PROMISE

promoting youth involvement and
social engagement

PROMISE: Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement: Opportunities and challenges for 'conflicted' young people across Europe.

Policy Briefs: a European Policy Brief and twenty-two

National Policy Briefs from case studies in ten participating countries.

Summary: This document includes a European Policy Brief, synthesising quantitative analysis of existing data and empirical case-studies in the ten partner countries, and 22 National Policy briefs providing specific contextual recommendations based on case-study data.

In order to support the development and implementation of policies to promote youth involvement and social engagement, European countries need a variety of measures. These include

- *Recognising the diverse life paths of young people*
- *Enhancing the recognition and support of youth-led initiatives*
- *Promoting support structures for young people*
- *Creating safe (urban) spaces for youth*

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Background and Aims of PROMISE

PROMISE explores the role of young people (aged 14 to 29 years) in shaping society; past, present and future. It addresses their engagement with social, environmental and political issues and the potential, across Europe, for youth involvement in positive social action and sustainable change.

Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, PROMISE focuses specifically on young people 'in conflict' with authority (and usually, therefore, in conflict with social norms), who are seen to be the most 'problematic' in terms of positive social engagement, often triggering negative and punitive responses from authority, in turn furthering marginalisation and stigmatisation. The negative effects of stigma and marginalisation reduce opportunities for young people to engage positively in social action, and as a result, much of the creativity, innovation and energy within these groups is directed away from positive social change. Such 'conflicted youth' present significant opportunities for change and should therefore be the prime focus of policy makers and practitioners. PROMISE will explore the opportunities and means for converting conflict into positive social achievement amongst conflicted youth across Europe. Our overall aim is to unlock the potential and 'promise' of Europe's youth.

The aims of PROMISE are:
- To provide a picture of the nature and extent of the multiplicity of young people's involvement in society, barriers and opportunities to participation and future potential for engaging in social change.
- To identify and analyse the particular conditions that encourage or prevent youth participation.
- To explain the nature of relationships that present barriers for socio-ecological transition in diverse groups of young people across Europe.
- To identify and analyse the unique context of conflicted youth that contributes to the creation of youth on the margins across Europe.
- To provide an analysis of normative responses to the conflicts young people face.
- To understand the role of gender in youth participation: specifically to understand the experiences of young women and girls and how this can be addressed.
- To understand the roles of generation, ethnicity, class and other areas of diversity in youth participation and how these can be addressed.

The objectives will be achieved through analysis of existing data, and through of new data collected in the ten participating countries.

Policy Briefs: *a European Policy Brief and twenty-two National Policy Briefs from case studies in ten participating countries*.

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POLICYBRIEF

PROMOTING YOUTH INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Trusting All Youth to Build a Better Europe

NOVEMBER 2018

INTRODUCTION

Europe displays extensive socioeconomic contrasts: it includes poorer states which recently emerged from communism, fascist dictatorships and/or civil wars, as well as wealthier countries with a GDP per capita ranking among the highest in the world. Despite these remaining discrepancies, young people across Europe are facing common trends that allow us to consider "European youth" as a relevant category.

"Youth" is a national policy area and the EU can only act by supporting Member States to coordinate their national policies, or by supplementing them. With the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, Member States have a renewed frame to cooperate in the field of youth. The Strategy proposes to focus three key areas: Engage, Connect and Empower. With this Strategy, the Member States have a tool to build effective national social investment strategies that enable successful youth transitions for all. The new Youth Dialogue is a core element of the Strategy which encourages the Member States to establish effective outreach structures to recognise diversity in social capital and opportunities, and to make all young people's voices heard.[1]

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. The focus was on the different ways they engage with social, environmental and political issues, and how they create opportunities for social change. The following recommendations on Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement in Europe are based on ethnographic case studies with young people and quantitative research using the European Value Survey and other secondary data sources.

Our results show that to support the development and implementation of policies to promote youth involvement and social engagement, European countries need a variety of measures. Member States need effective policies to encompass youth support in all areas (educational, employment, social) to make all voices heard, especially those of young people facing multiple life challenges. Therefore, they should:

- *Recognise diverse life paths of young people*
- *Enhance the recognition and support of youth-led initiatives*
- *Promote support structures for young people*
- *Create safe (urban) spaces for youth*

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[1] European Commission (2018) EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, p.4

1. RECOGNISE DIVERSE LIFE PATHS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The life paths of young people vary enormously[2]. The direction of a young person's life is less a matter of individual choice, and more something that is shaped by a complex set of contexts and socio-demographic factors (*ibid*). A key concern of the PROMISE project has been to what extent young people are able to make choices and steer their life course. Many of the young people who participated in PROMISE´s research report a significant lack of freedom of choice in their own life path:

> *"I always had a million things to think about while I was growing up because we had to face a lot of problems. My mum separating from my dad because of his drug addiction and stuff like that... To take my mind off things all I wanted to do was go out and have fun."* (**Italy**, Artistic Start-Ups)

Responsibilities towards family and friends, the need to balance little money with educational aspirations as well as the will to change the surrounding society put youth under constraints. The will to participate in society is very often the first thing to drop in importance, even though it is a key to facilitating change in other realms of the young people's lives.

> The case study on young mothers as caregivers **(Finland)** found that **young people often have multiple family-related care responsibilities**; not only as mothers but also towards other people they were close to, such as parents, a partner's child, or a friend. These care responsibilities have a concrete influence on their abilities to reconcile other domains of life (e.g. education, active citizenship) with care responsibilities.

But projects that are accessible and which young people take ownership of can change things:

> The **Italian** Artistic Start-Ups case study found that the years spent in street gangs lead young people to develop a strong sense of belonging that can be transferred to the whole local community when the young people are free to maintain the values and habits they know best. Through the medium of art, the young people learned to **use their street origin as an asset**, something they share with the younger generations they wish to involve in their arts projects. By so doing, **the stigma of marginality becomes a strength by which they aim for change in society**.

> *Member states need to ensure that services and projects for youth take into account the diverse life paths of young people and not presuppose youth as a phase of freedom from responsibilities, financial constraints or other pressures.*
>
> *This needs to be realised by providing free, flexible and life-world oriented services and projects to young people such as the Artistic Naples Project. Only then can the participation of all youth in society, as aimed for in the new EU Youth Strategy[3], be realised.*

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[2] Schwanitz, Kathrin (2017). The transition to adulthood and pathways out of the parental home: A cross-national analysis. Advances in Life Course Research 32, 21-34.
[3] Cf. European Commission (2018) EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, p.3

2. ENHANCE THE RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT OF YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES

PROMISE's case studies show that young people in conflict have very different levels of agency. While some struggle with the challenges they are facing that leave little space for social engagement, other conflicted youth all over Europe are remarkably adept at organizing themselves in squatted homes, self-organised youth centres, organized fan groups etc.

These initiatives not only show the resources many young people do have to lead self-determined lives, but are examples of the ways in which young people acquire life skills, gain new experiences and learn things they deem useful…

> *"Since I've been participating here[4], I've learned a lot about construction, at the political level as well, including the legislative aspect, regulations, because there are many problems with licensing issues; and then also on a personal level."* (Self-Building, **Spain**)

… and can also be a starting point for more formal involvement:

> *"NIOT[5] was also an impulse, a motivation for me to start to be more active, and through NIOT I got to an international group Radicalisation Awareness Network and its programme RAN YOUNG, which wants to create a platform, to share information among young people from Europe that relates to fighting against extremism and de-radicalisation."* (NIOT, **Slovakia**)

However, skills acquired in youth-led activities are often not recognised by wider society, and stigma and conflict stand in the way of young people unfolding their full potential of social engagement:

> *"We had a big group something like 6-7 years ago (...). We went to the council to get that lake sorted –to clean it up. We did all the work, got the plan on the paper in a really detailed way and everything, (…) and so we presented it to them. And they just rejected it. They said they have other priorities....That really threw us, we were so ready –but they just rejected it. It was one of the reasons for bitterness of the young people towards the municipality."* (Ex-Offenders, **Estonia**)

The **UK** case study on 'risky' youth found that situations of conflict should be seen as chances whereby **relationships with authority may be recast from conflictual to positive**. This can only happen where young people feel they **have been listened to and supported with the intention of channelling conflict into positive change and action**.

Greater appreciation of the effort of youth-led initiatives and the social and cultural resources gained is needed. Self-organised groups with bottom-up approaches need to be treated equally to formal, established youth groups; therefore we call on Member States to:

- *Listen to ideas & concerns of all young people through a variety of participatory political formats at all political levels that consider diverse life paths and are accessible to all youth*
- *Provide easy-to-access funding opportunities for informal youth-led activities, such as now realised with the solidarity projects within the EU Solidarity Corps, and raise awareness of these*
- *Make the new Youth Dialogue, a core element of the Youth Strategy[6], an effective outreach tool to recognise diversity in social capital and opportunities, and to make all young people's voices heard.*

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[4] The young person speaking here is one of 23 young people from 6 different collectives that one of the Spanish case studies focussed on: 2 self-construction initiatives for collective equipment; a masovería group that has carried out the restoration of an urban dwelling while also participating in the development of an urban garden and another masovería group focused on restoration objectives in a rural environment; a group of young female architects involved in alternative forms of construction that include a wide range of techniques, from bio-construction to the recovery of several craft practices (cf.WP6, p.393).

[5] Not in Our Town (NIOT) grassroots movement in the Slovak city of Banská Bystrica that originated as a protest movement against the results of regional elections in 2013 when a Neo-Nazi governor was democratically elected.
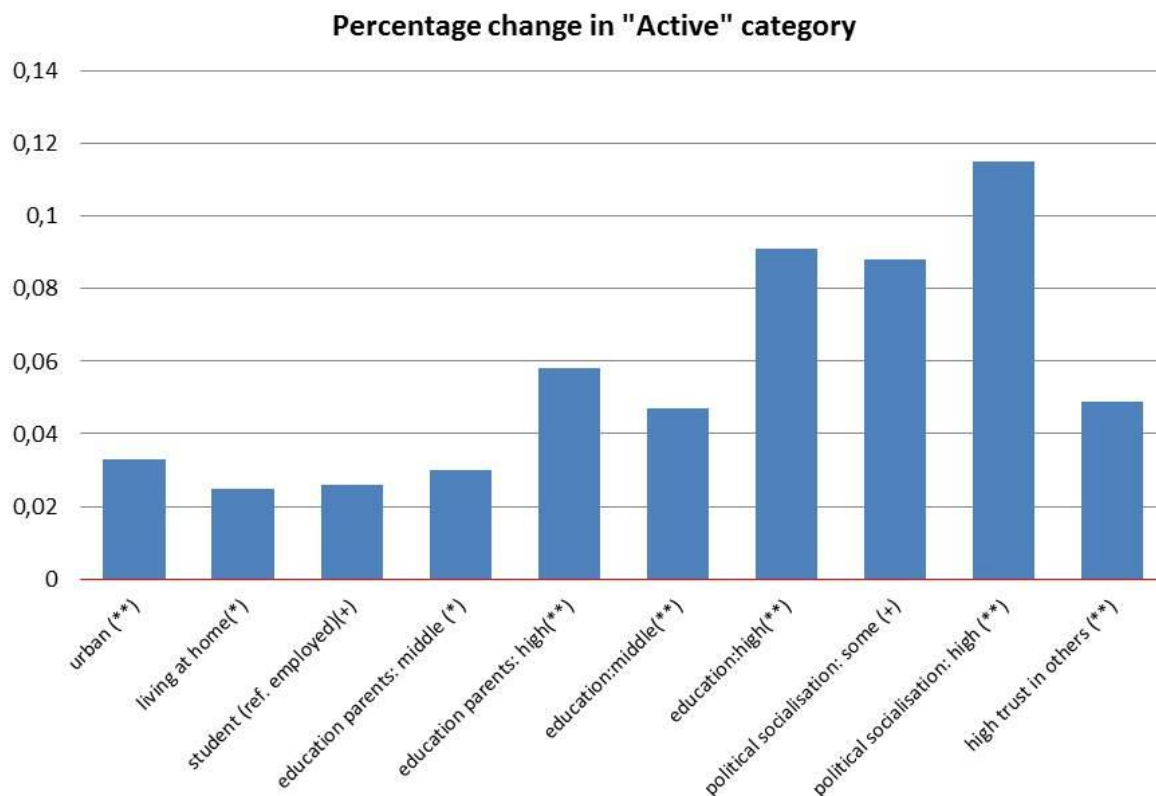
[6] Cf. European Commission (2018) EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, p.4

3. PROMOTE SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

All case studies conducted under the umbrella of PROMISE find that positive and supportive relationships are crucial for young people to develop. These can be relationships with family, peers or other trustworthy people such as youth workers or teachers.

The secondary analysis of quantitative data gathered for PROMISE, in line with findings from previous qualitative studies, indicates that families significantly influence the social and political engagement of their children (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Micro-level indicators of engagement profiles.[7]

Percentage change in "Active" category

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[7] The results are based on a multi-level analysis of young people (18-29) engaged in different profiles of activism (signing petition; attending lawful demonstrations; joining unofficial strikes, occupy buildings or factories) and standby engagement (discussion of politics with friends, following politics in the news, being interested in politics). European Values and Participation Report, WP D4.2, http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Israel-Quant-Lomazzi-GESIS_Youth-adults-social-engagement-in-Europe.pdf , slide no. 13

Factors such as political socialisation and parental educational background influence the young people – positively or negatively. However, the higher a young person's trust in other people, the more likely he or she will be socially engaged – irrespective of the family background and socio-economic resources.

Continuing youth work can promote young people's social and political engagement by using positive relationships as bridges to promote trust in society, as the following young person illustrates:

> *"It helped me to be here, in this environment of young people meeting up, having fun, playing... it is something that moves you and makes you get more involved with people around you and makes you think differently too: to lose fear, to have confidence with people, to relate to others... And this learning will be useful later on in your professional career."* (NoNEETs, **Spain**)

This links in well with the new EU Youth Strategy's goal of supporting youth empowerment through recognition of youth work as a prerequisite for fostering youth participation in democratic life,[8] and is also illustrated in the case studies:

> The **Portuguese** case study focusing on youth in so-called second chance education emphasises that encouraging the agency and self-determination of young people with risk and deviance pathways is a key aspect to their positive social involvement. Non- and informal education are especially well suited to provide this encouragement:

> *"They help us a lot. If I have to talk, if I have to vent, you can go to them. They give advice; it's like a second mother and a second father, basically. I feel good, it's different. The warmth, the cosiness, the trust, is completely different."* (Young People with Paths of Psychological Risk, **Portugal**)

However, in many countries across the EU, as the new EU Youth Strategy points out[9], youth work is not recognised as a profession and/or receives little financial assistance[10].

Therefore <u>we call on the Member States to provide consistent, reliable structures in non-formal and informal education</u>, such as:

- *reliable long-term funding of youth work and services and*
- *qualified training opportunities for youth workers in all EU Member States*

to ensure that youth workers can reach their professional aspirations of <u>promoting young people's trust in others and the society as a whole</u>.

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[8] Cf. European Commission (2018) EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, p.3
[9] Cf. European Commission (2018) EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, p.7
[10] Cf. European Commission (2014) Working with young people: the value of youth work in the EU.

4. CREATE SAFE (URBAN) SPACES FOR YOUTH

Urban areas have always had a great appeal for young people. They bring together a vast amount of people with different cultures, religions, value systems, jobs etc. However, cities are often very restricted when it comes to distributing space to different groups. **Without any places to explore different views, ways of life and ideas, however, prospects for young people can be dire**:

> One case study from **Italy** indicates that the young people who get involved in illegal activities do so because they feel they have no alternative options. **Criminality is the only opportunity** for them to engage successfully in activities and acquire a recognised social role in the local community. The lack of social and leisure opportunities in the neighbourhood, combined with the harsh family and economic situations of many of them, leads the young people to have **no prospect of an alternative life**.

> In **Finland**, a young person interviewed was asked if he goes out, perhaps to a pub, at which point he exclaimed: "*To a pub... [laughs a little] We are poor. We go outside, we go and buy something to eat from a grocery store if we want to. And then, now that it's summer again, we go outside. In autumn we stayed out for quite a long time. We stopped doing that two weeks before it snowed for the first time because it was so cold.*" (Circus Group, Finland)

In packed cities, young people need safe spaces where they can develop new prospects for their future, try out identities and experience their own efficacy in a safe environment, with the support of professional youth workers where needed. But also in rural areas young people reported facing exclusion and have difficulties finding spaces to express themselves in, especially if they want to be independent of traditional rural structures and customs[11].

Therefore, safe spaces should be developed to respond to these needs. The following examples identify some of the features of youth spaces:

> The research conducted with young people in **Finland** (mentioned above) found that what was essential for the young people's sense of belonging to the youth cultural and community centre was the fact that it was a **free leisure space** with no need to pay fees or to buy anything to gain access. Many voiced the need for more open urban spaces **for young adults over the age of 18**. This age group (18-29) often becomes invisible in municipal youth work, where most activities are planned for preteens and teenagers.

> One of the **Spanish** case studies came to a similar result. There findings show that although young people meet in many different premises (formal and informal/private and public), the young people interviewed agree on **the importance of having stable and equipped facilities** where they can meet, organise and participate in activities.

Member States must encourage regions to finance safe spaces for young people through a variety of measures, such as supporting and funding youth-led spaces, funding outreach projects and innovative approaches of more traditional youth centres and support services as well as encouraging participative youth work for a wide age range to cater for the diverse life paths of young people.

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[11] This was especially the case in the case study on rural youth in **Estonia**

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on National Policy Briefs linked to twenty-two ethnographic case studies conducted across ten European countries, and quantitative research related to the analysis of the European Values Survey and other secondary data analysis (EVS 2008-2010. Analyses of political interest and activism activities with ESS 2016-2017[12]).

The case studies involved participatory research with young people in conflict with authority as part of a participatory research strategy. In each country, they included up to a year of participant observation, a series of in-depth interviews with young people, and a range of participatory arts-based methods.

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[12] Cf. The European Values and Participation Report, WP4: http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/en/quantitative-outputs/

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INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Croatia, our research focussed on young people who are engaged in a specific social organisation - Supporters' Varteks FC. It is football club founded and owned by its supporters. Originally, Varteks FC played an important role in Croatian football until its management and local political/football elites changed its name to Varaždin and brought the club to bankruptcy as a result of numerous deals, legal cases and convictions related to match fixing. In 2011, this led the White Stones, passionate supporters of the old Varteks team, to join with other supporters to found a new football club with the old name – Varteks. Today that club is also known as 'Supporters' Varteks'.

This policy brief is concerned with young people within football clubs, football supporters, the national football federation, local self-government, and the broader institutional and political framework for football in the Croatian society.

Football competition in Croatia is organised in 5 divisions. The first division (and partly the second) is professional, while in lower divisions football players are amateur; they play and also work, study, go to school or are unemployed. FC Varteks play in the fourth division and sometimes in the third division. The club has poor working conditions and they don't have their own ground. Moreover, the local government does not permit them to play on the city stadium where FC Varaždin plays. Supporters of Varteks are also owners; there are around 300 of them as members and when they work in the club, they do so as volunteers. Before 2011, the core group of supporters and the club founders, The White Stones, were just an ultras group supporting the old FC Varteks. Today they are active on various levels within their own football club. The structure of the club is democratic and all elections are based on the principle 'one member-one vote'. They all decide about the management at their annual meetings. They have moved from a relatively passive position of supporters of the old club to being active members/owners of the new club with the old name and old pride, which is not compromised by the legal cases, match fixing scandals and convictions that happened under the management of the old Varteks, later known as Varaždin FC.

From its very beginning and the separation from the Yugoslavian Football Federation, the Croatian Football Federation remained closely linked with the political establishment. The only difference is that in the context of the new Croatian state, the Croation Football Federation (CFF) has emphasized nationalistic and 'state-building' character. CFF sees its own role as not only a sport institution, but also as a national institution that maintains and builds national identity. Members of the board are usually members of political parties, mostly of the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union). Importantly, key CFF management figures were involved in criminal activities, with ongoing legal cases or already convicted for corruption and other criminal acts.

Local governments are crucial in the system of financing both amateur and professional football clubs in Croatia. This reliance is caused by the bad economic situation and the lack of investors and sponsors. It means that clubs with strong links with local governments have a certain security in their activities; they have a significant advantage in comparison to those clubs without direct links with the local political/economic establishment. There are only few clubs in Croatia with democratic principles and transparent financial activity. They are usually marginalised, like Varteks FC, and ignored when it comes to financial support from the local government or investments in the infrastructure. It is clearly evident in the case of Varaždin, where local government supported old Varteks, and later Varaždin, who became bankrupt following by criminal activities and corruption.

The policy recommendations are directed towards the Croatian Football Federation, local government in the city of Varaždin, youth networks on a local and national level, human rights organizations, and the Ministry of Interior.

The aim of the recommendations is to inform and inspire action towards the democratisation of football in Croatia, the improvement of Varteks FC position regarding equal rights of football clubs in Varaždin, the protection of human rights of football supporters, measures against corruption in CFF, and the de-politicisation of football in Croatia.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Equal rights of football clubs in local community (city of Varaždin)

Our research showed the unequal position of Varteks FC in comparison with other clubs, especially in comparison with Varaždin FC because of the use of the city stadium. Our respondents frequently mentioned the inequality as the marker of their position, despite the fact that they, as citizens of the city of Varaždin, pay taxes and give money equally like others. It means, as one respondent said, that 'some citizens are more equal than others'. Respondents emphasised that it is especially painful regarding their children, because those in Varteks FC football schools do not have the chance to play on the pitch of the city stadium, although their parents belong to the same city. At the same time, the city government favoured Varaždin FC and they play on the city stadium as the privileged club. This is the cause of frustration among the people involved in Varteks FC.

➢ Our recommendation is simple: the city of Varaždin should apply the policy of equal rights when it comes to the use of the city stadium. On a more general level, local government (the city council and sport related institutions) should change their prevailing perception of Varteks FC as a certain 'black sheep' or deviant social actor. Our research showed that they deserve respect because of their 'bottom up' approach, volunteering and enthusiasm in gathering many young people around sport.

Democratisation of football clubs in Croatia

Amateur football clubs in Croatia, as well as many professional football clubs, are organized as NGOs. However, in many cases, transparent financial activity is missing, the use of public finances is blurred, and in general, the annual election of the boards and management is on the edge of legality. Many of our respondents pointed to that discrepancy, especially when mentioning well-known cases like the example of GNK Dinamo from Zagreb, the professional football club with millions of euros worth of contracts, is still organised as an NGO, receiving high amounts of money from public sources, such as the state.

> ➢ Based on our insight into the action and the club's development of Varteks FC within a hostile social and political environment, we would like to inspire and empower the process of democratisation of Croatian football. This means having transparent annual meetings and fair elections of the board, the assembly and the management of clubs based on the principle of 'one member-one vote'. Transparency of financial activities is urgently needed, knowing that most of the clubs depend only on public financing.

