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

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Strategic Recommendations

Aston University and Masaryk University

On behalf of the CITISPYCE Consortium

1. Introduction

In the course of the CITISPYCE project (2013 – 2015) we have mapped a wide range of causes and manifestations of inequality in cities across Europe. We have also found, via interviewing policy makers, practitioners and young people, evidence of innovative social practices initiated by young people themselves, as well as by institutions and third sector organisations. Finally, by analysing the data through the lenses of different disciplines within the consortium, we have begun identifying aspects of social innovations which have the potential to address not only symptoms but the underlying causes of inequality.

Our initial reflections have been drawn from all phases of the project and have been assessed through feedback and interaction in workshops and conferences. The Final Conference in December 2015 gave us a further opportunity to share our ongoing work with policy-makers, practitioners and young people. This has helped to refine our thinking on the role that social innovations developed by and for young people could play in “assisting policy-makers to tackle the challenge of growing and changing social inequalities.” Whilst we acknowledge the intrinsic complexity of these inequalities, we consider that our findings, even though based mostly on small-scale local practices, offer valuable learning points for policymakers at all levels.

Above everything else, we stress the importance of changing the prevailing discourses around policies relating to young people if real progress is to be made in mitigating social inequalities experienced by young people across Europe. Our findings call for significant changes in the way

policy-makers and practitioners regard young people. It is vital that we take advantage of the experiences, stories and reflections of young people to help shape future policies to combat their inequalities. This implies a shift in the paradigm that frames our responses to disadvantaged young people. We must move away from treating young people as a *problem* to one which acknowledges and harnesses young people's *potentials*, and away from seeing them as a category to be worked *on* towards one that can be worked *with*. This in turn should force us to look again at the underlying philosophies and mechanisms in policy making over the past few decades.

The change of paradigm, approach and philosophy represents a systemic change which will be hard to achieve. Such a change presupposes a change in mind-sets and ways of working of policy-makers at all levels, based on more appropriate knowledge and understanding of the causes of inequalities and social exclusion of disadvantaged young people. Obtaining this knowledge requires listening to young people and giving them a voice and participation in policy making. This aspect is included in several ways in the following set of recommendations because it is so central to this issue.

The other way, in which a paradigmatic change may happen is through the incremental implementation of socially innovative practices and their scaling up, leading to the adoption of their principles in mainstream policies. In this way the new approaches may become more widespread practice. Moreover, the young people's feedback on such policies and their positive impacts on young people and more general social benefits can work in favour of these practices. Both mechanisms of gradual and incremental changes can, over time, lead to the paradigmatic change (Streeck and Thelen, 2005) or third order change (Hall 1993) required.

We set out below some of the key issues emerging from our research that need to be addressed by policy-makers at all levels in order to improve their capacity to combat social inequalities as they currently manifest themselves in cities across Europe. In particular, they highlight significant barriers to their ability to harness the potential of socially innovative practices of and for young people. These issues are followed firstly by recommendations relating to institutional mind-sets and ways of working which frame their approach to young people and underpin many existing policies and programmes. Secondly, we consider how social innovations might assist policy-makers to tackle specific dimensions of inequality where societal and individual causes

intersect. Thirdly, we make recommendations regarding funding mechanisms and the provision of other resources to facilitate, upscale and sustain social innovations by and for young people.

2. Key issues which need to be addressed

2.1 Institutional mindsets which fail to recognise and tap into young people's potentials, knowledge and lived experiences:

There is a strong paternalistic approach to policy-making at all levels, based on a view of young people as a problem to be solved. Young people themselves are seldom directly involved in policy making or in co-determination of the measures at all. Thus, these policies do not sufficiently take into account the ambitions and abilities of young people themselves, hence they often accomplish the opposite of what is intended. This paternalistic attitude fosters dependency and learned helplessness; going against people's own ambitions fosters resistance or exit. Young people often lose motivation, lacking trust in public administrative institutions and front-line workers, and become disengaged, and self-excluded.

