

# COM.IN

## Local Strategies for the Active Inclusion of Young People facing multiple disadvantages – findings of a transnational policy experiment

Final Report February 2013



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# 1. An introduction to COM.IN and to this report

*Thomas Mirbach and Simon Guentner*

The COM.IN project looked at local strategies for the active inclusion of young people facing multiple disadvantages. With regard to such strategies, we were particularly interested in issues around governance: how do the various people involved in such strategies, including professionals, volunteers and service users, work together across organisational, departmental and professional boundaries?

This focus was inspired by the concept of “Active Inclusion” that is currently promoted by EU institutions and accepts that, for people facing multiple disadvantages, no single factor – for example, financial support, counselling or offering a job – will be sufficient to meet their needs. What is needed is a well-tailored strategy centred around a person, utilizing a range of instruments including money, advice and services to encourage and enable activity to move him or her closer to the labour market (this positive connotation has inspired the project title “COM.IN”) rather than negative stimulation through sanctions. Bringing these elements together can happen at various levels, through regulations and legal provisions (macro level), strategy and planning (meso level) or on site, in the direct interaction with a service user or welfare recipient (micro level).

Whilst “Active Inclusion” can be argued to be a toothless paper tiger developed by European policy elites and some academics rather than a fully established framework for social policy provision, it is a concept that reflects concrete practices on the ground that have been tested in pilot projects and experimental policy designs. The four cases that we analysed illustrate well the different shapes in which Active Inclusion policy can be delivered:

- In **Bologna**, Italy, the personalisation of services that are provided by the Consortium Arcolaio for young homeless immigrants were assessed;
- in **Hamburg**, Germany, we looked at a case management approach that is applied by the Lawaetz-Service GmbH in the context of the “Level 3” support system for people at risk of homelessness;
- in **Malmö**, Sweden, internal and external networking of the Fenix project was of interest, which combines work experience, psychotherapy and social welfare support for the labour market entry of young people facing multiple disadvantages; and
- in **Newcastle**, Great Britain, a strategic approach to multi-agency commissioning and coordination to tackle youth homelessness was reviewed.

Whilst the four local approaches differ in detail according to respective welfare systems, they all point to the importance of networking across organisational and professional boundaries. With our focus on governance, we ask how resources and instruments can be aligned to achieve synergies and enhance opportunities for social inclusion of marginalised young people.

As this report will show, the national and local policy frameworks on social protection and social inclusion often do not allow integrated action. Rather, they are fragmented, with self-sufficient sub-systems creating obstacles and boundaries. But new approaches have emerged in pilot projects and experimental settings, often still waiting for their potential and impact to be recognized and rolled out. This holds for the four practices that are presented in this report. They have been developed in response to specific needs and

apply a multi-dimensional perspective, but act in an institutional environment that is not (yet) fully supportive so limits their impact.

The organisational limits and obstacles are where the experimental element of our interactive action research project comes in. In Bologna, Hamburg, Malmö and Newcastle, peer reviews were carried out to analyse current practice and assess its functioning but also to identify shortcomings. Recommendations were developed and picked up in a series of “social experiments” to enhance the effectiveness of these practices.

This report presents the conceptual foundations of our project and also describes the four social experiments and their outcomes, ending with a set of recommendations to policy-makers and practitioners. Chapter 2 sheds light on the “Active Inclusion” concept as the latest model for combating social exclusion in the EU. In Chapter 3 we introduce the research approach that guided our project. It shows that our version of “social experimentation” is inspired by dynamic and interactive action research and incremental policy learning. Chapters 4 to 7 will then present

the social experiments that were carried out in the four cities. We can confidently assert that in each case the project inspired some real change in policy and/or practice. This is not least due to the sensitive and engaged practitioners who carried out the experiments and fed the findings into local cycles of policy development. In Chapter 8, recommendations are formulated at a level of detail that allows them to be picked up by practitioners and policy-makers alike.

The COM.IN project was a very fruitful experience not least because of its specific composition. From each participating city, it brought together researchers and practitioners alike. They worked closely together in the initial analysis, during the peer reviews, in conducting the experiments and assessing their outcomes, and finally in drafting this report. Hence, what is presented here in a short and concise way is the result of intense debates between many people and an exciting adventure of mutual learning across national and professional boundaries. For us, it was an enriching experience, and we hope that this report makes interesting and enjoyable reading for a wide audience.

## 2. Active Inclusion for Young People facing multiple disadvantages in the EU – a policy concept and its application in practice

*Simon Guentner and Anne-Marie Gehrke (Hamburg University of Applied Sciences)*

### The case of “hard to reach” young people

Times are difficult for young people in Europe. Youth unemployment was at a historic high of 22.7% in May 2012, ranging from 7.9% in Germany to 52.6% in Spain.<sup>1</sup> An increasing number of young people live at risk of poverty and social exclusion and depend on unemployment benefit and social service support. The economic downturn has led to redundancies and a rise in temporary contracts that allow no future plans and low initial wages that don't pay off the cost of living. Youth unemployment rates respond more sensitively to business cycle fluctuations than adult unemployment due to various reasons: young people more often work under short-term contracts and in precarious employment. The chain of temporary episodes of training like school-to-work, vocational training, military or civilian service, labour market schemes or temporary activities keep young people occupied – but outside the labour market. The measures often don't imply a long term perspective, and on a low budget young people depend on their families which makes them less mobile (Dietrich 2012).<sup>2</sup>

Whilst policy makers are occupied with the economic crisis and the resulting unemployment, it is important to remember that the situation of young people in Europe was not particularly positive before the crisis either. We should also recall that employment isn't the only factor affecting young people. Developing an

autonomous personality, engaging in social relationships and family foundation, obtaining and executing full citizenship rights are further important issues. Indeed, some of the measures that are being deployed to improve statistics and bring young people “closer to the labour market”, such as the various waves of recent apprenticeship initiatives, might in effect block or prolong these passages.

Young people who face particular disadvantages are those who are neither in education, employment or training, often referred to as “NEETs”. Factors that lead to exclusion from these important areas include lacking educational qualifications, school absenteeism, low skilled occupation of parents, worklessness or loose attachment of parents to the labour market and teenage pregnancy (Robson 2008).<sup>3</sup> Particularly vulnerable are those who have been in contact with care or child protection services, or have left their families and live independently. Problems are worsened if they have no further education or qualifications, have been in contact with hard drugs and alcohol, criminality, or suffer from health problems including mental health issues. Further risks of exclusion include involvement with the police, youth offending institutions or prisons. This group of young people face serious problems in the transition phase from school to work and are at risk of long-term unemployment and poverty. Furthermore, without contacts into educational or employment systems they are disconnected

1 Eurostat news release 113/2012: Euro area unemployment rate at 11.2%

2 FES/Hans Dietrich: Youth Unemployment in Europe-Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Findings. July 2012

3 Robson, Karen (2008): Becoming NEET in Europe: A Comparison of Predictors and Later-Life Outcomes, paper presented at the Global Network on Inequality Mini-Conference on February 22, 2008 in New York City.

from social networks which could provide social and financial assistance and emotional support. According to EUROSTAT, in 2010, some 7.5 million people between 15 and 24 were classified as NEET, which is an alarming 12.8%.<sup>4</sup> In recent years, NEETs have gained attention from policy-makers and are a key target group of the emerging youth policy agendas across Europe. But the persistence of this problem raises questions about the quality and effectiveness of responses. A lack of flexibility in national programs, poor coordination of partnerships, budget cuts and lack of knowledge about the target group's needs enhance the problem.

## Active Inclusion – integrated action against social exclusion

Active Inclusion is the key concept for combating poverty and exclusion in the European Union. In 2008, the European Commission recommended a framework on “the Active Inclusion of people excluded from the labour market”<sup>5</sup> to the Member States. This was followed by conclusions of the European Council on common active inclusion principles to combat poverty more effectively and a resolution of the European Parliament. Accepting that, despite financial welfare benefits and activation policies, there is still a significant group of people “far away from the labour market” and confronted with multiple disadvantages, the active inclusion approach calls for combining three interconnected but independent strands<sup>6</sup>:

Concerning the individuals' basic right to resources to live a life in dignity, the first strand stands for **adequate income support**. According to the Commission

and the Council, support should be adequate to meet the costs of living.

Furthermore effective arrangements should be provided to enter or re-enter the labour market. **Inclusive labour markets** should be developed through investment in education and training, personalized assistance, a supportive environment, low-income tax requirements and sheltered employment.

In addition, as a third strand, Member States should take every measure to ensure appropriate social support through **access to quality services**. The multiple needs of individuals for social assistance, housing support, childcare and health services should be met through coordinated, integrated and personalized services that are territorially available, physically accessible and affordable.

### Active Inclusion of young people

Having its origins in the fight against poverty, the idea of Active Inclusion quickly spread to other policy areas and was soon picked up by Commission services and Ministries responsible for youth policy. Calling for a “combination of adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services”, in 2010 the European Council issued a resolution on the “active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty”:

*“Unemployment, poverty, social and economic exclusion and all forms of discrimination are obstacles to the well-being of young people and may hinder their active participation in society. Greater inclusion of young people in society and their full and active participation in the labour market, combined with improved access to quality education, as well as adequate and better targeted social protection and services, are essential tools for reducing poverty, improving the quality of life and promoting social cohesion”<sup>7</sup>.*

4 See: EUROFOUND (2011): Young People and NEETs in Europe: First findings, Dublin

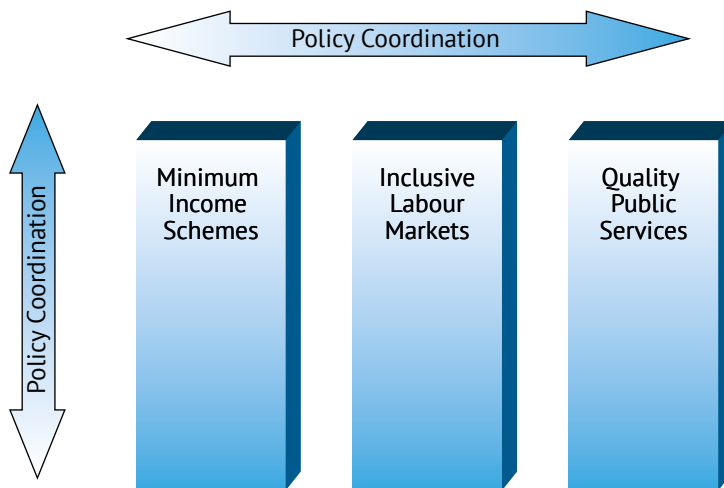
5 Commission Recommendation of 3 October 2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market; COM (2008) 639

6 Council Conclusions of 17 December 2008 on common active inclusion principles to combat poverty more effectively; European Parliament Resolution on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, 8 April 2009

7 Resolution of Council of 11 May 2010 on the active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty.



## Active Inclusion – a matter of coordination



According to this strategy, Active Inclusion of young people should be achieved through a combination of specific initiatives in the youth field and promoting a youth perspective in relevant policy areas, such as education and training (promoting education, training and non-formal learning in order to enhance employability, encouraging transitions from education to the labour market and prevent social exclusion) and employment and entrepreneurship (promote quality and stable employment for young people; promote self-employment and entrepreneurship; increase business start-ups and new networks through use of young people's potential and creativity)<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, young people should be encouraged to be active citizens and to participate in society.