Reforms in HNS (CFF – Croatian Football Federation)

The Croatian Football Federation is contaminated by numerous court cases and legal accusations against several key members. Instead of reforms, they are hiding in the shadow of the great success of the Croatian national football team at the World Cup in Russia. The leaders of CFF are using the success of the National team to cover many problems that are not related to the national team or to professional football in general. Moreover, they behave like the leaders of the communist party during the one-party period; which means that they perceive critical remarks and critical social actors as 'enemies'. Most of our respondents and Varteks FC present such a critical voice; they represent exactly that type of social actor who is critical against corruption in the CFF and within the Croatian football. Unfortunately, instead of a real dialogue, our respondents faced labelling and accusations of being 'traitors', 'hooligans', etc. The CFF is responsible for a much larger field of activities that goes beyond the national football team to include all divisions, female football, and the overall infrastructure. The resent situation regarding this labelling and complete absence of critical remarks is against the key principles of democracy and the freedom of expression. The CFF, with its networks within the political and juridical establishment, have in some cases succeeded to present criticism of football supporters as 'hate speech'. Our respondents have been accused for 'hate speech' just because they their t-shirts displayed the letters 'HNS' (CFF) crossed out.

> ➢ Our recommendation is that the CFF needs to reform, and promote transparency, democratisation, and investments in infrastructure and in amateur clubs who work with young people. They have to exclude members who are involved in criminal activities, especially those already convicted for corruption and other criminal acts. The Croatian Football Federation is not a political party and accordingly the organisation should be de-politicised.

Police: Protect the human rights of supporters and decrease the unnecessary repression

During our fieldwork we witnessed many situations in which the police force applied certain selective approaches, which put our respondents in an unequal position in comparison to other spectators or supporters of other teams. In many cases, the police focused on The White Stones only because they are the only organised group of football supporters in the lower divisions. Alcohol consumption is forbidden during matches according to the law. However, the police would tolerate it for other spectators but not for our respondents. In instances where the police tolerated alcohol consumption, they would test some of our respondents after a certain time and give them bans because of a few beers they legally bought to the stadium. We also witnessed repression and a level of police control which was not necessary at all.

- Our recommendation is simple: Police should respect the human rights of football supporters, avoid generalisations and hostility towards football supporters. There is evident need for more education within police, especially regarding the work with young people.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 25 interviews (The shortest interview lasted 40 minutes, and the longest lasted 230 minutes. The majority of interviews lasted between 80 and 120 minutes, and all transcribed interviews amount to a total of 301,612 words), 94 days in the field (around 1500 hours of observation) and 53 diary entries related to Varteks FC.

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FURTHER READING http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Supporters'-Varteks-FC.pdf

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: CROATIA, 2 OF 2

ZAGREB PRIDE LGBTIQ NGO

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

Zagreb Pride is a queer-feminist and anti-fascist organisation founded in 2008. The organisation works towards achieving a society based on values of equality, self-determination, solidarity, secularity and antimilitarism. Other than organising the annual Zagreb Pride Marches, the organisation works in education, research and publishing advocating equality for LGBTIQ people, with as well as actively working with the LGBTIQ community.

The Rights of LGBTQ people in the Republic of Croatia are mostly regulated with general anti-discrimination laws, while the rights of intersex people are not recognised and/or regulated by any law or act. There are two acts that include specific legal documents referring to rights of LGBTQ persons: the 'Same-Sex Life Partnership Act' and 'Regulation about obtaining medical documentation and determining requirements and preconditions for gender affirming surgery and/or life in different gender identity'.

The **Same-Sex Life Partnership Act**, from 2014, defines the terms 'life partnership' and 'informal life partnership', as well as setting out requirements for the conclusion of a life partnership, relations connected to children and parental responsibilities of life partners and property relations. This Act regulates inheritance, tax status, the status of life partnership regarding pension insurance and also the rights and obligations of life partners in the system of compulsory health insurance and healthcare. It also regulates rights and obligations in relation to employment, access to public and market-related services, and the public law status of life partnership. Covering all these topics, Same-Sex Life Partnership Act regulated much more rights than the **Same-Sex Union Act** from 2003 that it replaced.

In 2014 the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia passed the **Regulation about obtaining medical documentation and determining requirements and preconditions for gender affirming surgery and/or life in different gender identity**, which regulates a way of obtaining medical documentation for gender affirming surgery or life in different gender identity. This regulation is also important because it determines that people do not actually have to change their sex, or undergo a sex change operation in order to change

their formally documented gender. What could be seen in this act is that gender recorded in official documents guarantees the gender identity of a person.

In addition to that mentioned above, the **Criminal Code of the Republic of Croatia** recognises criminal offenses committed because of one's sexual orientation or gender identity as hate crimes. Equally, this law recognises any behaviour that denies or restricts a person's rights to obtain goods or receive services, or their rights to work or employment because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is recognised as a criminal offense against human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As far as other laws and acts are concerned, anti-discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is mentioned as an issue of human rights protection. Only to mention a few, there are the **Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, the Anti-discrimination Act, the Act on Gender Equality, the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, the Media Act, the Labour Act, the Asylum Act.**

Many of the most important and specific Croatian acts regarding LGBTQ rights have been passed in the last few years, mainly in 2014. This is an important step forward for the LGBTQ community. This one step should lead to the next. However, what remains a problem in the Republic of Croatia is the lack of recognition of the rights and needs of intersex people in legal documents.

EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

As part of our ethnographic case study ´Zagreb Pride LGBTIQ NGO´, we conducted interviews with 31 respondents on their experiences of discrimination, stigmatisation, bullying in school, family relations, political context and feeling safe, the findings showed the existence of stigmatisation of LGBTIQ people in Croatia, as well as experiences of bullying and violence in everyday life. All of the respondents talked about having some kind of violent experiences, which correlates with the results of a study Zagreb Pride conducted (Milković, 2013)[1] in which 74% of participants also confirmed having experiences involving some kind of violence. Comparison of these results strongly suggests that the situation is not getting better as regards hate crimes and hate speech. What is found as even more alarming from our own data is that hate speech (along with hate crime) seems to be more frequent than it can be shown statistically. Respondents often talked about their experiences of being physically attacked, but not reporting it afterwards. Most often, not reporting the crimes was attributed to the lack of trust in the police and a reluctance to come out as a LGBTQ person to the police. Some respondents reported a lack of recognition of hate crimes as a legal classification by police officers. Others demonstrated their own lack of understanding of the legal classification of these incidents as hate crimes.

For the majority of respondents, the marriage referendum was an important event in their childhood years and was widely discussed in the interviews. In 2013 the organisation ´In the Name of the Family´ organised a campaign collecting signatures in support of a referendum advocating for the definition of marriage as a union of man and woman to be introduced into the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. Even though the reaction of civil society organisations was quick as they organised an oppositional campaign called ´Citizens Vote Against´, the definition of marriage as a union of man and woman was included in the Constitution. At the time of the ´In the Name of the Family´ campaign, most of the respondents were in elementary or high school and talked about perceiving the campaign as an attack on them. Some respondents talked about being bullied in school, others about having more than usual problems in families, simply because at that time the representatives of the ´In the Name of the Family´ organisation were very present in the media. As one of the consequences of the campaign for the marriage referendum most of respondents talked about coming out at the time of this referendum. For them, it was a trigger for

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[1] Milković, M. (2013) *Brutal Reality: A Research Study Investigating Anti-LGBTIQ Violence, Discrimination, and Hate Crime in Croatia*, Zagreb: Zagreb Pride.

accepting their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. This topic remained topical in the media and politicised discourse in the following months, including analyses of the process and results of campaign, and in July 2014 the Croatian Parliament voted the Same-Sex Life Partnership Act. This legal act equalized the status of same-sex life partners and non-formal life partners to those of married partners. This equalisation of rights applies on all rights except those regarding the adoption of children. Even though it was not directly associated with the marriage referendum initiative, this act was, in a way, a reaction to the referendum by the left-wing government that understood the results of the referendum as a potential mechanism in the upcoming election results.

Conflicts related to school and the educational system were one of the most frequently mentioned and discussed within the study. Bullying was experienced by the respondents during some part of their education (elementary school, high school or in college). This issue was mentioned almost every time when the conversation turned to the educational system. In these cases, the respondents experienced not having enough support not only from their peers but also from their teachers. The lack of understanding and recognition of bulling in certain situations by teachers seems to be the central problem young LGBTIQ people face in the educational system. The problem of peer bullying is often problematised and discussed in the media and schools because of the UNICEF and Ministry of Science and Education run campaign called ´Stop violence among children´. However, bullying related to LGBTIQ issues remains less discussed and less acknowledged. This problem is mostly noticeable in a lack of education for the educators, which consequently means that teachers do not have enough knowledge or experience in responding to bullying directed towards someone´s sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It also became clear from the research that some teachers do not recognise that they are engaging in verbally abusive behaviour.

Violence and safety was discussed throughout the interviews with the respondents. In February 2017, there was a tear gas attack in one club in the centre of Zagreb. This attack was connected to an LGBT party that was organised in the club that night. Because of this event, Zagreb Pride organised a reactive protest campaign called ´Love is and Remains Stronger Than Hate´, which gathered more than a thousand people in support to those injured in the stampede that occurred after the attack. Some of the respondents were present at the party at the night of the attack and mentioned that the attack itself did not surprise or shock them, indeed; some had even expected such an attack.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the main research findings is the lack of trust in the police. This is the main explanation of the respondents as to why they don't report hate crimes and hate speech. They talked about a lack of recognition and understanding of hate crimes as a legal classification by police officers, which only contributes to deepen the existing problem. In addition, it should be noted that the problem also lies in the lack of understanding of hate crimes among respondents themselves, which sometimes leads to missing the opportunity for the crime to be characterized and recognized as such (i.e. as a hate crime).

A few recommendations we could offer in order to consider our research findings within the political context in which the LGBTIQ community exist in Croatia are:

1. **Mandatory hate crime education** – to introduce hate crime education as mandatory for police officers, as well as education for other judicial officials. Organisations such as Zagreb Pride conducts lectures about hate crimes among police officers, but this sort of education is conducted on an ad-hoc basis and is only possible where the head of the police academy is open to it. In order to really educate officers (and officials) about hate crime, this education should be more structured and become a part of the curriculum of the police academy;

2. **Increased human rights and LGBT equality education in the high school curriculum** – one of the key finding of this research is that young LGBT people, along within their families and society in general, are mostly discriminated against and bullied in schools. Respondents often talked about experiencing peer bulling in high schools, and sometimes also in elementary schools. A lack of understanding of LGBT issues and terminology and the lack of recognition of bullying by teachers seem to be the crucial problems in the educational system. The recommendation is that additional education should be organised for students, but also for teachers;

3. **Constitutional protection of minorities' rights** – In the light of the experiences with the marriage referendum in 2013, when the referendum was used as a democratic instrument to limit the rights of the LGBTIQ community, the referendum law in Croatia should be reformed. It should be clearly stated that issues regarding human rights and freedoms as well as the rights of minorities, should not be abolished or restricted. This law has several debatable parts which could be misused and therefore require reform;

4. **Review of child adoption and the regulation of parental rights** – not only is child adoption not possible for same-sex couples, same-sex couples with children are recognised and defined as single-parent families within the laws of the Republic of Croatia. The status and role of same-sex parents should be reviewed in concordance with the Same-Sex Life Partnership Act;

5. **Review of legal rights of intersexual people** – when talking about LGBTIQ rights, intersexual rights are not recognised in a legal context in the Republic of Croatia. After the birth of an intersex baby, parents are usually advised by their doctor to choose the sex of the child in order to register them. Because of the additional surgeries that those children are subjected to, the protection of the human rights of the child as an intersexual person should be regulated. In addition, securing counselling and adequate help and support for parents should be provided.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 31 semi-structured interviews with former and present volunteers and members of the Zagreb Pride organisation at the time of the research. Ethnographic fieldwork took place over eleven months (from October 2016 to September 2017). The age range of the respondents was from 16 to 33, with the exception of one respondent, aged 40. Most of the respondents were in their early twenties.

PROJECT IDENTITY

PROJECT NAME   Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement (PROMISE)

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Milković, M. (2013) *Brutal Reality: A Research Study Investigating Anti-LGBTIQ Violence, Discrimination, and Hate Crime in Croatia,* Zagreb: Zagreb Pride.

National

POLICYBRIEF

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Estonia, our research focussed on young people who are engaged in a distanced relationship with their home region and who do not feel related to the nationally and internationally supported local heritage culture, Seto culture.

This policy brief is concerned with the way such circumstances alienate young people from local life and potentially turn them into unengaged citizens. The divide between the highly regarded heritage elites and citizens, and the rest of the population contributes to a disengaged citizenry and an unintegrated society. It can create new dimensions of stratification and low self-worth amongst a certain section of the population. The young people studied demonstrated a clear lack of interest in the local life and were disappointment with what they felt was a bias towards the Seto enthusiasts, and believed that a patronage system had developed in the region where such individuals are unfairly privileged. Furthermore, the youths have had direct experiences of lack of support or interest from the political bodies to their projects which they see partly as related to lack of interest in anything not relating to Seto culture. The divisive and fragmenting potential in these grievances comes partly from the approach of Seto activists and decision-makers towards those who are uninterested in heritage culture. For the activists, this indifference is a sign of their lack of culture and roots, a lack of education and a signal of low status, which is seen not as a concern to be addressed but as a justification for exactly the opposite.

These policy recommendations are primarily directed towards local and national policy-makers, and national funders, but also towards other local and national stakeholders (entrepreneurs, non-governmental activists, etc.) and the representatives of international funding bodies, especially those working on various heritage programmes because similar issues are likely to be reflected in some other situations across the regions where diversification has included increased support to heritage culture. The aim of the recommendations is to, firstly, increase awareness of the effects of heritage funding on creating a particular disengaged heritage elite and heritage citizenry at the expense of the engagement and self-worth of the rest of the population. The latter become less involved in their home region, are more likely to

migrate, and may undermine the very objectives of the heritage group. Secondly, considering the lack of population in peripheral regions, encouraging locals engage is very much in the interest of both local and national policy makers. Thirdly, the ability to cross the various divides and value the variety of activities that people engaged in needs to be supported, and its local, national and global value recognised.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural youth in Seto country, Estonia, do not participate in the local activities or decision making, and have expressed disappointment in and appear to disengage from local life. They have not felt support from the local politicians which they see, at least partly, as related to the fact that their interests are not very high in the local agenda. Hence, such local people, including youth, do not engage with local political activities nor everyday local activities more generally.

There is animosity and suspicion towards the people in Seto circles who are seen to unfairly command the funds and attention due to their cultural heritage position. This forms a barrier against willingness to work towards the same goals.

In turn, the heritage elites regard the rest of the population as uneducated and without potential to get involved – hence barriers are also established from the side of the Seto elite.

The population who do not engage with local life are unlikely to contribute or consider any local opportunities. As a result, migration from the area is considerable; yet some politicians have expressed the view that people uninterested in Seto cultural activities do not even belong to the area.

Support the initiatives of local youth independently of their identity

The young people involved in this research did not participate in the local activities or decision making. They have had negative experiences when trying to change something in the area: politicians have not supported their activities or have said that what they do is not a priority. A couple of cases were reported where the youth had worked hard to propose a local development project unrelated to Seto culture or identity, and when they were rejected, they felt they had wasted their energy ,suspecting that the rejection came because of different local priorities. In other words, they see that what they do is not regarded as important, especially in comparison with the Seto activities. Hence, such local people, especially the youth, do not engage anymore with local political activities.

This is a lost opportunity. The policy recommendation thus on *the local policy level* would be

⇨ **value and support the efforts of any local group, youths in particular**. If the particular activity is problematic or impossible to achieve, **time and attention should be dedicated to** explaining this to the interested groups and **working out alternatives.**

⇨ **work out strategies to involve** these people in local life, which could defuse their suspicious attitude to politicians and other groups in the region, and pay off in the long run because they will likely feel more supported and on an equal footing with others. Instead of running into far more time consuming and politically costly confrontations with disgruntled groups, feeling valued with regards to forming local solutions could shift their position from disgruntlement to potentially willing to work towards common goals.

The groundwork for valuing such groups and individuals could be laid on *the national policy level:*

⇨ **change the limitation of the current focus of what constitutes a successful citizen** from that either profit-oriented entrepreneurship or various forms of heritage activism (political, NGO etc) towards one that recognises other forms of activities as valuable for the society, especially in the long run.
⇨ **value and support local adaptive strategies** such as subsistence gardening and small-scale local living skills.

Finally, on the *international level:*

⇨ supported heritage listed regions **must take into consideration the diversity of local interest groups** rather than assume a similar heritage commitment from all locals in a heritage listed region.

Support to and cooperation for local activities for varied interest groups without stigma

The research demonstrated the rural youth who have no Seto culture interests are disengaged from the general everyday local life. Their preferred activities are mostly **outside of the region**, making it more likely that they will leave the region early, even if they might have plans to return. When living in the region, they do not consider this their own "backyard" to develop and value. In other words, in addition to disengaged citizens, this situation breeds the distancing of young inhabitants from local life and activities, including engaging with neighbours, from local work, and free time opportunities. There is a certain inevitable lack of activities for youth in peripheral regions with low population numbers. However, the most involved young people are in organised activities and are more willing to participate in these.

Therefore, we recommend

⇨ **a positive and supportive approach to locally based activities**, independently of whether or not these are heritage based
⇨ **a cooperation between locally placed institutions**, including youth centres, governments, activists, entrepreneurs and a diverse number of institutions (from police and schools to NGOs etc) is needed to work out dedicated strategies to **involve youths in organising local life** (from free-time activities to apprenticeships) and **getting positively involved in their initiatives**. For example, the some local youths were involved in organising a car rally in the region; they participated willingly in this event although most of the time the same youths did not get involved in other activities in the region and as a result, are seen as passive.

There is, however, little support from the rest of the population and institutions. There is even a certain stigma as many of the youths are underage and would be arrested if driving on the road, and the police watch from the fringes to make sure this does not happen. However, instead of such hands-off vigilance, local police could instead get involved in the process of organising and supporting safety and awareness during this, or other similar events. Active engagement with young people's initiatives pays off, not only on the level of political involvement and in creating active citizens. Being locally involved in organising free-time activities, rather than being stuck with a negative, stigmatising mindset which in turn creates a similar approach amongst the youths, would potentially help such youngsters seek and find as well as create active opportunities locally.

The existence of non-heritage identity should be recognised and valued rather than rejected

The present attitudes of the active heritage-devout inhabitants towards the rest of the population are frequently problematic; furthermore, their additional incomes from heritage bodies are not fully transparent and the general view of the rest of the population tends to be feelings of unfairness when lack of willingness to share or cooperate is felt. Whilst one party is aggrieved, the activists themselves tend to

reject those uninterested in heritage as somehow hybrid, rootless, and by extension, less valuable citizens of the region. Furthermore, even when locals themselves are aware that there is no one singular heritage community, the funding initiatives and political attention tends to stress such uniformity. Some politicians in the Seto case approach the region as ideally a purely Seto space, even expressing views that those without Seto interests are not entirely welcome and their migration is to be applauded. This in itself is problematic because all people independently of their roots and background, let alone preferences and interests, should be equally valued. Such attitudes are unhelpful and alienate a considerable proportion of the locals and undermine also the heritage maintenance.

Instead of rejecting those who are not interested in the local heritage culture, the existence of differing interests could be turned into an opportunity by:

⇨ **offering a safe and supportive space for all such groups to come together without stigma and hierarchies** of what is valuable locally and what is not
⇨ **working out ways of mutual benefit from funding and other opportunities** across different types of bodies and interests (e.g., cooperation between museums, shops, cafes as well as schools, entrepreneurs, those simply living locally but potentially able to benefit or get involved in local activism etc. as the norm)
⇨ **recognise that the heritage space** should consist ideally of a variety of citizens whose support to the local culture will come from their feeling welcome and equal independently of their interests.
⇨ **working out a local "best practice" guide** which would establish both heritage-related as well as other positive activities in the region as equally valuable for local life. In some cases, this could need further support, for example, how youth workers could be best involved in building bridges between a variety of youth groups in the region, including the heritage dedicated individuals or groups and those with highly non-local interests (e.g. internet based gaming groups etc.). Schools, youth centres as well as internet groups could advertise opportunities to apply diverse interests locally.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

The Seto case study was based on the recorded and/or noted semi-structured interviews with young people primarily in Karitsa municipality but also in Tartu and Tallinn where some of the young people had moved. The context of the case has been obtained during long-term participant observation in the Seto region and from background interviews with older individuals in Saadoja municipality and in Karitsa municipality. Conversations and interviews with key players in local life, participating in meetings discussing youth related issues, and observations in relevant Facebook groups were another data source for contextualising the situation and/or the opinions of the youth.

The fieldwork for contextualising the issues in the studied municipality and gaining access has taken about 90 days between March and July 2017; fieldwork specifically focusing on the youth lasted 35 days between June and August 2017, in October 2017 and in January 2018, in addition, specific Facebook groups have been followed since March 2017. Observing the Facebook groups was useful to provide information both about the types of events the youth participated in as well as the topics that appeared to trigger interest and conflict.

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National

POLICYBRIEF

Young ex-offenders and recidivism

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Estonia our research focussed on young ex-offenders in Estonia. This policy brief is concerned with the effect of stigmatisation of young ex-offenders on their future life and employment status.

The policy recommendations are directed towards the prevention of possible re-offending by increasing the involvement of young ex-offenders in conventional life practices. States react to unlawful acts committed by young people through the criminal justice system, either placing young offenders on parole in cases of less serious offences or imprisoning them in cases of serious or repeated criminal acts. Although the main idea of these interventions is the rehabilitation of young people through considering the influence of risk factors that are associated with delinquency, the effect is often the opposite to the desired one. Among the all age groups, the risk of recidivism is highest for convicted juvenile offenders. Every third person from 14 to 18 commits their next criminal offence within a year after their previous offence. High recidivism rates indicate that reacting to delinquent behaviour by punishment and isolation is a rather ineffective strategy. The reasons of such inefficiency are various but one of them is related to stigma attached to young people's delinquency because of their treatment by the criminal justice system.

The aim of the recommendations is to define the key steps that could help to reduce or neutralise the effect of stigmatisation and therefore prevent young people from re-offending.

1. **Provide support for young people's transition from offender to conventional status.**

Conviction, punishment, offender status and stigmatisation have an influence on a young persons' self-confidence. A lack of self-confidence and fear of failure if they try new things restricts young people from even trying these things, participating in social life, or moving on with their career. Previous experiences that these things have already been tried, either by themselves or by others in similar situations, are seemingly relied upon. Such scenarios may also include returning to criminality as a way of life that works. The young people do not have the support they need in order to transition to a law abiding life. Providing such support may have a crucial effect on a young ex-offender's life.

