that it was time to move beyond the illusion of the public and private divide.

We are increasingly understanding that change has to happen through collective collaborations of interventions across a system. Today, most social issues are interconnected with one another and tackling them will be by co-designing, co-funding, co-delivering and co- evaluating innovative solutions.



He illustrated his argument with examples of collaborative initiatives which had achieved a positive outcome not only for the original problem but also for other problems not necessarily directly related. E.g Incredible Edible in Todmorden, Yorkshire where the growing of vegetables in public spaces round the village for sharing had not only raised awareness of environmental issues but helped decrease crime and increased social cohesion.

Indy Johar’s final message to the audience was ‘This is the future where we move from the ‘I’ to the ‘we’.

## 2.6 Panel Sessions Day 2

### 2.6.1 Panel III: Individual perspectives: young people's responses to the impact of social policies on their lived experiences of inequalities

Chair: Immy Kaur

Lead Presenter: Henk Spies – founder of Plus Confidence, Rotterdam/Utrecht

Maria Pothoulaki – Researcher, KMOP, Athens

Lionel Douglas – Visual artist, Rotterdam

Henk Spies summarised key messages in relation to young people's individual responses to social inequalities. He placed a focus on the logic of interventions in relation to social policies that target individuals or groups of young people, and on the question of how these interventions can be strengthened to generate more impact. He suggested that a key finding from our evaluation of the Case Studies we conducted was that internal factors, most notably a strong central idea, were the most important reason for success for Socially Innovative Practices. These central ideas can be adapted to different local contexts e.g. the CITISPYCE pilots. He also suggested that process and content often merge.

Within these central ideas there was a focus on a basic issue: what do policies, interventions or practices assume on the part of young people? To what extent is there a match between views of young people embedded in policies/interventions/practices and self-conceptions of young people? How can what is offered be better tailored to what is *required* to fulfil needs or to realise potentials of young people? How can this match be improved to strengthen the logic of interventions?

In trying to relate these to social policy responses he contrasted them with elements for building resilience that emerged from fieldwork (WP3 and WP4), i.e. building trust, communing and bridging.

He further went on to categorise policy reactions based on the different mixes of conceptualisations of problems and solutions. Amongst them, he highlighted the problem of unused potentials (resilience, creativity, talents) of young people (Social Innovation Discourse) that requires co-creation and entrepreneurship. This needs the conceptualisation of young people as innovators (lacking room and means to develop and flourish). He was also concerned that conceptions of young people in policies and self-conceptions of young people often do not match. Because of mismatching in design and targeting, and consequently inconsistency in the logic of intervention, policies are part of the problem as well as part of the solution, excluding as well as including.

Henk then presented a typology as an analytical framework to map situations of young people vis-a-vis social inclusion and exclusion, to map different discourses, associated approaches and their implicit views of people, and to map self-conceptions of young people. In summarising he suggested that better matching of (policy) approaches to abilities and ambitions of young people can strengthen the logic and the impact of interventions and diminish unintended adverse effects. The panellists then discussed the significance of social policies and whether building trust, ‘communing’ and bridging social and physical distances were important elements for building the resilience of young people.

In relation to social innovation by young people and for young people, the panel discussed whether social innovations *by* young people could be expected mostly from more resilient, creative, entrepreneurial young people, while concentrations of social inequalities might be more pressing among the socially excluded.

The Chair opened up the debate around 3 more questions.

*Q.1: Does stimulating social innovation for and by more resilient (better resourced, educated and more creative) young people also help to improve the situation for young people with fewer personal and social resources?*

Examples of the kinds of support young people needed in order to develop their own initiatives were considered but more concerns and questions were raised including:

The danger of clustering young people as marginalised or as competent. What logic are we using to affirm that one is competent and one is not competent? Is the one who has a business a competent one? Or is it the one who joins a football club, or the one who sells drugs because s/he doesn’t have anything else to do? There is a big risk of reproducing the neoliberal and paternalistic scheme which says who the competent or the marginalised are, according to pre-set schemes which reinforce the values and needs of capitalism.

There is a need, however, for a way of differentiating between those who have more skills and those who have less, between those who are resilient and those who are not. But on the basis of what?

Is there a “trickle down” effect of engagement and empowerment?

How can innovative approaches for young people stimulate empowerment and responsibility rather than conformity and obedience?

Vote: Yes 19: No 16: Don’t Know 11.

*Q. 2: For social innovation, are strong central ideas more important than who is advocating and implementing them?*

When designing and implementing projects, we need to take into account the different needs of young people and the fact that some may be (more or less) resilient, (more or less) competent, etc.