Briefly, a **change in paradigm** is needed in order to suppress the principles of conditionality and enforcement. Policy-makers need to engage more directly and openly with young people in order to recognise their potential, empower them, engage them, and help them with their self-development. It is important to build together with them their general and social skills, their links with community, thus involving them much more in designing the policies addressed to them.

2.2 Institutional mind sets and ways of working which limit scope for change:

Our findings have revealed three significant barriers to changing the mind-sets of policy-makers: complex and often rigid bureaucratic processes; departmental territoriality (silos) which limits the potential for cross-fertilisation of ideas, knowledge and sharing of resources; and a risk averse culture. We found examples of these at all levels of governance and in all the countries in which we conducted our research. This restricts the possibilities for co-opting external change-makers such as young social innovators and youth-led social enterprises. It will require a systemic change which will not be easy to achieve. Such a change presupposes a change in

mind-sets of the policymakers, amongst others, based on more appropriate knowledge and understanding of the causes of inequalities and social exclusion in deprived neighbourhoods.

2.3 The current framing of public policies which may contribute to inequalities:

The language in which policy-makers speak and in which documents are written may perpetuate inequalities as it may restrict young people's ability to access information or to engage in dialogue with those in authority. Traditional area-based approaches to regeneration, and interventions specific to certain neighbourhoods, can lead to resentment and division based on a sense of entitlement to public resources. Different cultural points of view between policy-makers and young people over the priorities for their city e.g. over the planning and use of space can reinforce the distance that young people feel from the mainstream. For these young people, the poor quality and provision of public infrastructure in their neighbourhoods is yet another sign of their inequalities as it appears that the public authorities do not see them as important. It adds to their frustration and, combined with increasing difficulties in finding guidance and support, instils a growing sense of isolation and powerlessness. This further exacerbates the feeling of distancing and disconnect and, in turn, contributes to a break down in trust between themselves and those in authority. Some of the social innovations we have uncovered can reconnect and facilitate dialogue between young people and policy-makers because they are able to win the trust of both.

2.4 Policy responses to austerity which have restricted the scope of youth policies and reduced support services for young people:

A major impact of the crisis on young people has been the narrowing down of the focus of policies to those which deal with what is perceived to be the main problem: unemployment. Such policies provide support which is conditional, accompanied by disciplining requirements, and forces them towards jobs of poor quality or workfare schemes. Combined with cuts in funding for services and welfare benefits, this restricted view of the needs of young people means that many of them in deprived neighbourhoods of European cities can no longer access measures which could offer the kind of wrap-around provision needed. Even where youth services are still available, they appear to concentrate on 'employment at any price' and

preventing anti-social behaviour. Across the board, there is a striking lack of coherent frameworks. Policy approaches to social inclusion of young people (outside school) seem piecemeal at best, based on projects and successive waves of experimental policy. One policy fashion replaces another, jeopardising previous results. These initiatives seem to be driven more by the imperative of having to make budget savings rather than developing 'new' responses to young people's needs. Worryingly, the case studies from the ten cities in our research are full of stories of disinvestment.

2.5 Policy approaches to education and training which contribute to young people's inequalities:

There are serious structural inequalities in educational provision across the EU, but they are particularly pronounced in post-communist and Southern European countries. Young people in deprived neighbourhoods, especially but not exclusively from minority ethnic or migrant backgrounds, are frequently channelled into low-level formal education pathways which are perceived to be of poor quality and stigmatising. Little is done to raise such young people's aspirations or to help them realise their potential. There is also a lack of acknowledgement by official authorities of the value of informal education as a means of acquiring essential skills and social competences (self-belief, confidence, teamwork etc) to cope with the challenges of adulthood. A number of the social innovations analysed in our sample seek to fill this gap in provision but they lack resources for wider coverage and/or organisational and promotional help from the authorities.

2.6 Failure to recognise and respect the needs of young people which leads to distance, distrust and disillusion

We have identified social innovations that address dimensions of social exclusion which are largely neglected in mainstream policies. The practices are unique in that they address neighbourhood, individual, spatial and group dimensions, often in a combination with political/civic and social dimensions.