> "EVS as a TOOL for NEETWORK" is a program that aims to support young people demonstrating risky behaviour with transition from NEET to EET status. The program is financed by the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme and is aimed at involving NEET youth in quality European Voluntary Service projects. In Estonia, the program works in close co-operation with Tallinn Center for Children at Risk. The goal of the program is to develop social skills of young people, to support them in decision making, provide experience with conventional jobs and opportunities to work in international projects, and learn more about different cultures and countries. The possibility of working with young people from different countries and to travel abroad is very high motivator for young people at risk. It increases self-confidence, self-control and responsibility that serve as a good basis for conforming behaviour and societal involvement.

Programs that provide support, motivate, teach social skills and increase self-confidence could become a turning point in the criminal career of young ex-offenders and help them to desist from crime.

2. **Use suspension of the pecuniary punishment on probation in combination with special intervention programs**

Criminal policy in Estonia is changing in the direction that any kind of punishment that takes the freedom from a young person shall be used as a last resort. There are some rehabilitation and social programmes in place, but their availability is scarce (especially outside Tallinn) and the effects rather questionable. Therefore, when young people, especially minors, are caught committing an offence, they are either punished by a fine or, if the offence is a minor one, the case will be closed but a person should pay the costs of the criminal procedure to the state. Depending on the number of convictions and the character of crime, by the age of 18, young people will have larger sums of money that they should pay back. Even when they are punished by a prison sentence, these obligations will still remain. To ensure that the money is paid back, the accounts of these young people are frozen and bailiffs can execute the orders of the courts. If an offender earns any money, a big share of it will be collected by bailiffs to pay the debts, leaving the person with a minimal sum of money to survive. This puts young people in a very difficult financial situation. The constant need for money and the inability to earn it legally may turn young people to crime or work illegally.

The Penal Code of Estonia has the possibility to suspend not only the imprisonment but also the pecuniary punishment. If this suspension of monetary sanctions is used in combination with special programs aimed at creating opportunities for jobs and assisting young people with criminal records to find the job, it could help young people to start their working career and desist from crime.

> The "STEP program" **helps to bring together a young person with criminal record** who wants to change his or her lifestyle (but sometimes do not know exactly how), **with an Employer** who is willing to support young people on this road. The young person also undergoes a **Counselling** procedure with the support of a competent adviser. The program assists Estonian businesses in strengthening their social responsibility commitment, and in the creation jobs or training opportunities for young people who are at risk of social marginalisation due to their criminal record. It assists young people in finding jobs, and provides counselling and mentorship. The program is financed by the ESF and the Estonian government.

Programs that provide employment opportunities for young people with criminal records, train young people and provides mentoring may have a positive effect on the lives of young ex-offenders.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 22 semi-structured interviews conducted with 24 young ex-offenders. The youngest respondent was 15, the oldest 27, the main age of the respondents was between 21 and 25. There were 3 females and 21 males in our sample. Although males are overrepresented, the proportion reflects the gender distribution among the young offenders. For all respondents, we collected written informed consent for young people; and for those under 18, parental consent was also obtained. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using NVivo 11 software.

PROJECT NAME   Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement (PROMISE)

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PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: FINLAND (1 OF 2)

Young Motherhood in Multicultural Finland

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Finland, our research focussed on young women who make the transition to parenthood (relatively) early, at the age of 17–24 years. In 2017, the mean age of first-time mothers in Finland was 29.2 years. The life trajectories of these young women thus contradict the several-decades-long trends of 'prolonged youth' and postponed parenthood. In part, they also deviate from the age-related norms of life trajectories that emphasise reaching the educational and employment-related benchmarks of adulthood before parenthood.

This policy brief is concerned with the young female participants' (aged 19–27) experiences as 'young mothers' in general, and their positions in and narratives on maternity and child health services. In Finland, maternity and child health services are part of the universal health and social welfare services. They are based on the preventive and advisory approach and provided for all resident mothers or couples during and after pregnancy, until the child reaches school age.

The policy recommendations are directed towards policymakers at national and European levels who are concerned with issues relating to youth and family policy and services, as well as professionals working with young adults in various fields, particularly in maternity and child health services.

The aim of the recommendations is to provide tools for developing services for young adults (both family services and services in other fields) so that they would be better able to take into account the potential family-related care responsibilities that young adults have, and the diverse effects that these may have on their life trajectories, current engagements within diverse fields of life, and their future orientations.

1) **Understanding individual life situations must be the starting point during encounters with young parents through diverse services, instead of age-related expectations.**

The participants in the case study were a very heterogeneous group in terms of their life histories, material, educational, social and cultural resources, as well as their ideals and future plans. They recognised several problem-oriented assumptions that were attached to 'young mothers' as a group, and hence did not identify as such. Instead, they wanted to be seen as ordinary, competent mothers. Negative age-related assumptions concerning a young person's parenting competence can easily hamper or erode trust between the young person and the professional:

> *In fact, personally speaking, I don't consider myself a teenage mum. I consider myself just a normal mum. Like everybody else. (…) At least there is the stereotype that they are (…) immature and so they don't know how to be a mother to their children. (Tiia, 20 years, expecting, mother of one)*

Being aware of potential vulnerabilities related to being a mother at a young age is positive. However, these vulnerabilities cannot be assumed and they should not be regarded as obstacles to regarding a young person as a competent, caring and 'normal' parent in service encounters. Not making assumptions about vulnerabilities or problems provides service encounters with a better starting point for trust-based relationships, and supports the young person's identity as a parent.

2) **The wide availability of maternity and child health services must be secured and they must be developed further as universal services.**

The participants considered the maternity and child health services useful and necessary, especially from the viewpoint of ensuring the health and wellbeing of the child, even when they also had points of criticism towards some parts of the services. The role of young mothers in maternity and child health services is, by and large, that of a rather passive receiver of information. However, (relatively) long-term service relationships enable greater trust between the nurse and the young client. They also permit the nurses to get to know the individual situations of the families. Appointments with a nurse are likewise an important channel for further and more targeted services if needed.

It is crucial that the principle of universalism is maintained in maternity and child health services. Providing the services in a more targeted manner would potentially increase the threshold for seeking out the services, incur the risk of stigmatisation, and delay access to further services when required. Digital services may supplement the existing services, but cannot compensate for face-to-face encounters.

3) **Gendered care responsibilities should be recognised as a factor defining young adults' activities and trajectories.**

Young mothers have many care responsibilities related to family life. A large proportion of these responsibilities are related to having a baby; yet several participants also had responsibilities towards other people they were close to, such as parents, partners' parents, or a partner's child, or friend. Hence, family-related care responsibilities are likely to extend to a larger group of young adults than just young parents. These care responsibilities are an important aspect of the close relationships of the carers, but they also have a concrete influence on their abilities to reconcile other domains of life (e.g. education, work) with care responsibilities. Family-related care responsibilities are not well recognised in many services targeted mostly at young adults, especially within education. This is one of the central concerns about the future

expressed by many of the participants. Even among the younger generation, the distribution of care work is relatively strongly gendered, with the result that the bulk of care responsibilities fall to the young women. This is reflected also in the maternity and child health services, where fathers' presence and role is still marginal. Given the gendered distribution of care work, the effects of the shortcomings in measures alleviating the challenges related to reconciling care work with other spheres of life impact young women's educational and work trajectories in particular.

Having underaged children should be acknowledged in the study allowance system, and options for flexible and part-time studying should be designed and made available in a more systematic manner in schools and universities. More generally, familial responsibilities should not be regarded as an issue that is absent from young adults' lives in any of the services that are targeted at them. If the aim is to encourage young parents to make use of a service or engage in an activity, it should be acknowledged that providing child care services is a necessity. Within maternity and child health services, efforts to engage fathers should be continued and new ways of encouraging engagement devised.

4) **Culture-related, essentialising assumptions should be avoided in all services when encountering young parents with minority ethnic backgrounds.**

The data show that many of the key findings of the case study are common across ethnic boundaries; this applies particularly to the wish to be seen as a competent parent and to be recognised as an individual instead of a representative of a group. The participants with minority ethnic backgrounds had experiences of racialisation and racism, which had a negative influence not only on their feeling of safety and sense of belonging to Finnish society, but also on how they sought to fulfil their parenting responsibilities and maintain an image as a capable and respectable parent. Some of them also worried about racism in terms of their children's future:

> I do get terribly stressed about what kind of place Finland will be when she grows up. (Melisa, 24 years, mother of one)

While it is very important that specific support measures such as interpretation are duly in place when encountering clients who have recently moved to Finland or whose Finnish skills are limited for some other reason, a minority ethnic background per se should not be seen as connected to migrant status or as denoting specific culture-related traits or practices. Professional training that addresses issues relating to cultural diversity, racialisation and (anti-)racism is highly recommended across diverse service fields and among professionals working at all levels of the service.

5) **The multiplicity of identities of young parents should be regarded as an opportunity rather than a threat.**

While the identity of a (competent) parent is extremely important for young mothers, they also have other identities besides the parental identity; namely that of a young woman, a student, or an activist, to give some examples. The social networks of young parents beyond the nuclear family, such as their relationships with their parents, siblings and friends, are to some extent acknowledged within the maternity and child health services; yet their other identities are largely overlooked or sometimes even regarded as posing a threat or hindrance to full parental identity. In the broader societal discussion, the identity of a parent is largely overlooked when discussing young adults' citizenship and engagement.

Like all people, young parents are complex individuals, and taking this into consideration supports their wellbeing in a more holistic way. When seeking to encourage them to participate in active citizenship, it should be acknowledged that for some young adults, the private sphere of the home is a major site for this citizenship.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

The data for the policy recommendations consists of interviews with 16 young mothers and two fathers, conducted in the metropolitan region of Helsinki, which is among the most multi-ethnic areas in Finland. Sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted individually and one with a couple. Additionally, for the purpose of obtaining contextualising data, ethnographic fieldwork was carried out in maternity and child health services in two cities. The ethnographic fieldwork included a total of 51 visits to seven different maternity and child health clinics. Detailed field notes were taken during the thirteen appointments that respondents and their children had with nurses and two with doctors. Each appointment lasted between thirty minutes and slightly over an hour.

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	Peltola, Marja (forthcoming) Nuoret äidit haluavat tulla nähdyiksi kompetentteina vanhempina [Young mothers wish to be seen as competent parents]. *Näkökulma* [View point, web publication] Helsinki: Finnish Youth Research Society.

National

POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: FINLAND (2 OF 2)

Intergenerational Contests and Spatial Occupations in the City

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Finland, our research included two different case studies: one on young mothers in multicultural Finland, and one on how young people and young adults (especially urban activists) experienced intergenerational contests and spatial occupations in the city of Helsinki.

This policy brief is concerned with how culturally and politically active young people and young adults use different public and semi-public spaces in Helsinki. This research focused on intergenerational contests and conflicts, and how young people negotiate them in the urban space. More specifically, the research was situated in the context of a youth cultural and community centre, which is located at the intersection of municipal youth work, and the tradition of underground and DIY activism and anarchism. Research participants were 16-3o year old young people who participated in different activities at the centre, such as performing subcultural circus and queer theatre.

Many of the participants in this study were critical about the current Finnish government's politics (such as cuts in the welfare sector), and were themselves in an economically fragile situation. Furthermore, their life trajectories did not necessarily follow the ideal route of quick education and transition into employment. Thus, many of them voiced an intergenerational distrust towards governmental politics and decision-making in Finland. What is extremely relevant is how intergenerational relations and conflicts were intertwined into many layers of the research participants' experiences of society as well as their ways of becoming active in the urban space. Firstly, the key experiences of conflict and stigmatisation were voiced as generational, including party politics, ideals of individualism and success as well as discrimination in the public spaces. Secondly, the participants shared the understanding that their activities were a generational experience, whether it meant rainbow activism or experiencing agency in a community based on practices such as peer learning. In addition, space was, in many ways, linked to the social and the understanding of a specific generation. Importantly, while many of the research respondents were not in a very vulnerable

situation socially, their opinions echo that of a generational experience of disappointment and distrust in society as well as the need for their own community and spatial occupation.

The policy recommendations are directed towards youth work and cultural youth work sectors in municipalities and NGOs. The recommendations can also be used as part of urban planning. The recommendations foreground, firstly, the importance of providing free and loose spaces for young people and young adults. Secondly, the recommendations highlight a critical view of creating free and safe spaces from an intersectional perspective. The aim of the recommendations is to promote culturally active young people and young adults' viewpoints on urban planning and cultural youth work.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide free and open spaces for young people and young adults

The research found that free and open urban spaces were extremely important for the participants. What was especially essential for their sense of belonging to the youth cultural and community centre was the fact that it was a free leisure space, with no need to pay fees or to buy anything to gain access to the space. For the respondents, the community-building values of the youth cultural and community centre were deeply intertwined with the material space; for example, the walls covered with graffiti and political sticker art, the unisex toilets, the second-hand furniture. Furthermore, the space carried its own youth cultural norms following the transnational DIY tradition, which was repeated in, for example, peer teaching and learning, sharing knowledge and creating tight communities. Importantly, many voiced the need for more open urban spaces for young adults over the age of 18. This age group (18-29) becomes often invisible in municipal youth work, where most activities are planned to preteens and teenagers.

➔ Urban planning needs to recognize the needs of young adults who are often left outside of municipal youth work. Free or cheap leisure spaces for creative activities and community-building need to be provided.

2. Critically focus on the exclusions and hierarchies in 'open' and 'safe' spaces

The research found that explicitly naming a space safe open and welcoming for all can create invisible hierarchies and exclusions. The micro power relations inside the centre and in different groups were marked by subtle hierarchies that became visible during ethnographic fieldwork. Some respondents voiced explicit opinions on some practices that they experienced as excluding. While 'safe spaces' and 'safer spaces' are frequently discussed and applied in contemporary youth work, the limits, the rhetoric of keeping the doors open as well as welcoming and respecting everyone can also turn into a dominant discourse that actually hides any hierarchies or inner struggles in the communities.

➔ Youth work and cultural youth work needs to continue critical discussions about the understandings of safe and safer spaces. Naming a space 'safe and welcoming' is not enough. Safety of a certain space needs to be analysed intersectionally in relation to race, social class, age, sexuality, gender and ability.

3. Enhance appreciation of young people's subcultural activities and alternative forms of learning

The research found several creative, subcultural and alternative forms of learning, shared in the communities of young people and young adults. Peer learning and support were influential and outspoken practices shared at the youth cultural and community centre. Many participants pondered this 'different way' of learning and sharing in contrast to the societal pressures of individual success and a goal-oriented,

neoliberal life trajectory. Many talked about intergenerational expectations and pressures they experienced from school, work or social services. Many had experienced devaluing of their activities in contrast to more established fields of art.

➔ Young people and young adults' alternative ways of learning as well as their subcultural knowledge and practices should be more widely recognized and appreciated in cultural youth work

4. Enhance knowledge on and tackle urban discrimination based on gender, race, social class, sexuality and age

The research found several experiences of urban discrimination and harassment in the public space. An important context for experiencing intergenerational distrust was related to the complex negotiations of belonging to the city. Different urban spaces are produced socially and can be understood through the struggle for belonging and as arenas, which produce us as subjects of a certain gender, age, ability and ethnicity. Urban encounters between people reflect and remake urban racialised, class-related, age-related and gendered hierarchies. The rainbow group members in particular voiced experiences of discrimination in the public space.

➔ Urban youth policies need to recognise and tackle discrimination faced by young people and young adults.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 20 interviews and fieldwork at a youth cultural and community centre with a subcultural profile in Helsinki. The most intensive period of fieldwork was done over three months (approximately 7 hours/week) between February and May, in spring 2017.

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National
POLICYBREIF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: GERMANY (1 OF 2)

The Autonomists. Perceptions of societal change among radical left youth.

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Germany, our research focussed on young people who are engaged in the 'extra-parliamentary left' or 'emancipatory left' scenes – in short, and more colloquially, named as 'the autonomists'.

This policy brief is concerned with the media portrayal and stigma of this group as a quintessentially violent or ready to use violence group, and tries to bring a different, multi-faceted perspective to the surface. The policy recommendations are directed towards policy makers and practitioners of youth work such as youth workers, teachers, social workers, and towards the police, particularly those policing demonstrations.

The aim of the recommendations is to give insights to the perceptions of societal change among a group of young people that, despite being referred to in the research as 'the autonomists', cannot be easily categorised as a single homogeneous group but belong to different regional scenes and groups.

They all share the eager wish to make the world a better place based on the principles of social cohesion, equality and justice. Within the groups and scenes exists a pervasive awareness of social inequality, discrimination and unequal treatment on the basis of skin colour, gender and other variables. The inevitable result of this is the guiding principle of solidarity with the disadvantaged and the repressed. The aim of their engagement is to lay the foundations for everyone to live in freedom and autonomously, without existential worries, and free from discrimination against skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion or lifestyle.

The Interviewees (22 persons - 10 female, 12 male; median age 25.8 years - from different regions in North, South and East Germany) directly expressed a desire for 'world peace', 'justice' and 'independence from power relations'. On the other hand, interviewees felt 'mega restricted and powerless [...] against major powers, large entities, which tell you how to live' (Frauke, aged 25).

1) *Reduce the risks of criminalisation for young activists. Actions of the police appear to be arbitrary at demonstrations in particular*

The empirical material proves that there is a high risk of `criminalisation' as soon as (young) people actively take part in actions and demonstrations on the so-called `left-wing radical' spectrum. All of the interviewees had been subject to unjust, sometimes brutal treatment by the police and the legal authorities. Different kinds of injustice was felt and experienced by the interviewees including judicial hypocrisy and unequal treatment, police brutality, spying, surveillance, observation, criminalisation and attempted criminalisation. Negotiations with local authorities created a large gap between activists and the democratic social system.

Recommendation > It is crucial to give young people engaged in the 'extra-parliamentary left' the opportunity to protest for ideas and topics on the left political spectrum without treating them all under general suspicion of being black block stone throwers. De-escalating strategies instead of criminalising strategies should become a major police strategy.

2) *Media Portrayals are creating one sided, stigmatising pictures of the left activists. Reduce the apparently false and biased reportages about left demonstrations and actions*

The media focus on forms of militancy and the violent nature of left-wing groups dominated the thematic diversity in the scenes:

`it's often the case when you go to a demonstration as an anti-fascist that you are immediately judged to be part of the left-wing violent mob that's come to trash the place' (Tatjana, aged 26).

The research has shown the diversity of political issues, positions and actions and attempted to look at the extra-parliamentary left from a different angle.

The current media focus on militant phenomena in radical left-wing contexts reduces the extra-parliamentary left to only a few attributes, and reproduces a false and biased truth that already exists in the public's perception. In the self-perception of the autonomist scenes, violence and militancy are far less important. The views outlined in the research paint the picture of decidedly reflective individuals, scenes and groups, who intensively, discursively and through their actions, grapple with their own (internal) and external (in society) structures. At the same time, these groups see themselves subjected - in varying degrees - to intense stigmatisation, clear risks of criminalisation, and also to attacks from extreme right-wing groups.

Recommendation > Images projected by the media (who hold some responsibility), particularly in reports about demonstrations, that create stigmatising pictures should not be reproduced and multiplied.

3) *Accept the participation and outreach aims. Although not ostensible visible, there are numerous efforts and projects touching the issues of social and ethnical inequality targeting social cohesion. They deserve respect, acceptance and support.*

Means of participation and different forms of self-organised social work are implemented in the scenes. This relates to projects such neighbourhood work, which supports the effort to raise residents' awareness of their own political concerns by means of speeches and proposals that are of interest to them. Permanent

services, such as social advice and assistance services, exchange platforms or courses and sports activities, support and assistance as well as information and leisure time services could be set up and made available to interested residents of the respective neighbourhoods.

If anything, the interviewees were reluctant to speak about their participation intentions, as in the contexts of the street-based social work and the autonomous project work outlined above, where the protagonists are more concerned with reaching a wider segment of the population:

`in the meantime, I don´t really want expand the scene any further [...], I really just want to do politics, yep, do politics [...], the problems this world is faced with, just sort of be involved in the discussions, tackle them, and, of course, simply to make the world a better place´ (Gustav).

Recommendation > Projects and social work – no matter with what political intention, and independently of self-organisational characteristics – should be treated with the same respect and acceptance as similar ones carried out by 'professional' organisations supported in official funding schemes. The project and social work are targeting social cohesion in the broadest sense and can be conceptualised as grass root or self-organised local or 'real' policies. They are an expression of the (indirect) wish to participate and shape the society the young people are living in.

4) *Recognise the informal learning processes for the activists and realise the enormous potential for individual empowerment.*

The individual benefits that the interviewees generated from their social commitment and political pursuits are clearly evident. All of those we questioned spoke about their individual learning process that resulted from their activities and interactions both within their own structures, with people and institutions outside of them, and about how their experiences have empowered them personally. This personal development comes, for example, from managing pragmatic and organisational tasks, and from reflecting on occurrences and interactions within their own scenes. It also comes from analysing historical and everyday political events in local and (inter)national contexts, whilst correlating these with (system) critical theories.

The examination of (system) critical issues is perceived to be important. There does not seem to be the same possibilities for examining (system) critical issues with the corresponding thematic focus at the same depth outside of their own scenes and groups. All the activists who are so deeply involved in their projects unanimously expressed the feeling that they enjoyed these activities and that the activities gave them a sense of individual fulfilment and purpose.

Recommendation > Youth work should realise and support the individuation and individual empowerment of young people who are organising themselves in squatted houses, autonomous centres, self-organised youth centres and housing projects. This empowerment has positive effects on the well-being of these young people and their individuation. It is also a means and a form of encouragement to actively participate and shape the society these young people are living in.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

Semi-structured individual and group interviews, participatory observation and secondary data analysis were the main sources of the empirical material that this policy brief is derived from. 16 interviews with 22 scene members, two expert interviews with a lawyer and a filmmaker, and 14 research diary entries that were written during the research and participation in various events. In addition, memos were written and records of participatory observations of scene-specific events as well as during occupations of properties, and during one major and one smaller demonstration. A radio broadcast by an Antifa group was also included in the analysis. Furthermore, we considered a programme broadcast by the German TV channel ZDF, which reported on the militancy of the autonomists in the wake of the G20 demonstrations; a film about anarchistic projects in Europe and a film on the topic of militant antifascism. Finally, photographs taken by the interviewees on the topic of 'political activity' were included in the analysis and coding of the data. The whole empirical phase lasted twelve months from April 2017 to April 2018.

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National POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: GERMANY (2 OF 2)

'Neo-Muslims?' The social engagement of young Muslim women

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Germany, our research focussed on young women who were actively practising Muslims and were engaged in various voluntary social or political activities in their religious communities, schools and youth organisations. They were actively against Islamophobia, and well as being in favour of being positively identified as Muslims, political dialogue, and the support of young people or refugees.

This policy brief is concerned with the individual and institutional discrimination and stigmatisation the young women who choose to wear the headscarf experience, and how this influences their engagement in society. It focuses on addressing and engaging the young women with their specific experiences and concerns with social institutions and processes.