Vote: yes 11: No 21: Don't Know 12

*Q. 3: Are services in your city diverse enough to cater for the different needs and potentials of young people?*

Vote: yes 4: no: 36: don't know: 4

### **2.6.2 Panel IV: Young people have the last word: Their views on what policy-makers and practitioners could do to improve support to young people to combat their inequalities**

Chair: Immy Kaur

Panel members: Yinka Danmole ( The Loft Birmingham), Irma Pinocchio (Venice pilot project based on Beatfrecks), Ioannis Sideris & Konstantinos Tarasis (Athens, pilot project based on The Loft), Lionel Douglas (ToonYork, Rotterdam)

This session was shorter than had been planned because of the overrunning of the previous one. Each panellist, therefore, was invited to speak and to take questions/ comments from the audience in turn. They described their projects and motivations, including the rationale behind them as well the activities they carried out and the challenges they faced. A key issue for all of the speakers was the importance of having access to, and a sense of ownership of, physical spaces in which to congregate and connect with other young people. Yinka from the Loft stressed how 'ownership' of spaces is a key theme for empowering young people. Yet such spaces were becoming much harder to find (cuts in public budgets leading to closure of community centres or the neglect of public spaces). Ioannis and Konstantinos from Athens gave an example from their own experiences of the difficulties of convincing policy-makers of the importance of such spaces to young people. Yinka highlighted the value of use of a space by creatives in the heart of the city "We were the only 'shop' in the whole city centre that didn't sell anything." The commercial landlord of the space was prepared to trust Yinka, but in Athens public sector policy-makers were far more reluctant to entrust space to the management of young people. This underlines a major challenge which faces young social innovators and that is the attitudes of those who control access to spaces and other

resources which they might need. Policy-makers need to be open to new ways of doing things and to show that they are willing to respect and trust young people who are seeking to do something different to overcome some of the challenges facing them.

Maria Pothoulaki from Athens made the point that a lot of young people do not believe in themselves, and that it is up to us (policy-makers, influencers, practitioners) to create confidence in them together. Yinka spoke of his experience in school of not being chosen for a special scheme to encourage young entrepreneurs because his teacher felt his academic achievements were not of the required standard. This clearly knocked him back, but later on the memory served to motivate him to prove his teachers wrong. Lionel Douglas, a visual artist from Rotterdam, told of his struggle to overcome his self-doubt and how valuable Citispyce had been for him to connect with young people with similar aspirations in other cities in Europe. It had given him self-belief and the confidence to start mentoring students in his home city to assist their transition from studying into work. The speakers from Venice and Athens also valued the support they received from the founders of the original projects and felt it was important for this kind of networking to be developed. They made it clear that it is possible to transfer an initiative/project from one context/country to another provided that the approach and process are appropriate to tackling a similar problem in your own city/neighbourhood and that contacts with the original project can be maintained. Turning a pilot into a viable project in the longer term, however, also requires ongoing financial support and this is hard to find, particularly for small-scale initiatives developed and run by young people.

It was also clear that socially innovative practices by young people that demonstrate that they have the potential to make a difference are small-scale and, if they are to have a wider impact on young people's inequalities, they need the co-operation/collaboration of larger organisations. But this is difficult to achieve without mutual trust.

## **2.7 Closing remarks from the Chair of the Plenary sessions**

The Chair Immy Kaur congratulated the young panellists on their initiatives and hoped that policy-makers in the room would take note of what they had said. She then went on to speak about Impact Hub Birmingham of which she is the co-founder. It is a social innovation in its own right. It is designed to facilitate the generation of new ways of thinking and doing things through the interaction of a wide range of young people with different knowledge and skills who use the space. She referred to Indy Johar's speech in which he highlighted the need for new behaviours and new

forms of organisation and urged policy-makers and practitioners to be open to new ways of thinking and doing.

The Conference was closed by Prof. Helen Higson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Aston University who thanked the Chair, Immy Kaur, the young people and everyone who had contributed to the discussions either as a panellist or as a delegate.



CITISPYCE partners and participants from the 10 cities involved in the project

## Annex 1: Final Conference Flyer and Programme

# Young People, Inequalities and Social Innovation: Lessons for Policy and Practice



## CITISPYCE FINAL CONFERENCE

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

Aston Conference Centre, Aston University,  
Birmingham, UK

This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Research Programme.



## Young People, Inequalities and Social Innovation: Lessons for Policy and Practice

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**This conference will present findings from the EU FP7 funded research project, CITISPYCE, into social innovation of and for young people against inequalities in Europe post-2008 and will set out recommendations for future policies and practice.** It will provide opportunities for debate and reflection between academics, policy-makers, practitioners and young people themselves on:

- the changing nature of inequalities facing young people across Europe today
- potentially innovative approaches and practices to overcome these inequalities
- engaging young people more effectively in policy-making processes

### Background to the Conference

The CITISPYCE partnership (seven universities, three major cities and three NGOs across 10 countries) has been working for 3 years on this research project funded by the European Commission under the FP7 Research and Development Programme.

A key objective has been to explore the changing nature of inequalities facing young people in ten cities across ten countries in Europe following the global economic crisis. A second has been to identify potentially innovative social practices of and for young people to combat them. These include practices to improve access to the labour market, to develop social competences and resilience, to reduce negative behaviours and to foster more active participation in civil society.