Self-confidence, creativity, empowerment, sociability, trust and engagement are strongly supported through these innovative approaches. The other related characteristic is a highly

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

Finally, there is a collective empowerment principle applied. This means that young people are empowered to deal collectively with the problems of inequalities. This is an important pre-condition for effective social inclusion in the case of young people who are seeking constructive alternative solutions to those based on the 'standard pathways' offered by mainstream policies or, in the case of young people who are living from day to day, without any ambition to change their social exclusion.

3. Strategic Recommendations

3.1 Institutional approaches to policy-making affecting young people and their life chances

This is a major task at EU, national and local levels and is essential if we are to achieve the paradigm shift in institutional responses to dealing with young people's inequalities that is needed.

3.1.1 Change institutional attitudes towards 'young people'

Disadvantaged young people are perceived as 'not belonging' to society and are regarded by policy-makers as a 'problem' to be solved. It is vital that policy-makers change from seeing 'young people equalling 'problem' to 'young people having potentials that could be actualised.'

We recommend:

- Listening to the voices of young people themselves, by engaging more directly and openly with disadvantaged young people in order to recognise their potential, empowering them, engaging them, and helping them with their self-development
- Being less directive and resisting the temptation to micro-manage the dialogue and any initiatives which may emerge
- Co-opting or working in partnership with individuals and social enterprises which have established trust with young people and can act as **connectors/bridge**

builders between them and policy-makers

- Using the communication, peer-to peer learning and mentoring skills of such organisations to establish open dialogue, facilitating the active participation of disadvantaged young people in discussions about their peer group
- Building local and national Knowledge Alliances where all parties meet on equal terms.

3.1.2 Change ways of working within institutions

Complex and often rigid bureaucratic processes act as barriers to the involvement of individual social entrepreneurs and newly established or small-scale NGOs in design and delivery of programmes to assist young people. It is important to simplify processes.

We recommend:

- Introducing more flexible, light touch regulatory mechanisms for small-scale funding programmes and for support to new and/or micro-organisations;
- Subsidiarity – devolving more decision-making powers on the use of resources to the lowest level to reduce delays in project design and implementation;

Departmental territoriality (silos) limits the potential for cross-fertilisation of ideas, knowledge and sharing of resources. Policy-makers need to break down internal silos.

We recommend:

- Instigating more formal as well as informal cross-departmental working to achieve a more joined up approach in terms of policy objectives, desired outputs and outcomes and resources to be allocated e.g. more round table events on topics of mutual interest and concern
- Establishing a dedicated champion for young people facing inequalities (e.g. Birmingham City Council) within the institution with power to bring together representatives of all areas of policy with potential vested interest. ie Create Internal Knowledge Alliances

Public institutions have a high sensitivity to risk - financial and reputational - which frequently prevents them accessing external knowledge and networks by co-opting or funding new,

unproven organisations or initiatives. They need to change their attitude to risk.

We recommend:

- Using connectors/bridge-builders with proven track record of trust within local communities to broker introductions to new organisations operating in the relevant policy fields
- Engaging such organisations in open dialogue to understand how they work before making any commitments
- Undertaking a cost/benefit analysis of traditional versus possible new ways of working
- Making use of examples of good research-informed practice to support new approaches

Policy-making is frequently bounded by institutional custom and practice and received knowledge. This often shows itself in a paternalistic approach to the design and implementation of policies and a lack of awareness of the differences between causes and symptoms of social inequalities. Policy-makers need to change this paternalistic mindset.

We recommend:

- Recognising and accepting that a controlling role in the development and delivery of programmes, usually associated with being the primary funder, is no longer realistic or appropriate because of reductions in resources (money and personnel)
- Being open to co-opt external organisations with appropriate knowledge and skills of the issue(s) or target group(s) to work on an equal footing

Policy-makers need to improve their understanding of the changing nature of inequalities in post-crisis Europe.

We recommend:

- Accessing current research through Knowledge Alliances between universities and/or policy think tanks and policy-makers to provide a more informed understanding of the differences between causes and symptoms of inequalities. This is so that officers are clearer about the purpose/objectives of policies and programmes to deal with aspects of inequality and can plan accordingly with

regard to the use of resources, time-scales and evaluation or measurement of effectiveness.