The policy recommendations are directed towards all actors working with young people (schools, public and private youth organisations, migrant organisations, youth policy makers) and those seeking to increase young people's social engagement. Furthermore, it is aimed towards policy makers involved in diversity, integration and social cohesion.

The aim of the recommendations is to acknowledge and encourage diverse youths' agency, their multi-faceted identities, and their multi-dimensional spheres of belonging.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

> ➢ **Inter-culturally sensitive and non-stigmatising approaches of teachers and other school staff towards young women with hijab should be encouraged.**

Respondents report experiencing changes of behaviour of some teachers towards them after they started wearing the headscarf in school. While they reported that they felt accepted and supported by many of their teachers, almost all of them also experienced unsettling reactions from others. Reactions to their appearance with headscarf included being ignored by teachers, being confronted in front of the class on their motives, derogatory comments on their headscarf, and "over anxious" (from the respondents' perspective) reactions where it was suspected that the young women had been victim of coercion. While the respondents stressed that it was important that coercion to wear a headscarf should not be tolerated, they also stressed that the donning of the headscarf should not entail the generalised assumption that this had been a result of coercion.

> Banu reports that after she started wearing the headscarf, her previously good grades in school declined. Formerly, she had been the best pupil in her class in a certain subject and then dropped to mediocrity. She requested a performance review, upon which the teacher in question paid more attention to her and confirmed that she was actually performing above average and gave her the best mark in class. While she was happy her grades were revised, she was irritated that it was only after her protest that her marks improved. The mediocre marks she got for the period after putting on the headscarf and before the performance review nevertheless decreased her average.

While for some of the outside world the headscarf appears to be a "sudden change", the decision to wear it often constitutes the result of a thought and development process of the young woman. Starting to wear the headscarf can be an assertion of agency, a positive affirmation of identity and does not contradict educational aspirations and self-assertion.

Approaches of teaching staff who take a positive attitude towards the young woman, and encourage her in her individual aspirations, identity formation and expression of agency independent of the choice to wear a headscarf, should be supported.

> ➢ **Encourage diverse images of women who wear the hijab**

Women wearing the Muslim headscarf often feel reduced to the headscarf, and the ensuing assumptions and stigmatisations. A uniform request of all interviewees is that "we are not all the same". The desire to be regarded as an individual goes hand in hand with the wish that the multifaceted aspects of their identity should not be disregarded because of their choice to wear a headscarf. Others had confronted them with various assumptions, expectations and ascriptions due to their dress. From an intersectional perspective, the women were subject to specific ascriptions and stigma because they are female *and* Muslims. The assumptions and stigmatisations are diverse and create the basis for discriminations in many spheres of life: from (potential) employers, public authorities' staff, in public spaces, in interactions with strangers or in their own communities. As headscarf-wearing Muslim women, traditional lifestyles and family models are often attributed to them, and they are subject to many presumptions concerning their thoughts, views, ideas and behaviour. Not conforming to those expectations, e.g. by not marrying or pursuing a career, can cause irritation and conflicts.

> The women interviewed report many examples of stereotyped assumptions they are confronted with and how generalized judgements are passed onto them due to their choice of dress.
>
> *Outside the Jobcentre, sometimes I have to pass through or pass by, I hear it all there: 'No surprise to see her here'… The thing is I work there and I'm not one of those who receives benefits.* (Mara)
>
> *I also noticed that with young men from my Arab environment […] that the men view me differently now [with the headscarf]. That I'm somehow this woman who doesn't say boo to a goose, the 'typical' Muslim woman – the idea that very many men have – who doesn't have an opinion in life, nods her head and says 'yes' – and I can't be doing with that. That's not what I wanted to achieve. That's just not me. (Madiha)*
>
> *Many people still don't understand that you can be a free person and wear a headscarf. […] I'm absolutely not doing anything wrong. I'm not depriving anyone of their liberty. So why do people want to take my liberty away from me? (Melek)*

Awareness raising campaigns targeting both the general public and specific groups could widen and enrich the perceptions of women with headscarves. For example, specific campaigns targeting employers to reduce discrimination due to the hijab can be implemented on a larger scale. Multi-dimensional media portrayals that present Islam and Muslims in a positive and/or in everyday contexts should be intensified as an effort to counteract existing negative coverage of Islam and Muslims in association deviance, terrorism or other problematic contexts.

> ➢ **Increase employment opportunities for women with headscarves in public positions and institutions**

In Germany, Muslim women who want to pursue a career in law or in teaching face uncertainty whether they will be allowed and accepted with the headscarf. While in some Federal states teachers are allowed to wear a headscarf, in others they are not. Discussion about whether to allow or ban the headscarf for teachers has been ongoing since 1999; the issue continues to be discussed at the federal state level and many decisions have been delegated to schools in individual cases. The Muslim headscarf is forbidden for judges, public prosecutors and police officers because it is regarded as a religious symbol which contradicts the secular neutrality of the state. Some of the young women interviewed gave up their wishes to become teachers due to the insecurity of whether they would be allowed to teach with the headscarf. Visibility of women with headscarves in public positions such as in the police could increase the acceptance of the headscarf by the general public, and potentially the acceptance of the police by minorities who are discriminated against. It could also encourage diverse images of Muslim women.

> All of the respondents were aware that wearing a headscarf made it more difficult to enter into a profession. The fear of rejection on grounds of the headscarf goes hand in hand with the uncertainty of not knowing whether or not the headscarf is the reason for not being offered an interview. The fear is based on existing restrictions to public state positions as well as experiences: Several respondents had stories of these experiences to tell: when applying for a part-time or holiday job or training course they were rejected on the grounds of the hijab or where offered the job on the condition of taking it off. Taking it off was a very questionable option: As Banu describes, `*there's also an identification process behind the headscarf. […] when I know I am only accepted and respected because I've taken it off, then for me it also means they don't really respect me´*.

The employment of women with headscarves in public positions should be encouraged and the restrictions on state positions reconsidered.

> **Social Engagement Activities should explicitly address diverse youth (e.g. young Muslim Women)**

Many second generation youths pursue concrete professional aspirations and want to shape society – like the young Muslim women represented in this case study. Youth of migrant and minority backgrounds are under-represented in many fields of social engagement, although they are over-represented in some, such as activities for refugees. From the interviews, we can see that the young women are often active in fields which are connected to their experience, e.g. in the context of the mosque or in activities against Islamophobia. Specific actions to include them in other fields of social engagement, and including their concerns in those fields can help to increase their representation and involvement in spheres of social engagement in which they are under-represented.

> Why and how did the young respondents become active? On a practical level, specific factors have made the respondents become active: For example, because of the person who asked them to get involved - a teacher, friend or a friends' parent. This was often embedded in an institution they visited, for example their school, mosque or group where they were already active. Teachers and youth workers who addressed individual young people where motivators and multipliers.

Efforts to include young people in social engagement activities should take a diversity-oriented approach. This implies, for example, to open up for the concerns of diverse youth, encourage them to actively shape the agendas and contribute their subjectivities, address and invite them personally to participate and support an inclusive environment in the groups.

> **Stigmatised and minority youth should be encouraged to be their own agenda setters**

Young people who belong to stigmatised groups can experience feeling reduced to this part of their identity. Being regarded primarily as a member of a certain group and being seen as a representative of that group – with the other parts of their identities being ignored - can discourage them from finding and following their own paths and enacting other parts of their identities. Many headscarf-wearing women interviewed in this study often found themselves in the position to of having to explain and justify their faith, feeling like "representatives of Islam". Feeling reduced to their religious identity can restrict them in unfolding their full potentials.

All actors working with young people should encourage them to pursue their interests, wishes and aspirations. While acknowledging the existence of stigma and discrimination, and offering room to dealing with the experience, stigmatised youth should be supported to transcend the position of victims. Youth in general, and stigmatised and minority youth in particular should be encouraged to act and be their own agenda-setters.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on participant observation at 16 events of five different organisations and 15 in-depth interviews with young Muslim women. The interviewees are voluntarily engaged in various different fields, including the five organisations visited or other religious, social or political groups, either founded by the youth themselves or organised by local organisations and institutions. The interviewees were 18-35 years old, with the majority aged 18-22.

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FURTHER READING

"Young Muslim Women. 'Neo-Muslims'? Social engagement of devout young female Muslims" www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/en/research-impact/

National
POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: ITALY (1 OF 2)

Artistic/Creative Start-Ups in the Suburbs of Naples

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Italy, our research focussed on a group of young people from the most marginalised suburbs of Naples who engaged in society to 'steal' the youngest generations from criminality and give a chance to their future as well as to that of the whole local society.

This policy brief is concerned with the strategies and dynamics that allow young people labelled as "troubled", "losers", and "hopeless" to actively engage in society, turning the stigma into a positive value and a powerful drive for social change. Our research has found that troubled and marginalised young people can engage positively in society if they are given the opportunity to experience positive educational relationships that do not deny the young people's marginalised background and culture. In our case-study, the encounter with trustful adults and the opportunity to access "risky" artistic activities (such as circus and theatre) were key factors that led the "troubled" young people to drive social change in their neighbourhoods.

The policy recommendations are directed towards:
- National policy makers, particularly those in the education sector;
- Local authorities;
- School teachers; youth workers and social workers;
- Other policy actors engaged with youth work.

The aim of the recommendations is to:

- Raise awareness on the factors that prevent young people from marginalised urban areas to engage positively in school and in society; and encourage the adoption of educational measures alternative to the formal school system;

- Stimulate a debate on the innovation potential of marginalised young people and particularly of young people from the poorest suburbs of large cities;
- Encourage investment in the most marginalised urban areas and encourage the adoption of measures addressing youth from these areas.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Trust is key to an effective education

Most of our respondents have experienced school as the place where marginalisation and stigma are reinforced. The lack of positive and trustful relationships were the major factors preventing them from engaging positively into school career. Additionally, time spent in school was time stolen from more economically "productive" activities (e.g., drug dealing) and was therefore experienced as a waste of time. The encounter with trustful adults and the establishment of the positive relationships that derived from it was to our young respondents a totally new experience and the decisive turning point that marked a clear distance between "before" and "after" in their lives.

Examples

School teachers:

"For me, well… schools may as well all close down. Life is my school! Living in this world, the universe, is a university. If you don't live, you don't learn…Have you ever heard a teacher at school say: 'What's missing from your life? How would you like school to improve that for you?'…There's no time for improvement. There's no time for taking care of us, for relationships". (Matteo)

Building positive relationships:

"I would have liked to have had him (Gianluca) for a dad, that's for sure. My decision to come back here stemmed from the fact that I wanted to spend more time with him and learn from him…" (Paolo)

"By that point I trusted him (Gianluca) so whatever he suggested, I'd do it! Bungee Jumping? Ok, tell me when! Swimming? Let's go! Anything would have been fine. I trusted him and believed in what he said!" (Andrea)

Recommendation:

Educational relationships can be extremely effective when young people encounter trustful adults. Trust relations are key to education. The failure of formal education paths (e.g., school drop-out) does not necessarily entail that young people are not interested in, or capable of, undertaking an educational path. Youth policies, and local youth practices, should support opportunities for non-formal education based on trust.

2. Young people's life experiences should be valued

Our research has found that the negative values, role models and habits learnt from living in the neighbourhood can become crucial in the development of the individual identity and sense of belonging of the young people who grew up in harsh environments (e.g., in the absence of caring relationships and with scarce economic and social resources). The pack mentality and the years spent in street gangs have led our young respondents to develop a strong sense of belonging that can be effectively transferred from their street gang to the whole local community, provided that the young people feel free to maintain the values, role models and habits they know best. Without denying their troubled pasts, the young street artists addressed by our research have effectively learned to use their street origin as an asset, something they

share with the younger generations they wish to involve in their arts projects. The adoption of the street language and codes, as well as the use of artistic activities that entail risk and danger, is crucial in order for them to attract the younger generations and create an environment where they feel confident and empowered. By so doing, the young people's identity is valued not denied, and the stigma of marginality becomes a strength by which they aim to achieve a cultural change in society.

Examples

Adopting the young people's codes:
"These are kids who are constantly at-risk, even when they're not doing anything, simply because of the context they come from. So we transformed that risk from a negative one to a positive one: they have to take risks, do risky circus things like aerial silks or parkour but with positive connotations. That's what we work on". (Marcello)

"One day this little group came along to teach circus skills. I went out and was intrigued by all the things they were doing. One was on stilts, another was juggling clubs, balls… I went up to them because I wanted to try! And I liked it… it was fantastic. It made you feel good!" (Paolo)

Turning marginality into a positive value:
"It is a joint task! We are building a cathedral, all together, each with their own knowledge and their own skills. Thanks to this metaphor we can accept things that we generally tend to reject: being distressed, being judged negatively, being asked to make an effort that goes beyond your personal interest and what you would normally accept as an individual… An effort you make not only for yourself, but for the greater good". (Nino)

Recommendation:

In order for young people from harsh environments to engage socially it is important that their past experience is recognised and valued. Young people who grew up in a street gang are attracted by risk and danger. Circus and street theatre are examples of activities that can be fruitfully used to attract troubled young people and convey them towards positive social engagement. Policies aimed at providing alternative opportunities for troubled young people should consider the adoption of strategies that do not deny the young people's life experience and identity.

3. Invest in the peripheries and suburbs

Our research indicates that the young people who get involved in illegal/criminal activities do so because feel they have no alternative options. Or rather, criminality is the only life they know and the only opportunity for them to engage successfully in some activities and acquire a recognised social role in the local community. The lack of social and leisure opportunities in the neighbourhood, combined with the harsh family and economic situations of many of them, leads the young people to have no views of any alternative life. Many of our young respondents have never had the chance to get out of the neighbourhood until they were teenagers or even later. Many of them recall with great emphasis the first time they could travel to other cities and talk to young people who had a totally different life. Growing up in deprived areas which the young people perceive as "forgotten" by the institutions prevents young people from engaging positively in society and it leads them to perceive illegal activities as the only chance they have in order to find their place in the world. Many of our respondents indicate the opportunity to access the neighbourhood leisure centre as a turning point in their life. The lack of investment in the marginalised suburbs reiterates the stigma of the young people from these areas as 'marginalised' and 'problematic'; our research demonstrates however that they have instead the potential for extraordinary proactive participation *in* society *for* society if they are provided with alternative opportunities. The lack of investment in the marginalised suburbs also favours the spreading of illegal/criminal activities and organizations and prevents young people from engaging positively in society. On the contrary, the

peripheries of large cities can be transformed from places marked by exclusion and insufficiencies to places in which to experiment with new forms of social cohabitation, as our research indicates.

Examples:

Childhood in a deprived periphery:

"We didn't have anywhere to hang out…we were always making trouble in the neighbourhood. It was dark. There was no cinema. There weren't any football pitches, we'd use fruit crates, one on the left and one on the right, 50 meters apart, and we'd play. It was bad. There were no theatres, no parks…nothing. Bars closed at 7pm.There was a curfew. You couldn't go out. Nothing, nothing at all!" (Cristian)

Internalised periphery:

"This condition of internalised marginalisation - of internalised periphery is very strong and clear. They have internalised the inability to get out of their specific context, emerge and change things. A girl recently said to me: "Teach, what do YOU know? I come from the sewers" as if to say, worrying about me is useless, I know more about life than you do because I live amidst gunfire, shit and filth". (Maria)

Before and after:

"Before, this was normality for me! But since I've started getting out of Naples with G., away from [my] Region… I've seen other towns in Italy and I've seen the difference between them and us down here. It's astonishing!" (Cristian)

Never imagined a different life:

"…Then I went to Padua where I met loads of young people my age who were continuing their studies in higher education. When I came back here all the people my age were doing was stealing and bag snatching!…I had never imagined it was possible to work and study and lead a regular law abiding life. It never dawned on me to live "above board" let's say!" (Michele)

Investing in the future of the neighbourhood:

"I'll never leave this neighbourhood. If I do, it'll be because I know that Barra is capable of making it, that the kids will be fine on their own and that a whole new generation will be able to grow up correctly, in the right way, with the right rules, experiencing the beauty of childhood". (Marcello)

Recommendation:

Research findings clearly indicate that youth policies should target **peripheries and suburbs** as key-spaces for the growth of young people's creativity and innovation potential. Youth policies should be given more resources to create opportunities (including providing leisure spaces and activities) for young people in the most marginalised suburbs of large cities.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on the findings from an ethnographic research study conducted between June 2017 and February 2018. Fieldwork included in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 young people (6 females and 14 males) aged between 18 and 34 and participant observation of the activities carried out by the youngsters at the Asterix centre as well as on neighbourhood streets and squares. The young interviewees also provided pictures taken by themselves and showing their neighbourhood and the activities they engage in. Most of the young respondents working with 'at risk' young people in the suburbs of Naples were themselves 'at risk' youngsters in the past. Contacts with the young respondents were made through links with two self-organised centres organizing theatre and street circus activities.

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FURTHER READING

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PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: ITALY (2 OF 2)

No Tav: Stigma as a drive for social change

October 2018

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Italy, our research focussed on young people who are the target of a strong stigmatisation process due to their involvement in a social movement opposing the construction of a high-speed railway (the TAV) between France and Italy.

This policy brief is concerned with the media portrayal of the young activists as "terrorists" and "anti-progress" and the nation-wide construction of stigma that derives from such portrayal. However, despite the strong stigmatisation they are subjected to, these young people succeed in interpreting instances of social change by borrowing, from the overall No Tav movement, the key features that allow them to turn stigma into pro-active social engagement. Our field research demonstrates that the feeling of belonging to an enlarged community of people sharing the same values and the extraordinary trustful relationship established between the young and the elder activists, are key to transforming the negative effects of stigma into positive engagement. Such transformation ultimately leaves the young people with the awareness and the will to drive social change without delegating this responsibility to the State or the Institutions.

The policy recommendations are directed towards:
- Journalists, particularly those working in the national media
- Local authorities and policy makers
- Police, particularly those on duty during demonstrations
- Professionals involved in the work of the judiciary
- Practitioners and social workers in the youth sectors

The aim of the recommendations is to:
- Inform about the overall social engagement of young activists, the values and the motivations that inspire them;
- Raise awareness on the innovation potential of young activists;

- Contribute to prevent stigmatisation and repression;
- Stimulate a debate on the positive effects of trustful intergenerational relations and supportive environments/communities on the young
- Encourage active participation of young people in society

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support local communities

Cohesive local communities can have powerful effects on young people. As our young respondents reported, having a cohesive and protective community behind them which supports their agency and with which they share the main values provides young people with strength. They identify themselves with the local community but also with the enlarged No Tav community; and they openly express pride in belonging to such a community. The young activists share with the community the major values that inspire them (e.g., solidarity, social justice, diversity, sustainable environment) and convey all those values in agency with and for society. Most importantly, the feeling of belonging to a community allows young people to find their place in society and they become aware of the interdependency connecting each individual to all others. This ultimately encourages them to mobilize jointly in order to achieve the societal changes they deem necessary. This is a key point resulting from our field research: there seems to be a direct link between the awareness of belonging to a community and the young people's propensity to social engagement, on the one hand. On the other hand, links exist between the young people's propensity to social engagement and their refusal to accept the "dependency culture" (our respondents openly speak of a "delegation system") that justifies social passivity. The innovative potential of young people, including young people 'in conflict', can be best expressed when young people themselves are placed within a community with which they identify and with which they share the same values.

<u>Examples</u>

Sense of belonging:

"There are actual bonds…with the place, the valley, the people… and in my opinion this is the heart of this struggle. There is this sense of belonging connecting everyone (…) Something I believe is missing in an urban context. Because possibly there is not as much dialogue and sense of belonging, even". (Clara)

Interdependency:

"I mean one's own feeling of belonging to a community and the idea that we are all small pieces of it, right? It's together how we can get results (…) When someone leaves it is an important part of it that goes, and when a new one arrives, it's an important one that joins us". (Roberto)

"I really like the idea itself of movement, of people who are not 'one' anymore, who don't act only for themselves but jointly with others, in friendship and harmony with others". (Michele)

Valuing diversity:

"You get the old man and the baby in the pram, the anarchist, the communist and the catholic, absolutely in a non-conflictual manner. There is no difference between the black block and (the old lady) who goes to a demonstration…" (Piero)

Belonging and identity:

"Well, let's say that if I am what I am it's because of training, education and my parents and a lot of other things but it's also thanks to the NT movement. Definitely". (Luca)

Trust:

It makes you trust people you don't know, so... You are more familiar with the idea of being able to change things you don't know and open up, let's say so. (Piero)

Recommendation

Community building strategies should be an integral part of social inclusion policies and the community activities at local level should be intergenerational as much as possible. Local policies should seek to provide opportunities and sites for socialization, leisure and awareness-raising activities in each neighbourhood. In urban contexts, neighbourhood committees could be created with the aim to create open spaces to give voice to all social sectors and in particular to young people.

2. Provide opportunities for intergenerational exchange

Our research has found that a trustful intergenerational exchange can represent a very effective weapon against the scarce participation of young people in society. Trust-based intergenerational relationships give way to a valuable learning process that can empower young people and encourage them to engage socially. All our young respondents have pointed out the strength they draw from their relationship with the elderly – a truly bi-directional learning process that is based on trust and respect. The young are aware that such relationships are a distinct trait of the No Tav social movement and many recognize that it is vital to the life of the social movement itself as it allows for generational turnover. The elderly also play a key role in helping young people to cope with the stigma and shows them ways to turn it into something positive. As our young respondents report, the fact of feeling trusted and respected by the elderly is not only meaningful to their engagement, as it opens their mind, but it represents also the turning point that convinced many of them to engage actively in the movement. The young activists view such synergy as guaranteeing a twofold approach – the action-oriented and the reflective – which they see as the most effective strategy to achieving social change. Beyond expressing gratitude to the elderly, the young activists are aware that the dynamic synergy between the younger and the older generations is beneficial not only to each of them individually, but also to the overall social movement and ultimately to the whole local society, which is strengthened and becomes more cohesive.

Examples

Shared aims:

"One of the beautiful aspects of the movement is its being cross-generational (…) Diverse people who, differently from most (...) other cases in this country, succeed in gathering with an aim, with a purpose". (Michele)

Generational turnover:

"They literally walk with us, point the way out for us basically saying that they will come with us up to a certain point so that then we can continue on our own (…). They are holding out their hand, let's take it!" (Francesca)

"There is a big problem of transmission of values from one generation to the next one (…) which does not necessarily mean that you'll have to stay in the Valley for the rest of your life, nor that you'll have to be forever part of the NoTav fight. (...) It means that while you are staying here, there has to be a sparkle, something (…) A baton which fell on the ground for future generations to pick up and take over from there". (Roberto)

Turning point:

"The very fact that I felt involved when I was among people who were older than me, who trusted me. I mean, they wanted me to feel involved and they made me feel as their peer (…) I believe it is like that for all younger people, for all those living here, and this is the starting point..." (Alice)

Recommendation

Youth policies and policies addressing social cohesion should seek to increase opportunities for intergenerational exchange as it allows for a very effective learning process. Although informal, such learning process benefits both the young and the elderly and ultimately contributes to the cohesiveness of society as a whole. Intergenerational exchange should be encouraged at school. Within each neighborhood, initiatives where both the young and older people can best engage with their knowledge and skills should be promoted as benefiting the whole community.