### Active Inclusion in the EU 2020 Strategy

Since 2010, the efforts to promote Active Inclusion are integrated into the EU's overall macroeconomic strategy "**Europe 2020**"<sup>9</sup>, which aims at promoting "smart", "sustainable" and "inclusive" growth. The strategy is backed by a number of quantitative targets against which progress can be measured and flagship initiatives that should guide respective action. Three of these "flagship initiatives" are of particular interest here:

The **Agenda for new skills and new jobs** includes various measures to reach the employment targets for 2020 of 75% of the working-age population (20-64 years) being in work, an early school-leaving rate below 10% and more young people in higher education or equivalent vocational education (at least 40%). The agenda includes labour market reforms

8 Resolution of Council of 11 May 2010 on the active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty.

9 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

consistent with the principle of “flexicurity”, a “new skills for new jobs” initiative, improving quality of work and work conditions and providing better conditions for job creation.

The **European Platform against poverty and social exclusion** promotes actions to reach the EU target of reducing poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020. The actions it promotes and supports are about improving access to work, social security, services and education, as well as making better use of funding to combat social exclusion and discrimination. Another aim is to identify and develop innovative strategies to provide effective and efficient social support and encourage new partnerships between the public and private sector.

The **Youth on the Move** initiative aims to improve young people’s education and employability, to reduce high youth unemployment and to increase the youth-employment rate. It seeks to make education and training more relevant to young people’s needs and to motivate them to take advantage of EU grants to study or train in another country (each year the EU supports more than 40,000 people). It also seeks to encourage EU Member States to take measures simplifying the transition from education to work.

Whilst these initiatives provide an important background to the promotion of change, the central instruments to implement the EU’s 2020 strategy remain the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) alongside the Commission’s Annual Growth Survey and Progress Report. But according to the EU network of independent experts on social inclusion, the NRPs are still rather weak on measures to promote inclusion. In their assessment of the 2011 reports, they find that in “many instances, the social inclusion measures proposed in the NRPs are imprecise or aspirational in nature”.<sup>10</sup> The European Anti-Poverty Network also

commented recently that Member States still handle the three topics adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services separately instead of creating integrated approaches that tackle the multidimensional aspects and the impact of poverty and its causes.<sup>11</sup> Instead, EAPN argues, governments often still stick to traditional activation approaches which are very limited and increase sanctions which penalize the unemployed even more.

The EU Social Investment Package that was presented by the European Commission in early 2013 also calls for more attention to be paid to Active Inclusion in the NRPs and for better aligning of EU 2020 objectives and Structural Funds.<sup>12</sup>

## Implementing Active Inclusion – thinking outside the box

The basis of the Active Inclusion concept is that an effective response to the multiple disadvantages of people experiencing poverty must be holistic and include material support in addition to access to employment and quality services. A range of policy experiments and pilots have tested such an approach in recent years, which have often been aligned with workfare type reforms of welfare policies, with personalization and de-institutionalisation agendas of the care sector and with other new public management discourses in the spirit of the “Third Way”. Key words are collaboration, cooperation, partnership and participative governance. Typically a range of actors and organizations are involved, and with them their respective problem perceptions, mind-sets, agendas and instruments. Hence, crossing the boundaries of organisations becomes a crucial factor for success-

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10 Frazier/Malier 2011: Assessment of Progress Towards the Europe 2020 Social Inclusion Objectives, CEPS/INSTEAD, 2011, coll. European Network of Independent Experts on

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Social Inclusion n° 2011-02

11 **The European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)** Booklet on active inclusion: <http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/eapn-books/2011-active-inclusion-booklet-en-web.pdf>

12 European Commission (2013): Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020, Com (2013) 83 final

ful cooperation. Such “boundary spanning” can be promoted through individuals, but also through joint policies or protocols or pooling of resources; it can take the shape of formalized partnerships and contracts or be rather informal and loose.<sup>13</sup> Two common approaches to fostering collaboration are network management and case management.

- **Network management** is about facilitating communication between organizations which, according to Kickert and Koppenjan, often means “promoting the mutual adjustment of the behaviour of actors with diverse objectives and ambitions with regard to tackling problems within a given framework of interorganizational relations”<sup>14</sup>; network management can include activating and arranging interaction, but can also involve conflict mediation and, if it is done in a strategic way, “tinkering” with relations.<sup>15</sup>
- **Case management** was developed as a response to deinstitutionalization, community-orientation and personalisation of care services. Relevant services and resources are identified and coordinated around a person who is handled as a “case”; central to this approach is a case worker, working together with the person to develop an adequate and effective support network. As a range of contacts and organizations will be involved, this includes brokering and coordination between them.

Irrespective of the specific form of collaboration, a number of challenges have to be tackled. These include:

- Multiple and unadjusted modus operandi of the organisations involved.

- Blurred, unclear roles and relationships (personal, professional) between actors.
- Unclear responsibilities and “dilemmas of multiple accountabilities”.
- Varied perceptions on what constitutes a problem and what needs to be done.<sup>16</sup>

The four cases presented in this report all exhibit some form of “boundary spanning”. To promote the Active Inclusion of young people facing multiple disadvantages, they tap into a range of formal and informal resources, striving for an effective support structure. The practices will be described in Chapters 4 to 7. We will not cover all their complexity but focus on their governance and “boundary spanning” mechanisms - because it is these particular aspects that we sought to strengthen through social experiment.

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13 Paul Williams 2012, Collaboration in public policy and practice - Perspectives on boundary spanners, p. 30 f

14 Kickert/Koppenjan 1999: Public Management and network management – an overview, p. 44. In: Kickert/Koppenjan: Managing

15 Kickert/Koppenjan 1999, p. 46

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16 Williams 2012, p. 70

### 3. Social innovation through experimental practice in social services – a framework for interactive policy learning

*Simon Guentner and Anne-Marie Gehrke (Hamburg University of Applied Sciences)*

The following section describes two concepts that have guided our project methodically: social innovation and social experimentation. As the literature on each is broad and scattered, we will concentrate on definitions and contributions that have been developed or referred to by European Institutions in more recent policy processes. In a second step, we will then outline how we applied these concepts in our research process.

#### Social Innovation and Social Experimentation

In essence, innovation is about the invention and application of new ideas. In Schumpeter's classic position, innovation refers to the "creative destruction" of an existing process or product. Later, the sociologist Everett Rogers put the focus on the diffusion of a new idea and identified five stages that need to be passed through for it to turn into an innovation that is actually adopted and applied: potential users need to 1) know about the idea, 2) be persuaded about its usefulness, 3) decide to take it on board, 4) implement it and 5) finally confirm its implementation rather than disregard it after a first test.<sup>17</sup>

Social innovation is a specific type of innovation that relates to a particular purpose and context. The European Commission's think tank BEPA defines social innovation as a new response to pressing social demands, which affects the process of social interac-

tions and which aims to improve human wellbeing (EU/BEPA<sup>18</sup>). Not surprisingly, social innovations are rarely stable but experience constant change and modification in the process of being adapted to new situations.

According to the Young Foundation, an influential UK based think tank, social innovation is about "new ideas that meet unmet needs"<sup>19</sup>. Similarly to BEPA, they argue that the specific "social" dimension comes in when "innovative activities and services (...) are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and (...) are predominantly developed and diffused through organisations whose primary purposes are social." (Young Foundation 2007, p. 8).

An aspect that is hardly touched upon in the debate but crucial in order to understand the dynamics of social innovation is that it doesn't happen in a blue sky or on a blank sheet of paper, but in often complex welfare arrangements that prearrange the field. As implied in the "creative destruction" concept, and in particular in situations where efficiency gains are driving the search for ideas, a new solution to a problem can mean that an existing service or even a right (to benefits) is tackled. Hence, social innovation is likely to be a conflict-ridden process.

In a recent research project (TEPSIE)<sup>20</sup>, the Young Foundation and others set out what they regard as

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17 Rogers, Everett M. (1962): Diffusion of Innovations. Glencoe: Free Press.

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18 BEPA 2011, Social Innovation: Empowering people, driving change

19 [http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/03\\_07\\_What\\_it\\_is\\_SAID.pdf](http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/03_07_What_it_is_SAID.pdf); The Young Foundation - Social Innovation, 2007, p. 4

20 [www.tepsie.eu](http://www.tepsie.eu)

the five core elements of a social innovation: novelty, actual implementation, meeting a social need, proven effectiveness and an empowering impact:

The core elements of social innovation

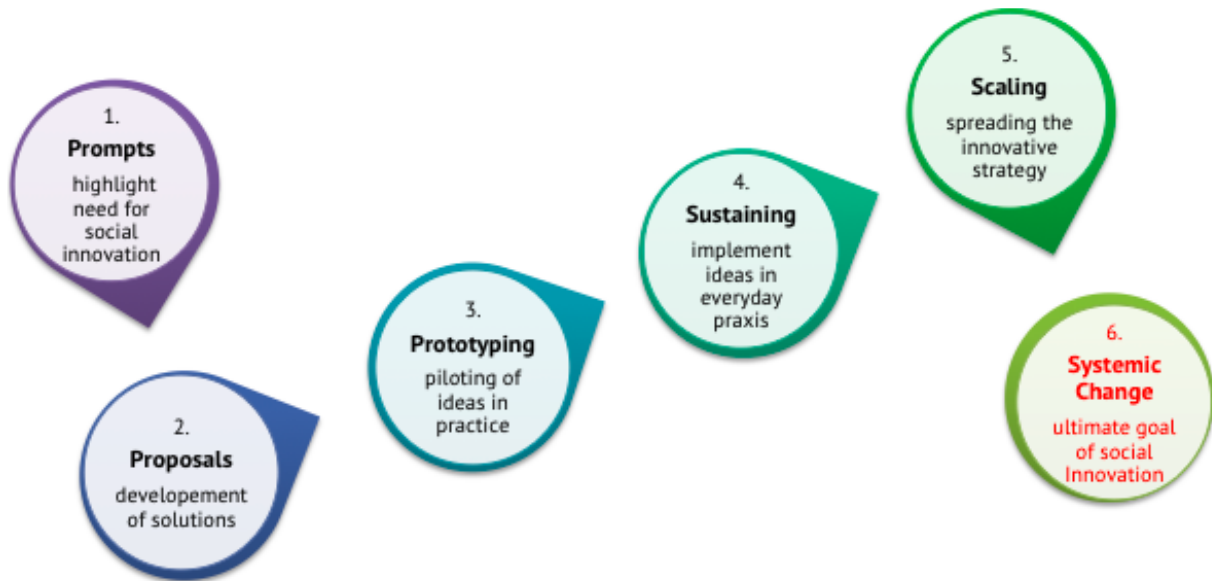
Core elements	Description
1) Novelty	Social innovations are new to the field, sector, region, market or user, or to be applied in a new way.
2) From ideas to implementation	As with innovation, there is a distinction between a social invention (developing ideas) and a social innovation (implementing and applying ideas). As such, we make a distinction between promising ideas (which may or may not become social innovations) and social innovations.
3) Meets a social need	Social innovations meet a recognised social need.
4) Effectiveness	Social innovations are more effective than existing solutions – they lead to better outcomes for beneficiaries.
5) Enhance society's capacity to act	Empowers beneficiaries by creating new roles and relationships, developing assets and capabilities and/or better use of assets and resources.

Source: Young Foundation 2012, p. 20f<sup>21</sup>

21 The Young Foundation (2012) Social Innovation Overview: A deliverable of the project: "The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe" (TEPSIE), European Commission – 7th Framework Programme, Brussels: European Commission, DG Research

With regard to the process of social innovation, the Young Foundation identifies six steps that an idea or practice passes through, from identifying a need to the eventual systemic change to meet this need:

Figure 1: The six stages of Social Innovation



Based on: The Young Foundation, 2010

Drawing on the work of BEPA and the Young Foundation, Social Service Europe, the European network of social service providers, defines social innovation as the process by which new responses to social needs are developed in order to deliver better social outcomes<sup>22</sup>. They identify four phases:

- identification of new or unmet social needs, followed by
- developing new solutions in response to these social needs,
- evaluation of the effectiveness of new solutions in meeting social needs, and
- scaling up of effective social innovations.

