

**Part III**  
**Local Social Innovations**

# Chapter 9

## Social Innovations as Messages: Democratic Experimentation in Local Welfare Systems

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### 9.1 Social Innovations as Messages—an Approach and a Metaphor

The aim of this contribution is a twofold one. First of all, we want to present in a concise manner what kind of inspiration can be derived from the 77 local social innovations in the 20 cities that have been analysed in the welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion (WILCO) project. What can be learned from them for the further development and restructuring of local welfare systems when dealing with the challenge of strengthening social inclusion? Secondly, we want to shed light on the procedural aspect of innovation—how can civil society actors, policy-makers and administrators make better use of such social innovations, or to put it in more analytical terms, how to understand better the interaction between given social and welfare systems and innovations? With respect to both of these issues, innovative contents of cases and problems of diffusion of innovation, we propose to use the “message” metaphor.

First, let us briefly describe the empirical and methodological basis of this chapter. The introduction to this book already outlined roughly the concept of social innovation we worked with and the general method of analysis of the international research project. Therefore, we can restrict ourselves to point out the guiding orientations for selecting innovations.

First of all, we selected only local innovations that were past inception stage. According to this criterion, every innovation selected for investigation has existed for at least 1 year (since March 2011). Thus, all social innovations we looked at were

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about ideas or approaches that had already been implemented in practice to some degree. Each innovation selected by our teams entailed a practical project that had been realised. As it turned out, this project was either an organisation or an organisational subunit with new services that clearly differed from what existed so far in the field or a measure/intervention such as a new transfer, tax or resource arrangement. However, as the selected cases in this chapter show, local social innovations can also take other forms. Innovations always have a background of orientating streams of values and thinking as well as associated practices that back up and inspire them. A local network rather than a single organisational unit may represent innovations. Therefore, speaking about social innovations can refer to a large project, but also to a cluster of small, similar projects. In such case, the task was to describe the whole cluster and zoom in on one or two of the small cases, to get a sense of the micro-dynamics. In case the innovation was part of a government program meant to promote, finance and regulate an innovative approach, only those innovations from wider national programs that could be seen as “local”, in the sense that there was a considerable degree of freedom to shape them in the local context, were selected. It was a mandatory requirement of WILCO to feature between three and six innovations in each city. The actual number of cases chosen in a city depended largely on the complexity of the respective cases.

Given the enormous diversity of social innovations, we suggested only three “analysis grids” for all teams to use when observing selected innovations. Hence, the selected case studies in this chapter have been organised along three basic themes: (a) conceptions and ways of addressing users, (b) internal organisation and modes of working, and (c) interaction with the local welfare system. Altogether, we tried to obtain both a very concrete and sensitive picture of the individual innovation and an intelligible way to draw “messages” that were interesting also for colleagues working on the issue in other countries and settings.

### ***9.1.1 The Concept of Messages***

What do we mean when we suggest understanding innovations as “messages”? First of all it means that beyond their immediate effect in the location where they take shape they may trigger similar actions elsewhere. In the field of welfare policies and services, which we studied, this may take the form of values and convictions that inspire them and which they want to promote, proposals they entail, and lessons to be learned. Obviously this calls for an analytical process of looking at the more general meaning of innovative ways of coping with problems that have come up recurrently in different local settings and circumstances. In the first part of this chapter, we will therefore present our reading of the messages implied in the innovations under study. References will be made to five dimensions of these innovations that we found especially telling.

However, understanding social innovations as messages also means looking at innovations as processes of transmission between actor and local context. Such a

process can set a new practice into motion and address broader networks of civil society, political and administrative actors, possibly market actors as well. Are they willing to pay attention to such messages? What determines the different degrees of readiness among these actors to take up messages? And moreover, what influences the capabilities to “read” and the ways of interpreting them? All this may concern innovations and innovators themselves, the degree to which they actively care for broadening their action and winning support, but it mainly concerns contexts and the ability of systems—here welfare systems—to adopt innovations. The second part of this chapter will reflect on these questions, focusing on the difference it makes once an innovation is non-market based and in its essence non-technical, such as *social* innovations, taking shape in local milieus and welfare systems.

Obviously the metaphor of “messages” may in many ways be insufficient and questionable. Studies of innovation usually prefer the “diffusion” metaphor, and we also use it in this contribution. It takes account of the fact that innovations are a kind of “message into the open”, without any specific or exclusive addressee. Many effects and messages of innovations are beyond the control of the innovators. However, speaking about “messages” has the advantage of including not only processes (of diffusion) but also issues related to content (new values, practices, policies). Furthermore, looking for “senders” and “receivers” allows us to study not merely systems and structures but also the actors who are responsible for dealing with a message, its contents and readings.

What are the main messages we found in the approaches and instruments used in local social innovations studied as part of the WILCO project? The first part of the chapter will deal with this question. What can be said about the processes of transmitting, accepting, rejecting or reading such messages (what is mostly called the process of diffusion)? What are the challenges when it comes to linking social innovations and social policies? This will be taken up in the second part of the chapter.

### ***9.1.2 Recurring and Shared Features of Welfare Innovations— Five Key Messages***

When analysing the cases of innovation, our aim was to find out whether there are recurring features that give them a distinct profile. Altogether they represent forms of acting and thinking that can be defined first of all in negative terms—breaking up with the traditions both of what we call “industrial welfare” and the more recent wave of managerial and neo-liberal reforms.

However, as we will show, these innovations can also be defined in positive terms. Recurring features point to a certain style of doing things, *a shared culture and perspective of thinking and acting across national borders that makes a difference to the past*. It was a key task of our analysis to deal with the question what can be generalised from these innovations, their approaches and the tools and instruments developed by them—not only in the special local system within which an innovation was taking place but also at the level of an international debate on

local welfare systems, their institutions, rules, services, modes of governance and kinds of welfare mixes. Therefore we focused on commonalities and messages they entailed for the actors concerned, especially for policymakers, administrators and experts. Our findings (for a more detailed analysis of the findings presented in this paragraph see Evers et al. 2014 and Evers and Ewert 2015) have been ordered under five headings:

- Ways of addressing users
- Regulations and rights
- Governance
- Methods of working and financing
- Challenges to framing welfare systems

Table 9.1 shows in which areas the main emphasis of the respective 14 cases is to be found, but it notes as well one or two other fields where the basically polyvalent social innovations can be seen as illustrative.

The innovative approaches found in above fields obviously do not represent a kind of social or political programme. Rather, they are *messages in terms of a loose assemblage of elements of a kind of “cultural turn” in dealing with issues of welfare and more specifically social inclusion*. Different political actors and parties can take up concerns and aspirations of innovations and turn their contents and uses into different directions. Therefore the following points listed will attain more precise meaning over time, according to the way wider social and policy context integrate them into their discourses (Schmidt 2010). Linking social and economic concerns or striving for more flexibility and personalisation, for example, can take on quite

**Table 9.1** Five dimensions of local social innovation—the emphasis of the cases presented

	New ways of addressing users	Innovations in regulations and rights	Innovations in governance	Innovative methods of working and financing	Challenging the local welfare system
Warsaw	XX				X
Zagreb		XX		X	
Amsterdam	X			XX	
Lille	X			XX	
Pamplona			X	XX	X
Berlin	X			X	XX
Milan	X	XX		X	
Stockholm	XX			X	X
Nijmegen	X	XX			X
Birmingham(1)	XX				X
Birmingham(2)	X		X		XX
Münster	X	X	X		XX
Barcelona	X		XX	X	
Bern			XX		

different meanings. We will take up the importance of (discursive) contexts and the different faces of “mainstreaming” innovations in the second part of this chapter.

### **Message One—About New Ways of Addressing Users**

The majority of social innovations chosen for inclusion in the study were service innovations. Since services are generally organised along less-closed and standardised lines than income transfer (for example, in pensions systems), it is little wonder that they provide more fertile ground for small-scale innovations.

The overall message of finding new ways of addressing users shows itself primarily in the search for new service relationships that reduce the dependency of users and strengthen their capabilities by opening up new opportunities or enhancing their skills. The theoretical debates on co-production (Verschuere et al. 2012) find a good illustrative counterpart in many of the case studies presented in this chapter. The orientation towards users and citizens featured in these cases implies a desire to avoid stigmatisation. Most of the occupational and social integration programmes provided as part of workfare policies (Handler 2004) employ strict targeting that clearly indicates who is “in” and who is “out”, along with detailed rules and requirements governing the process of admission and integration. For instance, being entitled or forced to take part in a special programme for the long-term unemployed is linked with various forms of categorisation, classification and control. By contrast, many of the innovations addressing issues such as occupational and social integration take a more loose and open approach that does not impose admission requirements on (potential) users and does not prescribe in detail how reintegration should proceed and which stages it should include.

While public administration and welfare bureaucracies are separating between different tasks, needs and groups, it has become increasingly difficult to adequately meet the complex and often unique needs of customers in a highly segmented system. Bundling existing support measures tends to be complicated and discouraging. However, among the selection of innovations studied, there were a number of organisations that developed personalised support packages that allow access to otherwise separate forms of support.

Cultural and ethnic diversity and the problems of poverty and social exclusion have increased in the age of large-scale migration, unemployment and growing inequality. This makes it increasingly difficult for services and professionals to reach groups that need their help most, often because the services offered are simply not known, are too difficult to understand or are not taken up due to a lack of trust. Finding innovative ways of bridging the gap between professional services and real people’s lives has been a recurrent challenge met by innovations we studied.

The various features of a different approach to users just mentioned is nicely illustrated in one of the case studies in this chapter about an innovative network providing new forms of support for children and single mothers, often vulnerable and living under stressful socioeconomic conditions. It was set up by a Swedish association operating mainly in the Stockholm area (see: Nordfeldt et al. in this chapter). The services that address children encourage group formation and shared activities while simultaneously organising individualised support in the form of fairs where mothers receive personal counselling by invited experts from different fields.

### **Message Two—About Innovations in Regulations and Rights**

These days, working and living patterns are changing and less continuous; zones of transition between life situations and life stages are becoming more complicated (Bovenberg 2008). Traditional services cannot always cope with these complexities. This may mean being out of school but not yet in a job, on the track back to employment but without access to a place to live. Often this coincides with other acute problems that may require immediate help. What some have called “new social risks” (Bonoli 2005) cannot be dealt with using the manual of standard risks. Innovative ways of offering a quick fix, often provisionally, may well be the critical missing link when it comes to providing living and working arrangements that keep people “in the game”. Quite a number of social innovations studied in the WILCO project involve establishing flexible forms of ad hoc support that meet newly emerging risks short-term. One telling example is the Welfare Foundation Ambrosiano in Milan, Italy (see Sabatinelli and Costa in this chapter), that supported individuals and families who were temporarily in need for various reasons (redundancy, illness and so on) through quick micro-credits, regardless of their previous or current type of employment contract and country of origin.

Traditionally, most public welfare services have the status of rights that are unconditional, insofar as they simply require a set of material preconditions to be fulfilled. A new tendency in welfare arrangements (see Evers and Guillemard 2013), particularly in the field of “workfare”, is for clients to enter a form of contractual relationship in which the preconditions for support concern their future behaviour. This requires clients to take exclusive responsibility for themselves. Among the set of innovations studied, there were also other types of moves from rights to contracts, defining the notion of “giving something back for what one gets from society” more broadly. People received access to goods and services once they committed to doing something for others in the form of volunteer work or providing clearly defined personal support for vulnerable people in the community. One example of this is Time for a Roof, an intergenerational home-sharing service in Nantes, France (see Coqblin and Fraisse 2014 in: Evers a. o. 93). It offered cheap accommodation to students who entered into an intergenerational cohabitation arrangement.