3. Prevent stigmatization

Stigma can have detrimental effects on individuals. On young people, stigma can have particularly damaging effects, as it can affect their social identity and can thus discourage them from participating in society. Even though our young respondents, who are the target of a damaging stigmatization process by mainstream media, have found efficient ways to counteract the negative effects of stigma, they have to cope with it daily. They experience frustration and anger, which they seek to combat by organising information exchange opportunities, in particular for young people. From school to university and in their daily life, the young activists strive to demonstrate that their activities have a much wider scope than simply opposing the State interests. They seek to show that they engage in a wide variety of social issues other than the high-speed railway. By so doing, they hope to achieve two aims: opposing the stigma that labels them as the quintessence of violence, and encouraging more people to mobilize for social change.

Examples

"It was mostly about how the No-Tav were portrayed at that time, like terrorists, black-blocs… (…) If I were to trust the public opinion, possibly I would have never understood anything of the No-Tav movement, what it really was…" (Clara)

"I really was in trouble there, I mean, I felt as though I was living in two different worlds, when I talked about the TAV they all looked at me as though they were saying 'Noooo, such a thing is just not true (…) It's you people in Susa Valley who are crazy'. (…) I wouldn't say justify myself, but I had to give them good reasons. Since then I started to get informed to be able to give a detailed account so that I could also answer (…) and that is how it all started". (Francesca)

"You cannot be a terrorist just because you have different political ideas". (Roberto)

Breaking the stigma:

"To show a 70 years old person throwing a stone or fireworks against institutions, clashes with the imagery of the black block, of the anarchist". (Piero)

Recommendation

Training of journalists is highly recommended and it should aim at guaranteeing that all voices are been heard. Journalists should be encouraged to listen to the young people's voices when writing news regarding them. Showing images that portray exclusively violent young people does not help people to gain an understanding of the various issues; in a society that aims to guarantee expressive plurality, such practice should be limited and balanced with more positive images of young people. Workshops on the effects of stigma and on anti-stigmatization principles and strategies should be organized periodically. Young people's activities aimed at raising awareness on the various social issues they engage in should be supported and promoted in schools, universities and with local committees.

4. Support the participation of young people in society

Our case study demonstrates that young people, even young people labelled as "in conflict" and "violent", are willing to engage positively in society and mobilize to change things. In our case, the young activists'

social engagement is incredibly high compared to that of the average young people in the rest of the country. The young people seek social change by engaging at all levels – from the small daily choices to political ideology and more serious social and environmental issues. In particular, the attention given by young people to specific topics (e.g., solidarity, sustainable development, social justice) may be an indicator of active participation in society and/or the capability to be promoters of social change/innovation. While constantly repeating the need for everybody to mobilize for social change, the young people clarify that each person should engage in accordance with their own pace and will. Having a good relationship with the community of origin and the older generations, as mentioned above, is key to the young people's capacity to be promoters of social change. Our young respondents are aware of being a "special" case in the country and they have started to seek exchange opportunities with young people from other areas in order to transfer their experience and sensitize them about the need to mobilize.

Examples

"I believe young people really want to get out of their hideouts and say, well, we are also here and… We want to take part in it, in this process of change!" (Pamela)

"To follow some kind of line of thought in the daily life, the fact that a person can fight for it day by day, simply by discussing with one's own friends or families, trying to lead a life more coherent with nature". (Piero)

"Revolution, or any change, can also be brought about by going shopping (...) You can always choose to buy from me. To support me and the land, in order to add value to the whole area, so that it is cared for, monitored and it doesn't fall apart (...) Another kind of development is possible and it could imply that no other train as fast as TAV should transit". (Luca)

 "It's something I feel that makes me say, do participate, it's ok to keep asking questions, it's ok to work on big issues but do take part actively in everything, it's essential! There's the need for something made out of younger people, and it's crucial that everybody make an effort to do something, even in one's own small way". (Francesca)

"It is now a different time, a time when we demand less. Therefore, this is the perfect moment for us to create an idea, or even only inform young people about what is happening [here] but not only about that: about all that is happening in general concerning young people and not, which can be relevant for us". (Roberto)

"In the very valley where they want to build something useless and devastating, we want to create a different world. We can do it together and we know that all together, all according to one's own possibility, we are invincible". (Festival promoters' website)

Recommendation

Exchange opportunities between young people involved in social movements and other groups of young people should be promoted as potential "innovation incubators". Exchange opportunities can stimulate reflection on youth participation in society and encourage young people to engage actively in order to address social change. Social policies should deserve more attention to leaving space open for the ideas and the practical contribution of young people in society beyond education and employment, as young people can guarantee a future outlook to societal issues.

This policy brief is based on fieldwork conducted between May and December 2017 in the Susa alpine Valley, in the North-East of Italy. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 20 young activists, 9 females and 11 males. All interviews were audio recorded. The age of the interviewees ranged between 18 and 27 years, with the exception of 3 interviewees aged between 30 – 34 years. Contact with the young activists was made through the local branch of a national organization working on the labour market and then through the snowball technique. Participant observation entailed attending formal and informal meetings of the Youth Committee as well as of the overall movement; visits to the key sites; and spending time and sharing meals with many young and less young activists. Other data were collected from field diaries and secondary sources.

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National

POLICYBRIEF

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways how young people (14 to 29 years-old) with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Portugal, our research focused on young men and women aged 15 to 24 with life paths of risk and deviant behaviour, presenting conflicts with major normative social institutions like the family, the school and/or the law. They were engaged in a state-provided intervention aiming to promote their social reintegration, namely second chance education projects, non-custodial youth justice measures or alternative residential care, which in some cases, overlapped.

This policy brief is concerned with the experiences of conflict and stigma faced by these young people, in particular, the fact that they become an object of judgements and social demands, and are easily labelled as 'problematic', 'deviant' or 'dangerous'. It also relies on the evidence that supportive relationships and participatory institutional settings act as facilitators for their positive social involvement.

The policy recommendations are directed towards national and regional policy makers in youth related fields, public authorities, civil society organizations, families, schools, teachers and other youth related professionals.

The aim of these recommendations is to suggest effective ways to deal with young people's conflicts with social and juridical norms, specifically by preventing the emergence of risk and deviant paths, and its vicious cycle, and also to promote young people's positive social involvement.

1. **Promote national and regional public policies that ensure young people's rights and equal opportunities.**

According to our findings, the conflicts young people face are closely related to structural contingencies and inequalities, such as socioeconomic, territorial or gender disadvantage, stigmatisation based on behaviour or place of origin, and social and educational marginalisation. These contingencies and inequalities strongly determined their life paths, which became defined – by others and even sometimes by themselves – as non-normative or as conflicting.

Most young people who become the object of State intervention within educational formal measures or youth justice measures come from poor backgrounds, particularly from socially deprived urban neighbourhoods. These youngsters face greater socioeconomic vulnerability and need to be targeted by specific social and educational policies in order to overcome structural inequalities.

➢ **Positive discrimination policies and additional support for the most vulnerable young people** should be implemented, providing additional **educational** support adjusted to their needs, and facilitating their access to **housing,** to **health services**, and to the **labour market**.

2. **Reduce the stereotyping and discrimination that young people face in formal control institutions, and encourage social relationships of tolerance, mutual trust and positive expectations in such contexts.**

In our study, many young people felt that they were often treated by others ('society' and its authority figures, like teachers, judges, or the police) on the basis of prejudices related to poverty and/or to social deprived neighbourhoods. Consequently, their relationships with authority figures tended to be built upon mutual distrust, negative expectations, and attributing individual responsibility for failures and mistakes, leading to more conflict and, ultimately, to marginalisation. This exclusion cycle is particularly evident in young people's relations with formal education, as school often turns into a place for individual failure and interpersonal conflict, where they don't feel welcomed and stop expecting positive outcomes, eventually ending up in disengagement from education.

When young people are given the opportunity to participate in a responsible and cooperative way within a frame of trusting relationships with educational agents, they tend to feel welcomed and reengaged in education.

➢ Young people with risky or deviant paths should be given **the opportunity to express their identities, points of view, experiences, and positive traits** within educational, care and justice institutions. Encouraging **participation**, side-by-side with peers and adults, in **cooperative activities and projects** can be an effective way to overcome stereotypes, promote mutual trust, and foster positive expectations.

3. **Value, support and build the capacity of families, educational agents and other professionals, to develop supportive relationships with young people.**

Supportive and individualized relationships established with significant adults (relatives, teachers, youth workers, youth justice officers, psychologists, etc.) are understood by youngsters to be major facilitators of personal change, primarily by providing emotional support, and by enhancing their self-esteem, moral and

behavioural adjustment, commitment to school, work and/or family, and the ability to define long-term life goals.

> Teachers and social workers can make a great difference in young people's lives. For that to happen, supportive intergenerational relationships must be characterised by openness, respect, listening, appreciation, joy, adaptability, commitment, space to make suggestions and choices and orientation towards the future.

> ➢ Families, educational agents and other professionals **should be trained** (theoretically, methodologically and ethically) to gain a **deeper understanding** of the experiences of vulnerable youth, and to become able to **build supportive relationships** with them. The **positive contributions** of families and professionals could be further acknowledged and supported by the State and civil society, and should constitute the foundation of **articulated multiagency reintegration strategies** directed at vulnerable youth. Within the framework of these strategies, the Portuguese State should encourage the social and legal recognition of the role – and professional status – of **youth workers**.

4. **Foster young people's agency in all educational, social and justice institutional responses directed to them.**

Encouraging the agency and self-determination of young people with risk and deviance paths is a key aspect on their positive social involvement. Young people's opportunity to participate in the decisions about their paths fosters their personal fulfilment and self-esteem. This, in turn, is shown to be particularly relevant to their re-engagement in education, crime desistence, and development of new life goals.

> Young people value the opportunity to make choices and act within the projects they are engaged in. Hence, they tend to be more actively engaged in activities and relationships when they feel that this involvement is a result of their free will and of their own commitment to change.

> ➢ Young people should be **involved in the discussion, choice and development of activities** in all educational, social and justice contexts, being able to **give their contribution in all stages** of that process.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 26 individual interviews to young people with life paths of risk and deviant behaviour (9 female). Respondents were aged between 15 and 24; 6 of them were under 18 years old. The participants were recruited through a Youth Justice Team and two Second Chance Education projects. Additionally, approximately 40 hours of participant observation, two group discussion sessions and a photo elicitation exercise were conducted with the students of one Second Chance Education project during a 7 months period.

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National
POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: PORTUGAL (2 OF 2)

Young Gender Activists

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Portugal, our research focused on young men and women aged 17 to 32 who disagreed with the social norms regarding gender roles and gender inequality, and who are engaged in formal or informal activities that aim to promote gender equality.

Gender activism started to gain social relevance in Portugal with the second and third feminist waves that occurred in the last century, and over the decades, young people have become more aware of the social and global challenges faced by women in the country. Despite the fact that initiatives around gender equality are rising and gradually having more impact, and that youth involvement in social and cultural initiatives for gender equality has grown, at the present moment, significant gender inequalities in income, job opportunities and family responsibilities remain. In terms of legislation, Portugal has made significant progresses in terms of gender equality policies; however its implementation needs to be further encouraged.

This policy brief is concerned with intergenerational gaps that reinforce dominant discourses of gender inequality and devalue youth, with gaps in the implementation of gender equality policies, and with the experiences of conflict and stigma that young people face due to their gender activism.

The policy recommendations are directed towards young people, families and older generations, school and education staff, social workers, civil society's organisations, public authorities, and regional and national policy makers.

The aim of the recommendations is to contribute to the effective and widespread implementation of equality policies, to suggest effective ways to disseminate and strengthen the role of youth gender activism, and to strengthen intergenerational relations in order to enhance the role of youth in society.

1 - Contribute to the effective and widespread implementation of gender equality policies

According to the young gender activists, the dominant social discourses in terms of gender roles still lead to unequal opportunities between genders, and maintain a low tolerance of difference. According to them, there is a false sense of change and acceptance in the Portuguese society, which is not ready to make fundamental changes.

The young gender activists suggested that some positive changes have already occurred at this level, though slowly and insufficiently, and believed that many rights have been achieved by decades of activism. The focus of the activists is to ensure that the rights that have been achieved through gender equality policies are respected.

National and regional stakeholders should be encouraged to adopt a **more inclusive discourse, namely by acknowledging inequalities and taking into consideration men and women's specific needs.** Measures should be taken to inspire **public and private institutions to follow equality policies** and to guarantee that equality is taken into account in other policy areas, especially in youth policies (e.g. public recognition for good practices, State certification for their social practices, and judicial and social support to those who are target of unequal treatment, in the workplace or at school for example).

2 – Disseminate and strengthen the role of youth gender activism

Young activists recognized many positive impacts of their activism, on themselves and on other people, but they considered that activism is not always perceived positively by others. In fact, when describing the main conflicts they experience, these young people mentioned resistance to activism, for instance, when their relatives did not understand their less conservative ideals nor their engagement in activism, or when teachers resisted rather than supported their initiatives to promote gender equality. Moreover, several participants referred to the media and social networks as a means to both disseminate stereotypes about gender and gender activism, and to deconstruct expectations based on gender and labels about gender activism.

The young gender activists presented some ideas on to how to disseminate and promote the involvement of other youths in gender activism, namely by: encouraging the use of a simple language when talking to others about gender equality and activism; passing on the message of gender activism more effectively and clarifying some misconceptions (e.g., feminism); providing more information about the activities that are organised (e.g., place, how to get involved); training teachers and other school staff to be aware and well informed about gender inequality; and promoting debates about gender equality and tolerance towards difference.

Civil society organisations focused on gender equality could contribute to the enlargement of knowledge about their work and should favour the articulation between each other, thus extending their initiatives to a wider audience. Youth initiatives and youth organisations aimed at gender equality should be further supported by public and private funding, and youth services. Specifically, citizenship education projects directed to gender equality and related issues should be further and more frequently developed in schools, stimulating the curiosity and knowledge about the theme, empowering the educational agents, families and students to participate more actively in the society. These educational projects could involve children from an early age, and young activists could be invited to take part, by facilitating workshops and enhancing the value of youth social involvement in society, namely through gender activism. Additionally, the **media could have a more active role** in deconstructing gender roles and expectations based on gender, as well as disseminating information widely, and promoting a more positive image of gender activism organisations.

3 – Strengthen intergenerational relations and enhance the role of youth in society

According to the young gender activists, youth in general is seen negatively by older generations. Thus, the discrimination experienced by these young people, based on gender or on their engagement in activism, intersects with discrimination because they are young. Even within activist associations, young people sometimes feel misunderstood and unsupported by older gender activists. For instance, older activists, who tend to be seen as key actors for young people's involvement in activism, are also seen as competitors for more visibility and for preserving the work they have done. Consequently, this makes it difficult for young people to have their space within activism trying to continue the work of older activists.

Some young gender activists reported not feeling supported by older generations in their gender activism, and they believed that this lack of support is linked to the fact that they are young, and young people usually are not taken seriously.

Half of the participants felt that older generations could have an important role in motivating young people to this type of activism, namely through sharing their stories with younger generations.

More initiatives should be promoted in contexts like schools or gender activism organisations allowing **younger and older generations to meet, share and cooperate**. This would allow the sharing of experiences and difficulties to enhance mutual understandings between generations, and promote shared approaches to problem resolution. Moreover, these moments should be encouraged to happen within the family context, in order to contribute to a greater acceptance of different perspectives and to a growing mutual knowledge, thus decreasing young people's feelings of non-acceptance.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 20 interviews with young gender activists (5 males), aged between 17 and 32 years old. The participants presented different types of engagement in activism: some (11) were or had been in formal gender activism organisations; others (7) were sympathisers/occasional participants in gender initiatives (e.g., feminist festivals, workshops, manifestations, gender meetings); and finally, two were "independent activists" (e.g., editors of gender zines, owners of feminist brand clothing). Additionally, we made observations at six events related to gender activism, such as manifestations and workshops, which resulted in field diaries and in the recruitment of some participants.

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National **POLICY**BRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: RUSSIA (1 OF 4)

People living with HIV and HIV activists (St. Petersburg & Kazan)

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society.

In Russia, our research focussed on young people who are engaged in HIV activism. This policy brief is concerned with the difficulties young people living with the HIV virus face in their everyday lives.

The policy recommendations are directed towards changes of the public attitude to young people living with HIV/AIDS and providing them with life chances that are equal to that of others. The aim of the recommendations is to present the problems and variants of their solutions defined by young people with HIV themselves.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide young people living with HIV with up-to-date antiretroviral therapy.

Participant observation and interview data suggest that children and young people with HIV in Russia experience difficulties because they need to take antiretroviral therapy (ART) in the form of a number of pills (up to 8) every day. Firstly, they experience 'fatigue from therapy', secondly, they are forced to handle possible questions about the nature of the pills from other people during trips, in youth camps etc. and a likelihood of the disclosure of their HIV status. Most young people with HIV keep this fact secret, that is, they do not reveal their HIV status to others, in order to avoid discrimination. Antiretroviral therapy in Russia is provided by public health institutions. The drugs available in Russia require daily intake, in contrast to up-to-date drugs that are taken once a week or once every 1-2 months. Teenagers often stop taking therapy that can lead to the formation of virus resistance to ART.

At first, it all started with syrups, there were syrups, there were huge pills. Now every year and a half, I change my therapy, because, because they get bored, and I want some new drug to get used to it in a different way so that there is at least some, at least some diversity between them. And now I take 8 pills a day one time, in the evening. And it all suits me more or less because when I took them twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, in the morning I could not take them… I can't even drink water properly in the morning, and therefore it was very uncomfortable for me, and every morning I felt sick when I went to study (Rustem).

All over the world, there are already drugs of the fifth generation, there, of the fourth generation. And here we accept, well, most, drugs of the first or second generation are prescribed to primary patients. That is, Efavirenz, from which a strong side effect, and so on, Zidovudine is the same... Patients are in a very difficult situation, they do not understand anything. Drugs are appointed, they get them, feel even worse more often... Most don't know, they get drugs, felt bad, they give up therapy, that is, resistance arises (Arthur).

➢ **Initiate a discussion of the quality of antiretroviral therapy prescribed to teenagers with HIV in Russia as a problem that limits the life chances of young people.**

2. Initiate a discussion about the lack of sex education in Russian secondary schools.

In Russian secondary schools, the discussion of condom use is excluded due to the Federal Law 'On protecting children from information that is harmful to their health and development'. According to this law, information that is 'represent(ed) as an image or description of sexual relations between a man and a woman' is restricted for children of certain age categories. The permitted information for children who have reached the age of sixteen is defined as 'images or descriptions of sexual relations between a man and woman that do not exploit an interest in sex and are not offensive, except for images or descriptions of sexual acts'. Due to these restrictions, there is no sex education in Russian secondary schools. The HIV activists who recently graduated from school say that topics of sexual relations and condom use are not discussed in lessons, and the theme of HIV is presented only very briefly:

We also didn't talk about this at school. We were briefly told, these ten-minute dudes came and said: 'Here's HIV, blah blah blah, it exists'. But about condoms, no one teacher, no parents, no one spoke openly (Anastasia).

HIV activists try to conduct preventive work in schools, including discussion of the use of condoms, but face school principals' fear.

At schools, it [condoms] is a closed topic and even more than that. I, well, I am also a member of the parents' committee in school, yes, I am also very active there, that's it. I talked with the principal of the school, with whom I had quite a good relationship, and asked: 'Don't you want to, well, people who do know how to do this, come to senior classes and make counseling there, say, some kind of lecture?' She says: 'What are you? If I now do it, parents will then drag me through the trials' (Dina).

In this context, the question of a fifteen year old schoolgirl at the training informing about HIV held by activists is characteristic: '*And if to take birth control pills, but without a condom, can you get* [HIV] *then*?' (field diary, 26/05/2017).

HIV activists include the topic of condoms use in their trainings informing about HIV with schoolchildren, but only if these trainings are conducted outside schools, for example, in a rural cultural house.

➢ **Initiate a discussion about the lack of sex education in Russian secondary schools as one of the factors contributing to the HIV epidemic.**

3. Provide a support group of teenagers living with the HIV virus with a stable meeting place.

The only support group for teenagers with HIV organised by HIV activists in Russia does not have its own place. The feature of the group is that its participants are not only HIV positive teenagers, but also their friends. During the period of participant observation, from February to May 2017, the teenagers' support group met about once a week, on weekends. The meetings consisted of 'trainings' conducted by students of the Kazan Theater School. Places for the meetings of the support group were provided free of charge by various organisations and communities, each time one has to negotiate the place again.

➢ **The support group of young people with the HIV virus needs stable premises to meet. These support groups are the only spaces in Russia where people with HIV can openly talk about themselves and their HIV-related difficulties without fears of labelling.**

4. Recommend to refrain from the terms that are morally burden and differentiate people when talking about HIV/AIDS

One of the features of the Russian authorities' rhetoric about HIV/AIDS is an appeal to morality. President Putin in his only speech about HIV/AIDS said: '*Our common task is to promote a healthy way of life and raise awareness of the importance of moral values*' (Putin 2006). The 'State Strategy to Combat the Spread of HIV in Russia through 2020 and beyond' approved by Russian government includes also the traditionalist rhetoric ('*to strengthen traditional family and moral values*') but doesn't include the provisions on sex education, harm reduction programs and substitution therapy (Government of Russia 2016).

The teenagers living with HIV emphasise that there are no grounds for a special attitude towards them. They are afraid that after learning about their HIV status '*some will not see you as an individual, who you are, but only pay attention to the fact that you are HIV positive*'. '*We are the same as everyone else, we just help our health with pills, but otherwise we are no different from others*' (Pozitivnye deti 2018).

➢ **Recommend journalists, politicians, bloggers etc. to refrain completely from the terms 'risk groups', 'vulnerable groups', 'marginal groups' and 'moral values' when discussing the topic of HIV/AIDS, as this contributes to the stigmatisation of people living with HIV, including children and teenagers.**

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 29 interviews (10 of them in Kazan and 19 in St. Petersburg) and 28 days of observation (20 in Kazan, 8 in St. Petersburg).

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FURTHER READING	Humiliated and Labelled, part 1: Seven Circles of Hell for People with HIV in Russia (in Russian). 2018. https://www.idelreal.org/a/29063925.html
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National POLICYBRIEF

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society.

In Russia our research focussed on young people who are engaged in civil initiatives, who are not indifferent and critical towards what is happening in society and who want to change the existing social order to a better one. We focus on exploring innovative forms of youth participation and emerging conflicts faced by young people who openly label their activities as civic or political engagement. We call them 'the new civic activists', and the primary reason for our interest in this group is that despite the general negative attitude towards politics, the lack of confidence in political institutions and the increased risks associated with one's participation in public rallies, these young people are not afraid to openly take part in various initiatives, therefore becoming a subject of civic and political engagement.