Concepts such as the ones presented here will always remain rather abstract and need to be brought to life in specific contexts. Whilst it is rather unlikely that in practice all stages are rigidly followed, the concepts are helpful in tracing a development and understanding the dynamics of an innovation process.

Policy-makers at all levels have been promoting social innovation through pilot projects which allow for a new idea to be tested and its impact assessed. In particular, EU funding programmes such as the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund have proven a good test-bed for social innovation. An approach to inducing social innovation that is promoted by the European Commission within its employment and social solidarity programme PROGRESS (2007-2013) is social experimentation.

22 Social Service Europe: Social Innovation - The role of Social Service Providers, 2012, [http://www.eurodiaconia.org/files/other\\_soc\\_policies/Social\\_Services\\_Europe\\_062012\\_Briefing\\_on\\_Social\\_Innovation.pdf](http://www.eurodiaconia.org/files/other_soc_policies/Social_Services_Europe_062012_Briefing_on_Social_Innovation.pdf)

A social experiment is, in its broadest sense, an exercise to test a policy intervention and its impact on social behaviour. It can be carried out in different ways; a popular approach is to compare a test population against a control group - a so-called randomized experiment. In its methodological guideline for policy makers, J-Pal Europe, a research network that specialises in social experiments, presents a rather critical view of the application of randomized experimentation, noting that ethical issues about the fairness of access to services emerge because the control group is excluded and does not profit from the new services.<sup>23</sup>

### Mutual Learning, Peer Reviewing and Interactive Action Research

In the design of our project, we opted against a rigid randomized experiment. Instead of introducing something new and testing it, we aimed at improving existing practices by more sensitively “bending” these practices through rather small but still significant changes. These changes were intended to be inspired by the experience and knowledge of peers who address similar issues but in different national and local contexts. To this end, it was important to properly understand the local situation and then find an appropriate angle through which a new idea could be fed into the ongoing work stream, leading to a new perspective and, eventually, change.

In the whole process, interactive action research played a crucial role. This is not a specific method but an approach that combines several different methods such as interviews, questionnaires, analysis seminars, self-evaluation etc. It is used to achieve active organizational change with professional research taking part at the same time. As Svensson et al put it:

*“The ambition of interactive research is to conduct research with the participants during the entire research process - from the definition of the problem to the dissemination of results.”<sup>24</sup>*

An important principle in conducting interactive research is that participants are seen as being capable of and interested in creating a deeper understanding of the issue being studied. This is why the first months of our project were spent building local teams as well as a mutual understanding between the four cities across all their different professional and organisational backgrounds. Mutual trust and a shared view of what was to be done and achieved with our project was crucial before beginning the actual process of experimentation.

We worked in three phases, starting with a phase of learning about the status quo, then moving towards the actual introduction of new elements into the ongoing local practices, and finally an evaluation and assessment of their impact, leading to reflections on what to do with the new insights in the future.

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23 Social Experimentation - A methodological guide for policy makers, J-Pal Europe 2011, p. 24

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24 Introduction - on Interactive Research, Svensson, Lennart/Ellström, Per-Erik/Brulin, Göran; International Journal of Action Research; 2007/3, p. 238

### 1. Transnational Learning

During the first phase, the focus was put on an existing practise in the four cities. Each city team produced a local report including a self-assessment of what went well and areas for improvement. These reports were read and commented on by the other city teams. In a next step, peer-review visits were organised in which one city visited another and had a closer look at the local practice. During these visits, a number of interviews were carried out with service providers, policy-makers and service users. Key to this was that the interviews were carried out by the academics and the practitioners of the visiting team together and developed into discussions rather than strict question-and-answer-type interviews. In this way, the interviewees also learned how similarly or differently the matter was handled in another country. Based on the knowledge

that the visiting team had acquired through the reports and interviews, they produced a brief analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and a set of recommendations that could improve the quality of the service.

### 2. Social Innovation

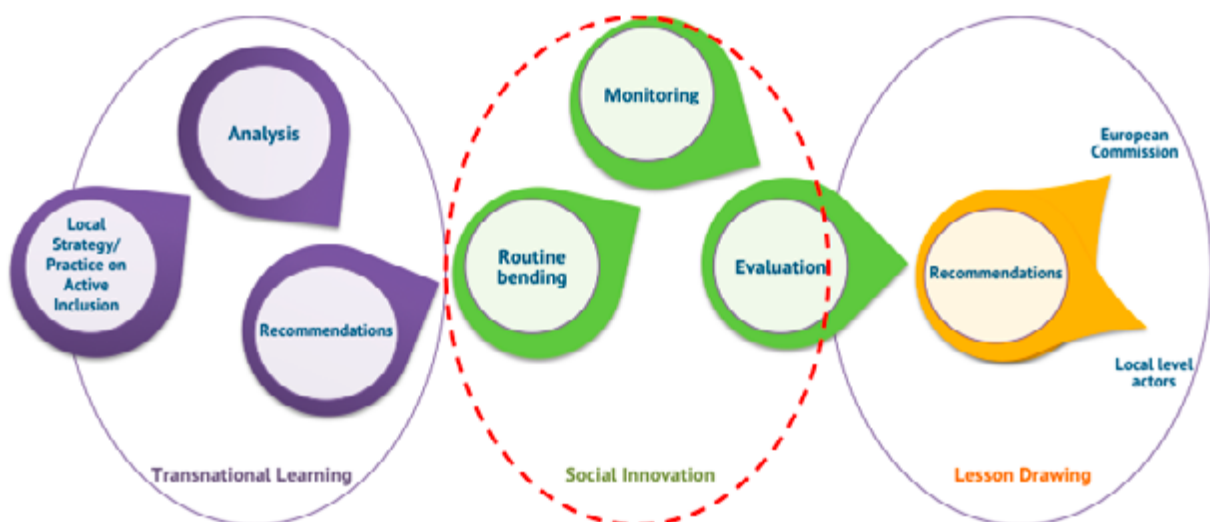
To begin the second phase of the project, the recommendations were digested by the local teams, picking out those elements that lent themselves to immediate testing, as we only had a very limited timeframe. They developed a strategy to test the new idea(s) and then implemented it in a four month period. This was about rethinking routines and slightly modifying existing practices through testing a new target group or a new method rather than launching a completely new project. This process was accompanied by a monitoring exercise to capture the impact of the changes

during this period. Again, practitioners and researchers worked closely together and met in regular local feedback meetings.

### 3. Lesson Drawing

In the third and final phase, the results of the experiments were presented, assessed and discussed. The city teams reflected not only on their own experience, but also on what lessons they could draw from developments in the other cities. A main finding was that in all four cities, the project had inspired new ways of thinking and acting and left with a positive legacy. Secondly, it was seen that in the process of experimentation all had to be flexible and adapt to unforeseen developments. These events led again to new insights and better outputs. On the basis of this reflection, a set of recommendations was developed by the whole team that is presented in Chapter 8 of this report.

Figure 2: The approach of social innovation at the COM.IN project.





## 4. Bologna: improving intra- and inter-organizational coordination through a common vision, approach and methodology “Bend to blend”

*Michela Corona (Consortium Arcolaio), Saverio Gubellini (Consortium Arcolaio), Flavia Pesce (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale, IRS) and Pierluigi Stefani (Consortium Arcolaio).*

### Socio-economic and policy context

The City of Bologna with its 1 million inhabitants lies in the centre of a metropolitan area between the northern and eastern part of the country. The economy is based on an active industrial sector. Bologna faces growing difficulties with unemployment, particularly for those born outside Italy. In 2010 about 50,000 inhabitants (1.3%) were 15-29 years old, 10% of these were born outside Italy. The Annual Labour Market Report 2010 for the Emilia Romagna region shows that the unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 was about 11% in 2008 and 18% in 2009. Data analysis of the nine Social Helpdesks in the Bologna Municipality shows a rise in the percentage of requests for help that were from people below the age of 18 from 25% in 2009 to 29% in 2010.<sup>25</sup>

Following the economic crisis new problems arose for young people:

- more unemployment or precarious and flexible labour contracts without access to social benefits;
- growing numbers of foreign residents experiencing difficulties in entering the labour- and housing market and working in precarious or dangerous jobs, leading to multiple exclusion and segregation processes and a constantly growing number of disadvantaged people.

As concerns the institutional/administrative context, it has to be underlined that social policy in Italy is delivered through a complex system with specific responsibilities allocated at municipal, provincial, regional and national level, leading in effect to profound territorial differences. The city of Bologna cooperates with public bodies to provide social services, the so called ASPs (Public Utilities for Services to People). On the basis of nine year contracts to manage and provide services, they share the planning and creating of local social networks. Services are run and provided not only by public entities but also by non-profit social organizations which are either directly appointed through the ASP or have to win public open tenders. Type A social cooperatives provide social services, health services and education services. Type B social cooperatives offer work integration for disabled or disadvantaged people. Financial resources for social interventions, and services for immigrants and young people, are funded mainly by the Municipality, private foundations, national government and the ASPs.

Through the General Social Service Regulations of 2008, all people in Bologna are entitled to obtain information about the services available and to have their needs assessed. The municipal Social Services are now integrated in a network and are reduced in terms of their complexity to three typologies: actions of support, home services and residential services. Access to services is organized through the Territorial Social Service of a neighbourhood. A Social Help Desk provides information, consultancy and advice about services; a Professional Social Service ensures

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25 Municipality of Bologna, Social Helpdesk Statistical Report, 2011

professional consultancy and accessibility. Supported housing provided by the ASP and other third sector operators can be differentiated by three types of intensity:

- Low threshold: direct access to emergency accommodation for one week.
- First level: meeting primary supported housing needs followed by a process of emancipation and improvement of conditions, duration 1-3 month, renewable in 6 months.
- Second level: full scale services by territorial social service with duration determined by people's needs.

## Practice under review before the experiment

Within the context briefly summarised above, the practice chosen for the review is directly related to how the main actor involved in the project (Consortium Arcolai) is carrying out its own activities and conducting its own internal and external relations. The Consortium L'Arcolai is an umbrella organization of three private organizations which had previously operated as voluntary or non-profit groups (the social co-operatives Co-op La Strada, Co-op Arca di Noè and Co-op La piccola Carovana)<sup>26</sup> plus a voluntary association Arc-en-Ciel. These four members have experience dating back to 2000 in managing public social services for immigrants, disabled and disadvantaged people. These services were initially provided by volunteers and then transferred to co-operatives. Later they combined to form a consortium with the goal of addressing the needs of homeless people, asylum seekers and immigrants. The Consortium "L'Arcolai" was launched in 2010 to participate in a Municipality of Bologna tender for the management of public services for homeless people and the social integration

of asylum seekers and immigrants. With the creation of the consortium, the three organizations hoped to achieve the following objectives:

- a synergetic approach (particularly economically);
- strong collaboration to ensure the quality of delivered services; and
- a common legal status to provide guarantees when applying for public tenders published by the Municipality of Bologna and the ASP.

At the same time, the Consortium wanted to create a shared mission among its members given the fact that all the activities managed by the Consortium were similar in their goals and methodology.

The Consortium offers a personalized service to determine the best strategy for providing accommodation and support to each client in order to promote his/her independence. As part of this process it assists the clients through social mediation, exercising citizenship rights and support to search for permanent housing (by acting as mediator to private landlords during the tenancy, translating contracts and helping with furniture, water and electricity).

Moreover, the Consortium's engagement in job search activities for their clients led to the creation of a job office, traineeships and professional workshops using peer educators. Other services include translation and intercultural mediation, advice about local services and creative workshops.