### **Message Three—About Innovations in Governance**

The social innovations under study all represented a combination of new social “products” and new social “processes”, the latter term referring to the internal organisation of decision-making and interaction with the environment, the public, various stakeholders, social partners and political and administrative authorities. Many social innovations that seek to develop new kinds of services also have a governance dimension. However, for some innovations, influencing and changing the system of governance was their main goal (see Moore and Hartley 2009; Lévesque 2013). This is the case, for instance, in the Citizen’s Agreement for an inclusive Barcelona. More than 500 participating entities in spheres such as the economy, culture, education, health and housing worked on a new participative governance structure (see Montagut et al. in this book). Likewise in Bern (see Felder in this chapter) where new integration guidelines that became mandatory for public stakeholders

were developed through a cooperative process in a working group of administrators, experts and representatives of local NGOs.

Traditional service organisations and systems tend to focus almost exclusively on their respective special tasks, effectively functioning in silos (Boyle et al. 2010). Social innovations, by contrast, are characterised by bringing together what is separate—ideas, concerns or practices—fostering units and types of organisations that operate in a more embedded and networked way. A good example are the Neighbourhood Stores for Education, Research and Talent Development (BOOT) in Amsterdam (see Broersma et al. in this chapter), where teachers and students from universities cooperated with activists in a community development programme linking governmental, not-for-profit and business organisations.

Innovation also means addressing issues, concerns and related forms of self-organisation in a way that is more in tune with changing challenges and pressures. When it comes to women's concerns, networks such as the MaMa Foundation in Warsaw (see Siemieńska et al. in this chapter) or the association Parents in Action (RODA; see Bezovan et al. in this chapter) overcame the traditionally restricted focus on achieving the same role as men in a labour market designed for men. They gave certain groups a voice in the public domain, highlighting new concerns that were previously seen simply as private issues, exposing local systems that under both socialist and post-socialist regimes displayed little interest in the manifold challenges of care. In doing so, these initiatives raised awareness of new ways of working and family life and brought them onto the public policy agenda. These and other innovative projects were eager to discover new ways of organising debates, deliberation processes and types of publicity, in order to set agendas and establish a new consensus on priorities.

Building issue-based coalitions and partnerships can be seen as denser forms of networking, often concerned with raising awareness of a particular issue. Establishing these kinds of partnerships, which are both unified and plural, is an important and innovative aspect of policymaking and fostering participation in governance. In addition to examples from urban housing and neighbourhood regeneration, the already mentioned *Foundation Ambrosiano* in Milan in this chapter provides a good example of bringing together stakeholders from diverse social and political arenas: the municipality, the province, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the three main trade unions, binding them into a pluralistic yet coherent alliance.

#### **Message Four—About Innovative Methods of Working and Financing**

When innovation means dealing differently with a given challenge or pressure, this often involves ways of accepting and living with worsening material conditions. Innovative projects and organisations with precarious funding are affected all the more by trends to be observed in today's labour markets: limited contracts that offer no security. Of course one could speculate that this is partly compensated by an atmosphere of creativity and cooperation, more positive stress than the one produced by hierarchies. Trust-based relationships may allow many of the various contributors to participate for a while and accept short-term contracts, secure in the knowledge that a new contract is possible once circumstances allow. Still, trust



building, cooperation and unwritten rules of respect can hardly be regarded as a reliable antidote to missing job security.

Furthermore, models for taking part in social innovation projects are typically much more diverse than in the public or business sector since they include not only various forms of (casually) paid employment but also many forms of voluntary and civic contributions. The latter range from short-term activism to regular long-term unpaid volunteering, from hands-on volunteer work to regular contributions in the form of civic engagement on a board of management. Hendrickson and Estany's contribution on Neighbourhood Children Services in Pamplona in this chapter is an illustrative example. This innovation provides leisure activities for children and young people such as activity groups, playgrounds, summer camps and neighbourhood festivals. In the working structure, one can find volunteers and paid practitioners from neighbourhood associations, cooperating with directors both of local social services and the associations themselves. For its network and activities, this combination of professional and lay contributions is indispensable.

People working in innovative projects must typically manage tasks that fall outside the limits of traditional professions and the divisions of labour that they imply (Brandsen and Honingh 2013). They might have to learn to converse with various kinds of users, clients, co-citizens and volunteers; sometimes they are specialists, entrepreneurs and managers simultaneously. Many of them need a combination of both technical and social knowledge. This kind of "re-professionalisation" process may, for example, involve collaborators who are architects by training but work simultaneously as community organisers and mediators. The social innovation based in a neighbourhood called *Ilot Stephenson* near Lille (see Fraisse in this chapter) features a group of architects supporting inhabitants in renovating their own houses under the slogan "Faire ensemble, le grand ensemble" (roughly translated: "working together to build the whole urban area"). This is a good example of a new kind of professionalism that combines previously fragmented knowledge.

Many, if not the majority of the social innovations we studied, are based on combining multiple sources of funding. The mix varies, and often state financing remains the most important component. But usually there is some degree of (financial) co-responsibility on the part of other organisations from civil society and/or the business sector. Furthermore, funding arrangements are usually precarious and limited in time. Examples of the possibilities and limitations of innovative projects that work with short-term funding, combining resources from different stakeholders, can be found in many innovations presented in this book (see, for instance, the contribution on work corporations in Nijmegen and their resource mix).

### **Message Five—About the Need to Question How (Local) Welfare Systems are Framed**

The WILCO project sought to examine the possible contributions of social innovations to changes and developments in local welfare *systems*. It was understood that this label meant more than just local welfare-*state* institutions. Referring to a welfare system usually means including—in addition to the local welfare state and municipal welfare—welfare-related activities and responsibilities from the third sector, the market sector, communities and the family (Evers and Laville 2004).

The cases of social innovations we examined demonstrate the mutual relationships that exist between all four components of (local) welfare systems—(local) state, business, third sector and informal networks of community and family life. There was considerable variation in the level and impact of state funding and support for social innovations. The organisations involved often took on a hybrid character (see, e.g. Fledderus et al. in this chapter). Social innovations can therefore best be captured by concepts of welfare based on deliberate mixing and pluralism among actors, resources and responsibilities.

Innovation becomes difficult, if not impossible, wherever the right to act, organise or provide differently is denied. This can be the case in both large private-sector business organisations, which are managed centrally, and in certain market sectors that are controlled by private sector oligopolies. Hence, giving room for social innovations often implies aiming for more diversity and more localisation in welfare arrangements. What is more, supporting innovation means opting for arrangements that allow a new balance between guaranteed equal standards and diversity.

It is no coincidence that the social innovations considered in this chapter are largely located at the intersection of welfare and urban development. Traditionally, local and urban politics have been less prominent in the system of public policy-making. This is likely to change, as Barber (2013) recently argued. Policy fields that are usually excluded from the welfare system, such as environmental policy or cultural activities, play an important role in socially innovative developments. As Brookes et al. show in this chapter, Birmingham operates with a locality approach to worklessness, where the packages of employment, skill-development and social integration measures are developed and tailored on “ward” levels (neighbourhoods of about 30.00 inhabitants), turning work integration programs into community-led, neighbourhood-specific approaches. The program “Kreuzberg acts” (see Ewert and Evers in this chapter) and the Ilot Stephenson project from Lille are also focusing on neighbourhoods, bringing together issues of individual consultancy and concerns with community revitalisation by networking and trust building among local stakeholders.

All these examples illustrate another major aspect of many social innovations: the upgrading of the community component in mixed welfare systems and of the development of innovative forms operating at the interface of public and community spheres, sharing responsibility between the two.

In contrast to most of the previous points, the integration of social and economic logics is much better established as a concern in debates on future welfare systems. The economisation of all spheres and an increasing focus on productivity are one side of the coin. On the other, there is the debate on the welfare state as a “social investment state” (Morel et al. 2012). This advocates modernising public welfare through an approach that stresses the positive economic effects of social policy intervention in education, family support, and in occupational and social integration. In urban regeneration, social innovations seeking to combine the active participation of people as co-producers and co-decision-makers with public and private investment can be seen as part of this perspective on social investment as a means of societal development.

Summing up, the local innovations we observed—besides specific tools and aims mentioned before—represent an important way of reconfiguring mixed welfare systems, an observation likewise made by Jenson (2013) who even argues that this might be their main role.

## 9.2 Sending and Receiving—the Diffusion of Social Innovations

The following part discusses our analysis of diffusion processes. The sample of social innovations studied in the project is not quantitatively representative of diffusion potential, which makes firm statements on how much diffusion occurs impossible (which is, in any case, very difficult methodologically). Furthermore, the focus was on relations within the local context. However, the broad variety of types of innovations, the nature of which has been sketched in the first part of this chapter, allows us to draw some analytically generalizable conclusions concerning the nature of the process. We will focus on aspects of the process that are most distinctive of social innovation and on those specifically relevant to the third sector. We will continue to use the metaphor of sending and receiving messages.

Basically this metaphor, with its strengths and shortcomings, can be used for all kinds of innovation: market- or non-market-based, those technical in nature, others that are more about organisational devices and those concerning social relations and lifestyles. One should however recognise the special nature of this final type of *social* innovations (non-market-based and non-technical), which mostly develop at the local level in specific places (Zapf 1989). They have some distinctive features compared to innovations more generally. Specifically, three characteristics can be noted, which will be referred back later:

1. Social innovations usually relate to services, not products. As Osborne and Strosch (2013) emphasised, this makes them different from other types of innovation in that they relate to ongoing relationships rather than discrete transactions and to outcomes rather than outputs.
2. As a consequence, this type of innovations is usually embedded in specific social relations. This, in turn, means that they are more contextually bound than their technological counterparts. An iPad will continue to function in the same way whether it is used in Stockholm, Dover or Belgrade. The same cannot be said of approaches or schemes that work with people and rely on specific regulations and cultures to be effective. This is very relevant to the issue of diffusion, as it becomes much more complicated both in terms of objectives and process. Innovations invented in specific locations and setting cannot simply be “scaled up” as they require various ways of partial adoption and special readings.
3. Local social innovations address a specific type of need, a social need not yet sufficiently addressed by government programmes and markets. By implication, the majority are non-marketable. While many innovations originate from busi-

nesses, most innovations in local welfare originate in non-market contexts and respective social milieus, like the voluntary sector or social movements (according to some definitions of social innovations, exclusively so). Their social character is specific. This again has consequences for processes of diffusion, scaling-up, popularising or mainstreaming.

Taking these specificities into account, we can sum up the problems with transferring messages from social innovations that surfaced during the research in six paragraphs.

### **Risky Journeys: The Diffusion of Non-technical and Non-market-based Innovations**

The literature on the diffusion of innovations primarily concentrates on the business sector and therefore principally on diffusion in a market context. As we noted before, this is not the realm of all innovations, including most social innovations in the welfare domain, and we will see that it has consequences for the ultimate analysis of the process. Therefore it is useful to consider insights from literature outside market contexts.

There is by now a substantial body of literature on innovations in the public sector, under the label of “policy transfer”. This work on policy diffusion examines how policies spread across different administrations, adapting (or not) to different institutional conditions (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000). For instance, it has been used to explain the diffusion of monetary policy across member states of the European Union with their own different formal structures and administrative cultures (Radaelli 2000) or the spread of public management practices across different countries, in which the same instrument or policy can have very different meanings depending on where they are implemented (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Brandsen and Kim 2010).

Actual diffusion processes differ strongly in terms of what is diffused (e.g. objectives, contents, concepts, structures, instruments) and the degree to which something is diffused (ranging from straight copying to light inspiration, with various hybrid variations in between). Furthermore, it has to be kept in mind that journeys from “senders” to “receivers/adopters” are mostly risky and sometimes intricate (Nowotny 1997). There are many reasons why innovations may not diffuse from their place of origin. Others may get lost on the journey, damaged, changed in content or taken up and used by adopters other than innovators had thought of. While research on diffusion tends to focus on the process of adoption, especially of successful cases of adoption, one should ideally also examine failed cases or those cases where an innovation could have been relevant, but was never considered.