On the one hand, they use alternative channels to influence the state authorities and interact with them, and on the other hand, they try to change life in the city and in society as a whole at the micro level. Some of them are more focused on political activism – as participating in a democratic youth movement. Others aren't focused on politics and social order as much but want to preserve the moral order enshrined in the legislation of the Russian Federation. Members of these communities combat smoking and alcohol drinking in public places, which is prohibited by Russian law, and fight against the advertisement of prostitution and brothels. This is their way of showing interest in civic participation and striving to realise their civic potential. Both groups of young people, despite their differences, are not satisfied with the situation in society and want to participate in social change at their own level and in their own ways. They are activists and they oppose themselves to authorities and to 'the passive mass'.

According to the latest youth studies, institutionalised civic engagement and interest in formal politics are on the decline in most European countries, especially among young people (Norris, 2004; O'Toole et al., 2003). On the whole, young people are less involved in formal traditional political institutions and

processes – they do not vote in elections and they are not members of political parties. Young Russians also have little trust in political institutions and in the very possibility of social change via traditional channels (Trofimova, 2015: 77), especially if we take into account the widespread idea that political civic participation in modern Russia is meaningless and dangerous (Krupets et al., 2017). In this context it is especially important to support those young people who are still interested in civic engagement. Today young people are especially inclined to break away from 'traditional forms of participation' in favour of 'special, contextual and specific activities' (through new social movements, online activity, etc.) (Pirk, Nugin, 2016, Kim et al., 2016, Johnson et al., 2016). And sometimes such types of participation can be more effective for social change and improvement of the situation.

The media and the state rhetoric in Russia often describe 'new youth activism' as a serious 'problem', which has given rise to a new moral panic directed at young people. Currently, the main strategy for solving this 'problem' involves 'prohibitive measures' (the prohibition of minors' participation in rallies) and preventive measures within the education system (the cultivation of 'proper citizenship' in school students). However, it should be considered not as the problem but as an opportunity to understand the motivation behind young people's actions and to establish communication with them, to create legitimate platforms and opportunities for their interaction with the authorities – in other words, to increase young people's civic and political engagement.

This policy brief is concerned with this problem of low civic engagement of young people and with the problem of effective communication between active young citizens and the government. Young people interested in participation in civil and political life of the country and who are critical towards the government sometimes are not seen by the state as a partner or as an agent of social change.

The policy recommendations are directed towards the improvement of the dialog between the state and young people, towards the growth of young people's civic engagement and towards the development of their agency.

The aim of the recommendations is to make visible the perspective and the problem of young civic activists and to develop communication with them as the basis of social partnership and equality.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Support youth self-organized initiatives

The research found that at the moment in St. Petersburg active youth quite effectively implements grassroots informal initiatives. Young people demonstrate high motivation and passion to make the world better. They are creative and effective in self-organisation. Young people realise the politics of 'small deeds' and believe that it can have a global significance for social change in the future (the change of moral and social orders). In the context of a general decrease of political engagement this is a good example of civil society development. Young people who are in conflict with the passive majority demonstrate the effectiveness of self-organisation even in the context of a hostile environment.

> ➢ It is recommended not to prevent young people from self-organisation, but, on the contrary, to support their initiatives in every possible way: to create comfortable conditions for their development (for example, to soften state control over the activities of NGOs), to develop the system of financial support (for instance, through the grant competition) of different civic initiatives, and to make sure that young people know about such possibilities and know how to participate in competitions.

Platforms for the presentation of young people projects can, for example, be organised in a frame of different youth forums or youth events, where various young people meet, who present their projects and have the opportunity to receive official state support. When young people are fighting for moral order and the participants say that they are acting in the frame of a Federal project, it is more calming for ordinary passers-by when they also receive support from the police. On the contrary, groups that are not affiliated with state structures are often perceived as troublemakers. However, the participants of these cases do not want to receive support from public authorities because of their distrust of officials and because of bureaucratic difficulties.

But it is important to allow freedom for young people, to let them decide by themselves what to do and how to do it. They should not be over controlled otherwise it will decrease their creativity and limit the benefits from self-organisation for the development of new competences. Access to these programs should be easy, without bureaucratic barriers. Young activists are already highly motivated for civic participation, but their motivation should be developed and supported.

Perceive young people as equal partners of social change and form their positive image

Young civic activists today are competent agents of social change, they are not indifferent to what is happening around them and want to work for the common good. They have experiences of realising different projects communicating with the authorities knowing the problem 'from below'. But quite often young activists are seen by the authorities as 'children'. State representatives can ignore young people, or see them as 'the problem', or overprotect them. Such approaches are not fruitful and effective because sometimes young people are even more qualified compared with some other civil actors. They are flexible and open to new innovative methods of civic participation.

At the same time society sometimes marginalises the activists (talking about ineffectiveness of their activity, insulting them, etc.). This is also the problem especially in the context of low civic engagement.

➢ In order to engage young activists into the common effective work over social change it is recommended to perceive them as equal partners and to avoid paternalistic attitude towards them. Public authorities can involve civil society activists in the joint solution of existing problems and conflicts, for example, at the city level, which will increase the overall efficiency of work, since the existing experience of activists, social capital, cultural capital and the vision of the problem "from below" are valuable resources that can be used in solving various issues at the local and Federal levels.

➢ Plus, young people engaged in social change often experience a negative attitude from society and certain population groups, therefore it is important to analyse how they cope with external stigmatisation, what tools they use to protect themselves, and how they present themselves in everyday interactions. A comparison of tools used in different cases can help to identify the most effective solutions and share them with other young people. It will help to redefine the image of the activist in the society and motivate other young people to participate in civic initiatives.

Create platforms for the development of skills and competences

Our research demonstrated that many different skills and competences of young activists are developing in the frame of their civic participation. These skills can be in demand in various fields and at various places of work, creating the innovative potential of this generation. From their participation in civic initiatives they know how to organise team work, how to create and implement a project, how to disseminate the results

on the Internet, etc. Regardless of what activists are fighting for they often share a common motivation (professional development, accumulation of capital – knowledge, social networks, and social change) and to oppose the passive majority.

The special demand is to know how to interact with the state authorities (see next recommendation). Activists have to work constantly on their competence in communicating with state authorities and the police. Moreover, activists try to influence not only the legislation related to the state's youth policy, but also other laws, and therefore it is important to identify their means of influence and their impact on the existing legislation.

St. Petersburg Open School of Human Rights is a group of human rights defenders, activists, educators and dreamers who gathered four years ago to find new supporters, allies and colleagues for whom freedom and justice are important. The school invites people who are open to dialogue, complex conversation and new approaches, who want changes in society, social institutions, in a separate city, country and that are ready to work on these changes themselves; who want to help public initiatives and projects; who are ready to work with them and help to develop their community.

➢ The authorities can also participate in the development of organisational skills of young activists, and first of all they should teach how activists can interact with the state effectively, how to overcome all bureaucratic procedures.

Create the conditions for a dialog with young civic activists

Our research found that one of the key problems of modern civic participation according to the young activists' is the distance and closeness of the authorities. Young activists do not trust the state, but at the same time want to be heard by the authorities and are looking for different ways to voice their problems and suggestions to state representatives. Activists are not scared of open conflicts with representatives of power structures. They are not trying to avoid these conflicts, moreover, they try to 'compel' the state structures to interact with young people.

The Youth Board of St. Petersburg is a collegial advisory body under the Governor of St. Petersburg. The composition of the Board includes 65 people, its leaders, members of youth organisations and active young citizens of St. Petersburg. The mission of the Board is to create comfortable conditions in St. Petersburg to attract young people to solve urgent social and economic problems of the city and to connect concerned and active people for the development of the city.

➢ Accordingly, it is necessary to work purposefully on the development of conditions for the possibility to build an open and accessible dialogue with young people. It is recommended to include young activists in the discussions held by various policy groupings, to create conditions for safe and regular communication of civic activists with the authorities, to develop virtual communication. Online activity is very important for young people, sometimes it is even more productive than offline engagement. The internet is completely incorporated in the life of activists, and dialog with the authorities should also take place not only offline but also online.

Promote the engagement of young informal activists to formal politics

Data analysis shows that civic participation of many activists stems from their desire to accumulate new professional competencies that may be used in making a career later on. Activism can become, for some young people, a part of their future professional activity. They may try to convert the received knowledge and social networks into the development of their career. We can also see that the boundaries between activism and professional life become blurred and problematised, often by the participants themselves, which results in an opportunity to convert skills and connections acquired in the process of civic engagement into economic or political capital.

➢ We would recommend to develop the possibilities of engagement of young activists into the employment schemes of state structures (for instance, in the form of fellowships). It can be very beneficial for the state – because the young activists could become motivated and highly qualified employees. At the same time it helps to develop the dialog with activists and can be beneficial for their future career.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 29 in-depth biographical interviews with 19 men and 10 women aged 18 to 39 who are participants of 5 organisations. The interviews were conducted at the same time as the participant observation; the researchers spent 6 months in the field (from October 2016 to March 2017). As a result 16 research diaries were written based on 52 hours of participant observation in the 'moral order activists' subcase. In addition to their offline activity, researchers continuously monitored the behaviour of group members on social networks.

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PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: RUSSIA (3 OF 4)

Grassroots initiatives, conflicts, and solidarities of the feminist scene of St. Petersburg

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways in which young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Russia, our research focused on marginalised young people who are engaged in activism within the current social and political context. More specifically, this particular case study is about various feminist initiatives in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The analysis provided in this policy brief is aimed at the following: creating conditions for feminist activism in Russia, promoting feminist values in the public space, supporting the struggle against multiple forms of discrimination. The policy recommendations are directed at feminist activists and people who are working with the issues of gender, sexualities, and human rights.

The empirical data consists of 15 in-depth interviews with feminist activists and 20 days of participant observation in St. Petersburg. Most of the interviewees were women aged between 20 and 30.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing conditions to create self-organized safe-spaces for feminist practices and participation

Feminist activists need safe space for developing self-organized small-scale local initiative participation

> Example: a grassroots feminist library in St. Petersburg, feminist reading groups, feminist meetups

Recommendation:
- ➢ Support self-organised grass-roots feminist initiatives and provide a multitude of spaces for them

Raising attention to women's issues in Russia

In contemporary Russia, there are still numerous social problems connected to women's issues such as sexual violence, domestic violence, women's unpaid labour and reproductive rights

> The following facts frame the context: First, in Russia, more than 456 professions are banned for women to enter according to the Approval of a List of Heavy Work and Work in Harmful or Dangerous Working Conditions. This is set out in the Performance of which the Employment of Women is Prohibited (No.162 from 25.02.2000). Second, in 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill signed the Appeal for Citizens for the Prohibition of Abortion.

Recommendation:
- ➢ Promote information about women's issues and the infringement of women's rights among Russian youth

Supporting feminist initiatives aimed at protecting all people oppressed on gender, class, or ethnic grounds

The space of feminist activism in St. Petersburg is a heterogeneous space of different initiatives and groups of people. Most of them are struggling against not only gender-based violence, but also against multiple forms of intersectional discrimination.

> For the majority of our research participants, social problems faced by labour migrants in the Russian context are of great concern. For example, feminist activists created the newspaper for Central Asian women of St. Petersburg. They also volunteer (or have the experience of being volunteers) in the organization that helps children of labour migrants and refugees.

Recommendation:
- ➢ The feminist agenda should not only include the struggle for women's issues, but also against different forms of oppression and inequalities (e.g. supporting LGBTIQ, working-class, migrants and other groups of oppressed)

Supporting feminist projects aimed at sex workers' rights protection

The feminist agenda in Russia employs mostly neo-abolitionist rhetoric, constructing sex-workers as victims of violence. This approach stigmatises them and deprives them of a platform for public debate.

> In 2017, St. Petersburg activists created a feminist public project 'Sex work: multiple discriminations and fight for the rights', aimed at organising lectures, discussions and film screenings. Not only queer-feminist activists, but also sex-workers struggling for their rights were involved in the project.

Recommendation:
- ➢ Create safe conditions for commercial sex as a form of labour, emphasising the importance of the commercial sex workers rights protection.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 15 interviews and 20 days of observation with 10 feminist initiatives in St Petersburg, Russia

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National POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: RUSSIA (4 OF 4)

Grassroots initiatives, conflicts, and solidarities of the LGBTQ scene of St. Petersburg

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explores the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Russia our research focused on young people who are engaged in different activities against gender-based discrimination.

This policy brief is concerned with risks and dangers for participants, understanding of gender and sexualities and ways to fight stigmatisation of LGBTQ people. The policy recommendations are directed towards LGBTQ activists and people working with topics of gender, sexualities and human rights. The aim of the recommendations is to bring LGBTQ issues into the public space. This is an important element in the development of civil society.

The empirical data is based on 14 in-depth interviews with LGBTQ activists and 16 days of participant observation in Saint-Petersburg. LGBTQ people are fighting against gender-based discrimination by organising protests, educational projects and other activities. The participants represent a decentralised, informal social movement, interacting in a flexible communication network.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutional support of practices and activists projects

The practices that activists choose to achieve their goals are based on allocated funding. It caused conflicts between the leaders of organisations, and further between employees about 'unfair' distribution of funds between organisations or about how to spend the allocated money. It is worth noting that activists invest their own resources in the creation of local projects and events.

> For example, almost all informants who said that they are involved in public activism and associate themselves with it, believe that LGBTQ organisations spend money allocated to the community on things that are not important or necessary.
> Local activities aimed at supporting community members are recognised as more effective at the moment. The chances for changes at the structural level are considered to be a long way in the future.

> ➢ Youth organisations, partner organisations and other public areas should assist in the organization of local events as much as possible and use their resources where possible.

Increase knowledge about gender, sexuality and human rights among LGBT+ youth

The space of LGBTQ activism in St. Petersburg is a heterogeneous space of different organisations, places and initiatives aimed at different groups of people with non-conventional sexual and gender identity. According to the activists this separation does not allow the community to become stronger. One of the reasons for this fragmentation of the community is the different understanding of 'new' gender identities.

Intersex, asexual and people with non-binary gender identities are 'new' gender identities in the Russian context. Based on the analysis of the interview and the participant observation it can be said that there is a tension between people with non-binary gender, etc. identities and cisgender people. Cisgender homosexual people are accused of a privileged position in a common culture in relation to 'new' identities, monopolising the space for speaking and acting on the scene, and ignoring the specifics and problems of non-binary, queer, etc. people.

> For example, the project 'queer_day' holds regular discussion and meetings for people with non-binary gender identities. These meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month usually. These initiatives oriented primarily towards trans-, intersex- and queer-people.
> For each meeting, a topic for discussion and a group of people who want to share their experiences and thoughts on the topic set by the organisers. The peculiarity of these meetings is that they take place in a space for transgender people, including people with non–binary gender identities and people who are searching for their gender.

> Our respondents were afraid of homophobic attacks, physical violence and symbolic pressure from the homophobic population and were fearing of other consequences.
> For example, one of the activists, assuming that she wants to teach in the future, tries not to participate in public actions. So she will be able to protect and not to expose her future plans to the risks of being associated with this type of action.

- LGBTQ organisations and others should conduct educational workshops and seminars to increase the level of knowledge about gender identities, sexuality, human rights and other important issues among the LGBTQ youth.

Providing security for participants as a general aim

Carrying out public actions and events is impossible in the present political situation in Russia as organisers cannot ensure security for participants, either during the actions (for example, there are risks of arrest) or after them (for example, harassment and violent outing).

> For example, there are people who help with legal and psychological assistance (advice, support in court) on their own initiative. Offering concrete solutions to problems and moving away from the level of abstract goals in the LGBTQ scene is seen by a number of participants as an opportunity to achieve changes in the present or near future.

- Improve the competence of police officers. Organisers of the event must pay attention to the safety of all participants.

Developing a community of professionals to help with human rights issues

The LGBTQ people find solidarity in the face of symbolic, mental and physical violence by the state and social institutions and by the homophobic-minded population. The answer to social exclusion is the struggle for the rights of LGBTQ people. According to our respondents the LGBTQ organisations have lawyers, but they don't always react quickly to what is happening. As mentioned above, carrying out public actions and events is seen to be impossible in the present political situation in Russia.

- Improve the protection in court and representation of LGBTQ people at the state and international level.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 14 in-depth interviews with LGBTQ activists and 16 days of observation with 5 activists initiatives and organisations. The duration of the participant observation was 58 hours.

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PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: SLOVAKIA (1 OF 2)

Case Study: NIOT (Not in Our Town)

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of PROMISE is to explore the role of stigmatised young people in shaping society and address their engagement with social, environmental, cultural and political issues as well as the challenges they face that affect their participation in society. In Slovakia there are existing civic platforms consisting of mainly young people involved in various issues of public interest. Investigation of their activities can provide opportunities for positive social engagement – a key objective of the PROMISE project.

This PROMISE case study documents the story of the Not in Our Town (NIOT) grassroots movement in the Slovak city of Banská Bystrica that originated as a protest movement against the results of regional elections in Banská Bystrica self-governing region in 2013 when a Neo-Nazi governor was democratically elected. The development of the movement shows various levels of youth engagement in the period from 2013 to 2017. It demonstrates that civil participation can contribute to breaking civic apathy and motivate the wider local/regional community to engage in resistance activities against fascism, racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and any kind of intolerance. NIOT is a good example of informal grassroots activism strengthening civil society in a postsocialist city. It can serve as an example of civic self-organisation consisting of collective action mobilised without the involvement of a formal organisation and with more individual civil engagement that constitutes one of the common types of activism in Central and Eastern Europe.

This policy brief is concerned with recommendations that focus mainly on tools helping to support young activists in their activities combating expressions of radicalisation and extremism in the Slovak society. Second, our recommendations are also directed to schools and the sphere of education that is highly criticised in Slovakia for deficiencies of the educational system, outdated methods of teaching and a general dissatisfaction with educational achievements that are also objectivised by international studies of student assessments, e.g. PISA programme.

Support young activists combating any expressions of radicalisation and extremism, etc.

One of the key findings of our case study is the idea that manifestations of radicalism, extremism and intolerance are considered a key problem of Slovak society by young people from the NIOT movement. They see increasing extremism and radicalisation as particular, visible problems right now. As one of them stated, although the country has some other big problems like poverty, or quite a lot of people living below or near the poverty line, poverty doesn´t inhibit the others´ existence while extremism means that one group believes that the existence of some other group prevents them realising their own life interests.

Young activists that do voluntary work or work in various non-governmental organisations are good examples and proper tools for combating radicalistic and extremist tendencies among young Slovaks. However, quite often they have to cope with a lack of financial resources needed for their activities and with the underestimation of their needs by authorities who believe that to overcome extremism and radicalism is possible without substantial financial support, only by 'a good example'. Young people in Slovakia need more activities, such as the *True story of the American skinhead* (supported by Open Society Foundation) that promote discussions at youth clubs, centres, and schools presenting the life of a former leader of a Skinhead movement in the US. Personal stories and confessions are combined with a discussion in the Slovak context – the rise of support for the far right. The panellists included Christian Picciolini (previously a far-right follower, founder of the first American exit programme in Chicago, USA) and Radovan Bránik (expert on the far right in Slovakia).

Therefore we suggest:

- To support young activists and social innovators to ensure that they have sufficient resources for their activities in the forms of grants, financial tools or mentoring.
- To guarantee grants for lecturing and promoting activities at schools.
- On a governmental level (including local, regional and national) to use existing financial mechanisms supporting the development of civic society
- To financially support NGOs, youth organizations and public organizations

Introduce innovations in elementary schools and high schools focused on the values of democracy, multiculturalism, critical thinking and citizenship, fighting stereotypes and reducing prejudices.

Another key finding of the NIOT case study is the idea of connecting young people´s inclination to extremism with a lack of critical thinking, the vulnerability to manipulation and the fact that the educational system in Slovakia does not teach children the acceptance of difference and diversity.

'Diversity generally is not tolerated in our society' (V.S., female, 31).

Some respondents also connected educational limits with indifference of young people and a general lack of interest in public issues. They view it as a problem that young people in Slovakia are not value-oriented, they do not seem to follow what is going on in politics, they are ill-informed about how economics work because schools do not teach them any of these things.

Therefore we suggest developments the educational system and innovations supporting civic and value-oriented education in both, formal and informal education. There are already some positive examples. For instance, the foundation of Milan Šimečka runs the programme **Diverse Schools** aimed at teachers of elementary schools who are interested in innovative forms of intercultural education. It offers trainings, methodology and mentoring of skills in the sphere of intercultural education.

Our suggestions include:

- Install courses for teachers (not necessarily subject-oriented, but running through curricula) supporting civic and value-oriented education
- Support an open and democratic school climate, involvement of children and young people in decision-making processes
- Open schools for children and students after their formal education. For example, this could include opening schools for wider community learning and accessible for children and youth for extra-currucular activities, offering informal activities and enhancing positive peer relationships
- Support (also from public resourses) more projects such as i.e. *Socrates Institute* – education for talented and motivated university students – the building of informal communities of young people who become leaders in education to critical thinking, democratic values, creation of new projects and Startups.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

Our findings are based on 19 individual in-depth conversations that focused on respondent's activities in the NIOT movement. The interviews were conducted by means of a semi-structured interview, in the Slovak language, usually in an environment familiar for the respondent e.g. a workplace or a public space (such as a café or a restaurant). The respondents were young people from 18 to 35 years old. These young people were activists in the core group of NIOT or those closely collaborating with NIOT in some selected activities (such as an antifascist march in October 2017). Other activists involved in NIOT activities during the research period belonged to the age category of between 35 and 60. They were also partly an object of the participant observation because generational transmission and collaboration has been a very important part of the NIOT movement development.

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PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: SLOVAKIA (2 OF 2)

Case study title: Returning young migrants

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society.

The situation in Slovakia is characterized by a high number of young people studying or working abroad. For that reason, we have understood migration as a process that has several stages: a return to the country of migrant´s origin is one of them. Therefore, our attention during the research focussed on the return of young Slovak migrants and we have analysed the tendencies of returning young migrants to become bearers of change and development in their home country.

The topic of return migration is under researched in Slovakia and there is a particular lack of qualitative research in this area. Our findings are based on 27 individual in-depth conversations that focused on 'individual's migration stories'. The interviews were conducted by means of a semi-structured interview and supported by a series of ethnographic observations at a cultural centre in a small town in north Slovakia. The cultural centre was founded by young people upon returning home. In our research we observed how young returning migrants modify life in their immediate circles, in the community and in society. We have discovered that the process of returning migration contains an element of active communication with the environment, an element of certain negotiation and modification which does not have to have an immediate goal to change the social or cultural situation in the community. Despite a variety of reasons behind the homecomer's decision, we have identified that the young migrants´ readiness to return and the process of planning for a return are factors enhancing chances of young returnees to modify life in primary groups, in communities and in society. But an extended stay abroad as well as a return to a city other than the place of the returnees´ origin caused a loss of social capital. Therefore, young returning migrants have identified the lack of opportunities, where they could share their experiences and improve a situation in Slovakia, as a problem.