To achieve its goals, the Consortium is actively networking and cooperating with public and private organizations at all levels.

In particular, the Consortium uses the network of public and private services for the benefit of each service user. It creates links with all services (dormitories, the Central Service for Asylum Seekers, private associations for protection and reception), but also facilitates access to public specialist health services and looks for volunteers (volunteers can assist by finding food, involving users in social and cultural events and teaching Italian language).

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<sup>26</sup> The members of the Consortium have recently extended their networking with the Consortium "Indaco" and the cultural association "Naufragi" in order to enforce their social mission.

All these contacts and means of accessing services are documented in specific schedules, also in the form of case histories. All documents and reports are regularly sent to the Municipality for a systematic and continuous updating, which is enforced by periodic meetings.

The Consortium aims therefore at maintaining an exchange with the Municipality, especially in relation to short outcomes and the success of interventions, potential difficulties in entering public offices and new emerging requirements. This use of social and administrative networks is important to build up the sources of service users' support, in order to provide benefits but also to create a continuous exchange of knowledge about citizenship rights and duties.

The main objective is to promote the independence, success, and stability of each immigrant and their integration into local society. At the same time, Consortium activities seek to:

- create a positive connection with society, especially for those who have just become legal adults;
- support immigrants in looking for a job, and also maintaining and improving their employment situation;
- support immigrants in finding housing solutions;
- promote the social inclusion of immigrants and their active presence in social life;
- support the reunification of immigrant families; and
- promote residents' responsibility to take active care in maintaining and caring about the centres according to the idea of self-promotion and empowerment of the beneficiaries.

The Consortium is managed by a Board of Directors which includes people from the three social cooperatives and the voluntary association. Coordination between consortium partners had started in the early 2000s but stopped for budget reasons. So, the process of establishing a real and effective joint identity, com-

mon approach and methodology of work among the different organisations that are part of the Consortium was, at the beginning of the experiment, still an ongoing one.

As a preliminary phase of the experiment, members of the Consortium participating in the experiment were asked to answer a set of closed questions regarding their organizations, the consortium and the experimentation. The first set of questions helped to understand the baseline with regard to the extent of integration within the Consortium. As the annexed Table 1 shows, members of Consortium still saw themselves more as member of their own organizations than of the Consortium. Only 5% of respondents agreed (with no reservations) that they were part of the Consortium, while 60% of respondents declared that they felt themselves part of their own organisation. The Consortium is still perceived as something that is taking form; and this process is not yet fully internalised and understood by the professionals involved.

This perception is reinforced when looking at the answers to a second set of statements around the perception of the Consortium (see annexed Table 2). The creation of the Consortium is still perceived in an ambivalent way. Both the second and the sixth statement recognise that the creation of the Consortium is a slow, complex and difficult task, but while the second statement clearly identifies a positive benefit to integration ("it is long and complex but can bring added value to all the organization"), the sixth stresses the differences among the Consortium organizations ("it is a difficult path because every organization is a world on its own"). Moreover, more than 85% of respondents agreed that the Consortium was created for "instrumental" reasons in order to have more chances of winning public tenders. The higher percentage of "quite agree" to this statement instead of "completely agree" suggests that, although this was one of the initial reasons for creating the Consortium, there are now other reasons for taking a more integrated approach. However, nearly 95% com-

pletely agreed or quite agreed that there were positive potential outcomes of the Consortium such as increasing the quality of the delivered services. Also the statement that the Consortium can increase the possibility of lobbying had a high percentage of agreement (more than 85% of completely agreed or quite agreed), although this was the only statement where there was some non-agreement (4.8%).

## Experiment – methodology and process

The Consortium L'Arcolaio was visited by a project team from Newcastle in January 2012. In this peer review visit, three points were highlighted:

1. The importance of making a statement of the core values which are at the basis of work carried out by the Arcolaio Consortium. This would involve a set a number of common goals that all projects could agree to work towards, in order to unite and integrate further the work of the different parts of the Consortium.
2. Linked to the common goals, the Newcastle team suggested to make explicit the pathways by which a homeless person, or an asylum seeker or migrant, might move from being a service user to being completely independent. While the pathway will vary between individuals, it was thought helpful to have a model of the type of steps to independence that are typically taken.
3. Finally, it was also noted that voluntary help has often been provided in the form of 'once only' assistance, while the Consortium might explore the feasibility of recruiting volunteers to provide regular, befriending support to service users.

On the basis of this feedback, the Bologna team agreed to carry out an experiment in order to achieve:

- a consolidated identity among Arcolaio Consortium;
- more linkages with different organisations and services;

- an improvement in communication inside and outside the Arcolaio Consortium.

To achieve the goals set out above, the experimentation phase was structured into three phases: information (about the way different organisations forming the Arcolaio Consortium actually work together and the way different subjects - professionals and volunteers - collaborate and work together), experimentation (defining, sharing and communicating common goals and work standards as well as formalizing joint working between professionals and volunteers) and ongoing evaluation. The intention was to 'bend' the routines of the Arcolaio Consortium, in relation to collaboration and working together to deliver services, in order to achieve the three aims outlined above.

To this end, the experiment was structured alongside the following activities:

- appointing of a Technical Working Group composed by one/two people from each organisations forming the Arcolaio Consortium in order to coordinate the entire experiment process;
- carrying out separate focus groups within each organisation in order to identify the main values, approaches and methodologies adopted by the organisation;
- reporting results of the focus group in plenary meetings in order to allow each organisation to present and discuss their results with the others;
- defining in plenary meetings a set of Consortium common values to be presented in a Consortium "Charter of values and intervention model";
- drafting the Charter;
- approving of the Charter by the Arcolaio Consortium;
- presentation of the Charter (inside and outside the Arcolaio Consortium);
- defining a formal procedure to include volunteers in the delivery of services (also with a social security assurance) and appointment of a common contact point for all volunteers involved within Arcolaio Consortium.

Monitoring and evaluation of the experiment took place through documentation and feedback meetings with the whole Bologna team and Consortium members. Furthermore, expert interviews were carried out and a survey was conducted to investigate the role of the Consortium.

### Results and Lessons

The experiment was carried out successfully. The following table shows the main processes, outputs and outcome indicators.

<p>Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 technical working group established;</li> <li>4 technical working group meetings;</li> <li>8 participants at each technical working group meeting;</li> <li>2 Consortium feedback meetings;</li> <li>35 participants at Consortium feedback meetings;</li> <li>3 focus groups conducted with a participative approach adopted for the feedback and participants involvement;</li> <li>1 volunteers meeting;</li> <li>5 new volunteers involved.</li> </ul>
<p>Outputs and Outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>charter and procedures adopted and signed by the Bologna Municipality;</li> <li>volunteers procedure adopted;</li> <li>1 volunteer contact point appointed;</li> <li>increased identity;</li> <li>better communication inside and outside Consortium;</li> <li>increased joint working and networking;</li> <li>increased quality of service delivery.</li> </ul>

As noted above, the experiment went through a process of involving all organizations of the Consortium and its members both through focus groups in individual organizations and plenary feedback meetings with all members of the Consortium. As a consequence, the drafting of the Charter of Values and services had a strong participative element. The drafting of the Charter was also the occasion to re-start a process of effective joint working among professionals in different organizations. It was agreed that inter-organisational meetings should be established for professionals to share and discuss together how to run specific services and/or how to better design the use of specific spaces.

The idea of establishing separate focus groups within individual organizations was considered to be effective in the first phase of the experiment. Each group was in charge of defining a set of values at the basis of its organization and of identifying the main methodology adopted in delivering services. The joint working and the possibility of discussing in small groups (before) and in big groups (after) was one of the main success factors of the experiment. According to participants the process was very useful to “better understand each other” and to increase the awareness of specific roles and identities within the Consortium. The necessity of “translating” the main results of the focus group discussions into a common document (both on values and approach and methodology of work) was also useful because it enhanced communication between Consortium members who had to find a “shared” language or express similar concepts and activities.

Other outcomes are explicitly expressed in the table of questionnaire results (see Table 3 to 5 annexed).

The process implemented during the experimentation was particularly effective in increasing the reciprocal understanding among professionals and organizations, and in creating a Consortium glossary and language. The process also built up the Consortium’s identity.

At the same time, the Charter is seen as a very useful tool to increase communication inside the Consortium and to increase both strategic and operative linkage among different organizations in the Consortium. In support of this statement it is worth emphasizing that both the Municipality of Bologna and the Consortium Indaco have formally signed the “Charter of values and intervention model”. This ensures that, in Bologna, there is now a recognised way of delivering services according to a common set of values and intervention methodology. Moreover the Charter has already “opened” the dialogue among professionals and volunteers and users. For example, specific joint activities with the Consortium Indaco are already planned.

External Traineeship



## Annex

**Table 1 – You are part of - You belong to ... (Agreement to the following statement)**

		Completely agree	Quite agree	Nearly agree	Not agree	Total
1	My specific organization	60.0	20.0	20.0	-	100.0
2	Arcoliao Consortium	5.0	70.0	25.0	-	100.0
3	Something in between that is taking a form just now	26.3	47.4	21.1	5.3	100.0

**Table 2 – The creation of the Consortium is ...**

		Completely agree	Quite agree	Nearly agree	Not agree	Total
1	An “instrumental” path to access to public tenders	33.8	42.9	23.3	-	100.0
2	A slow and complex path that can give an added value to the single organizations within the Consortium	38.1	52.4	9.5	-	100.0
3	A needed path to reinforce the capacity to give feedback to service users with more integrated and complex needs	35.0	45.0	20.0	-	100.0
4	A useful path to increase the quality of delivered services	33.3	61.9	4.8	-	100.0
5	A useful tool to increase the possibility of lobbying	33.3	52.4	9.5	4.8	100.0
6	A difficult path because every single organization within the Consortium is a world on its own	43.3	28.6	28.1	-	100.0

**Table 3 – The choice of drafting a Charter of Values and Services implemented by the Consortium is ...**

		Completely agree	Quite agree	Nearly agree	Not agree	Total
1	A way to reinforce the Consortium's identity	66.7	28.6	4.8	-	100.0
2	A way to communicate the Consortium's values and competences	61.9	38.1	0.0	-	100.0
3	A way to better understand each other within the Consortium	71.4	28.6	0.0	-	100.0



**Table 4 – The Charter has the capacity to ...**

	Average rate
be used in the territory	7.1
increase a strategic linkage among different organizations in the Consortium	7.7
increase an operative linkage among different organizations in the Consortium	7.5
increase communication inside the Consortium	8.2
increase the communication outside the Consortium	7.2
increase communication between professionals, volunteers and service users	7.5

Maintenance with clients preventing from working by law





## 5. Expanding the scope of a case management system in support of young people at risk of homelessness in Hamburg, Germany

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Ines Moers and Heide Schmidtman (Lawaetz Service GmbH, Hamburg)

### Socio-economic and policy context

The welfare system in Germany has often been described as the prototype of a conservative ‘Bismarckian’ model: social security is mainly based on social insurance and entitlement to support is linked to employment. Subsidiarity sees the state as last resort after family and civil society support and cohesion. Demographic and economic changes challenged this model, and, in 2005, a major welfare state reform that puts a strong emphasis on employment through a shift ‘from welfare to workfare’ was introduced. The three pillar system of social insurance was transformed into a two pillar system of *unemployment benefit I* (insurance based, maximum 1 year) and *means-tested unemployment benefit II* (tax based). According to the guiding principles of ‘promoting and challenging’, sanctions like reductions or denial of benefit can be introduced if co-operation with the Jobcenter is denied. Sanctions for people younger than 25 are particularly rigid, causing additional stress for those who already have difficulties coping with labour market requirements.