3.1.3 Modify institutional responses to the impact of austerity measures

Policy-makers have responded to budget cuts by imposing more conditions upon any support still offered, removing services altogether or replacing them by less costly 'new' initiatives which fail to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people on the ground. This has meant that young people are falling through the gaps left in mainstream policies and programmes thus adding to their inequalities.

Initiatives which seek to fill these gaps in ways that also help connect (or re-connect) young people with those in authority may not just be compensatory. They may also stimulate changes in the approach to policy-making and delivery which counter the current tendency to limit the scope of interventions. Policy-makers need to be open to alternative ways of filling the gaps.

We recommend:

- Drawing on the knowledge and creativity of young people themselves and their lived experiences of policies and practices as they play out in their cities and communities
- Being prepared to identify and work with new actors or structures beyond the institution's own established networks, particularly those involving young people who are facing inequalities e.g. social innovations which have emerged in response to an unmet need.

3.2. Harnessing social innovations to address key causes of social inequality

3.2.1 Education and development

Whilst recommendations regarding detailed changes to national education systems are beyond the reach of this project, the significance of access to quality educational opportunities in tackling the causes of young people's inequalities cannot be ignored. There are frequent references in the CITISPYCE fieldwork reports to young people from deprived neighbourhoods/communities not having access to decent schools, being discouraged,

demotivated and limited in their prospects for training or employment post-school because of poor grades. The recommendations that follow are based on the evidence of several innovative social practices identified during the fieldwork at the local level. They have the potential to redress symptoms of inequalities in the short term and possibly causes in the medium to long-term.

Policy-makers should move from ‘one size fits all’ in terms of pedagogical approach and be open to alternative learning methods.

We recommend:

- Minimizing restrictions on the provision of public education by NGOs and parents’ associations in order to open up more opportunities for non-formal learning approaches to assist young people to acquire social and cultural competences and skills
- Working with Universities and other Further Education institutions to offer more routes to improving basic educational qualifications using peer to peer mentoring schemes e.g. Social innovations in Krakow (mentoring/coaching) and Hamburg (WhatsApp)
- Co-opting innovative arts or sports-based social practices which help develop social and emotional competences (confidence, self-belief) as well as basic skills to offer alternative pathways to learning. For example:
 - Beatfreaks, Birmingham helping young people navigate their way through their inequalities by improving their social and emotional competences, raising their aspirations and signposting pathways to further education or training
 - Pilot initiatives such as Educational Demos from Barcelona with Amaro Records in Brno which uses a shared interest in making music as a basis for building self-esteem and confidence and becoming ‘critical citizens’
 - Challenge Rotterdam – a project helping young people to develop the necessary attitude and skills to obtain and keep in education or employment.

3.2.2 Employment and entrepreneurship

One of the key causes of inequality is increasing labour market segmentation and exclusionary tendencies in labour markets where young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment, precariousness and low quality of jobs available. They are sometimes locked in the shadow economy. This is often accompanied by discrimination in the labour market and other areas in the case of immigrants or ethnic minorities. At the same time, mainstream policies have shown a growing convergence towards work-first, sometimes even workfare-like policies which are underpinned by moral/underclass discourse (MUD). Young people are perceived as ‘not belonging’ to society, and this is also communicated to them – demonstrating ‘othering’ as an exclusionary mechanism. Policy-makers need to change the principles of activation.

We recommend:

- Replacing conditionality requirements with effectiveness requirements, both on an individual level and on an organisational level, to provide more opportunities for professional discretion based on social work approaches and greater focus on effectiveness through needs-oriented and continuous performance of the institutions involved

Current labour market policies aimed at dealing with youth unemployment frequently fail to reach the most excluded since they require a certain level of skills and social competences to benefit from the support offered e.g. around job-search, CV writing and interview skills which many young people lack. Policy-makers should extend the reach of their interventions.