What also becomes more complex in a public context is the issue of motives for diffusion, which is straightforward (or at least presumed to be so) among commercial businesses. The incentives for policymakers and civil servants are more complex. While they can be driven by the desire for problem solving, they can also be motivated by political gain and/or complex political strategies. Hence, the question of motivation (or lack of it) is important in the analysis of the diffusion of social innovations.

The literature also pays much attention to obstacles to diffusion that result from the nature of the innovation itself. In line with Rogers' work (1962), it suggests that the more complex innovations are (in terms of goals, assumed causalities, effects) the harder it gets to take them from one place to another. The more resilient the destination context (e.g. due to the strength of a dominant discourse or top-heavy regulation), the less likely it is to succeed. Transfer success also depends on capacity and resources available. The empirical results of the WILCO project show that the same applies to social innovations.

Even though there is an already burgeoning literature on innovation transfer, questions about what is specific about the diffusion of *social* innovations remain. Non-technical and non-market-based innovations are generally more diverse in terms of organisational properties or lifestyles compared to technical innovations designed for mass markets. Yet, to be fair, the difference is not always as drastic as the one between a cell phone and a new mode of participation in urban planning. Many new mass products are sold with varieties that allow marketing geared to the different tastes of consumers in different cultures and regions. Still, the differential impact of "local" as compared to "global" features remains an important topic for research to investigate what is specific for social innovations.

### **Spreading Rather Than Being Sent: The Opaque Nature of Diffusion Processes**

When the process of diffusion is studied across a wider range of cases, the sender-receiver metaphor quickly becomes unsatisfactory as, however bad the connection, however confusing the conference call, one usually knows who is at the other end of the line. Not so for diffusion because the process is so hard to trace.

Johnson dealt with the difference between areas such as the business sector, where innovations can be formalised, sold or withheld by license, and the often taken-for-granted fact that most social innovations develop in the public realm where they are basically free for use (2010, p. 240 f.). However, one of our case studies (Ewert and Evers in this chapter) shows that in the social realm there is also a tension between diffusion by innovation as an "open source" and diffusion channelled by competition. Projects and organisations such as Lok.aMotion, dealing with innovative concepts for community development and community-based business in Berlin-Kreuzberg, must act under conditions of "co-ompetition" where cooperation and competition merge. They often feel that their concepts are not simply taken up, but "stolen".

This dilemma is hard to overcome because cases where a clear origin and "author" of a social innovation can be identified are hard to find. Many of the case studies presented in this book are innovative in the local place where they crystallise but resemble concepts and ideas elsewhere. This holds true for quite a number of innovations presented in this book: the essentials of work integration enterprises and the variant discussed with examples from Nijmegen, the prevention visits for improving local child protection in Münster (Walter and Gluns) or the housing revitalisation schemes from the outskirts of Lille (Fraisie). These are varieties within a national or international innovative stream and orientations. The fact that respon-

dents attribute an innovation to a particular project or locality does not mean that it was necessarily the only or even the original source of an idea. Several similar schemes often pioneer in different places during the same period. While certain projects can be hailed as emblematic of a trend, it does not necessarily mean that they are the sole source of it.

Local social innovations that are not exclusive to one place show at least four different constellations:

- (a) They may have a predominantly bottom-up character, promoted by third sector organisations and the cultural orientations of the specific environment they emerge from (see, e.g. the cases from Sweden and France in this chapter).
- (b) They may develop through joint action in a cross-sectorial local network, where the initiative may come from “policy entrepreneurs” as local parties, policymakers and administrators, as in the cases from Bern and Barcelona.
- (c) They may take shape as local varieties within a national programme or framework which experiments with new ideas and scales them up, as can be observed in Birmingham or Münster.
- (d) Finally there are cases of social innovation in which the centre of gravity is located neither centrally nor locally but in nationwide civil society networks, as in initiatives such as the MaMa Foundation or the RODA network which started through Internet contacts (see Siemieńska et al. and Bežovan et al. in this chapter).

### **The (Un)Willing Sender**

It is often taken for granted that the person who sends a message does so on purpose. In other words, we assume that the innovator has an interest in getting a message across. This makes perfect sense in a market context, where diffusion often results in profits. The social innovation literature stressing the entrepreneurial and leadership side of the phenomenon (e.g. Goldsmith 2010) and research on innovations in social movements (Moulaert et al. 2005) also assumes a strong will to “spread the message” and change the world.

However, the findings from the WILCO project show that many social innovations are generated by actors, often from the voluntary sector who have no direct interest beyond their local contexts. They concentrate on their immediate milieu, where they feel understood, encouraged and supported. A detailed look at cases in this chapter that concentrate on surviving and solidifying on the place where they operate such as the Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano in Milano or the Neighbourhood Children Services in Pamplona shows that these are often groups of people or organisations that took action in the face of a pressing local need: Children went hungry, women were abused, young men wandered the streets aimlessly. They devoted great energy to get their initiative off the ground, scraping together resources and building on local knowledge (Scott 1998). “Selling” their innovation in another city, let alone another country, seems out of their reach and potential, therefore out of sight and thought.

This again points to the essential difference with other types of innovations. A company like Apple did not design its iPads for the local Californian market, but in the hope of selling them around the world. In fact, they would not have invested

in the idea, had they not been confident that they could sell these devices in a great many places. By contrast, social innovations tend to have no market value, and there is no financial incentive to spread them. This does not mean that there are no incentives at all: Idealism and the search for a better social status can go a long way. Nevertheless, in Rogers' terms, many local innovations may be weak in the "knowledge" and "persuasion" phases of the adoption process. Both the active entrepreneurs, civic activists and leaders in social movements highlighted in much of the literature are just one group, and perhaps only a minor one, of social innovators in local welfare. Due to their concern with wider support and publicity, their importance tends to be overrated.

### **Intermediaries**

However, that does not mean that there is necessarily a hard distinction between innovations designed only for use locally and those designed to be part of an (inter)national movement for social change and innovation. An important and related finding concerns the role of intermediaries (in Rogers' terms, the opinion leaders and change agents). More than other types of innovation, social innovations require intermediary agents for successful diffusion. They can be important for both: bringing ideas from the realms of politics and academia "down to earth", into realms accessible to local associations and projects and endorsing and passing over concepts and ideas from the "grassroots" to a larger public.

Among the cases of local social innovations presented in this book, a good example of such an intermediary organisation is *Fryhuset*, which has general competence in social action and advocacy, taking up and linking the special project on children and single mothers to other initiatives. Some of the innovations studied and presented in the following chapters, such as the MaMa foundation or the RODA network, focus foremost on this intermediary level. In both cases, there is no strict separation between nationwide concerns with innovative measures and steps towards legislation, on the one hand, and giving support to local groups and initiatives on the other. Intermediary action can also come from the side of governments, businesses, social enterprises and professional groups. In Poland, for instance, it was interesting to see the important role of lawyers. Dealing with a legalistic administrative culture, they were the right people to make the translation between bottom-up initiatives and government officials (see the resp. contributions on Polish social innovations such as "The foundation for the development beyond Borders" in Evers et al. 2014, p. 250).

### **Writing Messages: The Process Prior to Transmission and Adoption**

A process of reconstruction and translation requires new ways of collaboration between governments and citizens, for example, as well as new ways of thinking. The empirical material in this book shows that in local welfare this process does not start with the adoption of an innovation adopted, but usually well before that. A good idea is not convincing in itself—only when people are open to it. What this means is that adopting an innovation from elsewhere is, from the perspective of the adopting parties, not fundamentally different from inventing one. After all, it requires similar breakthroughs in institutional routines, whether of content, collaboration or other

aspects of working. Theoretically, it means that the analysis of diffusion must start *before* the actual adoption of an innovation.

The underlying question is to what extent the innovative capacity is reflected in what is adopted (a specific approach to solving a problem) or rather in the groundwork that is done before adoption (getting the right people together, getting minds ready for new options, and so forth). This is highly relevant to public administration reform because it means that simply finding the right kinds of policy approaches or instruments in itself is not enough.

However, instead of going into a chicken and egg controversy about the impact of “winds of change” and of innovations that both build on and promote them, the focus should be on the links between both phenomena. All case studies in this book illustrate such links one way or the other, which may to different degrees be mutually enforcing.

### **Different Readings Merging: The Adoption of Innovations as Bricolage**

Sending a message the author usually hopes for it to find its destination with its content intact. It would be intolerable if someone took it and rephrased it in her or his own words. Yet this is exactly what must happen in a successful process of diffusion. It is rare for a certain project or approach to be copied from one place to another unchanged. If so, it usually concerns simple schemes that can be implemented more or less independently from regulation or policy and which require only limited collaboration between local actors. An example are the Neighbourhood Mothers, a Dutch scheme in which migrant women are used as intermediaries to counsel other migrant women (a notoriously difficult group for authorities to reach) on issues such as social security, healthy lifestyles and parenting (see for the case from Berlin: Evers et al. 2014, p. 124). Dealing with similar constituencies and relying on little regulatory support, it was a concept easy to spread.

This no longer works with more complex innovations in welfare, however, as they tend to deal with difficult social problems and difficult constituencies. Approaches or projects need to be adapted to new contexts, they call for changes in institutional routines and the values that guide them. The literature on diffusion in terms of “transfer” and “franchising” of special organisational concepts is missing many potential ways for “mainstreaming”. Quite often processes of diffusion and mainstreaming entail mutual adjustment. The shape of a collaborative arrangement may have to be altered, for example, because responsibilities for a certain policy area are distributed differently in governments at different levels or because services are provided privately in one country and publicly in the other. The innovation will be reshaped, whether due to a different socio-economic and regulatory environment or for reasons of a different dominant policy discourse.

In many cases, the development of social innovations can be conceived of as a back and forth process between the characteristics of a social innovation and the specific environment of markets, state institutions and civil society into which they spread. The respective discourses (Schmidt 2010) through which the innovation is read, justified or rejected take a key role in this process. They influence the receptiveness of actors and contexts as well as the reading of and role given to innovations in local welfare systems.



This process can be decoded with the set of basic “messages” we discussed earlier in this chapter: services that lead towards co-production rather than merely supplying; rules and regulations that upgrade the impact of a “quick fix”, by referring to social rights that take a long time to take real shape; forms of governance that give a new role to stakeholders from civil society; patterns of governance that imply lower thresholds for the contributions of not only paid experts and politicians but also of civic activists, social entrepreneurs and volunteers; a different division of responsibilities between business sector, state institutions, citizens and their communities. Each of these messages points towards a different “culture” of welfare and social inclusion and can be read and interpreted quite differently, depending on the ideological and political discourses they are incorporated in.

In their seminal study on “The New Spirit of Capitalism”, Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) have shown how “autonomy” and “flexibility”, topics that emerged from the social movements of the early 1970s, were turned into centrepieces of justification for the restructuring of labour markets and conditions by businesses. This is a superb example of how aspirations and messages from social innovators can be read in different ways. They acquire different meanings, depending on the position given to them in the discursive context. This is testament to the open and risky nature of innovations. From such a process of mainstreaming, concepts such as “activation” and “empowerment” can emerge with different purposes and different meanings. They can relate to strengthening a sense of duty and commitment to goals set by the administration; alternatively, they can refer to strengthening capacities for individual and joint action, activating not only individual competence but also sources of support and solidarity. The study on prevention visits in families in the city of Münster in this book describes the controversy at the outset of this innovation whether to develop it as a special measure for troubled families only or as an open offer to families more widely. In the case of Neighbourhood Children Services in Pamplona, innovative association-based approaches received widespread support from opposing parties partly because each political camp could read it in its own particular way—as a means for community-based self-help against more state welfare or as a means for building a more cooperative welfare system.