The key point of references for **services for homeless people** are articles 67-69 of the Social Security Code Ch.XII that aim at *overcoming particular social difficulties*. According to the German constitution, which states that municipalities hold the key responsibility for providing services of general interest, most cities have established a system for homelessness prevention. There are usually central offices for coordinating the services, which are mostly provided by non-governmental welfare organizations.

### Socio-economic situation of Hamburg<sup>27</sup>

Hamburg is a city state with a constantly growing population (about 1.9 million people in 2012). Although the city’s population is relatively wealthy and the overall unemployment rate has dropped from 8.5% (2005) to 6.1% (2010), it is also a socially and economically divided city, with high inequalities between various social groups and neighbourhoods. The share of children depending on welfare benefits varies between 3.3% (Eppendorf) and 52% (Veddel) with a city-wide average of 25%. In Hamburg, 50% of all households are single people. Due to a dense housing market, in some traditional working class areas like St. Pauli rents have climbed extraordinary in the last decade from 7€/m<sup>2</sup> in 2000 to 12€/m<sup>2</sup> in 2011. People on a lower income, or who depend on welfare benefits, are forced into more peripheral areas, as the rate of welfare benefits is not adjusted to the rapid increases in rent.

The number of homeless people in Hamburg is estimated at around 4,000, of which about 1,000 seem to live permanently on the street. 2,500 live in municipal housing units for situations of need or are accommodated in an emergency winter programme providing 600 beds. A recent study showed that 22% of homeless people are women and 12% are under 25 years old.<sup>28</sup>

27 See: COM.IN Local Report Hamburg 2011, all statistical information is obtained from the “neighborhood database” of the regional statistical office: <http://www.statistik-nord.de/fileadmin/regional/regional.php>

28 Schaak, Torsten (2009): *Obdachlose, auf der Straße lebende Menschen in Hamburg 2009*, published by: Behörde für Soziales, Familie, Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz, Hamburg

Since 2005 the city has coordinated the various elements of homelessness prevention and support through a **coordinating office for housing needs**<sup>29</sup> (Bezirkliche Fachstelle für Wohnungsnotfälle, BFW) in each of its seven districts. As 'one stop shops' they are an interface between the relevant departments and co-ordinate the support in case of housing urgency and social assistance according to Article 67. Services are commissioned to a range of welfare organizations. In addition, a cooperation agreement between the city administration and twelve housing companies ensures homeless people an entry to 600 flats per year on the mainstream housing market; a good share of them through placement by local welfare organizations.

## Practice under review

The **cooperation agreement** between city and housing providers sets out three levels of need which entitle households to help with housing and access to the 600 flats assigned through this agreement (150 of them for "Level 3" clients). "Level 3" clients, who are the target group of the practice under review here, are homeless persons with social problems and debts, who are unable to solve upcoming problems independently and who will need extra support from an NGO and a financial safeguard for their tenancy. The "Level 3" clients usually suffer from a variety of problems, e.g. high indebtedness, drug addiction, alcoholism, mental disorders, poor physical conditions, lack of language skills or an unsettled residency permit status. Young adults under 25 (U25), often without a school leaving certificate, represent a special target group due to their specific needs and situation. Many of them cannot keep up with the bureaucracy and the requirements that an independent tenancy and the Jobcenter puts on them. This leads to sanctions (up to 100% of their social benefit) and therefore sometimes even to homelessness. Additionally, drug abuse and

indebtedness within this group are often at a high level. Instead of a stable home, this group often finds shelter at a friend's flat which initially seems a better option than rough sleeping but in the longer term will not train them to cope with the requirements of adult life, nor give them financial security. In addition, they do not use public support systems as much as older homeless people. As a result, they are a hard to reach group and there are only few specified services provided<sup>30</sup>.

The **Lawaetz-Service GmbH** is one of five NGOs that support homeless households categorized as "Level 3". In case of the Lawaetz-Service GmbH this takes the form of a case-management approach. It is based on a "housing first" concept, and involves a one year sublet that is given to the clients by the NGO, allowing clients with multiple problems to settle down in their own flat before starting to work on their individual needs and challenges. This contrasts with a "continuum of care" approach, where they would have to take certain steps before they qualify for an independent tenancy.<sup>31</sup>

## Challenges

Although successful overall, the project still faces some challenges. It has a professional bias, informal support structures are not fully explored, although the staff primarily act as rental advisers and not as social workers. Support is centred around the ability of the person to manage his/her home and finances, so a range of issues from employability to meaningful daytime activities tend not to be addressed due to a lack of cooperation with organizations involved with these activities. Case work is also limited to the one-year sublet period; there is no follow-up structure or monitoring.

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29 See: COM.IN Local Report Hamburg 2011, p. 4

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30 See: COM.IN Local Report Hamburg 2011, p.5

31 Atherton/Nicholls: 'Housing First' as a means of addressing multiple needs and homelessness. In: European Journal of Homelessness, Volume 2, Dec 2008 p. 289-303

## Experiment – methodology and process

The experimentation phase took place between April and October 2012. The goal of the experiment was to extend the network of organisations and support structures that are reached via case management and to create more synergies and cooperation. Besides contacts concerning the provision of social care and debt advising, access to meaningful and empowering activities for the clients was sought. Also, attempts were made to identify, and eventually remove, barriers to participation. To achieve these goals, staff had to go beyond their mandate and day to day praxis. These goals were based on recommendations of practitioners from a project for integration in Malmö/Sweden (“Fenix”) following a peer-review visit to Hamburg (January 2012).

To reach the overall goals, five objectives were developed and respective activities identified as well as output and impact indicators to measure the effects of specific actions:

1. Raise awareness of potential services and support structures among the Lawaetz team and other organizations,
2. Enhance knowledge of these opportunities through information interviews with potential new partners,
3. Create synergies (by offering help in the process of linking clients to organizations),
4. Inform clients about services and
5. Ensure that the client has access/is linked to resources/services.

### Baseline - information

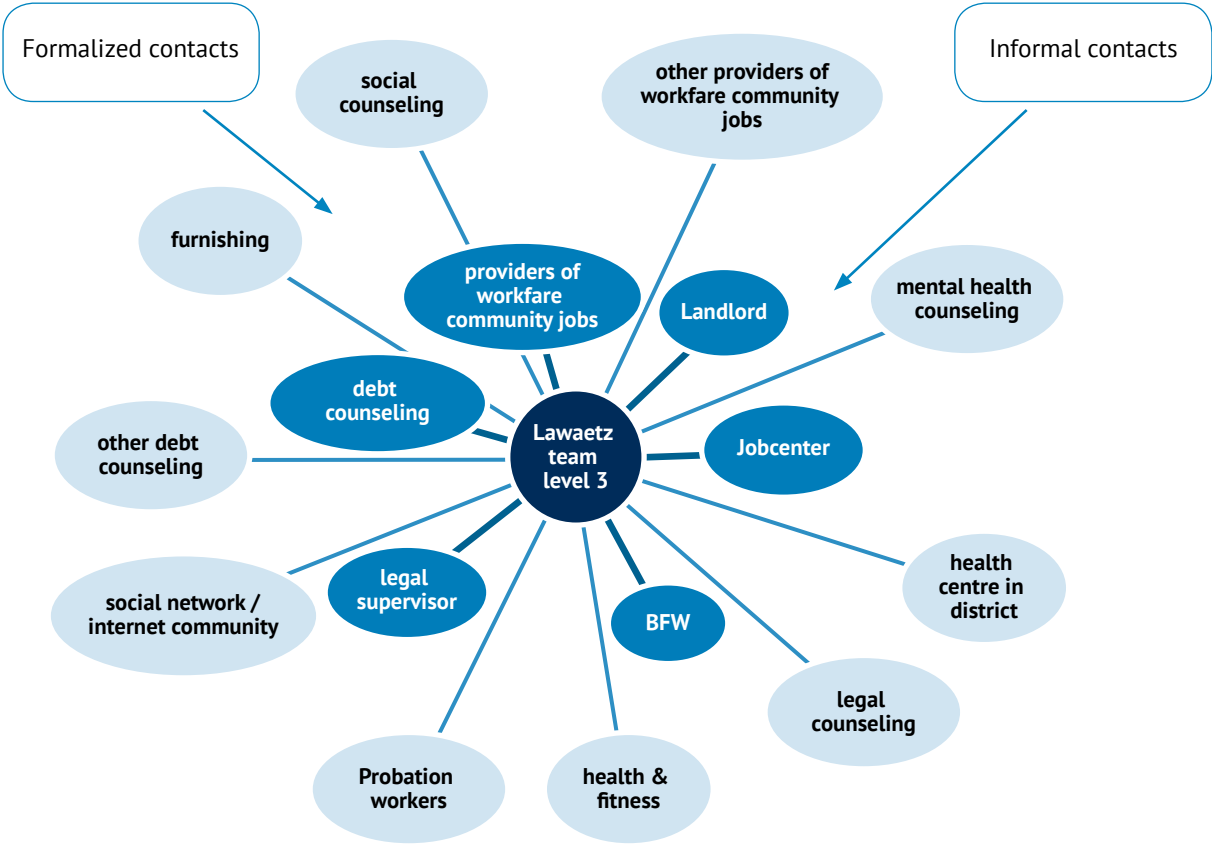
To implement the recommendations, the project team chose to slightly change their way of working with other organisations: Instead of engaging with potential partners scattered around the whole city, they chose a specific neighbourhood for the experimentation phase, the “Grindelsiedlung”, where a number of young households are located and have their social

environment. Research showed that beside formalized contacts a great number of informal contacts/ networks exist which the project team only address sporadically through the process of case management (see figure 3 on page 26). **Formalized contacts** (inner circle) were then briefed about the project and made aware of the clients’ specific living conditions. During the 12 month sublet, the project team has regular contacts with these organizations. Beside these contacts there is also a range of organizations and services which are more **informal** (“being in touch”) and spontaneous, or where the staff simply know of their existence and would approach if necessary. We saw that there is quite a disparity of knowledge about the different institutions between the different project team members according to their job experience. This could lead to a variable use of resources and transfer of information to clients. The staff members try to solve this situation by having regular team meetings and case conferences.

The „Grindelsiedlung” in Hamburg



Figure 3: Case management network of the Lawaetz “level 3” team at the “Grindel”-Neighbourhood in Hamburg Eimsbüttel



The experiment

The aim of the experiment was to find organizations that could help to widen the range of meaningful activity for the young clients in the “Level 3” project in a context of “actively including” them into society and giving them spaces and opportunities in their social environment that they could identify with. So it was important to provide not just activities specially designed for homeless people but also services that just happen to be in the neighbourhood. Informal contacts which the team only addressed sporadically could be used to meet nearly all of their clients’ needs. Therefore, the experiment was used to bring some of these “informal” contacts in the neighbourhood closer to the actual “formal” case management

network. Potential new partners were selected according to the following criteria:

- meaningful and empowering activities that facilitate Active Inclusion
- good accessibility for clients (in terms of cost, theme and local access inside the social environment of the “Grindel” neighbourhood)
- willingness to work with the target group
- resources for individual contact with the project team
- capacity to create specific offers to ease/assist clients’ access to the institution

A risk factor that was considered when the experiment started was that new cooperation partners

could see the Lawaetz team as the clients' social workers and so might assume a mandate beyond housing related case management, addressing to them all the questions and problems related to the client/the target group. In initial interviews, the conditions of cooperation were therefore clarified. Six organisations agreed to individual information interviews/meetings with the project team:

**Hochschulsport Hamburg** (University Sports club)

**Grindel e.V.** (union of traders in area)

**SAGA GWG** (landlord in Grindel Area)

**Facebook community of the "Grindel" neighbourhood  
Jobcenter in the area**

These meetings helped to inform both sides about each other's activities. After a round of meetings with these organizations the information was assessed and relevant offers for clients were identified. In a next step, the five participants were informed about these services and opportunities and encouraged to approach them. A service that was of interest to all was the university sports club; for other organisations, the level of interest varied between clients.