Amongst our findings, we have identified several forms of inequality which are not necessarily being addressed by current policies and which may, in fact, be a consequence of some of these policies. At the same time, we have found evidence of a range of innovative coping strategies/practices developed by and for young people which have the potential to combat these and other inequalities.

### Why Attend?

- ✓ Gain fresh insights into the changing nature of inequalities faced by young people across Europe today
- ✓ Find out about a range of innovative social practices by and for young people to overcome barriers to their inclusion
- ✓ Help shape recommendations to EU, national and local governments to develop new policy approaches and improve support for innovative social practices by and for young people

### ✓ Who should attend?

- Policy-makers re: youth, inclusion, participation
- Local Authorities
- Youth Organisations
- Trade Unions
- Social Innovation Centres
- Voluntary Organisations
- Employment and Social Inclusion
- Academics
- PhD Candidates
- Youth workers
- Social Partners

### How to register

Entry to the Conference is **FREE** but you will need to book your place in advance. Simply click on the link below to go to our registration page on Eventbrite. Once you have completed the booking form, you will receive confirmation by email and instructions on how to print your ticket.

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/young-people-inequalities-social-innovation-citispyce-final-conference-tickets-18935242821>

For more information call: Citispyce on +44 (0)121 204 3577 or email: [citispyce@aston.ac.uk](mailto:citispyce@aston.ac.uk)

## CITISPYCE FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME (subject to confirmation)

WEDNESDAY 2 <sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 2015	
14.30 onwards	Delegates Conference and/ or Hotel Registration
15.00 - 17.30	<b>Optional study/site visits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of Urban Spaces used for networking by young people 1) The Loft, 2) Library of Birmingham, 3) Urban Coffee Company</li> <li>Guided walking tour of Lozells/East Handsworth (Citispyce fieldwork neighbourhood)</li> </ul>
19.15	Coaches depart from Aston Triangle for the welcome reception at Impact Hub
19.30 – 21.00	<b>Welcome Reception</b> hosted by Birmingham City Council & chance to meet young social innovators /entrepreneurs – Impact Hub, Walker Building, 58 Oxford Street, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 5NR
THURSDAY 3 <sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 2015	
09.15	Conference Registration & Morning Refreshments
10.00	<b>Welcome &amp; Overview of CITISPYCE project:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key findings &amp; challenges for researchers &amp; policy-makers (Professor Helen Higson, Aston University)</li> <li>Methodological Approach (Professor Olga Jubany, University of Barcelona)</li> </ul>
10.45 – 11.45	<b>Panel debate I</b> Inequalities faced by young people – the situation across Europe: Key causes and prospects for potentially innovative solutions Presentation by Prof. Mikael Stigendal (Malmo University) followed by discussion with Prof. Phillip Mizen (Aston University)
11.45 – 12 noon	<b>Morning Coffee Break</b> Refreshments & chance to meet and talk to some of the young people involved in the project
12.00 -13.00	<b>Panel debate II</b> Perspectives at city & neighbourhood levels: young people caught between symptoms and causes of inequalities Led by Prof. Dr. Simon Guentner (Hamburg University of Applied Sciences). Panel includes Mashuq Ally, Head of Equalities & Social Cohesion, Birmingham City Council
13.00 – 14.00	<b>Networking Lunch</b>
14.00 – 15.00	<b>Parallel Interactive Workshop Sessions</b> involving young people, policy-makers and practitioners e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can young people be empowered as actors in dealing with their inequalities?</li> <li>Knowledge Alliances – new approaches to collaborative policy-making?</li> <li>Physical and virtual spaces – why are they important to young people?</li> <li>Youth employment policies – are they fit for purpose?</li> <li>Bridging gaps - How can services for young people become truly inclusive?</li> </ul>
15.00 – 15.15	<b>Afternoon Coffee Break</b>
15.15 – 16.00	<b>Feedback</b> from the Workshop sessions
16.00 – 16.45	<b>Keynote: Indy Johar</b> , Senior Innovation Associate, The Young Foundation & Co-Founder of 00 & Dark Matter Laboratories: Changing the paradigms – releasing the potential of young people as social innovators
19.30	<b>Conference Dinner – Aston Conference Centre</b>
FRIDAY 4 <sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2015	
09.00	Morning refreshments
09.30 – 10.15	<b>Panel debate III:</b> Individual perspectives: young people’s responses to the impact of social policies on their lived experiences of inequalities Led by Henk Spies, CEO Plus Confidence, Netherlands
10.15 – 10.45	<b>Panel debate IV:</b> Young people have the last word: Their views on what policy-makers and practitioners could do to improve support to young people to combat their inequalities
10.45 – 11.30	<b>Conclusions &amp; way forward – Immy Kaur</b> , Co-founder of Impact Hub, Birmingham
11.30	<b>CLOSE</b>

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