There is an inevitable ambivalence about innovations and their introduction to local welfare systems. On the one hand, they represent real new elements of support. On the other hand, their ultimate meaning only becomes apparent when taking account of the discursive framework in which they operate. Processes of popularising and mainstreaming innovations through negotiations will therefore mostly create hybrids of different ideas and inspirations. They are formed through a process of *bricolage*, a term from the famous anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1966), which means to construct a new entity out of (mostly) old pieces. The nature of this bricolage can differ quite strongly. At one end of the spectrum, there are innovations copied in a straightforward manner, for example, through a franchising method. At the other end are innovations that are not scaled or diffused directly, but which have an indirect effect, by suffusing the values they build upon to other places. In between stand various innovations of which only parts are transferred, which are fused with local elements and possibly even imbued with different sets of values. It is no wonder that research on diffusion is methodologically so difficult.

### 9.3 Conclusions

Using the metaphor of social innovations as messages allows integrating two aspects of social innovations that often get separated: (a) the content of innovative solutions—in this case in the field of welfare policies and services—and (b) social innovation as a process in which systems and politics—here, local welfare systems—deal with such solutions.

With respect to both content and policies, we systematically analysed evidence collected as part of WILCO to identify recurrent approaches and instruments used in local social innovations. The central aim was to draw messages on a more abstract level from our sample and to make them more overtly relevant both to academic debates and to practitioners working in other settings and countries. We classified them as five challenges: finding new ways to address users, innovating regulations and rights, ways of governance, modes of working and financing and the transformation of established local welfare mixes.

A significant message resulting from our work is that, if taken seriously, many new approaches are not the quick-fix solutions they were often intended to be. They are not available simply at the push of a button. There seem to be wide gaps between prevailing modes of policies, politics and organisation on the one hand and social innovations on the other. Bringing both sides together can demand a long learning process.

Despite their differences, the social policy community of theorists, experts and practitioners tends to operate within a shared paradigm that makes it difficult to incorporate innovations into the social policy vocabulary. To break through this, at least three prevailing perspectives must be questioned.

The first perspective to question is one that implies an exclusive link between social change and (national) state reform. If one revisits the history of the welfare state, it is to a large extent one of social innovations taken up or rejected, marginalised or mainstreamed. Social movements and organisations have always played an important role in inventing and creating welfare arrangements of their own—mutuals in the field of social security, cooperatives as early “social enterprises”, voluntary associations establishing and running all kinds of services. Although much work in the third sector research community has examined this legacy of contributions from the third sector and civil society to welfare state development (see, e.g. the contributions in Evers and Laville 2004), the social policy research community has largely ignored it, treating welfare state reform almost exclusively as a set of top-down reforms.

Secondly, one should question interpretations of justice and stratification that lead to an emphasis on standardisation and uniform institutional arrangements, so characteristic of the basic belief system the modern welfare state was built upon (see Wagner 1994). It is crucial to reconsider how reliability and equality can be combined with room for social innovation and diversity. In order to achieve both, a balance must be struck between a guaranteed level of protection by regulations and the preservation of open spaces for change through innovation.

Finally, many governance concepts still imply a central role for decision-making by powerful elites. Yet, if top-down and bottom-up initiatives are to be reconciled, public policies should be less about imposing change and more about preparing it through experiments and pilots. These should be designed to learn from social competences, accumulated through the change makers that have invented and carried them through (Then and Mildenerger 2014). In the debates on the persistence of hierarchy (Lynn 2011) and new forms of governance that are sensible for this challenge, some have labelled such an approach “democratic experimentalism” (Sabel 2012). Nudging change and preparing reform in this manner should be higher on the policy agenda.

These critical remarks point towards the conclusions of the second part of this chapter, which discussed how social innovations change once they become part of a local welfare system and spread from one place to another. Specifically, it focused on how diffusion of social innovations in local welfare is qualitatively distinct from the diffusion of other types of innovations. Typical of social innovations is their strong link to specific contexts. Exactly because they evolve within social relationships and rely upon the collaboration of various different actors, they are relatively hard to transplant from one context to another.

Furthermore, those who invented a new local social innovation are often not primarily interested in diffusion since they were originally motivated to solve a local problem. This is a fundamental difference with innovations in a business context because there the objective is to spread products as far and wide as possible.

The process of winning importance also appears to be different from the marketing of innovative products and purposeful mainstreaming by policymakers and administrators. Theoretically, one would expect the bottleneck in social innovation in a complex field such as welfare to be flaws in adaptation processes, but this does not appear to be the case in practice (as compared, for instance, to the diffusion of governmental innovations). One possible explanation is that social innovations tend to have a strong bottom-up element that allows them to evolve organically, with large contributions from local people and voluntary organisations. This is part of a transformative process *prior to* the adoption of an innovation that changes local social relations, for instance, by giving the voluntary sector a greater role in shaping local services. The actual innovation is just the final stage of this process and not necessarily the most important part of it.

The findings point towards a bias in the research on diffusion. It tends to emphasise the adoption of an innovation, failing to cover the process of transformation in social relations that occur ahead of adoption. By implication, it overstates the role of organisations involved in the direct transfer of innovations (particularly professional networks) and underestimates the role of actors involved in the wider process of local transformation, including citizens and voluntary organisations.

Arguably, the cumulative effect of small initiatives is of far greater importance to society than the few examples that achieve wider and more visible impact. In any case, research on social innovation should not restrict its focus on success (in the sense of being taken up and mainstreamed). Where social innovations survive in more difficult environments, their impact on mainstream welfare is more indirect—as one element in a cultural turn that may be quietly successful in the long run, even if many innovations fail at the first attempt.

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# Chapter 10

## Warsaw: Paving New Ways for Participation of Mothers, Fathers, and Children in Local Public and Social Life—The MaMa Foundation

Renata Siemieńska, Anna Domaradzka and Ilona Matysiak

### 10.1 Introduction

Typically, activities falling into the category of civil activism arise from everyday problems and needs of individuals as well as groups. Those civic activities are therefore not profit oriented, but change oriented and often reflect existing gaps in social support system (Young 1999). One of the clear examples of this type of social initiative is MaMa Foundation, which emerged as an answer to unmet needs of mothers with small children. It is also one of the best examples of possible positive impact of local civil society organization (CSO) on public administration as well as local welfare policies.

MaMa Foundation's success story is even more telling in context of Polish low rates of CSOs' participation and declining belief in organizations such as trade unions, professional associations, and special interest associations now widespread in many European Union countries. As Eurobarometer data collected in 2013 shows, the share of respondents who reported that they did not need such organizations ranged between 23% in Estonia and 55% in Romania, with 43% in Poland (Flash Eurobarometer 373 2013, p. 7). Generally, this opinion is stronger in the newer democracies.

However, it should be said that the participation in organizations is, in fact, only one of many forms of possible civic involvement. As Polish data shows, activities undertaken by individuals and informal groups have a significant role in this respect

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(CBOS 2011a). Also, both recent financial crisis and experiences gained through the implementation of different projects by CSOs and informal groups, strengthened the awareness of Polish society that working together with other people facilitates solving problems of their communities (neighbourhoods, villages, towns). Between 2002 and 2012, belief in the value of working together increased considerably, from 50 to 72% (CBOS 2011b). Prevalence of this opinion can be considered as an important step forward in building social and cultural capital in Poland.

Frequently, joint activities start as an (informal) initiative on the part of individuals or groups, which are later transformed into formal CSOs for various reasons, for example, to be entitled to get financial support from public authorities or to have the formal status required to cooperate with public agencies. In Poland, people are more likely to participate in organizations having grassroots origins, initiated by individuals they know through their social network. This is due to the low level of citizens' trust in all kinds of public institutions and authorities (WVS 2012, unpublished), suspected of protecting only their own interests and not those of the citizens. MaMa Foundation, which was established by the group of young, highly educated mothers, is a good example of this trajectory. Stemming from an informal group of women experiencing similar life situation—having a small child and struggling to remain publicly active—this initiative transformed into highly innovative and influential CSO, giving voice to needs of both mothers and parents. Moreover, some of their projects become institutionalized, after local authorities decided to include them in their formal policies.

## 10.2 Warsaw As a Context of Innovation

The city of Warsaw is both the largest and most diverse in Poland, in terms of dynamic labour market, social problems as well as needs of its residents. In recent years, parents of young children become one of the most visible interests groups in the city, lobbying for new solutions in childcare or protesting against city regulations restricting the access to kindergartens and daycares.

Up to now, some chaos in implementation of the local social policy led to a situation when childcare needs were not sufficiently met by public system. For example, in 2012, in many districts in Warsaw, public daycares lacked over 6000 places (PAP 2012). This created the situation in which the residents “took the matter into their own hands” and came up with their own solutions to existing problems, often becoming animators of social innovation. For instance, problems with the institutional infrastructure related to childcare in Warsaw, particularly in the dynamically growing parts of the city, encouraged the inhabitants to develop civic initiatives in order to make the authorities engaged in new investments accountable for satisfactorily solving those issues. Also, civil society bodies were organizing new types of care facilities, to fill the existing gap in public services.

MaMa Foundation is a very successful example of this type of initiative, already serving as a role model to several similar grassroots' organizations in the city. The

Foundation has an integrative and innovative approach to tackling many problems connected with parenting in the big city, constantly developing new projects and ideas. The issues MaMa works with include city mobility of parents with small children, economic reactivation and social inclusion of women as well as problems connected with modern parenting.

The importance and visibility of those issues is growing in Warsaw, where, due to high in-migration levels and demographic change, the number of children at kindergarten age steadily increases. Predictions indicate that subsequent years will be those of a baby boom, which makes childcare policy of interest to politicians and parents. Also, the cultural shift expressed in higher life aspirations is changing parents' expectations and puts a new pressure on policymakers. It is especially visible in Warsaw, where number of young and highly educated professional men and women settle down, taking advantage of the good employment possibilities. This may explain the received publicity of MaMa Foundation since its first awareness campaigns. Media visibility was one of the important factors translating the Foundation postulates into political pressure that influenced decisions of the local authorities and administration in Warsaw.

### **10.3 The Foundation**

MaMa Foundation is a non-profit organization established in Warsaw in June 2006 by a group of young, highly educated women, mothers of small children. Its activities are based on the idea that mothers and fathers with small children should be able to increase their participation in the local public and social life through elimination of social, cultural and architectonic barriers. The Foundation's ideas and projects are rooted in social economy, ideas of social solidarity and feminism. Currently, the MaMa Foundation not only addresses the needs of parents with small children living in Warsaw, but also supports refugees and disabled people. It lobbies on national and local level, working with public authorities and institutions, business, as well as media.

#### ***10.3.1 Types of Services and Ways of Addressing Users***

Main types of MaMa Foundation's activities include social campaigns, free workshops and trainings, legal, psychological and civil advice, cultural, artistic and educational projects, as well as publishing and research initiatives focused on empowerment of women. Many of the listed activities take place in MaMa Café—a parents-friendly cafeteria located in the centre of Warsaw, rented on preferential terms from the local authorities.

One of the best-known Foundation's projects is "O Mamma Mia! I cannot drive my pram in here!". It is a social campaign for adapting public space for prams



and wheelchairs. It has been running since 2006 and includes systematic monitoring, taking into account specific needs of parents with small children and people with disabilities. Public places such as railway and metro stations, public offices, and transportation hubs are regularly evaluated. The results of the project include the publication of *Warsaw Friendly for Parents*—a handbook directed to local authorities and formulating standards, which should be met by parents- and children-friendly architecture and infrastructure. Other examples of similar awareness-raising projects are “Horror stories”—a campaign about mothers’ rights as employees; “Boys don’t pay”—a campaign emphasizing problems with fathers, who avoid paying alimony; a campaign focused on problems of pregnant women and lone mothers in urban space (including photo contests “Mum speaks now!” or “Bellybutton—hub of the universe”).

Also, MaMa Foundation voices concerns about the rights of women who do not work professionally but are stay-at-home mothers and wives. In recent years, two projects regarding this issue were implemented: “List of domestic tasks” and “Warsaw Housewives’ Club”. As for the first project, in cooperation with a group of experts, the organization has formulated recommendations for the Polish Parliament emphasizing the economic value of work performed by women at home: “We show and calculate it precisely that housework performed by women (...) is quantifiable and it is possible to calculate its precise value in money. (...) It is not all about paying women for doing housework, but about actually seeing this work, being able to notice it” (MaMa Foundation representative).