#### Participants in the Experiment

The U25 clients living in the "Grindelsiedlung" have a variety of needs. Of the **five clients** selected for the experiment three are male and two female. They are either in temporary employment, attend school or are enrolled in some sort of employment training. In individual interviews, the clients were informed about the project and asked for further requests or demands concerning their daytime activities. All clients expressed that they would favour hints for activities concerning sport and social contacts and that new activities would have to be in their neighbourhood/social environment and therefore easy to access.

## Results and Lessons

Reflecting on the experimentation, the Lawaetz- Team believes that four of the five objectives were achieved:

1. Raise awareness of potential services and support structures among the Lawaetz team and other organizations,
2. Enhance knowledge of these opportunities through information interviews with potential new partners,
3. Create synergies (by offering help in the process of linking clients to organizations),
4. Inform clients about services

Goal 5, however, "linking the clients to new services", was achieved for some but not all participants.

In fact, it became clear the target group could be divided into two groups:

- One group of clients has enough resources to find and maintain meaningful activities on their own. These are clients where the tenancy can be seen as "safe" after the first year in their tenancy because they stick to rent payments and other commitments linked to the flat. Apart from keeping a tenancy they also have positive conditions to manage daily life through hobbies, friendships and connections to services they require. These tenants take responsibility for their life and can adapt to new situations.
- For a second group of clients, however, the sheer struggle of securing the tenancy as well as their daily subsistence leaves no room for any engagement with "meaningful daytime activity". They have barely any resources to manage their daily life due to various problems (like mental illness, debts, idleness etc.), for which they have insufficient contact with service providers or networks. Keeping the tenancy lies at the centre of their daily activities.

The following examples illustrate the problem at hand:

**Client D 19/female (group one):** This client co-operates positively with services. She keeps the conditions of her tenancy (appointments with the team, house rules, rental payments etc) and accepts the help offered by the team. A longstanding difficulty is that the tenant is being followed by her ex-boyfriend who has been stalking her for several years now. However, instead of fleeing the situation, she found help from a therapist, informed the police and started seeing a counsellor. She introduced the different services to each other so everyone knows about each other and can stay in contact with the other institution. She recently began a job-training scheme, which is usually a point where rental payments are missed because the benefits are no longer transferred directly to the landlord but instead have to be paid by the tenants herself. In this case, the new job was a positive change because the tenant took care of her payments right away and let the team know about the changes. When questions occurred, she asked for help initially. The team sees her long-term goal of managing and keeping the tenancy secured. The client is able to manage her daily life and has a good and stable network of counselling, family and friends. She does not need the offers from new cooperation partners that have arisen from the experiment.

**Client B 19/male (group two):** This client had just moved into his apartment when the experiment started. From the beginning, he was neither able to keep to appointments with Lawaetz and other institutions nor the conditions of his rental contract in general. Even after several reminders he did not pay his rent and electricity bills. This was due to sanctions from the Jobcenter which were announced after missing several appointments there. In addition, the rental company continuously received noise complaints from his neighbours. Even though the Lawaetz-Service GmbH worked together with the Jobcenter, his mother and his girlfriend to try to prevent the sanctions, he declined almost all counselling offers.

These difficulties were aggravated because the youth advice centre that was asked to help declined to work with him because he had had so many different options and supporting institutions in the past, which had not proved effective. The problems with noise and his unwillingness to take the help offered led to the cancellation of his rental contract. It was clear that he was unable to cope with the requirements of daily life, meaning that managing a tenancy was too big a challenge for him. The Lawaetz team needed to concentrate on the protection of housing first, whilst additional daytime activities came second in the experiment and were of less importance.

### Findings

- The team is aware of the complex situations their clients have to deal with. Therefore it was difficult to connect them to further commitments that they might fail to comply with (payment of membership fees, etc.).
- In order to attend new activities, some clients would need much more support than the Lawaetz-team could provide during the experiment. Due to the limitation of resources and a mandate which ends after the 12 month period, the team cannot serve as a long term contact partner for other institutions the client starts to work with. That's why the Lawaetz team tries to help coordinating the services and sensitize every institution and the client for the topics different institutions have in common.
- The Lawaetz team recognized that they primarily act as landlords and that they would struggle with a conflict of roles if they had the additional responsibility of facilitating meaningful daytime activity.
- In addition it seemed that the clients – who know the Lawaetz team as their landlord in the first place – struggled to accept the encouragement towards “daytime activity” in the COM.IN project. The tenants did not see the Lawaetz team in the role of someone who is able to help them find a job. Their disorientation was noticeable through

them being passive and missing appointments concerning these new offers. At the same time the same clients were still very reliable when it came to appointments concerning their tenancy.

Especially for the U25 clients it became clear that the tenancy was only one part of the transition phase into adulthood and independent living. The key question was whether a client was able and willing to take responsibility for his life or not. If he/she was able and willing to do so, finding meaningful daytime activities was not a problem at all.

In general the Lawaetz team recommends the coordination of services for each client through a personalized case management approach that supports the client into independent living. The two examples show that the team can neither support the clients who are coping well nor the ones that struggle with basic aspects of everyday life, unless every institution involved has a clear understanding of which tasks will/will not be fulfilled and by whom and which expectations will/will not be met from the beginning of the process. So what is really important about the process is that the responsibilities of each service provider or partner in the network are clearly defined to avoid role conflicts.

In the course of the experimentation, the team reached its limits in this task and found itself in a role conflict, with their main responsibility being in the housing area as a quasi-landlord. The team feels that it should be located in a more peripheral position in the network of providers rather than as the spider at the center of the web.

Therefore, the team feels confirmed in the working methods it had applied before the experiment, concentrating on housing first.

The additional task (trying to find meaningful daytime activities) could only be fulfilled if it came with a clear mandate so that the team as well as the clients understood the nature of these new responsibilities.

## Conclusions

Although personalised case management is well established in some sectors of social policy and social work (e.g. for young offenders, young mothers etc.), it is still slightly unusual in the work with homeless persons. Although Hamburg has a good and differentiated system of social care providers in the sector of homelessness, it importantly lacks coordination of responsibilities in some areas, which might lead to the "loss" of clients (as shown by the second case illustrated above, client B).

The experiment showed that lining up actors around a case is not easy to achieve. Any coordination role must be backed by a clear mandate. This is the case when, for example, a legal supervisor is announced. His mandate includes an independent case management role that has the authority to coordinate different services in a central position. In the experiment, the Lawaetz team tested if it could take on a similar central role for five cases by expanding its case management network and trying to turn some informal contacts into more formalized contacts. Overall the experimentation suggested that this new position for the team would result in role conflict. It would suggest to other organisations as well as clients a centrality that it could not fulfil in the long-term. Also it contradicted the well-established principle of clearly defining experts in the case management network. This does not mean that closer coordination is not necessary, but that other forms of coordination (committees, protocols etc) have to be tested which avoid the centrality of one organisation over others.





The „Gründelsiedlung“ in Hamburg



## 6. Enhanced Pathway Planning to Prevent Homelessness among Care Leavers in Newcastle, UK

*By Jamie Harding (Northumbria University), Kate McLoughlin (Newcastle City Council), Louise Metcalfe (Newcastle City Council) and Sharon Brown (Youth Homeless North East)*

### Socio-economic and Policy Context

The experimentation discussed in this Chapter combines consideration of housing issues and the care of children looked after by the local authority, so the context for both these areas of policy is provided briefly here. Addressing housing first, 30,000 properties owned by Newcastle City Council (the local authority) are managed on its behalf by an organisation called Your Homes Newcastle. The other main source of housing for young people in the city is non-government organisations (NGOs), which provide over 600 bedspaces of emergency and non-emergency accommodation in the city.

The local authority maintains a strategic role in the area of housing and has legal responsibilities under national homelessness legislation. Two key policy developments which created this strategic responsibility are:

- The 2002 Homelessness Act which requires local authorities to work strategically and in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle homelessness.
- The introduction of the Supporting People programme in 2003. Money which had previously been paid by central government directly to NGOs to meet the housing related support costs of homeless people and other groups was transferred to local authorities. This enabled authorities to commission housing and support services from NGOs and others in line with their strategic aims.

Newcastle City Council has historically been seen as a progressive local authority in relation to homelessness, particularly in its work with young homeless people.<sup>32</sup> Young people benefit particularly from The Young People's Service of Your Homes Newcastle. This service is commissioned by Newcastle City Council and provides assessments and prevention services to 16-17 year olds. It also offers a supported housing block, a specialist hostel for young people and a visiting support service to young people across the city. Young people are consulted via two representative groups, Youth Voice and the Youth Independence Forum.

Turning to the second area of policy, children who cannot be cared for by their parents and are instead looked after by the local authority are referred to as being 'in care'. On their discharge from the local authority as adults these young people are referred to as 'care leavers.' In Newcastle, the number of children and young people in care was 509 in 2010, a rate of 97.7 per 10,000 children under 18, which was considerably higher than the national rate.<sup>33</sup>

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 created a system of Pathway Plans to be agreed by the local authority and a young person in care by their sixteenth birthday. Local authorities are responsible for meeting all the financial needs of the young person until they are aged 18, even if they are living independently. Care leavers continue to receive a high

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32 Venn, 1985; Harding, 2004

33 Newcastle City Council, 2011

level of priority under the homelessness legislation until they are 21.

Despite these legal requirements, care leavers are consistently over-represented in studies of homeless people. For example, Harding et al. (2011) found that 25% of their sample of homeless people in the North East of England had been in care, compared to approximately 1% of the general population – a similar figure to previous studies of homeless people.

### Practice under Review before the Experimentation

Prior to the experimentation, social workers within Newcastle's 16+ team created Pathway Plans with young people in care via an electronic system that made brief reference to housing issues. The 16+ team then worked closely with housing staff when housing problems arose. A group discussion of relevant professionals held prior to the experimentation made the following points about the strengths of joint working in Newcastle:

- The partnership between housing staff and the 16+ team was strong and had been made stronger in the previous 12-18 months. There had been a realisation that housing was a major part of the transition from care and individuals had begun to work well together, which had created the conditions for the more systematic improvements that the experimentation was seeking to bring about.
- Trust was developing between agencies and there was less discussion than previously about agencies not understanding each other's situation.
- There had been a change to viewing young people as children until they are 18, which staff regarded as a positive change.
- Agencies had responded to young people telling them that, had they known the difficulties involved in independent living, they would have stayed at home or in care longer. As a result, the Youth Independence Forum undertakes peer edu-

cation work and the Young People's Service had produced a film to be used to encourage young people to think realistically about independent living.

There was a consensus among staff that the experimentation discussed below was only made possible by the strength of joint working between housing and social services staff and, in particular the invaluable contribution of one housing professional who is given the pseudonym of H. The effectiveness of this joint working is demonstrated by the case of one young person who is referred to as P:

P has been in the care system for many years; his history includes a failed adoption and a long period in a Children's Home, with extra funding being found to enable him to stay in care until he was 19. He has a history of failure in different housing situations, in part due to his behavioural issues, emotional immaturity and vulnerability.

P's social worker felt that the homelessness section had played a major role in obtaining accommodation for P – H had been able to negotiate with housing providers, and, on occasions, to investigate the (false) allegations made about P's behaviour. The social worker praised H for advocating on P's behalf and for being a constant presence at case meetings.