The policy recommendations are directed towards youth organisations, NGOs, and local authorities as well as politicians at a national level. Based on the core findings in our research, the main aim of the policy recommendations is twofold. The first aim is to strengthen a networking process among young returnees and, by means of this, to give them the opportunity to transfer innovative ideas into the Slovak society. Secondly, we aim to raise awareness, among official representatives in their community and across wider society, about the role young returnees could, and would, like to play in their communities, and the skills and innovation they have to offer

1) Recommendation: Support public organisations and NGOs working with young migrants before and after their return.

Young returning migrants are not an entirely homogenous group because of their different individual experiences of being abroad. Based on their activities after return, we have recognized two distinct groups: those who are active mainly in their primary groups and those whose activities change lives in their communities and across broader society. However, both groups of returning migrants would like to present experiences, skills and innovative ideas acquired abroad to a wider audience but an extended stay abroad as well as a return to a city other than the place of the returnees´ origin have caused the loss of social capital. Therefore, young returning migrants have identified the scarcity of platforms and opportunities, where they could share their experiences and improve situations for others, as a problem. For that reason, young returning migrants feel unheard by official institutions, communities, and society. Taking into account this situation, we are recommending the following actions:

- A support for public organisations, youth organisations and NGOs focusing on the return of young migrants (e.g. LEAF).

Unfortunately, organisations and NGOs dealing directly with the return of young migrants are based mainly in the capital city, Bratislava and their main target is a selected group of skilled returnees from prestigious universities. So, the next recommended step is:

- Work out a platform of networking for young returnees in Slovakia's regions and thereby evolve the potential of young migrants to improve life in communities.

2) Recommendation: 'To tap into the unused potential' of young returning migrants for the country´s social development.

The official state position relating to young migrants studying and working abroad is confusing and ambivalent. On the one hand, official representatives of the state are declaring support for the return of young migrants; on the other hand, any activity following the declaration of support is missing. In the interviews young people who have returned from abroad present themselves as active citizens full of innovative ideas who would like to modify life in their communities. Based on the results from the case study, however, young returnees have a feeling that experiences acquired abroad are not used adequately by decision makers in their communities and society as such. An existence of invisible barriers resulting from weakened social contacts due to their stay abroad is blocking returnees' activities and is leading to young returning migrants´ disillusions, apathy, and consideration of repeated migration. For that reason, we are suggesting:

- To establish local councils of returnees that would be accessible on a voluntary basis for everyone who has worked or studied abroad and returned home. These councils could also serve as networking hubs for young returnees and could be generators of ideas and praxis from abroad.

- Reformulate the system of returning grants and the policy of return in cooperation with young migrants.

3) Recommendation: Multicultural education and civic responsibility

While an economic perspective is a dominant tool analysing the process of return migration in new EU member states, return migration is certainly a far more complex problem that unveils novel issues. Considering the respondent´s narratives, an extended stay abroad changes attitudes to cultural diversity and leads to the acceptance of different lifestyles. Therefore, respondents´ experiences with diverse lifestyles may reduce antipathy to other cultures in a society without previous experience with social and cultural diversity. To maintain this goal, we are suggesting the following activities:

- Support young returnees´ public presentations of experiences with different cultures; allow discussions with young returning migrants at elementary schools and in senior houses.

- On a governmental level use already existing financial mechanism supporting the development of civic society to financially support NGOs, youth organisations and public organisations which will organise the discussions mentioned above.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

Our findings are based on 27 individual in-depth conversations that focused on 'individual's migration stories'. The interviews were conducted by means of a semi-structured interview. Because the topic of return migration is not sufficiently anchored in Slovakia and there is a lack of qualitative research focusing on return migration, the researchers decided to carry out a series of ethnographic observations at a cultural centre in a small town in north Slovakia. The cultural centre was founded by young people upon returning home.

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National
POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: SPAIN (1 OF 2)

Self-building, alternative accommodation and public space uses

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society.

In Spain, one of our case-studies focussed on young people who are engaged in self-building, alternative accommodation and new uses of collective spaces of which the public/private character is unclear. This policy brief is concerned with what the young people identify as the main obstacles to lead autonomous lives and how they respond to them. The policy recommendations are directed towards informing political and regulatory changes to support young people's autonomy. The main aim of the recommendations is to increase young people's resources and capabilities to choose their life trajectories.

Many young Spaniards want to participate more actively in providing for their own futures. They often learn skills informally, non-formally or are self-taught and they try to avoid bureaucratic constraints. It is difficult to speculate, at the collective level, on the extent to which these initiatives will be able to question, substitute or coexist with other more traditional options. At the individual level, it is difficult to estimate the most relevant effects of these young people's actions. A key question that remains open is how these participatory, bottom-up, atypical and micro-local initiatives can gain further momentum, can be articulated into sustainable proposals and enter into the central political arenas. However, it is already possible to identify in these distrusting, resistant, critical and alternative behaviours, some elements that can contribute to complementing, replacing or revitalizing the usual practices. These elements have guided our policy recommendations.

1. Facilitate access to autonomous accommodation (residential emancipation from family home)

The two alternative accommodation initiatives contacted, and many of those we have come across in the collected documentation and the relevant literature on the issue, originate from the need to find residential independence - together with political and social motives. Many of our interviewees claimed that they were looking for alternative housing solutions, because they could not afford or did not want to spend half or even more of their available monthly income in paying the rent for a small room in a shared flat.

> *"Many times I think, if we didn't have to pay any rent, or had to pay much less rent, how would our lives be? Now we dedicate more than 30% of the salary, almost 50% to pay the rent, eh? It is very much, compared to other countries, right? That is not fair!" HQ2*

Our fieldwork in this area found young people demonstrate an active role in facing their housing needs, investing several hours per week in self-building efforts. These commitments are equivalent in many regards to more conventional hours of work or social activism. However, the case study also indicated that these initiatives face the risk of being too isolated in a general institutional context that could do much more to accommodate them, and to develop cross-sectorial polices to increase both the number of these initiatives and their potential positive effects (in satisfying accommodation needs, and in terms of capacity building). The findings point towards the following lines of policy reform:

➢ Promoting social housing for young people, with self-building playing a key role. Given current levels of social housing in Spain, and elsewhere in Europe, there is room for an increase. In a significant part of these housing programs, young people should not only be passive beneficiaries, but they could be involved in the main stages of the project: designing, building and managing. Thus, these political answers would directly deal with three of the most challenging issues young people face: accommodation, employment and education/training. The final institutional design could explore different mixes of solutions depending on the final users' socioeconomic characteristics, and on the role of the main actors supporting the young people (public sector, private actors, cooperatives…).

➢ Redesigning the regulatory framework of house renting to increase trust in alternative forms of rent. Given the stock of empty houses, first and second residences, and specially houses with different reform needs (from light maintenance to structural interventions); there is space for a better use of available accommodation resources.

➢ We also met a group of 6 young women who decided to relocate to a small village, within a 2-hour drive from Barcelona, to reform a house and start a sustainable agritourist cooperative. They helped us to better understand the growing trend of young people moving to rural villages to escape high accommodation costs in big cities. The impact of these choices is still negligible in comparison with the major urban-rural imbalance dynamics. However, they offer insights to orient policies trying to redress or mitigate these urban-rural territorial imbalances. These policies should better support people in rural areas to retain access to opportunities usually linked to big cities (transport, decentralization of key services, developing high-speed broadband and mobile telephone coverage, distant learning, tele-working…) so that the rural/urban choice is not an all-or-nothing one, and there is more reversibility in several residential choices throughout life. In particular renewed policies in this area would be beneficial for young people choosing to go to rural areas to escape speculative housing market in big cities, and contribute to develop those rural areas.

- At the more general and structural level, the problems young people face in finding affordable accommodation, given its serious consequences for their personal development and for society at large (birth rates under replacement rates), calls for attention to the main structural policies affecting the price formation mechanisms in the housing market. This includes all the usual suspects mentioned when considering why the ratio of house prices to average annual salaries, with recent housing bubbles, has seriously upwardly departed from historical trends: urban and land planning biased in favour of landowners and developers, unclear procedures around giving planning permission for housing, land hoarding, embedded speculative incentives in multi-transaction processes, regressive land tax policies, social housing deficits, asymmetric information. In sum, government and market failures limit the supply and quality of low-cost homes.

2. Support young people's agency in public spaces and collective facilities

We approached two groups of young people's self-building collective facilities (1 educative and 1 cultural space), and one group remodelling a neglected urban area into a lively public space. Whereas the main apparent motive for the first two initiatives was coping with unsatisfied needs around the lack of collective facilities; for the third one, it was looking for opportunities to implement their skills in reforming and revitalizing a neglected plot.

Still, in the three cases, young people departed from a single major reason as a main explanation behind their activities. Instead, they stressed that, together with dealing with specific needs, they were motivated by a mix of concerns: show their capacity and will to do things, meet with other young people to do this together, give political visibility to the shortages they were experiencing and their ways to deal with them.

To suit our policy recommendations to this area, it is helpful to consider the main features and motivations we identified in these groups. They aim at: achieving radical exemplarity of democratic practices in decision-making and the distribution of tasks (transparency in terms of the reasons, knowledge or experiences behind the decisions); keeping important decision-making margins about the main objectives as the initiative goes along; learning and performing new skills; exploring synergies with other related activities; communicate with other groups of young people; explore the limits of legality and expand the repertoire of what is acceptable.

Therefore, to better support young people's involvement in the creation and use of public spaces and collective equipment, a range of political measures could be taken into account:

- Increase the availability of spaces and facilities where young people have a bigger role in designing, building and managing their goals and functioning. In these places, young people have more chances to go beyond the usual practice and to contribute to glimpse new traits of future collective aspirations.

- In existing public facilities for young people, and regarding issues related to space use (schedules, timings, operating hours, and contents of the activities) there could be larger areas that remain unspecified so that young people have a bigger say in the final decisions of how the space is used. The multi-purpose character of the spaces, and iterative decision-making, also help to widen the range of young people participating and their involvement.

- As regards some existing infrastructure such as schools, public libraries, cultural and sport facilities; in many cases, their timetables and opening hours are constrained by the work schedules of their paid employees (many are closed during lunch breaks, evening and night hours, weekends and school holidays). Here, there is margin to increase not only the time availability of the facilities for young people, but to see ways to involve the young people in the managing and monitoring of the facilities when responsible employees are not around, so that the operating hours of the facilities are expanded and decoupled from the employees' shifts.

> Develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms by gaining transparency, validity and reliability in the assessment of the final outputs (minimum requirements of a facility, the satisfaction of particular needs) and allow for more openness, innovation and flexibility in the procedures leading to those outputs. This may help to get rid of constraining regulatory details, facilitate permission procedures, and widen what is legally and socially accepted.

> Given the minority and the isolated character of many of these atypical initiatives, the public sector, and, especially in our case study, the local authorities, have a key coordinating and communication supportive role to play. By promoting the communication and coordination of these different young people's initiatives, among themselves and with other young and non-young social actors, authorities may help these activities to become something more than anecdotal or simply an isolated performative exercise. The shorter-or-longer life expectancy of these initiatives, the exchange of knowledge and participants between different actions, the possibility of virtuous relay cycles between different initiatives and groups of young people; all these factors depend on the coordination between several initiatives in supportive institutional contexts. A main factor, thus, for their generalisability and scalability ('out and up') to contribute to relevant political and social change.

3. **Promoting alternative forms of economic participation (cooperatives, freelancing, part-time jobs…)**

A significant number of young people are interested in producing both personal and social value in different ways to full-time dependent waged employment (their preferences include cooperative efforts, through to a wide range of part-time arrangements, to informal freelancing and self-employment).

Many young people interviewed explicitly avoided full-time employment, because they could not find their preferred jobs or because they wanted a bigger control of their time and of their productive activities:

> *I'm working right now, I'm working in a bar, 30 hours on weekends. Then, this gives me four whole days to be here (self-building site) during the week and do what I want... In the bar I am 10 hours on Friday, 10 hours on Saturday and 10 hours on Sunday ... in the evening ... I actually asked at the bar to have the most concentrated working time, to have intervals of 4 days off for me... (EC3)*

Given the mismatch between young peoples' preferences about how to participate in the Labour Market and the alternatives available, there is room for serious policy reform in the following areas:

> Facilitate access to non-dependent employment: free-lancing, cooperatives, self-employment (remove regulatory obstacles to these forms of work, remove the tax disproportionate penalties some freelance activities suffer, see possible changes in social protection rules to better accommodate these economic activities)

> Support substantial forms of part-time (>20 hour per week), with pro-rata treatment in working conditions to avoid discrimination between full-timers and part-timers in income per hour for the same work, or social protection. The public sector, as employer, may pioneer the effort in offering jobs of 24-hours per week to young people (depending on the activities and young people's preferences, different forms of part-time jobs might be more or less convenient: 3-day working weeks, 5-hour working days, intensive seasonal jobs made of 4-5 months with long working weeks…)

- Avoid segmentation in the labour market between insiders (usually adults) and outsiders (where young people, together with women and migrants, are overrepresented) and refine productivity assessments that support equal pay for equal work regardless of the type of contract or the employees' demographic attributes (gender, age, national origin…).

4. **Better synchronisation between the activities young people do, or want to do, and the acquisition of the knowledge and skills they need to perform them.**

Most young people interviewed criticised the education they had followed, or they had access to, as too disconnected from the activities they were carrying out, or wanted to execute in the future. According to many of them, the nature of the curricula they had learned usually had few links with what they find themselves actually doing or they wanted to do. Additionally, the time gaps between the learning stages and when they put into practice what they have learnt, are also too stretched apart.

> *'we spent the five years of our career without visiting a building site' (V3)*
> *'you finish your studies and you see yourself beginning from scratch again' (V2)*

By contrast, the initiatives studied in the case-study showed close links between the activities young people were involved in and the skills and knowledge they were learning. Moreover, within the same month, they had the chance to put into practice what they had been learning.

Following their assessment of what they had missed in their own formal education and what they specially valued in the self-building activities they were carrying out we think the next policy lines are worth exploring:

- Assess the suitability of traditional sequential patterns of education-employment transitions. For a large number of young people, there might be better solutions than following, first, an education program for several years, and, then, after 4, 5 or more years of full-time formal education, trying to find a job putting into practice the knowledge and skills acquired. Many seem to prefer alternative routes where learning and practical working are more simultaneous - combined within the same time unit (month, week, even days). They are looking for more solutions with elements including 'learning by doing' and 'on-the-job-training'. In the words of one of them, 'I would like to spend some days of the week studying, and other days performing what I have learnt'

- At the same time, a more 'learning by doing' approach often needs contexts that support project-oriented, team work, and detailed outputs as core ingredients.

- Together with wanting more flexibility, many show concerns about how to ensure security or predictability in their education-to-employment transitions. A greater level of security, after any educational effort, is afforded to young people who have opportunities to put their learned knowledge into paid/unpaid practice.

- Given that many of the young people we met, had learnt a wide range of self-building skills via informal/non-formal methods (peer exchanges and self-learning), their situation stresses the need to develop systems of validation and accreditation of informal and non-formal learning, including reliable systems of competence evaluation.

- Many young people lead diverse education and working life trajectories, combining different experiences (formal and informal learning, paid and unpaid work, and in different countries and regulatory contexts). Consequently, they would benefit from more developed recognition systems that better accommodate the different nature of these activities, to better support the cumulative transferability of the skills gained in the different working, learning, and social contexts.

5. **Policies affecting young people's wellbeing may benefit from deepening their cross-sectorial nature and shifting in several areas from sequential to simultaneous/grid logics.**

The young people we interviewed face challenges that, allowing for a huge variety of circumstances and contexts, are replicated among young people across Europe: unsatisfactory education, precarious employment, difficult access to accommodation, low income levels, and little political influence. They experience troubles in all the key steps in the traditional transition from childhood to adulthood; and many experience several of them at the same time. The old advice, first get an education, then a job, find a house, form a family, make a career and, maybe then, have something to say, now seems more questionable than ever.

All the initiatives considered in this case study (self-building linked to alternative forms of accommodation and collective facilities), included young people having a proactive approach to several basic needs: learning new skills, performing them to get access to affordable accommodation, doing them within groups of friends where they develop strong affective bonds, and, often, investing their activities with political meaning. Besides, and opposed to more conventional sequential perspectives, they try to purse all these goals simultaneously within the same time units (weeks, months…), trying to benefit from the synergies and interactions between these activities.

➢ Recommendations: favouring a more cross-sectorial and simultaneous/grid policy approach could be considered in several key areas for young people wellbeing, see for example, the social housing programs for young people where self-building is at the core of the strategy. Young people would be both the main beneficiaries (perhaps with others), and the main actors in the designing, building and managing of the project. Such a project may include educational/training sessions, paid/unpaid work, access to residential independence, and, if necessary, access to soft-conditional income support measures or even unconditional basic income.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on: 23 semi-structured in-depth interviews with young people as part of a participatory research strategy; several days of participant observation; numerous informal conversations, both during the days of participant observation and in other meetings; written, audio-visual and photographic material of the different activities; and the collection of various documentary sources, such as websites, internal documents and media articles.

Table 1. Interviews and Participant observation

	Interviews	Participant observation (days)
Self-building 1	6	4
Self-building 2	4	6
Masovería Urban Gardens	7	4
Alternative Architecture	3	3
Alternative Accommodation	3	3

PROJECT IDENTITY

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FURTHER READING http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Self-building-alternative-accommodation-and-public-space-uses.pdf

National

POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: SPAIN 2

No-NEETS

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. In Spain our research focussed on young people labelled as "NEET", as a term used to refer to young people who neither study nor work.

The economic crisis starting in 2008 has affected the entire Spanish society, but has had the most significant impact on young people, worsening their already initially disadvantaged economic circumstances. Spanish youth unemployment (for young people under 25 years old) has doubled from around 20% in 2000-2007 to more than 40% since 2008, clearly deviating from the EU-27 average (21%) (Eurostat, 2018), and exceeding 50% in 2012, second only to Greece across the whole of Europe. This economic situation has had an impact on the total amount of young people considered to be NEET. In 2011, 21.7% of young people in Spain aged 15-24 were not in employment, education or training, a rate that decreased in 2016 to 14-17%[1] (Eurofound, 2012, 2016). They were labelled NEET ('Not in Education, Employment, or Training'). From 2014, the Spanish media has contributed to stereotyping and stigmatisation of NEET young people, presenting them as inactive, making them responsible for their own situation and implying they were too idle to get a job.

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[1] The last study made on European NEET was conducted by Eurofound in 2012, since then there is no specific data on NEET youngsters are in Europe, only approximations.

This policy brief is concerned with those youngsters stigmatised and labelled as NEET: young people who have had irregular trajectories in the past 2 years but at the time of the research were actively participating and taking responsibilities in a youth organisation. We did include in the sample young people from different national backgrounds (there are young people born in Spain and people who had migrated), different ages and sex. The main objective has been to describe and analyse how young people from vulnerable backgrounds with irregular trajectories cope with their lives and socially participate through youth organisations. The results obtained led us to refuse the concept "NEET" and propose the concept "No NEET" when referring to young people with irregular trajectories in order to emphasize their active role within society since the informants were not apathetic and passive but active and committed to socially contribute to society through the organisations they are part of.

The policy recommendations point towards three main issues that young people with irregular trajectories and from vulnerable backgrounds have highlighted as problematic. These are experienced as an impediment to their full development and participation within society. These issues are:

1. Stigma: all young people have felt stigmatised at some point of their lives: for being NEET as well as for being 'too alternative', for being part of an urban tribe or for being migrants.
2. Being outsiders: the stigma they have experienced has made them feel like outsiders and, sometimes, this is related to other social problems such as drug use.
3. Lack of support: young people stigmatised as NEET feel that it is hard to find someone to talk to and to share their problems with, to overcome difficult situations and to feel a part of something.

The aim of the recommendations is to address the three main problems young people have shared during the fieldwork.

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KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Provide at least one youth club per neighbourhood

The research shows the importance of having at least one youth facility per neighbourhood where young people can meet and take part in different activities. The most significant experiences for the young respondents took place during their free time and along with other young people. Although these meetings may take place in many different premises (formal and informal/private and public), the young people agree on the importance of having stable and equipped facilities where they can meet, organise and participate in activities.

Sometimes, when the public sector does not provide spaces to meet, young people do find temporary solutions, such as self-managed youth clubs:

> **Associació de joves de la Verneda**, Barcelona, has its origins in a playground that some young people were attending. The playground was intended for people up to 18 years old, and once they became adults they were asked to leave the project.
> Some respondents, when they turned 18, decided to create a youth association in order to organise leisure activities for young people around the neighbourhood since there were no organisations available for young people.
>
> When we interviewed the young people here they were about to formally legalise the association, so they could apply for funding and for permanent premises to develop their activities.

→ Urban youth policies should **provide long-term facilities for young people in order to facilitate youngsters to meet, organise activities and participate.**

2) Facilitate young migrant people's access to work and residence permits

All the young migrants we spoke to shared the same intentions in leaving their country and migrating to Spain: to get a job and seek a better quality of life. However, once the young people got to Spain they faced a structural problem: they did have access to work permits and, therefore, they could not get formal work. The bureaucratic barriers are too strict for them to overcome, and most young migrants end up developing jobs on the informal market (sometimes even illegal jobs). Apart from the bureaucratic barriers, they also experience a stigma (often based on their skin colour) that means the only job offers they receive are related to the informal market (either by taking care of old people or children, street vending or even drug dealing).

If they try to obtain work permits they find it impossible. They are barred from seeking formal work without one and so their options become extremely limited. The only help these young people receive are from NGOs and private organisations that provide them educational certificates and internships to have the first contact to the labour market:

> **Mescladís**, Barcelona, is an NGO that offers training as chefs and waiters to people in vulnerable situations (mainly migrants without work permits). Thanks to this training, these young people are provided with their first contact with the labor market and start building up their opportunities to regulate their legal status in Spain.

→ National policies must **create channels for young migrants accessing the labour market and get their work and residence permits** so they don't find themselves forced to get informal, or even illegal jobs, in order to survive.

3) Create a minimum hiring quote for young people

Spain is one of the European countries with the highest youth unemployment rate. The time is coming when there will not be enough money to pay pensions, and politicians have begun to discuss if adults should work longer and retire later in order to have money to pay the pensions.

One of the recurrent paradoxes, shared by young people during the interviews, is: why are there young people willing to work who are unemployed and people willing to retire forced to work longer? All the respondents agreed that the government should facilitate job opportunities for young people, and one of the respondents had a very specific proposal:

> 118, a young man from Barcelona, proposes to make a law that obliges private companies and the public sector to have at least 20% of their personnel under 35 years old.

→ Labour policies **should facilitate young people access to the labour market and should guarantee decent work conditions** in order to stop high youth unemployment rates. We propose to have a minimum hiring quote for young people in medium/large companies and in the public sector.