The project “Warsaw Housewives’ Club” included workshops aimed at increasing awareness of women in terms of partnership-based division of tasks at home and providing the participants with specific tools that could help them in negotiations with their husbands or partners.

The workshops, trainings and legal advice offered by MaMa Foundation address women getting back to work after maternal leave, mothers, who organize initiatives supporting other mothers, as well as female refugees and victims of domestic violence. Apart from that, since 2007, the Foundation inspired the establishment of local moms’ clubs in different Warsaw districts. They all provide free workshops for mothers, local leaders and representatives of local authorities and create friendly space for meetings and exchanging experiences. One such local moms’ club is located in one of the most deprived areas in Warsaw—Targówek district. When the club was closed due to the end of the project, the group of its former participants decided to set up their own independent organization called Mom’s Power Foundation, which, to some extent, continues the activities of the club by offering free services for parents from the district. This case shows how MaMa Foundation triggers other local initiatives and inspires similar projects all over Warsaw.

Another example of MaMa’s initiatives was the “Moms’ Cooperative” innovative training project, which was aimed at creating a new, independent social cooperative, giving employment to unemployed mothers. Its main goal was to support women who are threatened with social exclusion, in terms of their education, integration into the society and their future chances on the labour market. It included both vocational and psychological trainings in order to strengthen the overall

potential of unemployed women. The project included 10 young, lone mothers from Warsaw, who gave birth to their children before being 18 years old and were long-term unemployed (more than 2 years, usually because of childcare duties) (MaMa Cooperative 2011).

The specific activities within the project included educational workshops on social economy, social cooperatives, self-employment, marketing and promotion, folk art, and psychological motivations. In consequence, the participants set up Moms' Cooperative, which creates, promotes, and distributes regional and local handmade products inspired by Polish folk art (toys, jewellery, bags, cell-phones' accessories, souvenirs for tourists, and office supplies). Now, Moms' Cooperative operates independently from MaMa Foundation, trying to find place for its products on the local and national market. The idea of this project emerged from the cooperation between MaMa Foundation with two partners from the private sector: The Orbis Hotel Group and the Accor Foundation. The social cooperative of young and lone unemployed mothers from Warsaw is claimed to be the first initiative of this kind in Poland and serves as an example for other similar initiatives all over the country.

Other, cultural, artistic and educational projects run by MaMa Foundation include: "Baby at the cinema," organized in cooperation with cinemas in Warsaw, which enables parents to watch films while their children play with babysitters; "Mothers' Art"—the exhibition of modern art created by mothers; "MaMa Perform"—performative workshops for mothers; publishing books for adults (such as anthology "What does it mean to be a mother in Poland") and stories for children; workshops for children in the Warsaw Museum of Modern Art; as well as "Scientific Café"—meetings and discussions for parents with children.

### ***10.3.2 Internal Organization and Modes of Working***

All the people who currently manage MaMa Foundation (chair, members of the board and employees) are mothers and Warsaw residents, who personally experienced various problems related to being a mother in the capital. Foundation's chairwoman is Sylwia Chutnik, a known feminist, successful writer and certified guide to Warsaw. MaMa Foundation currently employs two people (temporarily, within the budgets of particular projects) and cooperates with about ten volunteers on a regular basis. The organization is also supported by a group of lawyers, psychologists, trainers, scientists and artists, who take part in its activities when needed. As a main rule of all MaMa programs, even when an initiative is directed only to adults, the Foundation allows the participation of children or provides free childcare during workshops, trainings or meetings.

The Foundation cooperates regularly with Warsaw authorities in order to develop mother- and child-friendly public spaces and policies. The members of Foundation's board, employees and experts participate in public debates and express in media their opinions on mothers' situation in private and professional life. Usually, the Foundation tries to spread its message among different social groups at the same

time: “The initiative is, in fact, aimed at several social groups. The women—this is the workshop part, the society as a whole—some of the social campaigns and the recommendations, aimed at politicians representing all options in the Parliament and the local authorities, not only politicians, but also officers of specific departments or offices” (MaMa Foundation representative).

MaMa Foundation cooperates with great variety of local and national entities, such as Association for Legal Intervention, various women’s organizations, Institute of Public Affairs (think-tank research organization), Warsaw Municipal Office, local authorities in several Warsaw’s districts, local politicians and public institutions such as Warsaw Labour Office. It also participates in several third sector coalitions, including women’s organizations as well as associations for the disabled.

Up to now, MaMa Foundation’s crucial projects were financed by: the Accor Foundation (private sector), Warsaw Labour Office (public sector), Trust for Civil Society for Central and Eastern Europe (public charity incorporated under the laws of the USA), and European Social Fund. Apart from that, the Foundation has the status of a Public Benefit Organization, which means that, according to Polish law, it is allowed to receive 1% of income tax from individuals. To receive such status, an organization has to be a foundation or association (political parties and trade unions do not qualify), involved in specific activities related to public benefit as described by the law, and being sufficiently transparent in its activities, governance and finances.

### ***10.3.3 Embeddedness in the Local Welfare System***

MaMa Foundation’s initiatives strongly affected local public discourse on mothers and fathers with small children, defining them as a group with particular needs and problems, especially regarding the participation in public life and city space mobility. The Foundation contributed significantly to a growing awareness of public officials on the importance of mother and child-friendly architecture and infrastructure. None of those issues were seriously addressed in Warsaw before.

MaMa Foundation stresses also the important issue of reconciliation of work and care by emphasizing that motherhood does not have to be an obstacle to personal and professional development of women. Apart from that, the Foundation offers solutions in terms of employment and childcare, which are innovative and alternative to those provided by public institutions. For example, Moms’ Cooperative concerns such specific subgroup as long-term unemployed mothers by using innovative means based on the concepts of social economy.

Through its lobbying activities, MaMa Foundation challenges the common belief that women on maternal leave are satisfied to spend time with their children at home, in local shops and on playgrounds. They argue that this type of social and spatial isolation of young mothers often results in their sense of loneliness and depression. Regarding these problems, MaMa Foundation established several “Local Moms’ Clubs” in different parts of Warsaw, where mothers can come with their children, meet with other people, exchange experiences and take part in free workshops

and trainings. Apart from that, the Foundation provides great variety of cultural and educational activities, which are directed to women or parents with children.

The activities of MaMa Foundation are followed with interest by organizations and institutions in other Polish cities as well as abroad. The project “Warsaw Housewives’ Club” is being implemented in Berlin, and a female representative of the Ukrainian Parliament has also displayed some interest in establishing similar projects in her country. Last but not least, the projects of MaMa Foundation trigger, intentionally or spontaneously, multiplication of local initiatives, which are often implemented by MaMa’s actions beneficiaries, strengthening potential of local communities to solve their own problems.

## 10.4 Conclusions

MaMa Foundation is an innovative initiative established by a group of highly educated young women, who continue identifying new problems important for women and families living in the city. The organization fits perfectly the Dalton’s broader description of reactions of societies living in contemporary democratic systems. As Dalton wrote: “People today are also more conscious of their political rights and more demanding in their individualism. The new style of citizens’ politics encourages a diversity of political interests (issue publics), instrumental and flexible voting choices, and more direct styles of political action (...) This interest groups signify a new way of organizing interests and mobilizing opinion.” (2002, pp. 253–254)

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# Chapter 11

## Zagreb: Parents in Action—Innovative Ways of Support and Policies for Children, Women and Families

Gojko Bežovan, Jelena Matančević and Danijel Baturina

### 11.1 Introduction

Unlike the social policies in the majority of other Croatian cities, the social policy in Zagreb is often referred to as comprehensive and generous. The core of social policy of the city is a set of diverse social assistance measures (benefits), covering a wide range of beneficiary groups, whereas social services can be regarded as less developed. However, those fields neither seem to build up a coherent system nor do they have a strategic policy orientation. Nevertheless, over the past decade, there has been a noticeable development of local (public) services and recognition of new vulnerable social groups. The examples are services for the homeless, public kitchens, shelters for victims of domestic violence, disabled people, etc. The problem of insufficient coordination between different city departments and the lack of professionals' comprehension of a wider social system is very visible. Developmental challenge of social care system identified as coordination of government and city social programmes has not been properly addressed in policy papers yet (Bežovan 2009; Bežovan and Zrinščak 2001). Bearing in mind population coverage and the levels of social rights, it can be said that Zagreb serves almost as a "local welfare state" due to its stable budget, which provides generous and comprehensive social programmes. Owing to that, even civil society can get more funds from the city budget.

The concept of social innovation, its meaning and understanding in the general public and even within the academic community, is rather new and vague. There is a scarcity of policy and academic papers that deal with social innovations. Civil

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society organisations seem to be more receptive to the concept, which has slowly started to permeate the civic discourse. Also, recent research (Bežovan 2009, 2010) on the roles and contribution of local stakeholders to development of welfare mix has shown that civil society organisations (CSOs) are more familiar with the social innovations concept than state organisations.

Identified social innovations in Croatia reveal some particular characteristics of development and diffusion. Firstly, there is the importance of social and cultural capital. Mutual trust and engagement of the better-off and better-educated citizens are an important prerequisite for the success of innovation. It was also shown that personal capacity and entrepreneurial orientation of the initiators, who are often inspired by ideas or movements from abroad, play an important role. Such civic entrepreneurs, as Goldsmith explains, can act as catalysts for transformative change (Goldsmith et al. 2010). Secondly, particular innovations are seen as a part of Europeanisation process, which creates new programmatic and financial frameworks for development of innovations. Thirdly, since social innovations in Croatia predominantly occur within civil society, their success and sustainability largely depend on the sensibility and professional capacities of policymakers and public officials, as well as their support.

This chapter presents the case of the CSO *Roditelji u akciji*—Parents in Action (RODA), which is perceived as innovative in the field of childcare. The innovative dimension of RODA is twofold. On the one hand, it has developed over time into a prominent stakeholder of family policy in Croatia, which has shifted the family matters from the realm of “private” and put them on the public agenda. Secondly, in terms of service production, RODA has evolved from the advocacy to production, and they are now recognised as a good example of social entrepreneurship as an emerging practice in Croatia.

The case study is conducted on the basis of desk research, interviews with the key stakeholders from RODA and a focus group on social innovations in Zagreb.

**The Context of Family Policy** As for the family policy in Croatia, it is manifested mostly through material benefits, such as children’s allowances, tax reliefs and maternity leaves, rather than through provision of services for children. To some extent, this is related to the structure of traditional family: Women used to work less, while relatives and members of extended families used to be on hand. The lack of childcare services is particularly evident in large cities, where nurseries and kindergartens often cannot accommodate the children of working parents (Zrinščak 2008; Dobrotić et al. 2010). The coverage of children aged 3+ in kindergartens is 55% on average in Croatia, which is below the coverage of most EU member states, while the coverage of children under 3 with nurseries programme is 19% (Matković and Dobrotić 2013). Due to insufficient institutional capacities, informal and unpaid family support is still a widespread strategy of ensuring childcare.

At the same time, the research suggests that Zagreb might have a more developed infrastructure of (formal) support to parents, since the survey of the quality of life has shown that respondents from Zagreb reported problems of reconciling work and family lives to a lesser degree. It should be stressed, however, that the coverage

of children in kindergartens (aged 3–4) in Zagreb and the Zagreb County is above 68%, which is at the same time the greatest share among all counties in Croatia (Dobrotić 2007; Dobrotić et al. 2010).