At one point, P's social worker had suggested that P should spend a second spell in the local authority's temporary accommodation at Hill Court. H played a key role in insisting that Hill Court was not a suitable option for P. Although this led to some disagreement with the member of the 16+ team, the ultimate outcome was a good one, because P was diagnosed with autism (many had assumed that he had bipolar disorder) and found accommodation that was suitable for somebody with this condition.

Now that P gets good support in appropriate accommodation, his social worker feels more optimistic for his future, while acknowledging that he will always need some kind of support to live independently and has yet to develop many of the skills to do so.

However, staff agreed that there was a need for earlier work to prepare for the transition to independent housing. Despite a number of examples of effective joint working such as the one above, there remained difficulties with some young people who had been in care, particularly those who were involved in offending.

A group of young people who had been through the care system were asked about their experience of receiving services. Their assessment included the following points:

- Some felt inadequately prepared for independent living, although it was acknowledged that a good foster family (people acting temporarily as parents on behalf of the local authority) could provide effective preparation.
- The support provided by the Young People's Service was highly valued, but there were concerns that not all young people coming out of care received this support
- Some wanted more prescriptive advice about the housing options that were available to them.

## Experiment – Methodology and Process

The experiment arose from the peer review visit of the Hamburg team which highlighted weaknesses in the planning of transitions for care leavers and recommended the creation of panels to prevent homelessness. The panels were to take a competency (rather than age-based) approach to managing the transition to independent living for a small number of care leavers with complex needs. The goal was to bring about more successful transitions and a reduced risk of homelessness.

The experiment adopted this goal but made some adaptations to the process that had been recommended: it was decided that the creation of a new set of meetings would be too great a time commitment for staff who already faced many demands on their time.

Instead, agreement was reached to add a RAG (red, amber, green) assessment of potential housing need into the Pathway Planning process. The assessment examines three elements: a young person's financial situation, their practical skills and the likelihood of them maintaining a tenancy. For each of these elements the options are:

- Green – good chance of successful transition to independence;
- Amber – requires support in a number of areas to make a successful transition to independence;
- Red – strong concerns about successful transition to independence and about risk of future homelessness.

After assessing each of these elements, an overall assessment is made as to whether a young person is Red, Amber or Green. If they are assessed as being red or amber this represents a risk of homelessness and a housing professional becomes involved in care planning meetings with the 16+ team.

The RAG system could only be introduced towards the end of the project, so it was not possible to assess its impact on outcomes for young people. Instead an assessment was made of its likely value, based on the views of professionals and young people.

## Results and Lessons

A young person referred to as M was shown the RAG assessment system and gave very positive comments. She felt that it was good to identify, at the earliest opportunity, anyone who may have accommodation related issues.

M also felt that the RAG approach could be used as a measure or indicator of someone's situation improving or deteriorating. Discussion or exploration could take place around why someone has moved from green to amber or even red in terms of their assessed accommodation needs.

M felt that the RAG system could also be used to provide positive feedback to young people who are making the necessary adjustments and co-operating with services, i.e. explaining what has happened to move them from red to amber or green.

The hopes that staff had for the introduction of the RAG assessment through the Pathway Planning process included the following:

- The 16+ team felt that they would be able to identify at an earlier stage those young people who were likely to have housing difficulties.
- H felt that there would be benefits to her being involved in every case at the point where a young person was assessed as being red or amber, rather than becoming involved in such cases at the point of crisis.
- The 16+ team believed they would be able to better identify the type of preparation needed by a young person and to prevent unrealistic options from being taken.
- The 16+ team hoped that the identification of a young person as red or amber would not only lead to support from H but also, on occasions, to the young person meeting with a housing provider to explain what they needed to do before they could be considered for accommodation. In addition, the Young People's Service might begin to prepare a young person for a tenancy at an earlier stage.
- A housing professional felt that the RAG system might facilitate different thinking about young people moving out of the care system and, in particular, the questioning of whether it was necessary for this to involve a period of living in hostel accommodation.

Although all parties agreed that the RAG system was a positive development, there was also widespread agreement that it could not resolve all the difficulties faced by care leavers. H foresaw that problems could remain with young people being insufficiently prepared for independence and continuing to feel that hostel accommodation was the only option for them

as they moved into their 20s. The 16+ team identified a longer list of difficulties that the RAG system was unlikely to overcome, including the following:

- While the system might make clear to workers that a young person should be assessed as amber or red, the young person might disagree with this assessment and unrealistically perceive themselves to be ready for independence. However, a housing professional argued that the RAG assessment could have a positive impact on this situation because the young person could be presented with a clear set of steps to take in order to move from red to amber or from amber to green.
- Some young people were not willing to consider any plan for independence other than the one that they themselves have formed.
- While the RAG system could be effective in identifying a young person as needing more preparation from the age of 16, it could not deal with the reasons for them being poorly prepared at this stage.
- There remained a lack of housing choices for the most difficult young people, for example those about to be released from custody.
- More generally, housing work was often about choosing the best from a limited range of options, none of which were particularly appropriate.
- For some young people, housing shared with others who experienced similar difficulties to them was likely to aggravate their problems.

So the evaluation highlighted the importance of seeking to ensure that all young people in care receive the best possible preparation for independent living. A key issue is that young people who have been in care may not have a 'home' to return to. Case studies confirmed that many care leavers receive substantial support through several failed attempts at independent living, but their experience is clearly very different to those who can return to their family home for an indefinite period before making another attempt.

Not having the same sort of safety net in the event of making mistakes makes the question of preparing young people for their first attempt at moving out of care a particularly important one. The data collected here showed that there was some excellent joint working taking place, with the contribution of H being highly praised. It was encouraging to note that another staff member was being trained to take H's role on occasions when she was not available.

The effective joint working made possible the creation of the RAG system to deal with a weakness that many perceived in the present system, i.e. that not all young people were receiving adequate preparation for leaving care. It seems entirely appropriate that the RAG system is put in place to ensure that the examples of good practice are spread to all young people who need support.

The areas covered by the RAG system were agreed after a thorough consultation and were widely thought to be appropriate. In addition to providing a more comprehensive service, both the young person who examined the RAG assessment and H suggested a further advantage – it could be a helpful tool for discussing what a young person needs to do to better prepare themselves for independence. However, it would obviously be too optimistic to suggest that the RAG system could help to alleviate all of the long term needs of young people as they come out of local authority care: young people with offending histories were agreed by all to have particularly problematic circumstances.

Of course, a longer term evaluation of the RAG system would involve tracking those young people who were assessed as red or amber over a period of time to establish the services that they received as a result of the assessment and the impact that these services had. Such an evaluation is clearly impossible at this time. However, the COM.IN project has provided the mechanisms for the creation of an evidence base to demonstrate the long-term impact of case management, finding personalised solutions for young people

and housing allocation policies. Data will now be collected about the young people who have most difficulty in maintaining independence, pointing to more efficient and effective means of housing and care agencies working together, which will inform commissioning strategies.

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## 7. Expanding a social work method to a new context and target group – a case for “Fenix light”? Malmö/Sweden

*Pia Hellberg Lannerheim (City of Malmö) and Mikael Stigendal (University of Malmö)*

### Socio-economic context

Malmö is the third largest city in Sweden, with more than 300,000 residents from approximately 170 different nationalities. The city has a rich industrial heritage with large-scale manufacturing industries, mainly shipbuilding and textiles, dominating for several decades. Malmö has been regarded as the cradle of the Social Democratic movement in Sweden, due to all the organisations that started there in the late 19th century. After the franchise reform in 1919, the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) gained power in the city council and retained it for an uninterrupted period of 66 years. In Malmö, industrial society materialised, but it was also organised in a social democratic way.

When the Social Democratic Party lost its power in 1985, Malmö was in a process of profound change which peaked in the first part of the 1990s when a large part of the remaining industries closed. Within just a few years (1990-93), the employment rate dropped from 78% to 61%. The recession of the 1990s hit Malmö harder than any other city in Sweden. At the same time refugee immigration increased sharply.

Since 1994, the SAP has been back in power, presiding over a very divided and segregated city. At one end of this division, the decline has turned into an expansion, indicated by the establishment of a University (1998) which currently has 24,000 students, the building of the Oresund Bridge (2000), the housing exhibition (2001) and the building of the Turning Torso - a 54 floors and 194 m high housing skyscraper – in the

old harbour. At the other end of the division, large parts of Malmö have become characterised by social exclusion. These areas are associated with immigrants, often the ones that bear the brunt of long-term unemployment, poverty and social exclusion in general.

Currently, of all the inhabitants in Malmö, 30% or 87,600 are born abroad and the group from Iraq is the largest, 9,500 people. More than half of the school children in the city have a foreign background, defined as being born abroad or with at least one parent born abroad. Unfortunately, poverty makes its mark on their childhood and adolescence. According to a study initiated by the organisation Save the Children, 31% of the children (age 0-17) with a foreign background live in poverty-stricken households, the highest percentage among municipalities in Sweden.<sup>34</sup>

### Policy context

Youth unemployment in Sweden is currently 23.3 % in the age group 15-24 years (according to Arbetsförmedlingen, the Swedish Public Unemployment Office, October 2011) and is amongst the highest in Europe.

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<sup>34</sup> Salonen, Tapio (2012): Barns ekonomiska utsatthet i Sverige - årsrapport 2012:2, Malmö, download: <http://www.radda-barnen.se/Documents/vad-vi-gor/sverige/samhallets-ansvar/barnfattigdom/Barnfattigdom2012-2-1%C3%A5ng.pdf>

Actions to overcome youth unemployment and reduce the number of young persons who receive early retirement benefits (income support without an activation element to bring them closer to the labour market), are an issue that is high on the political agenda of the entire political establishment in Sweden. A government official inquiry, published in October 2012, found that, between the mid-1990s and 2007, the number of persons in the age group 20-34 with early retirement increased by 5% in Finland and just over 10% in Denmark. The equivalent figure in Norway was 45% and in Sweden a staggering 80%. Unsurprisingly, the report found that a low level of education, unemployment and poor childhood conditions are often at the root of early retirement. Participants at Fenix often find themselves in the borderland between work and early retirement so the actions taken by Fenix are highly relevant in the discussion of the vast number of early retirements in Sweden.

### Practise during review before the experiment

Fenix is a municipality-wide employment program set up by the City of Malmö. It is directed at young adults aged 18-24 years for whom conventional social support and labour market inputs have been shown to be insufficient. Activities supplement the municipality's other inputs in this area. The goal of these activities is to better prepare young people for work or studying. A majority of the participants at Fenix have no more than elementary education (compulsory schooling between 7 and 16 years old) and very few have experience of paid employment. Most participants have serious psychosocial problems, which may take the form of passivity or feelings of isolation and depression.

At Fenix, the Social Welfare Officers and psychologists work as a team. Work-based learning, psychotherapy and social support are cornerstones of the work undertaken at Fenix.

### Experiment – recommendations, methodology and experiment

In January 2013, the Bologna team carried out a peer review of the services provided by Fenix to young adults who have never entered the labour market or who have been excluded at an early age.

#### Strengths

The interviews carried out during the peer review visit allowed the identification of several strengths in the Fenix experience. The following are those considered most important:

- **Continuity in the Fenix experience.** Fenix has been running for 20 years and has evolved positively. This continuity allows the project to be well known in Malmö and to create and maintain strong and durable networks (for example with local firms for labour insertion and with municipality or state social workers who can identify the young people who would most benefit from the project).
- **The duration of the project.** Participation in Fenix tends to be a long term process (young people can attend for a maximum of three years with an average duration of 18 months). This is a very positive element which avoids the stress and the pressure of obtaining immediate results in a short time. It also means that more intense support can be provided in the first phase of the project (on average the first six months of contact with a young person). This helps to create a trusting relationship between the young people and the Fenix staff.
- **Strong and complementary roles division within Fenix.** The staff at Fenix is composed of social workers and psychologists who jointly help and support young people participating in the project. The interviews and the study visit as a whole showed a strong complementarity among these two professional roles which are essential to the good performance of the project.