We recommend:

- Combining small scale policies/practices oriented towards empowerment, general individual and social development of young people and communities where they are living with the (larger scale) policies/practices focused more directly on employment or formal education. Such combinations may produce more synergy as individual and social development creates important pre-conditions for improved employability
- Increasing the numbers and proportions of disadvantaged youth in Active Labour Market Policy programmes (ESF projects included)
- Focusing the programmes even more on deprived neighbourhoods

- Adopting a comprehensive but individualised approach to tackle the multiple barriers to labour market entry, ie employment services must be accompanied by other social (wrap-around) services, infrastructures and support
- Ensuring that a certain proportion of their programme funding is allocated to support for the most disadvantaged young people to provide more individualised treatment with special focus on their needs in transition to the labour market.

In addition, employment policies often fail to take account of the ‘demand’ side of the labour market and insufficient effort is made in some countries to collaborate with employers in the provision of targeted support for specific for ‘hard to place’ and discriminated target groups.

We recommend:

- Involving employers directly by creating public-private partnership/pacts between employers and municipalities/cities
- Developing an integrated approach such as that piloted in Sofia (HESED) based on example from IQRS in Brno.

There is a disconnect between employment and other services for young people and their client groups. Although One Stop Shop initiatives exist in several of the CITISPYCE cities, they seldom reach those most in need. Our findings reveal distrust and disillusion amongst this target group with the help available.

We recommend:

- Improving the quality and reach of employment and other services for young people through ensuring better training for staff working in front line services of One Stop Shops and also in the back-office (coordinated strategy/actions) and improving the ‘signposting’ of such services
- Co-opting organisations working *with* and trusted *by* young people to provided informal one-stop shops where specialist advisors can be co-located and more approachable than in an official building e.g. Physical spaces

occupied by social innovations such as Amaro Records in Brno and Community-based NGOs e.g. HESED in Sofia

- Providing better signposting to young people at local level and strengthening outreach services through collaboration with community-based NGOs e.g. HESED in Sofia or Educational Demos in Barcelona

There is a gap in support for those young people who have positive “alternative ambitions” (e.g. arts, media, entrepreneurial). Many young people do not wish to join job-seeking programmes with their conditionality and lack of flexibility. Self employment is, therefore, seen as a potential alternative, even if a precarious one, but there may be little or no help available to support this choice. In our research, however, we found a number of examples of young people who had been supported and assisted to become self-sufficient within arts-based social innovations aimed at developing participants’ personal and social competences. These also provide a supportive network and safe environment in which they can gain the necessary knowledge, experience and self-belief to work independently. Policy-makers should make use of these alternative informal learning and mentoring projects.

We recommend:

- Co-opting their services e.g. Educational Demos Barcelona, Beatfrees, Birmingham, Hidden Wings Krakow,
- Facilitating access to funding and other resources to enable such organisations to scale up their activities and thus provide training and support for a greater number of aspiring freelance workers

3.2.3 Recognition, empowerment, trust, engagement

Our research shows that there is a strong requirement to empower young people facing inequalities through targeted assistance to meet their individual needs, leading to improved social competences, increased confidence and self-belief. There is also a need, however, to empower local communities (in which many of these young people live) by introducing more open governance mechanisms and new policy approaches to deprived neighbourhoods. This will involve: bridging symbolic and spatial divides; addressing the perceptions of decay and neglect; and creating trust to encourage the participation of those who feel excluded from the mainstream.

We have observed socially innovative arts-based practices at the local level which are able to empower young people who suffer from low levels of educational attainment and limited social and cultural capital. e.g. Hidden Wings (Krakow), Educational Demos (Barcelona), Beatfreaks (Birmingham).

We recommend:

- Using small-scale local social innovations as ‘policy models’ or ‘policy guidelines’ for broader (mainstream) public policy reforms in addressing discrimination, neglect of the most disadvantaged and helping change an approach focused on a policy of enforcement/work first activation
- Co-opting socially innovative arts-based practices at the local level to work with young people who suffer from low levels of educational attainment and limited social and cultural capital to improve their social competences, build their self-esteem and empower them to become ‘critical’ citizens
- Establishing local community centres that provide integrated and culturally tailored services for young people in the area (NB Roma neighbourhoods have the most important significant need for such approaches).