According to the National Family Policy Strategy (2003), an increase in the number of childcare institutions and increase in the number of children covered with organised preschool care and education was one of the priority areas for family policy development. This strategy also proposed measures related to education and training of parents, incentives for implementation of programmes of civil organisations, educational programmes that include education on family, partnership, parenthood, etc. It was pointed out that family policy should therefore contribute to creating a friendly, social environment, which would help families solve a variety of problems, first and foremost the ones related to children's development. The problem of accommodation of children in preschool institutions becomes a part of national public debates only occasionally, as this is the service that is under the responsibility of local authorities. Rarely have there been cases of protests or highlighting problems in ways that would capture wide public attention. The practice of parent associations and their organised efforts to improve the provision of childcare services as beneficiaries were almost non-existent before. RODA was one of the first CSOs in that still generally underdeveloped area and became the most prominent one. The issue of placing children in nurseries and kindergartens in Zagreb would usually appear on the agenda in early autumn only, when some children would be left without a place in a kindergarten. Due to the pressure of extensive numbers of children not enrolled, the number of private kindergartens and different forms of informal playrooms has increased significantly.

The childcare policy in Zagreb has been one of the high political interests in recent years, with frequent changes regarding financial aspects, as well as the field of value-loaded discussions. It is also a policy field that has mobilised different stakeholders, and it is one of the rather exceptional examples of the mobilisation of service users (parents) for advocacy regarding local welfare policies.

## 11.2 RODA

The association RODA—Parents in Action—was founded in mid-2001, as a spontaneous reaction of parents, women with children, who raised their voices against reduction in maternity allowance and protested in front of the government office. The women connected through the Internet. The association continued to advocate the rights of parents persistently until the maternity allowance was increased and the maternity leave became longer and more flexible.

With its innovative programme of activities, the association was formed in the social space that was previously considered private, and in traditional societies perceived as the responsibility of parents and their extended families. The need for such an initiative came with the increase in number of young families with children, with better education, in a big city (Zagreb), who do not have the support of parents



and close relatives and still face the challenge of reconciling professional and family commitments. Initially, the efforts of the association centred on the protection of vested social rights, but owing to a lot of volunteer work and enthusiasm, the initiative resulted in multidimensional social change and social innovation.

### ***11.2.1 Internal Organisation and Modes of Working***

The activities of the association are mainly financed through the state and city programmes which support civil society. Citizens have been participating with small-scale donations, while a company donated 100,000.00 HRK (about 13,150.00 €) to RODA instead of giving out the money for Christmas cards and gifts. RODA also receives various kinds of nonmonetary assistance, and they are allowed to use a storage space free of charge. Initially, they decided not to accept donations from companies that violate the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes, tobacco and pharmaceutical industries and the companies using unethical marketing targeting children. Despite the various sources of support, the activities of RODA rely mostly on voluntary engagement of members.

The deep involvement of RODA in active parenting initiatives has resulted in a social entrepreneurship project of sewing and selling cloth diapers and connected products. Since 2004, RODA has been promoting the use of cloth diapers as a healthier, more environmental friendly and cheaper solution, and they launched the whole venture in 2006. With the production of cloth diapers, RODA has set an example of social entrepreneurship among associations. A high-quality product made from natural materials, healthy and safe for children, is manufactured, while disabled and difficult-to-employ persons are involved in the production. The production facilities are established within Vocational High School in Varaždin, and there are 56 women working there. Social entrepreneurship is sustainable, it brings profit to the association, develops and expands and creates new jobs. The profits generated are reinvested in the business and core activities of the organisation. The association has recently established a limited liability company for further production of cloth diapers.

RODA has 12 branches throughout Croatia, and they have organised various activities in more than 50 cities and towns in Croatia. What now exists is a strong network embedded in society, which is the voice of advocacy for social change.

In order to strengthen its mission and public acceptance, every year RODA gives out awards to the relevant stakeholders who have contributed to fulfilling the mission of their organisation within the society. They also give out a kind of anti-award to those who have been prominent in their negative approach to the vision of the association. In 2011, this anti-award went to the Croatian Minister of Health, who had advocated a restrictive law on medically assisted reproduction.

RODA is known to the wider public through the RODA forum, which has over 40,000 monthly visits. This is the platform where new members with new ideas appear, and they contribute to strengthening the community spirit of the association

and its constant renewal. This usually refers to the first experience of membership in an organisation and first experience of volunteering. New members always have the time and passion to volunteer and help the others, and they also develop their own character in that way: It is not only about giving, but also receiving to a great extent. Advising other people is a completely new experience for them—to have a feeling that they help the others and that others believe them. These are solid foundations of a sustainable social network ready to take on the new challenges.

The main organising principle is that the association is managed like a household, with better-educated members: 95 % of them have never been members of any associations before. Ideas and projects belong to the association, while volunteer work builds trust and the atmosphere in which members are accepted and respected and they enjoy support of others.

The fact is that these are the middle-class persons who are quite well off, and none of them receives income-tested children's allowance, so the association is not concerned with this topic. Their members are a specific group with similar background, which directs their interests and values to a certain extent. This is why they often cannot perceive the position and priorities of low-income mothers. In this case, civic initiative produced in the CSO belongs to well-off families from young generation exclusively.

The dynamics of social innovation remains visible here through the provision of services: There are tangible and recognisable results. However, advocacy activities are harder to see and they provide long-term results. These two processes and priorities in the association are intertwined. As an association, RODA keeps changing as the children grow up, and this is something that will be interesting to follow in the future. It is simply the dynamics that is difficult to predict. We are talking about a sense of membership in the network in which women share the same or similar values. This is the support that many people need in their lives. The strength and substance of the women is felt in the association. Interestingly enough, none of the politicians has approached the association or expressed direct interest in their work.<sup>1</sup> It might be seen as a critical issue in terms of governance and perception of this group among politicians as the “opposition”. Although they are regularly financed by the state due the quality of their projects, they are not sufficiently recognised by politicians for their actions, and the politicians do not perceive them as strategic partners in policy making. This witnesses to weak capacity of politicians and fragmentation of society.

However, RODA operates in a society where too many people remain silent about things that bother or disturb them; they do not protest, they were raised to obey. If they seek changes, they have to speak publicly about it. The service providers will hear them in one way or the other. What is announced publicly always has a certain resonance. Through such public speech and statements, RODA has become

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<sup>1</sup> However, in the case of discussion on the increase in prices for children daycare, some stakeholders felt that civil society organizations were happy to come under the umbrella of political parties, this association included, as it meets their interest.

a recognisable stakeholder in the family policy, which improves the quality of programmes for children, their accommodation and diet.

Adequate levels of trust and promoted norms and values are shared by all members of the association, especially the ones practicing volunteer work. In that way, the contribution to social capital multiplication has been made, as a basis for social innovation in the association and beyond. “Mobilisation and organising around a shared vision of change” (Moulaert and Mehmood 2013, p. 448) is an added value of this innovation. In this case, social change is visible in an area that used to be the area of privacy and the space of few government services. It was a framework for social innovation that strengthened the social cohesion in general public.

RODA has passed their knowledge and skills to the organisations in South East Europe, in Sarajevo, Belgrade and other cities. However, it has been impossible to implement such a programme in these countries, as there is neither willingness nor need for volunteer work. So in this case, it can be clearly stated that social innovation emerged from civil engagement and volunteer work of citizens, as a kind of collective action (Habisch and Loza Aduai 2013), making effort to protect and promote their interests.

### *11.2.2 Concepts and Ways of Addressing Users*

By promoting and advocating the rights of children, RODA has impacted changes in public policies for children, women and families. Through their consistent cooperation with the media, they have made a recognisable influence on public opinion and lobbied for changes in childcare. For the first time in public policy, being involved in a copayment scheme, they come up with the image of the services co-producer, having vested in the quality of service for which they are paying. RODA encourages active and responsible parenting through direct support and assistance to parents, equipping them with skills and knowledge, empowering them and making them better advocates of the rights of their children. They are joined and networked, which makes them strong and decisive in their public statements.

Parents are the ones who make decisions about their children. The children do not belong to the institutions, but parents can affect the quality of services that children receive in childcare institutions.

RODA has become an important stakeholder in the debate on the right to adequate maternity allowance and maternity leave, the right to medically assisted reproduction, pregnancy and improving birthing conditions, as well as promotion, education and counselling on breastfeeding, education and support to parents and children safety in traffic.

The association has gradually developed into some kind of a “union of parents”. They have created a new paradigm of parenting in Croatia, promoting the idea that children need their parents and their greater affection. This kind of attachment parenting is based on emotions and first experience of parenthood. “When you do not have a family to help you, you turn to those similar to yourself.”

RODA is familiar with the problems of many parents barely surviving, seeking their help: They state the cases of families of five who live in apartments of 26 m<sup>2</sup>. The housing situation is a limiting factor in the expansion of families and the decision to have two or more children. Temporary, 1-year employment contracts also present certain constraints. The association has helped some families to cover delayed rent payments.

For 8 years, RODA has been providing support and advice on breastfeeding through their breastfeeding hotline. They have also organised a school of breastfeeding, a conference and printed and distributed relevant materials. These activities become a strong lever for the social integration of young mothers. This innovation can be studied also as gender and parenthood relations about social arrangement and capacity to organise daily life (André 2013, pp. 414–415).

Considering the vulnerability of children in their parents' cars, RODA launched an initiative for proper use of car seats for children. The result of the initiative was the increase in the number of children who are driven in car seats, as well as in the proportion of car seats that are correctly installed and used appropriately. In the framework of this programme, a large number of brochures have been printed and good cooperation with the police has been established, in so far as they organised quick traffic controls near kindergartens and on the city roads.

Four times a year, RODA organises sales of second-hand children's clothing, shoes and equipment. So far, 30 sales were held, and each was visited by an average of 800 parents. Organising such a 3-day event requires the help of 40 volunteers.

As the children of parents belonging to this association grow up, RODA might develop programmes for teenagers in the scope of its future activities.

### ***11.2.3 Interaction with the Local Welfare System***

As a well-known stakeholder and advocate of social services for children, RODA had an impact on the practice of making and implementing childcare policy in Zagreb. In partnership with other organisations, they have exerted pressure on the city administration to organise a special session of the Committee for Education and Sports, the body of the City Council, the topic being the prices of childcare services in Zagreb. Instead of paying for the cost of services on the income-test basis, they insisted parents should be means-tested (income, property, etc.). Raising the issue of the means test as a prerequisite for eligibility to social rights is a big and important thing in the national social welfare system. With such impact, the proposal of increasing the cost for such services on an income-test basis has not been accepted.<sup>2</sup>

Also, RODA put on the agenda the issue of quality of childcare services in terms of space per child in kindergartens, quality of food for children and educational programmes. In representing users of services, they are very much respected as a stakeholder, and they are gradually witnessing a process of quality service improvement.

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<sup>2</sup> At that time, there was strong opposition to the Mayor in the City Council.

After RODA's actions, CSOs of parents have become a visible part of the governance structure of the local welfare system, which made the local welfare system more vibrant and responsive to the public and, specifically, to beneficiaries of social services. As the media were covering all debates and events, the general public got a sense of importance of CSOs and, in this case, of self-organised mothers.

For the first time, this case opened a debate on public issues where citizens have vested interests and showed strengths of a civil organisation addressing public issues and influencing policy process. With this experience, a new culture of communication and relationship of the city with CSOs might be seen.

### 11.3 Conclusions

In transitional countries, civil society is a space for the self-organisation and mobilisation of citizens to protect and to promote their interests. Civic norms, values and networks produce a necessary level of social capital to build trust among local stakeholders and to strengthen social cohesion.

In this case, there existed a fertile soil for social innovations and, after a certain period of time, social entrepreneurship. RODA was established as a successful social innovation because it was in possession of certain social capital mostly from middle class citizens that were its key actors. Also, they were among the first organisations that actively worked in family policy area counting on engagement of families. They became recognised and branded themselves so they are now the organisation that almost every mother has heard about, which contributes to their success as social innovation. It is obvious that developmental capacity of this innovation, being owned by a civic organisation, increases on a steady basis.

Empirical evidence says that civil society is a space for self-organisation and self-promotion of the middle class, which is the core of "urban citizenship". It brings the issue of fragmentation of the space of civil society as a relevant topic for further research. Important question is the one of capacities and inequalities. What are the differences in possibilities of organisations with developed social connections and social capital derived from their middle class status as opposed to the organisations founded by lower class citizens? Also, what are the differences between urban and rural based organisation?