- **Process of self-evaluation and self-improvement.** The interviews showed the motivation of the Fenix staff to improve their skills through training to support daily activities with young people. There are continuing activities of self-evaluation with a senior psychologist (supervisor) which allow staff to discuss problems and difficulties that may arise during daily activities and increase the complementarity of work between social workers and psychologists.
- **Different and flexible forms of intervention.** The Fenix project provides different activities that are tailored and adapted to the different needs and characteristics of the young person (personalization of the intervention within a common framework). In particular, the peer review team considered favourably the possibility of choosing the appropriate number of psychological therapy sessions (there is a fixed minimum, but then the young people together with the staff can decide to have more or not) and the appropriate amount of other individual and group activities.

## Recommendations

All recommendations for further development are based on two main considerations. The first one is related to the belief that, in the social context in which Fenix is operating, there is a strong need for the interventions that the project is conducting. The second one is related to the necessity of involving different actors both inside and outside the Municipality, in the context of social changes, reorganization of public services and the multi-dimensionality of the problems tackled by Fenix.

Based on the above considerations, the Bologna team made two recommendations that could be implemented in the social experiment:

- To intervene at an earlier stage with young people who are in or might be in a difficult social situation

- To achieve an extended interaction with the Educational administration (the “follow up unit” of the local authority)

These recommendations were considered by the Malmö team who then developed a design for the experiment that would aim at reaching out to a new target group.

## The social experiment

A proposal was sent out by the Fenix team to the Guidance centre in Malmö with an offer to work with six young adults from the follow-up team (drop-outs) categorized as being at risk of long term exclusion. None of these new participants should be on benefits as that could create a constraint on their participation. Fenix wanted voluntary participation with young people who were motivated to change. The Guidance centre identified a group of around 200 young people who were in an awkward situation and risked being marginalised in the long term. The Guidance centre found it difficult to work with all these young people.

That was the background to the idea presented in the proposal: to identify some of these 200 young people who could be worked with proactively before they became Fenix’s clients at a later stage. Fenix wanted to find out if their approach could help young people in this situation to be more involved in society. Fenix planned to approach a group of six young people who were motivated to make a change to their life, despite their difficulties. Motivation was underlined as particularly important.

The Guidance centre was eager to establish cooperation and did not anticipate any difficulties providing Fenix with members of this “new target group”. However Fenix only received 3 referrals; the reason given was a heavy workload at the Follow up unit. Later on, at the beginning of September, one more participant approached Fenix.

The new referrals had higher levels of need than was anticipated; consequently the approach had to change from offering work to questions of a more



investigative nature in order to put the “right “ demands on the participants. As the new group had not been on any benefits they had been supported by their parents, and the parents had been taking part in the planning process for their children. This created a necessity to build an alliance between parents and children.

## Results and lessons

Of the three participants, one went back to school after the training, and two moved on to a long-term rehabilitation program.

All three participants were Swedish young men - in a city where 30% are born abroad and another 10% have both parents born abroad. The parents had been struggling to find help for their children. No service had worked with these young people during their time in school. Their families had not had contact with social services before. The parents had jobs and supported their sons for the time being.

So young people who might appear to be socially included turned out to be socially excluded. This discovery of a new target group is an important outcome of the experimentation phase in Malmö. This target group is not entitled to get help from Fenix because they have parents who provide for them and do not want them to have contact with social services. These findings have started a process within the City of Malmö to examine these issues more carefully.

The project also opened up networks and made Fenix more visible, particularly to JobbMalmö (the labour unit of the City). Fenix now takes an active part in seminars and conferences, making presentations and seeking to cooperate with the different parts of the labour unit who are working actively with the target group, i.e. young unemployed people with the need for more support than the state employment centre can offer. Even just hosting a peer review gave Fenix

a great opportunity to market their activities and made them much more visible in the City of Malmö.

In the course of the project, Fenix staff learnt that, in order to attract new groups of young people, they have to make themselves seen and heard in new ways.

Another reflection is that it is important to cross some borders in order to develop a project. It is important to have a mandate from a higher organizational level in order to work with a new target group. There is a need for somebody to build bridges in the future between, among others, the Guidance centre and Fenix.

Relax area for participants



## 8. Reflections on transnational learning and policy recommendations

*Simon Güntner, Thomas Mirbach*

The COM.IN project was a transnational and interactive research project about local strategies to promote the Active Inclusion of young people. Researchers and practitioners from Bologna, Hamburg, Malmö and Newcastle came together to explore current practice and to develop and test new ideas. Hence, there were two major elements to the project: understanding and assessing practices already in place, and experimenting with new elements to improve these.

At first, we explored different approaches to promote the Active Inclusion of marginalised young persons in four cities. We learned about the respective social, economic, political and institutional contexts as well as the details of governance and operation. In Bologna, we saw the various interventions of L' Arcolaio to support young refugees. In Hamburg, we looked at the case management approach operated by Lawaetz Service GmbH, who apply a housing first approach and provide accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness. The Fenix project in Malmö combines work-based learning, psychotherapy and social support for young people with low educational attainment levels and psychosocial problems. In Newcastle, we reviewed the structures to prevent homelessness among care leavers.

We learned about each other's practice through peer reviews in which one city team undertook a self-assessment of its practice and was then visited by another city team that carried out a series of interviews before producing a report that included recommendations as to how the practice could be developed further.

In a second step, these recommendations informed a short period of experimentation (April 2012 – October 2012). In each city, the local practice was slightly modified during this period. In Bologna, the rather loosely joined parts of L' Arcolaio Consortium undertook a series of exercises to better align their work around a shared vision and develop a collective identity. In Hamburg, the case workers set out to expand their network of partners, reaching out to more informal forms of provision such as sporting and leisure activities. In Malmö, the Fenix team reached out to a new target group, strengthening the preventive elements of their approach. In Newcastle, better cooperation between services was sought through a new communication tool, a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) assessment of a young person's potential housing need.

Finally, these local experiments were monitored and evaluated. We found that in each city, the experiment has a legacy and the new elements will not disappear. In Bologna, the L' Arcolaio consortium now has a common charter and guidance to inform the practices of the various organisations involved. In Hamburg, the local practitioners were reassured about the value of the case management approach they had had in place, but also became more sensitive to its limits with regard to the specific needs of a particular subgroup of their clients. In Malmö, the Fenix team identified a group of young people who had not previously received support from social services but who were particularly vulnerable and in need of support. The city is now developing a strategy how to reach out to this group. In Newcastle, the new RAG commu-

nication system has been appreciated by professionals and young people and will therefore remain in place.

With such results, we regard the COM.IN social experimentation project as a great success. When discussing outcomes and reflecting on the process of learning, we arrived at a set of more general recommendations that will be valuable in other contexts. Necessarily, these are rather abstract and general. But as they are derived from successful experimentation on the ground and have been subject to empirical testing, we see them as valid and crucial contributions to building effective local strategies and networks that promote the Active Inclusion of young people. The recommendations are listed below:

### **1. “Dancing together” – Cornerstones of networking to promote Active Inclusion**

A starting point of the “Active Inclusion” concept is that one-dimensional approaches will not suffice when people are experiencing multiple disadvantages. It is widely accepted that to effectively tackle social exclusion, organisations that specialise in one area - be it education, employment, housing or other - need to align their activities and work together. Working across organisational boundaries is, however, not yet common practice. In the course of the COM.IN experiments, we have noted a number of limitations to joint working:

- Organisations or individuals can only take the lead and bring others together if they have a clear mandate and legitimation (which can develop gradually over time, but must be clear at some point).
- Networks have an important role to play in supporting young excluded people when single institutions can't meet needs or are amongst the causes of exclusion. Networks can be a temporary aid but do not replace the need to reform such institutions.

- Networks do not emerge spontaneously; they develop where people have a shared objective and incentives to work together.
- Networks can create synergies and innovation, but they can also defend corporate interests and degenerate into a closed shop; the composition and modus operandi of the network needs to ensure participation beyond the “usual suspects” and an appropriate level of transparency (while respecting data protection rules). User involvement is key to preventing club formation and closure.
- To avoid being too specific in their focus, networks should continuously seek to engage in wider policy development and related debates.
- Networks need to prioritize the personalisation of services, with a strong and active role for the client. This will enhance quality and flexibility, and also ensure that the service user is provided with choice, rather than being guided by rationalisation and economic considerations only.
- With regard to the organisations, projects and networks involved in Active Inclusion strategies, cooperation has an internal and external dimension. Both dimensions are further explored in the sections below.

### **2. Structuring a support network (internal networking)**

Even within a project, organisation or network, boundaries exist around professional roles, mind-sets, routines, resource allocation and other factors. A key point to consider is certainly the place of the service user in the network and the perception of him or her by the organisations involved. This perception often moves between being seen as a case to be handled, a client, customer or even co-producer – with different organisations having different perspectives and different ways of working. This is neither a bad thing nor a good thing, but needs to be understood by the partners. In the COM.IN experiments we experienced how different the skills and competences within a single target group can be and that there is a permanent risk of expecting too much or too little. Hence, to achieve an adequate modus operandi within a sup-

port network, we suggest considering the following three principles:

- Inside a network, the roles must be clear and transparent – not just at an organisational level but also for individuals within them; informal leadership cannot replace such structures.
- The client/service user must be actively involved (“coproduction”) - without him/her there won't be success.
- There must be easy to read communication tools as they help to objectify issues and needs.

### **3. Embedding a support network in the local landscape of formal and informal social services and resources (external networking)**

A project or a system to support a young person on his or her pathway to independent living, strengthening self-awareness, building social competencies and eventually creating employability, is always embedded in the complex and broad landscape of welfare provision, including social security and other services. Apart from welfare state institutions, family, friends and other social contacts are important resources to be acknowledged in a personalised approach to inclusion. Within the COM.IN experiments, we tried to reach out into these spheres and saw their potentials but also their limitations. Involving parents, for example, can be vital when they are willing to support a young person, but poses new demands on social work practice that has previously centred on the young person only (see the Fenix case). Often, social workers and services will face prejudices and reservations from actors outside the social policy system; in other cases, mainstream service providers can be too enthusiastic, with unrealistic expectations that cannot be met (as was seen in the Hamburg experiment). Hence, we recommend considering the following:

- Resources outside the support network should be sought and used (an integrative systemic approach);

- A network (and its way of working) must be recognisable from the outside so that it can gain credibility and carry out its work openly;
- Particularly with regard to its preventive role, social work needs a good image that allows people to use it without feeling bad.

### **4. Network governance as a social innovation – recommendations to the European Commission**

As we have experienced in this project, transnational peer reviewing opens spaces for experimentation and testing new approaches locally through creating an “extra-ordinary” situation and extra attention for an issue. This is a clear added value, and can trigger social innovation. However, the following aspects should be considered further:

- Not all experimentation will lead to improvements, not all that seems new is necessarily to the benefit of the service user/client (whose needs should come first). Robust and sensitive evaluation mechanisms are needed to determine whether new (or altered) interventions are really beneficial. And a sound assessment of reasons for failure can bring important insights for better practices in the future.
- Routine bending through interactive action research is a more realistic approach than positivist and rigid experimental designs; above all, the interventions must be sensitive to the local context.
- The social world is not a laboratory in which unexpected developments can be controlled or excluded. It is inevitable that unexpected events happen in a trial and error situation; any new project must be prepared for these. These unexpected developments need to be analysed and can inspire new ideas.



Exterior of Fenix backyard

COM.IN