4. Funding programmes and resources to support social innovations by and for young people and increase their impact:

The Report on Social Innovation: a Decade of Change, published by the European Commission in 2014, reveals the extent to which policy-makers have moved social innovation to the forefront of the political agenda: social innovation as a driver for social change. Social Innovation is a key part of the Social Investment Package. This includes the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme, which inter alia makes technical assistance available for conducting randomised evaluations to administrations undertaking social policy reforms. The European Social Fund has made provision for encouraging socially innovative projects and the Framework Research and Development programmes of the past decade have supported research around social innovation. Yet, there is little attention paid to the specific potential of social innovations by and for young people to combat social inequalities. Perspectives on the nature and potential of social innovations to bring about societal changes are largely institutional/ and top-down. As

we have already made clear, policy-makers need to rethink their attitudes towards young people and harness the potential of their social innovations.

4.1 Funding policies and programmes

4.1.1 Improving the complementarity of funding programmes of different departments within and between institutions in terms of priorities, timescales and application criteria.

Whilst we recognise that progress has been made to improve communication and collaboration across different Directorates General (DGs) in the Commission, we consider that more needs to be done to improve the situation within and between all levels of governance but particularly national and local levels.

We recommend:

- Moving to a greater alignment of deadlines between DGs for applications for EU projects & programmes; (EU Level)
- Increasing the level of collaboration across departments or directorates with a shared interest in young people so that different funding streams can be more closely aligned to tackle the same priorities; (EU, national and local levels)
- Aligning more closely national objectives and types of intervention with those of both EU and local levels for the application of EU funding programmes e.g. Youth Guarantee and ESF; (National level)
- Devolving powers to local level to enable those closest to the sites of intervention to harmonise application criteria across complementary programmes at EU and national levels.

4.1.2 Improving continuity of policies and programmes aimed at assisting the most marginalised:

Building trust and developing individual social competences of young people who have low levels of educational attainment and limited social and cultural capital takes time and needs a consistency of intervention.

We recommend:

- Ensuring greater consistency of grant priorities and criteria for applications over different budget cycles to avoid applicants having to waste time and resources ‘tweaking’ their work programmes to meet shifts in requirements e.g. change of target group, area or outputs
- Retaining a percentage of grant money available to extend ‘new’ or short-term projects aimed at supporting vulnerable young people which can demonstrate success (see measurement and evaluation section). This could be further assisted by not requiring such projects to go through a fresh application process which takes time and may leave a project without resources to continue in the interim period between grants.

4.1.3 Introducing greater flexibility within existing funding programmes and publicising them more widely to enable small-scale organisations to access support

We recommend:

- Simplifying the eligibility criteria for accessing funding programmes for small social enterprises or self-employed social entrepreneurs or organisations recently created and thus with limited ‘track records’
- Minimising the level of reporting required including the monitoring and evaluation data required
- Reducing the match funding requirements for small-scale organisations
- Publicising and providing easy access to advice on programmes such as EaSI.

4.1.4 Broadening the scope of policies and programmes for young people facing inequalities to include those furthest from the mainstream

Policies and funding regimes focused on employment e.g Youth Guarantee Scheme do not currently meet the needs of those who are furthest from the mainstream with low levels of educational attainment and limited social and cultural capital.

We recommend:

- Introducing a requirement for youth policies to include the principles of empowerment and partnership
- Making provision for support for services that are tailor-made and suitable to the ambitions and abilities of participants rather than one size fits all

- Giving priority to projects and interventions which combine employment and/or education objectives with the development of individual and social competences
- Preparing specific youth employment policies, or ensuring that a certain percentage of funding stream should be allocated to better tailored programmes and ESF projects aimed specifically at supporting the most disadvantaged target groups of young people

4.2 Actively supporting the start-up, development and transfer of socially innovative practices

Social innovations often arise from the vision of an individual or small group of like-minded people and frequently struggle for resources in the early stages of development e.g. the social innovators fund the activities initially from their own pocket because they cannot pass the necessary credit checks to access private finance. Public grant schemes also have eligibility tests which preclude individual social innovators or start-up companies from applying. If they do succeed in securing financial support, the money is usually for specific time-limited projects, and subject to evaluation on the basis of quantitative targets.