The case made impact on the local and national welfare systems in terms of policy making process and governance producing new welfare culture in this field. Besides such promising development of the analysed social innovation in the space of civil society, the social welfare system, which is in the hands of government and the city, has still not become the space of viable social innovations. Overregulation and paternalistic style of government, where the authorities own public policy, remains the major obstacle for developing social innovations (Bežovan et al. 2013). Some earlier research (Bežovan 2010) identifies the problems of a lack of coordination and poor cooperation between different local stakeholders. Mobilisation of local stakeholders and facilitation of social change appears to be a demanding and

difficult process that capacitive organisations such as RODA need to overcome to develop social innovations.

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# Chapter 12

## Amsterdam: Neighbourhood Stores for Education, Research, and Talent Development—The BOOT Project

Francesca Broersma, Taco Brandsen and Joost Fledderus

### 12.1 Introduction

Amsterdam is increasingly torn—between wanting to be a “social” city on the one hand, and a “competitive” city on the other. The fact that the Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, or PvdA) was the largest party in the municipal council from the end of the Second World War until 2014 and that the mayor has always been a member of this party during this period indicates that Amsterdam is, to this day, a city that treasures a secure safety net for the more vulnerable segments of society. Yet, the fact that during the last two decades the municipal coalition has included representatives from the left to the right side of the political spectrum shows that the stronger leftist tendencies once there in the past have made way for a more moderated ideology. Whilst equality and solidarity are undoubtedly still defining values in the social and political mentality of Amsterdam, the city has progressively become more and more open to the ideas of differentiation and efficiency.

An important recent occurrence that marked the way in which Amsterdam currently approaches the provision of local welfare services was the introduction of the national Community Development Programme (*wijkaanpak*) in 2007, an integrated, more holistic approach towards neighbourhood regeneration; besides improving the physical environment, the *wijkaanpak* aims to enhance the broader liveability (*leefbaarheid*) in disadvantaged neighbourhoods—that is, to improve the social and the economic environment too. Moreover, in the *wijkaanpak*, citizen participation is

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key. At the same time, the *wijkaanpak* encourages various actors that are involved in the provision of welfare services at the local level to engage in new partnerships with other actors that are operating within their same neighbourhoods. In practice, the *wijkaanpak* has been pushing for all of the various actors involved in the provision of welfare services in Amsterdam to join forces and tackle societal problems in a more coordinated and more efficient manner. Existing (welfare) organizations are thus increasingly forced to reconsider not only their approach towards the provision of welfare services but also their (traditional) organizational culture.

Neighbourhood Stores for Education, Research, and Talent Development (*Buurtwinkels voor Onderzoek, Onderwijs en Talentontwikkeling*, or BOOT) can be seen as a confluence of these developments, a national drive towards more collaboration and a local evolution towards pragmatic, tailored solutions to the problems of specific areas.

## 12.2 Neighbourhood Stores for Education, Research, and Talent Development (*Buurtwinkels voor Onderzoek, Onderwijs en Talentontwikkeling*)

The nationally implemented Community Development Programme (*wijkaanpak*) that started in 2007 raised the question about how the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA)—the largest institute for higher professional education in Amsterdam—could connect the knowledge and the competences of its students, teachers, researchers, and network to the so-called problem areas (*aandachtswijken*) in Amsterdam, in such a way as to contribute to the socioeconomic development of these neighbourhoods. In the meanwhile, the HvA aspired to be the university of Amsterdam, *for* Amsterdam. Hence, in consultation with the municipality, the HvA came up with the BOOT concept.

The first BOOT was opened in 2008, and by now there are four BOOTs in four different city districts (West, Oost, Zuid-Oost, and Nieuw-West). Various programmes of different domains of the university give their students the opportunity to do an internship for a minimum of 5 months and a maximum of 10 months, 4–5 days a week, at one of the BOOTs. These domains include the Domain of Economics and Management (*Domein Economie en Management*, or DEM), the Domain Technique (*Domein Techniek*), and the Domain Society and Law (*Domein Maatschappij en Recht*, or DMR). Accordingly, various services are offered at BOOTs. The standard set of services that are provided in all BOOTs comprises financial, legal, social, and nutritional consultation hours, homework support for 6–10-year-olds, and an atelier for urban renewal. In addition, depending on the specific needs of the neighbourhood/residents/organizations, BOOTs may also engage in other activities.



### **12.2.1 *Conceptions and Ways of Addressing Users***

In reality, there are different kinds of users of BOOTs. From the perspective of the university, the main users are the students—BOOTs are set up and supported by the HvA so that their students can gain practical experience and their teachers are more in contact with their work field. Ultimately, for the university, what matters the most is that through the BOOTs, they are able to educate better social workers for the future. At the same time, BOOTs are also used by city districts and local (welfare) organizations to conduct research projects and/or to help them in their provision of (welfare) services. Last but certainly not the least, BOOTs are used by residents of deprived neighbourhoods, who resort to the students for personal advice as well as for help to organize activities in their neighbourhood.

For the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to which students in the BOOTs are offering their services, BOOTs appear to be an easily accessible point of information and assistance. Whilst some residents, for one reason or another, may be more hesitant to approach formal services that are provided by more traditional (municipal) welfare organizations, they seem to be less hesitant to approach the (students in the) BOOTs for help. Moreover, residents that resort to BOOTs seem to value the fact that students take their time to figure things out for them and that they try to offer more personalized assistance than they do in other existing welfare organizations/associations. That on average 350–500 residents visit the various BOOT locations every week indicates that residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods appreciate the existence of a BOOT in their vicinity.

### **12.2.2 *Internal Organization and Modes of Working***

The way in which BOOTs are internally organized is mainly decided by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. The HvA delivers most of the staff for the BOOTs (be they students, teachers, or mentors), it supplies the bulk of the funding (most of the participating “domains” at the university contribute a certain amount of money to be able to pay for the staff and the necessary equipment), and its academic schedule decides the timeframe of the activities that are carried out in the BOOTs. However, in most cases, housing corporations provide the location, and the city districts pay the fixed costs such as gas, electricity, water, and Internet. In some cases, BOOTs have set up a so-called Neighbourhood Partner Agreement (*wijkpartnerovereenkomst*), which is an agreement between the BOOT and partnering organizations in which BOOT promises to provide certain services in return for a location/compensation of the fixed costs. In other cases, it is the city district itself that asked for a BOOT to be set up and thus also provides a location for them. By now, all BOOTs have not only a standard set of services that they provide but they also carry out additional services/activities depending on the specific needs and desires of residents and organizations in the neighbourhood, like the manager of

BOOT explains: “It’s a bit like a menu, where you can choose: I want a BOOT with the standard set of services. But if you want BOOT to carry out extra projects on top of those [...] then that is also financed separately”(Manager BOOT).

The modes of working, though—in terms of the services that a BOOT offers—are very much based on the needs of the neighbourhood in which a BOOT is located. In fact, BOOTs seek to fill the gaps in welfare provision that are left by other (municipal) welfare organizations that are already active in the neighbourhood—either by offering specific types of services or by targeting specific groups of residents. To be able to fill this gap and to adjust the services that are offered by BOOTs to those that are provided by other organizations, close collaboration with existing (welfare) organizations in the neighbourhood is crucial.

### ***12.2.3 Interaction with the Local Welfare System***

As BOOTs focus on providing welfare services that are not yet being offered (enough) in a particular neighbourhood, there is a strong interaction with the local welfare system in the different neighbourhoods in which they are located, and they maintain a closely cooperating network of partners. In fact, the most innovative aspect of BOOTs is the binding role that an educational facility like the HvA—as a fresh and more neutral actor in the field of welfare provision—plays between different (welfare) organizations that are operating within the same territorial boundaries, yet not necessarily cooperating much. When BOOTs first started, for many welfare organizations that were already in those neighbourhoods, this was a difficult transition to make, as they had been used to providing a particular service in a certain way and were generally very much focused towards the inside—on their own activities/organization. BOOTs bring many of these different, so far disconnected, actors together, which not only provides a clearer overview of the services that are present in a certain neighbourhood and of those that are lacking but it also stimulates all partnering organizations to have a more outward look. As the manager of BOOT noted:

(...) You have to give it a lot of time to build up a trusting relationship. And, the most important—and in that you can educate other organizations a bit too—is that you put the residents at the centre of it all. Because it’s actually a bit weird that you would see this as competition ... You have been put there with money from the government to carry out services for the residents. If you can do that better with someone else’s help, it is a bit weird if you wouldn’t want to do that. But that is something that with the Community Development Program (‘wijkenpak’) was a cultural process also. Organizations were very much turned towards themselves, and well, they had to start working more result-driven. [...] While, the point of the ‘wijkenpak’ was that you would bring your forces together to solve societal problems. [...] And I think that we... because we were independent—so we were not part of the municipality, or of housing corporations, or welfare organizations—we tried to get everybody to turn a bit more towards the outside (Manager BOOT).

### **12.2.4 Future Developments**

The entire BOOT concept is based on nonprofit-making growth model, which may be difficult to maintain in a future where all partners are facing budget cuts. BOOTs too are thus constantly looking for ways to innovate themselves, so they can somehow continue to offer their services in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The BOOT manager stressed the importance of mobilising and pooling different resources:

At some point the city district is going to pull itself back more, simply because they are not getting any money for this anymore. And then you have to look at (...) how you can keep this going, without costing more money, but that you still grow. [...] So you have to look how you can create an exchange system with existing partners, so they can keep their costs low by using students. [...] We are especially busy with looking at how residents—because there is of course a lot of knowledge also with residents, and time, unfortunately these days also with people who are highly qualified, but that are unemployed—to look at how they can guide the students for a part. [...] That would be great, matching the trend that residents themselves are looking for themselves how to organize things.

BOOT—for which the motivation and the driving force comes from more “common” educational facilities—is perhaps a type of innovation that is more likely to be diffused in an international context, and, as a matter of fact, already is:

We talk a lot with other educational facilities—like ROC, in Holland, the University of Applied Sciences in Nijmegen—to see how they could do that within their own context. And that gives us a lot of interesting information. So there are also other BOOT concepts in other parts of the Netherlands, who do it in their own way. That fits with their university; that fits with the needs of the residents that live in those neighbourhoods. And that is a movement that I think has been very good, to see how higher educational facilities can do more than just education in the traditional way. But how can you really use that exchange with the city? And that’s a trend that you see in the whole of the Netherlands, even in Europe (Manager BOOT).

What certainly helps diffusion is the existence of an extensive network of third sector (welfare) organizations and the presence of local governments that take on a leading and steering role. In the case of Amsterdam, the fact that there are already many local welfare provisions in place means that knowledge and personnel are often there, but it is a matter of coordinating efforts more efficiently. While local governments may not be able to provide financial support the way they used to in the past, it is all the more important that they remain active in bringing scattered and disjointed (welfare) organizations closer together. In Amsterdam, although the public administration surrounding welfare provisions is bulky and fragmented, the fact that it is a capital city that wants to set an example in the Netherlands also puts pressure on the administration to be innovative and dynamic. In other words, politically, a change of (organizational) culture must be supported and encouraged.

## 12.3 Conclusion

Due to its particular (political) history and (administrative) structure, Amsterdam has an extensive and intricate system of separate and rather compartmentalized actors involved in the provision of local welfare services. Every city district has its own (welfare) programme and organizations, and due to the availability of sufficient funding/subsidies, all of these actors have long had the possibility of working fairly independently from one another. Instead, at the moment, the political discourse in Amsterdam calls for social innovations that target social cohesion at the local level in an efficient manner. Hence, the political discourse favours social innovations that promote closer collaboration between the many (disjointed) actors that are involved in the provision of welfare services at the local level and that encourage new actors—including for example universities—to step up to the plate. In particular, the innovations that seem to enjoy most (political/financial) support are those that seek to combine both the social and the competitive side of the city and try to bridge the gap between those two (so far rather disconnected) worlds. BOOTs are a prime example of this.