4) Promote mentoring programs for young people

The young respondents agreed that what helped them to overcome their situation has been establishing a relationship with someone who has supported them. They said adolescence is a stage of life in which they need a lot of support but it is not easy to find someone they can fully trust. However, most of the respondents have been able to connect with someone who has helped them. The person who they have established a relationship with differs in each case (a youth worker, a family member, someone from an NGO) but all of them have a key element in common: that the supportive person listens to them without judging suggests solutions without imposing anything and provides a space where they feel valued.

> "I think that when you are 16, 17 and even 18 sometimes, you have problems but you keep them to yourself. You do not really want to rely on anyone who could help you either because you are afraid or because you think they will not understand you. It is complicated but when you finally find someone to count on, you feel more comfortable releasing everything you had inside" (116)
>
> "[the youth worker is important to me because of the] love she gives, for being there all my life, and for the advice she gives me [...] she is my model, someone who listens to me, someone who would give me advice if you have a question to ask, who gives me orientation" (113)

→ Youth policies should **promote programs to mentor young people through their adolescence and youth** so they have someone to share their problems and worries with. We see the value of creating a multi-agency network (including teachers, social workers, youth workers... any professionals working with young people) willing to get involved in a mentoring program with young people in need. The hours these professionals would spend in mentoring programs would be accounted for as working hours.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This policy brief is based on 21 interviews and 120 hours of participant observation with 4 organisations.

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National
POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE POLICY BRIEF: UK (1 OF 2)

'Risky Youth' and Criminalised Identities

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. This case study, based in the UK, focussed on young people who are engaged in criminal activity or seen by authorities to be 'at risk' of offending.

This policy brief is concerned with the labelling of young people as 'risky' in multiple aspects of their lives by authorities, the media, and through public discourse. This has led to punitive approaches to young people by various authorities. This culture of labelling has led to punitive approaches being taken towards young people, who also experience conflict in various facets of their lives. As a result, they are left feeling disempowered or disenfranchised. Our research has found that safe spaces for expression (of resistance or engagement), and positive relationships with others (peers and adults) can result in young people being empowered to have positive impacts on their own lives, and the lives of others.

The policy recommendations are directed towards:
- Policy makers, particularly those in the justice and education sectors
- Key workers in the youth sectors such as youth workers, teachers, social workers and carers
- Police, particularly those dealing with community policing

The aim of the recommendations is to:
- Raise awareness of the impact of labels and stigma on young people's immediate situations and broader lives
- Prompt a consideration of the initiation approach used by judicial and police sectors when addressing young people involved in criminal behaviour
- Add to an evidence base which highlights the importance of youth services, community policing approaches and the necessary funding for protection and expansion of such services
- The combination of recommendations could ultimately lead to a recognition of and opportunities for building young people's capacity for agency and empowerment

1. **Labels and stigma as sources of conflict, escalation of which should be avoided**

The research found young people experience negative labels and stigma in multiple sites of their lives. These include labels of: 'troublesome/risky' youth; incompetent young mother; criminal identity; academic 'failures'. These labels are embedded within associations with the care and welfare systems; family and peer groups; and the local areas in which young people live, and were a source of conflict with multiple agents, particularly those in positions of authority. These include: the police and broader judicial system; teachers; social workers; family members. In many cases, young people reported feeling that they were treated more harshly because of the negative labels associated with their identities. This perceived discrimination fuelled a lack of trust in such institutions.

Examples

General:

"If people listen to the media and like the television, then they get their information from that, then they assume that, because one person's done one bad thing and has got into media because of it, that everybody else is going to do that. 'Cause it's like that stigma again behind teenagers, and that one representative versus everybody else". (Keira, YOrg)

School:

"… felt so degraded that I just felt useless and it was like, it's not even the way like, it was the way he was saying it as well, very direct like, "You're gonna fail," like. It was, "You're gonna fail," like and after that he didn't even seem like he cared. He was like, he made his judgement, "You're gonna fail," is there even a point in teaching her anymore?" (Becki, YOrg).

Police:

"I think it was when we'd kicked… off in the children's home, and we'd caused damage to the children's home. And the police literally pinned us to the floor like we were full-grown adults." (Helen, YCL)
"If I was arguing with Scott [boyfriend] and there was a big domestic or whatever like, I would not ring the police, like no matter how frightened I was. Because I feel like they are definitely against me, definitely like. I've had bad like, things with the police, definitely, had bad times." (Amelia, YCL)

Recommendations

➢ Developing young people's trust in institutions should be a priority and this can be addressed, to an extent, by pursuing the following recommendations:
➢ All sectors who work closely with young people, particularly with marginalised young people, should work to mitigate the stigma young people feel as evidenced above. Effort should be made to avoid perpetuating these stigmas and labels by consciously applying society's moral code clearly and fairly, careful use of language, and avoiding premature punitive responses in situations of conflict
➢ Groups should be provided which cater to the needs of young people who have experienced similar stigmas or labels associated with their identities. Stigma was found to be avoided, or overcome, when young people attended groups with like-minded young people or those who had shared similar experiences such as those for young mothers or young care-leavers. These provided safe spaces for young people, free of discrimination
➢ Young people should be empowered to challenge labels and stigma through positive social action and generative action. Schemes to promote these actions, such as the groups mentioned above, should be supported, and young people be made aware of such schemes and groups.

2. (Continue to) Build Positive Relationships

The research finds that the labels and stigma explored above are the primary sources for conflict in young people's lives. The research found that forging positive relationships can foster happiness, confidence and trust in young people. There is also a significant negative impact when there is a lack of positive relationships, such as young people feeling overlooked, ignored and unsupported.

Positive relationships with adults, or those in authority, are identified as those with reciprocal trust, when young people feel listened to and have an open dialogue with adults. In general, young people feel supported by the adults with whom they have positive relationships, however they are also challenged in these relationships. These challenges, sometimes arising in response to conflict, can see relationships with authority recast into something more positive where young people feel they have been listened to and supported with the intention of channelling conflict into constructive change and action.

Examples

Impact of lack of positive relationships:

"Obviously like me growing up in care, I didn't really have... 'cause I was moved around and that, I didn't have like a set person that I could go to and know like trust in and stuff like, and listen to". (Sophie, YCL)

Positive relationships with teachers:

"It was brilliant, like it was all right, like. I got on with the teachers well. I don't know what I can say like. I just loved it. I loved my school" (Jacob, YOrg)

Positive relationships with family and foster carers:

 "It's been brilliant. Been there since I had my first kid. [...]And they supported me and stuff. They're like my mum and dad, yeah." (Sophie, YCL)

Positive relationships with youth workers:

"You're made to feel quite equal anyway. So like they don't, like the staff don't look down on you, like, 'We're staff and you're not.' They aren't like, they're on your level, do you know what I mean? They chat to you, they involve you. They're not like... they don't look down to you or anything." (Sophie, YCL)

Recommendations

> It is recognised that many statutory and voluntary sectors prioritise the building of successful and positive relationships with young people, therefore these recommendations are not intended to undermine the excellent work already taking place. Rather, they are intended to pay greater attention to the expertise of those professionals who have positive relationships with young people. Given the evidence from the research of the importance of these in young people's lives, it is recommended that an evidence base is built in order to exemplify what makes a positive relationship in order to encourage best practice in institutions and across sectors

> Positive relationships can flourish in many different settings but opportunities must be provided for this. In the case of this research, youth clubs have been found as important sites for fostering positive relationships, and funding for such sites should be protected and increased

> Recognising the nuances of the ways in which young people respond to conflict is key to fostering relationships which recast authority figures from inherently adversarial to challenging but positive

3. Encourage Expressive Space

The research found that young people need the space, both physically and conceptually, to express themselves. Crucially, young people should feel safe and able to express both positive and negative feelings and opinions. Such spaces are important for young people to test boundaries and explore their identities. In being challenged in a supportive relationship, young people have their actions recognised as legitimate, whether such actions are typically considered to be 'pro-social' or not. These expressive spaces are inextricably linked to the existence of positive relationships and provide the opportunity for young people's abstention, non-conformist or conflictual behaviours to be recognised as an expression of need and/or agency. The research found that when young people felt able to express a variety of feelings, opinions or identities, they were encouraged to adopt positive actions.

<u>Examples</u>

YOT Illustration: He's not drawing me I mean it	YOT Illustration: "Do you want me to help you or go away and leave you alone?"

"In a school, they're told about individuality and all that type of thing, but then there's these rules that are set to have seemingly positive impact, but they're not eventually – they're negative, because they're told constantly how to act, how to dress, how to behave, what to do, when you can go to the toilet. That type of thing. So it can eventually have... and then if you act out because you don't like something, then you're seen as a, that's a negative. And you're punished for being negative." (Kiera, YOrg)

<u>Recommendations</u>

> ➤ It is recommended that young people should not be silenced and instead, their opinions and feelings be recognised, even in cases where these expressions are difficult or unpalatable. Allowing young people to test boundaries in this way should be used to guide young people towards more positive feelings and actions

- Both physical space and conceptual space should be provided for the above expressions, in all relevant institutions and organisations. In doing so, young people's capacity for expression should be recognised and encouraged
- A broader definition of engagement, which takes account of the context of young people's lives and biographies, could be adopted in order to acknowledge young people's perceived apathy, abstention or conflictual behaviours as nonetheless agentic activity. The key to recognising such behaviours and potentially view conflict as an avenue to empowerment comes from positive relationships with adults and expressive spaces

4. Recognise Positive Social Action (no matter how small)

The research found that young people reported a number of turning points in their lives, which had been significant in overcoming the negative impacts of stigma and conflict they had experienced. These turning points had been prompted for a number of reasons including altruism, maturity, pursuit of personal and professional development, and generally seeking more positive change in their lives. Most significantly, perhaps, is the range of these 'turning points', from the small and everyday changes, to the large and fundamental. We found that even the smallest changes can have the biggest positive impact on their lives and the lives of those around them.

Examples

General demeanour:
"I became, like, more respectful. 'Cause obviously, when you're younger, I would, like, if I was to be told off, I'd probably be a bit more disrespectful in a way. But as getting older, I just realised that, if I do something wrong, just like apologise and just respect what the other person's saying and just get on". (Marcus, YOrg)

Statutory intervention:
"Even though it's three weeks, three week don't really sound major, but knowing you have to get up at the same time for three week when I could have been lying in bed till half past ten, half past ten, eleven […]Yeah, but I hope so. Like I even said like at the beginning of this course, like, no, at the beginning of my YOT order, I was like, "I'm making sure this is probably the last order I'm doing, simple." 'Cause I'm fifteen now, got, as soon as I go back to school I'm in, I'm in my last year, so…" (Liam, YOT)

Generative activity:
"I wanted to be a good person and help people. And helping people makes me feel good about myself, 'cause I know, I'm helping other people and making their opportunities better" (Aiden, YOrg).

Career path:
"now I'm working as a youth worker with young people, like, with care-leavers […] It's working alongside the people that used to look after me. It's good. It's kind of one of those 'Look at me now' moments." (Helen, YCL)

Recommendations
- It is recommended that small, positive actions should be recognised and championed in young people's lives by the adults who work with and support them. The significance of these actions should be considered in the context of young people's broader experiences and biographies
- Opportunities for positive social action to help empower young people should be provided for in both structured (e.g. volunteering schemes and education) or individual forms (e.g. more positive social interaction)

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

This case study is based on fieldwork conducted between December 2016 and April 2018. The first phase involved spending time in spaces occupied by young people attending youth clubs and courses led by young organisations and participating in activities (n=34) such as topic-based discussions, art exhibitions, film showings and dance rehearsals. During the second phase, between April 2017 and April 2018, 21 semi-structured biographical interviews were conducted and recorded with young people aged 13-30 and three focus groups (using photo-elicitation techniques) were conducted with groups of between 6 and 8 young people. Contact with the young respondents was made primarily through links with 4 youth clubs and support groups run by third sector organisations already known to the researchers. An additional group, run by a third sector organisation providing creative activities as part of the statutory youth justice provision, was also accessed.

PROJECT IDENTITY

PROJECT NAME Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement (PROMISE)

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FURTHER READING Harragan, A, Deakin, J, Fox, C and Kaur, B (2018) 'Risky Youth' and Criminalised Identities. PROMISE Case study report. http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/'Risky-Youth'-and-criminalised-identities.pdf

National

POLICYBRIEF

PROMISE **POLICY BRIEF:** UNITED KINGDOM (2 OF 2)

YOUTH MOBILISATIONS OF 'SUSPECT COMMUNITIES'

OCTOBER 2018

INTRODUCTION

PROMISE explored the ways young people with a history of stigmatisation or conflict participate in society. Our research explores the stigmatisation associated with being a young Muslim in the UK. Rising anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments together with the securitisation of society, including through counter-terrorism legislation introduced amidst concerns about 'home grown' terrorism, have contributed to the construction of Muslim populations as 'suspect communities'. Young British Muslims are particularly affected by the 2015 UK counter-terrorism Prevent Duty, which brings them into tension with a range of institutional sites – especially schools, colleges and universities they attend - that have a statutory duty to deliver this preventative arm of the counter-terrorism CONTEST strategy.

This policy brief is concerned with the experiences of stigmatisation among young Muslims in the UK in the post 9/11 climate and 'war on terror' but, in particular, their responses to them. Our findings suggest that young people respond to stigmatisation in proactive ways that resist the misrecognition of British Muslims, re-present Islam and its practice and carve out new spaces to live out British Muslim identity in a way that is meaningful to them.

The policy recommendations are directed towards:

➢ Policy makers in local and national government ;
➢ Police and counter-terrorism officers and Prevent coordinators responsible for community policing;
➢ Safeguarding leads and Prevent duty coordinators in institutions with statutory duties to deliver Prevent including schools, Higher Education and Further Education institutions, Local Authorities, the National Health Service and prisons;
➢ Key workers in the communities working with young people such as youth workers, community leaders and activists and community cohesion officers.

The aim of the recommendations is to:

➢ Raise awareness about pre-emptive counter-terrorism measures such as PREVENT and how it impacts on young Muslims;

➢ Prompt a consideration of the PREVENT policy and procedures to avoid any iatrogenic effects that could potentially contribute to stigmatisation of young Muslims;

➢ Add to an evidence base which highlights the importance of taking into account the wider socio-political context in which these policies are enacted and thus experienced by young Muslims.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

STIGMATISATION

Our findings demonstrated that young Muslims experience a strong sense of stigmatisation due to: the widespread, negative connotation of Islam and Muslims; personal experiences of racism and Islamophobia; and their interactions with the UK counter-terrorism Prevent strategy and its implementation. The strong association of Islam with terrorism has contributed to the creation of a 'suspect community' that positions Muslims as a homogenous group that is collectively responsible for terrorist atrocities. This narrative legitimises the scrutiny of Muslims and leads to feelings of being constantly under suspicion.   This stigmatisation problematises already complex and sometimes troublesome identity work that young Muslims face and contributes further to their marginalisation in the British society.

Examples

Everyday experiences of Islamophobia:
 […] it's very difficult for them to be a young Muslim, because they're scared and they get called all sorts. Like following the [names city in the UK] attack, I was walking into a library just to do some revision. I just was just (…) out by some lady in a car, just like following me with her eyes, because I had a back pack on. She was just like following me with her eyes. [...]I suppose that's what a lot of my hijabi friends experience on a daily basis. Like getting people calling names in a takeaway, all sorts. [...] there's a whole undercurrent of abuse which is directed at British Muslims... (Dmitri)

Public scrutiny and mistrust:
And like even if it, whether or not it's true, whether or not it's taken out of context and manipulated and warped into something else, the point at the end of the, the picture at the end of it is that we're [Muslim community organisation] seen as bad, we're seen as, you know, extremist or like retaliative to British society. (Nadira)

Being treated with equal respect:
I don't want to be assumed guilty without having done anything. You know, so if I go on the street, I want to be treated as any other respected citizen of the country. You know, I don't want to be treated guilty without having committed anything. (Tariq)

Recommendations

➢ It is recommended that more attention be paid to raising awareness about the discriminatory effects of stigmatisation. While stigmatisation is distinct from hate crime - which is a punishable offence – it is nonetheless debilitating. It is a process of the imposition of an identity (a 'self') that has not been chosen and that constrains life chances. It is reinforced through everyday encounters, small acts, feelings and sensations.

➤ It is recommended that educators and people working in youth settings encourage peers to recognise how stigma is experienced and reproduced. This can be achieved through conducting exercises in empathy (walking in another person's shoes) to see how small acts can be experienced as reinforcing the sense of being under suspicion.

ENGAGING WITH PREVENT

The statutory obligations attached to the Prevent duty mean that most participants in our research had had direct engagements with Prevent provisions at some point in their educational careers. These experiences were mainly negative. Respondents described how the 'Prevent agenda' pervaded everyday classroom experience, working to shut down debate on issues important to them (e.g. British foreign policy or injustices experienced by Muslims), turned university lecturers into 'the police' or led to stringent risk assessment procedures, including the vetting of external speakers, when organising student events. However, some respondents reported a positive experience in working with local authorities, schools, and Prevent panels to make sure that they identified correctly individuals at risk of being radicalised and to develop ways of implementing the duty that reduced the chances of iatrogenic effects.

Example

Negative experiences of Prevent:

[…] certain other ISOCs [Islamic Societies at Colleges and Universities] have… like, their prayer halls have been installed with, like, cameras and, like, recording... like, they're recorded twenty-four hours a day. Like, I think they certainly feel the effects a lot more. Like, they feel like being watched and, like, just for going and praying and stuff. (Shareef)

Tarring everyone with the same brush:
We understand like the thought process behind it [Prevent], and the fact that it was aimed to stop radicalisation. But we felt like it was victimising a large group of people, and stigmatising any actions that they do in order to catch a few rotten apples. (Ashraf)

Working with Prevent to safeguard one another:
I've worked with some young people to go to their local authority and be like, 'Look, you know, we, we want to be part of a Prevent Advisory Board, let's, let's better understand how it's implemented, let's see if we can maybe get an Imam in to do some religious sensitivity training for you, to make sure we're not conflating religious conservatism with potential non-violent extremism.' […] I think the council were very, very receptive, quite surprisingly. […] they [the local councils] are more than willing to engage with the community and I think they actually quite value the participation of young people who, who know what they're doing. So as long as you're not simply going in there and criticising everything, but you're saying, 'I wanna work with you to create something, you know, let's co-create something,' there is that reciprocity. (Ruksana)

Recommendations

➤ It is recommended that the potential iatrogenic effects of counter-terrorism policy – whereby measures designed to increase security have the counterproductive impact of further alienating marginalised communities and acting as a potential driver of violent extremism – are taken into consideration when devising policy and how it is implemented.
➤ It is recommended that young people are included in, rather than being made the objects of, the Prevent duty. Working with those delivering Prevent encourages a sense of being involved in a shared safeguarding exercise rather than being an object of suspicion.

➢ It is recommended that young people's active engagement with Prevent delivery is transmitted to other young people to ensure Prevent is engaged with not only at an abstract, political level.

COUNTERING STIGMATISATION

The counter-terrorism Prevent policy may contribute to the construction of Muslims as 'suspect communities' but, simultaneously, it mobilises young Muslims to challenge their misrecognition through social and political activism. This takes a range of forms including participation by students in actions such as the NUS 'Students not Suspects' campaign, which lobbies for the repeal of the Prevent duty. However, many more young people are active in charity, volunteering, educational and social activities which aim to counter negative images of Islam and represent Islam in a positive way. For young Muslims 'doing good deeds' can be a powerful weapon in the fight against stigmatisation.

Examples

Promoting good work:
'Cause you very rarely hear positive new stories [about Muslims], and I think that's kind of why [Muslim] people feel that they have to promote when they're doing good work or they try to, to market things much more effectively. I think there's a real lack of responsible reporting, but it's not just on Islamic issues, I think it's on all kind of minority communities. They're, kind of, it's easy to scapegoat and it sells, like these headlines sell papers, and that's very worrying because they're not recognising the minority communities as equal stakeholders, but also they're not taking into consideration the long term impact it has. (Ruksana)

Benefits of getting engaged in community and charity work:
Kind of a giving back to your community, kind of thing […] it helps dispel a lot of these stereotypes at a young age for a lot of these young people, because they would know a Muslim who's, who's been helping them. (Yardan)

Recommendations

➢ It is recommended that young people's community and charity work is recognised and publicised both to encourage young people who want to be active to become so but also in order to disseminate positive stories about young people, including about young Muslims.
➢ It is recommended that young people's positive social action be supported and promoted by community agencies and young people be made aware of what their peers are engaged in.

MARGINALITY & SOCIAL ACTIVISM

The mobilising potential of the stigmatising effects of the Prevent agenda appears to confound existing evidence that socioeconomic deprivation inhibits civic engagement and political participation. However, our study finds that marginality acts as an enabler to social activism only in conditions of a range of other supportive factors. Particularly important is the family whose aspirational orientation encouraged respondents down pathways of educational achievement, which also gave access to the social networks and organisational resources that impact positively on young people's propensity to participate.

Examples

Disadvantage as mobiliser:
Yeah, like my mum and my dad, they both didn't go to university. And my sisters have been through so much like hardships like when we were kids, and I have as well like, it's all motivated us like. We said, 'Enough is enough' like. […] and we were like, 'We want to have this. We want to have a degree. We want to be, in the nicest way, like the white kids off [sic] the school. (Dmitri)

Family support for political activism:
[…] you need to be emotionally resilient because when you put yourself, when you raise your head above the parapet, you are putting yourself out there to also be attacked. So whether it is through social media and I have a lot of trolls who message me, but also, quite a lot of messages of support as well. But also, if you don't have the support, the right support network around you, it can be draining. So, for example, this Ramadan I have been incredibly busy, so I'm doing my full-time job, but then I've also been doing, supporting various different communities with community responses. I think last night I got an hour's sleep because we're helping co-ordinate for this fire appeal. And it's all really important work, and I know without my family I wouldn't be able to do it because it's not sustainable. So I've got, like my mother will be like, "Okay, you just need to stop today," and that's useful because otherwise you can push yourself to the limits […] (Ruksana)

Prevent 'politicked' young Muslims:
It's [the Prevent policy] been able to mobilise hundreds of student activists across the country and to make sure that, you know, their universities have an anti-Prevent policy and that they're standing up to Islamophobia, institutional Islamophobia. But on the other hand, it's also made people very, very conscious of the Muslims around them. So like if a Muslim says anything [...] they will scrutinise that and […] treat it in a way that they would never treat it if it was a white non-Muslim counterpart. (Meena)

Recommendations

➢ It is recommended that awareness is raised of multiple marginalities experienced by young Muslims who often come from deprived neighbourhoods and have low socio-economic starting points whilst also experiencing stigmatisation around ethnicity and religion.

➢ It is recommended that support be extended to those groups working specifically to encourage civic engagement of ethnic minority and socio-economically deprived young people.

➢ It is recommended that the organisation of young Muslims is encouraged and supported in order to enable them to be engaged publically and voice their opinions.

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FURTHER READING

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