We recommend:

- **Creating a dedicated ‘social innovation-youth’ programme** for application at the local level to pilot new approaches by young people to tackling disadvantaged young people’s inequalities; (EU level)
- Involving existing young social innovators (e.g. those identified by networks such as the SIX network or the CITISPYCE consortium) in a **consultative panel** to advise on the shaping of such a programme
- **Giving greater discretion at local level** for the use of ESF or other Youth Programmes under DG Education and Training to test how such innovations are able to support alternative employment pathways and approaches (e.g. arts-based experiences) to assist young people in personal development, acquiring of social competences and skills, networking and increasing employability (EU, national and local levels). This may mean revising the conditions which regulate member states’ access to and use of ESF.

- **Dedicating a percentage of any funds available for social innovations** to support innovative practices which are *by* young people *for* young people

Our pilot projects have demonstrated that it is possible to transfer innovative social practices from one national context to another. It requires the sensitive application of the philosophy, general goals and approaches in a different context and a respect for local conditions in terms of the tools and methods used.

We recommend:

- **Supporting the transfer of social innovations** through transnational networks such as Eurocities and the use of Erasmus+ programmes for knowledge transfer
- **Fostering openness to new ways of working through supporting ‘go and see’/ ‘look and learn’ exchanges** between local officials in municipalities or practitioners in NGOs or social entrepreneurs
- **Raising greater awareness of Erasmus+** by the European Commission and its national representations with young social innovators by incentivising EU funding specialists in universities and municipalities to share their expertise.

Such innovative practices are scaled up and disseminated mainly thanks to NGOs. During our research, it became clear, however, that private organisations, public administration bodies or universities can also act as players. Be that as it may, what is a very crucial condition of success is the development of **broader coalitions of partners**: public, non-profit, for-profit partnerships. Single citizens, civic committees, young people, informal groups need support to become part of them. Municipalities are well placed to act as catalysts for bringing such coalitions together but only if they are prepared to facilitate rather than control.

We recommend:

- Collaborating with private and not-for-profit partners across the city and at area level to draw on the funds, expertise and connections to young people and other citizens’ groups who are aware of innovative social practices with potential to be scaled-up

5. Measurement and evaluation

In post-crisis Europe, policy-makers and practitioners, whether from the public, private or voluntary sector, are increasingly obliged to consider the value for money of any policy intervention they make. They have traditionally relied on predominantly quantitative indicators to measure the impact of many of their policies and practices. Yet, it has become increasingly clear that quantitative indicators alone are not adequate to measure the impact of social innovations, particularly in mitigating social inequalities. The Case Studies of the socially innovative practices we identified across the ten cities in the CITISPYCE project highlight the need for a more holistic approach, incorporating qualitative as well as quantitative indicators and assessing both internal and external success factors. These Case Studies also illustrate the value of small-scale social experimentation at the local level and the importance of the role of researchers in analysing their critical success factors in relation to achieving specific policy objectives. Policy-makers also need to re-assess what their policy objectives should be. Mitigating the symptoms of inequality alone is not enough; the overarching aim should be to find ways to tackle the underlying causes.

We recommend:

- Adopting continuous and systematic monitoring and evaluation to distinguish more clearly the effects of policy measures, bearing in mind that a possible higher cost for early intervention to assist an excluded young person is likely to be more cost effective over the long-term
- Investing in longitudinal client monitoring (at city and also at local area levels, coordinated by local authorities) where possible: at least in countries with sufficient administrative capacity
- Creating Knowledge Alliances between policy-makers, researchers and young social innovators to develop more holistic measurement frameworks in order to harness social innovations against inequalities experienced by young people more effectively e.g. Using subjective indicators of employability (as personal development, capability to gain and retain a meaningful job) and quality of life alongside objective indications such as drop-out rates from the programmes, job retention rates and similar.