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# Chapter 13

## Lille Metropolis: Co-production of Housing in a Major Urban Renewal District

Laurent Fraisse

### 13.1 Introduction

Union is the name of one of the biggest urban renewal projects in the Roubaix-Tourcoing-Wattrelot district (Lille Metropolis). In a post-industrial site spreading across 80 ha, a large project has been planned combining an eco-neighbourhood, a business hub and new housing, including 30% of social housing. In a district called Ilot Stephenson at the periphery of this area, a protest by inhabitants against the demolition of their popular housing led to an innovative housing co-production action between architects, local authorities and an inhabitants' organisation. Access to 30 homes at reduced cost has been achieved thanks to an innovative mode of architectural intervention that encourages inhabitants' participation in the self-rehabilitation of their neighbourhood. This emblematic initiative has inspired and has been integrated into the broader participative governance process of one of the most ambitious urban renewal projects in northern France.

This innovation-driven urban process has to be understood in the context of a long de-industrialisation process within the Lille Metropolitan area and the Nord-Pas-de Calais region. This process has strongly affected the historical working class and inclusion in the labour market of new generations, who face high degrees of unemployment and a rise in social vulnerabilities. The area's industrial background has also impacted on the nature of housing, with a large stock of working-class houses, former blue-collar dormitories that have become de facto social housing. A lot of them have been left unused for many years and tend not to comply with health and safety regulations, with tenants living in very poor, even insalubrious conditions (inadequate heating system, substandard water supply, etc.). In this context, metropolitan urban policies have aimed at investing in urban renewal and housing construction to improve urban living conditions but also to promote economic regeneration. This urban renewal operation has been politically one of the significant

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projects launched and managed by the Lille Metropolis Urban Community (LMCU) which gathered 85 municipalities, large cities (Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing) and their independent suburbs, and was governed by a left wing coalition between 2008 and 2014.

On a wider scale, the background to this innovation is a period of urban policies in the 2000s characterised by a vast national programme of urban renewal targeting deprived districts. Several hundred demolition-reconstruction operations covering large social housing complexes built during the 1960s and 1970s have taken place in the suburbs of France's big cities. Focusing mainly on the architectural and construction aspects, the role and participation of inhabitants in such urban renewal projects has often been the subject of controversy (Donzelot and Epstein 2006; Hall and Hickman 2011). The Ilot Stephenson initiative could be considered as a pilot project to test an alternative approach to urban renewal (Fraisse 2013). Architect Patrick Bouchain and his colleagues launched the concept *Construisons ensemble, Le Grand ensemble* [Working together to build the whole urban area], which was tested between 2009 and 2012 (Bouchain and David 2010).

### 13.2 The Ilot Stephenson Rehabilitation

The story of the Ilot Stephenson neighbourhood started with a conflict at the beginning of the 2000s when the inhabitants of this small working-class neighbourhood located at the periphery of the Union urban renewal project learnt that the municipality would purchase their houses and then demolish them. They organised themselves into an organisation named *Rase pas mon quartier* [Don't demolish my neighbourhood] and initiated actions protesting against the project with some support from various elected opposition members.

After several years, they succeeded in stopping the demolition project in 2004. In 2007, the Lille Metropolis authorities decided to transfer the management of the whole Union urban renewal development to the semi-public company, SEM Ville Renouvelée, with an obligation to properly integrate sustainable development and participatory approaches. After 3 years, during which nothing happened, the Ilot Stephenson project was the first operation launched in an atmosphere of mutual mistrust between inhabitants and urban planners. The mayor of Tourcoing and SEM Ville Renouvelée decided to call on architect Patrick Bouchain and his team to re-think the urban project with the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

After a contentious atmosphere between inhabitants and local authorities, new ways of addressing inhabitants of the Stephenson neighbourhood emerged and opened up a new period of collaboration. An innovative architectural intervention based on participative and local co-production has led to the rehabilitation of 30 historical houses and the improvement of 24 inhabited houses. Of this, 12 have been purchased by a social landlord. Several have taken on a self-rehabilitation dimension and were sold at a lower price. In addition, architecture skills and urban project management were available for any owners or tenants making housing improvements (thermal and energetic diagnosis, insulation, etc.).

### 13.3 Approaches and Ways of Addressing Users

The Ilot Stephenson project is a new architectural and urban planning experiment conceptualised by Patrick Bouchain and his architects' firm, Construire. They are part of the architectural movement that considers that building cities should not only be a matter for specialists (architects, urban planners, property developers, social landlords, etc.) and that inhabitants should not be passive subjects who are generally excluded from most social housing, construction and urban renewal projects. Inhabitants' participation in the production of social housing or rehabilitation of urban areas is one of the key principles for improving cohabitation in the city. In this context, the recent and systematic demolition-reconstruction incentives in France do not sufficiently take into account people's lives and the neighbourhood's history.

"Building is living" is one of the principles of a new interaction with residents. It means that the building phase is no longer regarded as a parenthesis in inhabitants' lives, but as an important opportunity for public expression and civic participation seen as a condition for sustainable and efficient housing rehabilitation. Conceptually, the building site is no longer seen as a no man's land and a temporary phase in the life of the neighbourhood but as a dynamic episode in the lives of the inhabitants.

Concretely, the architects immersed themselves in the Stephenson neighbourhood by locating part of their office in an old electronics workshop. This daily presence changed relationships with inhabitants and other stakeholders as well as the architects' perception of the initial architectural scheme, by setting it against the habits and needs of everyday life. They knew whom to contact for any daily issues on the building site. The electronics workshop was also transformed into a public space where a large model of the urban project was reconstructed for the inhabitants. Several meetings with residents, elected representatives, technicians from local authorities and representatives of local organisations were organised for presenting and discussing adaptation of the initial plan. Regular workshops and conferences were organised in the electronics workshop bringing together the current and future inhabitants and exploring topics such as making compost or recovering wastewater. Educational activities were also planned with children.

The new approach to the urban renewal project led to concrete and substantive changes for the community. Beyond the concrete rehabilitation or improvement of about 60 houses that should initially have been pulled down, the public exhibition and discussion of the large-scale model led to a change in the initial architectural proposal. Initially located just in front of some tall buildings planned for the eco-neighbourhood, the rehabilitation of small traditional houses presented the problem of a disproportionate scale and of perspective. A consensual agreement between all stakeholders has been reached based on the revision of the urban plan involving the progressive transition of the height of the buildings adjacent to the Stephenson neighbourhood. Moreover, the architects mediated discussions about the future of the cul-de-sac that the urban planners wanted to open to traffic, whereas families wanted to keep it as a secured space where children could run

around and play safely. The compromise was to partially open the cul-de-sac, making it accessible to pedestrians and bikes but not cars. The construction of the first model of renewed housing that the residents agreed on was visited by present and future inhabitants. The idea was to meet and involve future residents in the district before they moved in.

The Ilot Stephenson project has also inspired and strengthened the governance of the whole urban renewal planning process. The semi-public company SEM Ville Renouvelée has adopted a participatory approach by implementing the eco-neighbourhood. Factors include the co-production of a sustainable development framework. Its formulation has not only involved the different local authorities and housing developers but also groups of local non-profit organisations called *Collectif de l'Union*. This group of local organisations and citizens demanded, from the beginning of the Union urban renewal plan, integration of employment, social and ecological aspects alongside the initial business and construction dimensions. Some collective proposals coming from local residents associations were formulated in 2010 to include grassroots projects and participation by inhabitants within the urban planning scheme. These claims, by degrees, took into account and partially impacted urban governance planning. Thus, the framework for the eco-neighbourhood adopted in 2007 was revised 4 years later in order to adjust to new needs expressed by local actors, local institutions' strategies and national legislation. Moreover, a charter of participation was drawn up with the different Union stakeholders. The active involvement of the group of local organisations led to the creation of a specific fund for resident participation by the local authorities in order to support local initiatives connected to the renewal urban project. Finally, the creation of a "House of the Union" has been inspired by the internal organisation and working methods used by the electronics workshop experiment. The Union group of local organisations has been put in charge of running the space.

### **13.4 Internal Organisation and Working Methods**

As the Stephenson project has demonstrated, opening a building site can involve several innovative aspects in the architectural working methods. The most important aspect is the temporary establishment of at least one architect in the neighbourhood during the building or rehabilitation phase. This new architectural position means a form of commitment in the community beyond a simple technical role. Concretely, part of the architects' firm is established in the district, which is considered as a place of work. This sort of architect's immersion has been pushed beyond working in the neighbourhood, like in the Stephenson operation, to actually living with the inhabitants, as has been the case in a similar rehabilitation of old working-class houses in Boulogne-sur-Mer on the west coast of the Nord-Pas de Calais region.

The presence of the architects' office implies the mobilisation of new professional practices and skills due to the fact that the architect and the development project are embedded in neighbourhood life. One of the results is the trend for tailor-made



approaches to housing rehabilitation that take into account domestic situations. Far from the sort of standardised urban construction that requires the same building materials throughout, a normalisation of inhabited rooms as well as heating and insulation systems, the architect tries to adapt interior and exterior construction through a compromise between urban requirements and inhabitants' concrete needs. This can lead, for example, to the installation of a new wood stove that most of the families use rather than the heat pump initially planned by the social landlords. The idea is that new housing standards are not always more sustainable and efficient if they are too far removed from tenants' habits. The architects also play the role of political regulator and social mediator in relationships between the local authorities, social landlords and inhabitants. Gaining the trust of inhabitants and getting them to agree to interventions at their homes, especially in a contentious context, means avoiding inappropriate decisions that risk halting the operation. For instance, architects may have to negotiate a lower and more progressive rent increase with social landlords than originally planned for the renovated houses.

New working methods also mean interactions with professionals (social workers, social entrepreneurs, artists, volunteers, etc.) who are involved in the neighbourhood in order to organise activities for and with the inhabitants during the building period. To a certain extent, the architect becomes a kind of community developer by facilitating the creation of public spaces and open meetings, by organising visits and animations with children, by being in contact with social services or work integration enterprises to obtain better access to rights or work opportunities for residents, by encouraging the intervention of artists in cultural events on the building site, etc. An initiative mentioned as unusual for local urban planners has been the contribution of students from Tourcoing Beaux Arts School who created a temporary art performance within the houses under renovation. One example in Boulogne-sur-Mer has been the participation of a number of inhabitants involved in self-renovation of their homes in building skills training sessions that potentially open up new job perspectives to them.

In the case of Ilot Stephenson, the architects' presence also led to the involvement of local building artisans. This was facilitated by public procurement contracts divided into small batches, and the fact that the location of the architect's office at the building venue also changed the rhythm of professional interactions with construction workers who did not have to wait for the architect's traditional weekly visit to the building site for solving practical issues.

At the urban planners' level, the main change in working methods was the 2007 creation of a new statute of technician in charge of sustainable development and inhabitants' participation, introduced when management of the urban renewal project was transferred to SEM Ville Renouvelée. It is an innovation in a professional milieu dominated by architects and urban planners who are not used to and do not know how to work with groups of inhabitants, local organisations and neighbourhood councils. Urban planners have learnt to systematically present and discuss the urban project with residents within the different neighbourhood councils as well as on ad hoc committees.

### 13.5 Embeddedness in the Local Welfare System

From a local political issue to an emblematic and publicised project, the Ilot Stephenson story has profoundly influenced the Tourcoing mayor, urban planners from SEM Ville Renouvelée and Lille Metropolis and other stakeholders in the project. It has definitely led to the integration of a human and participatory dimension in urban planning and urban renewal projects. According to the architects, calling into question, even if partially, the plan for a large and emblematic urban renewal project already voted in by the local authorities remains quite rare.

Although such innovations are quite sensitive to the local context, several factors can be identified for explaining why it has worked. Firstly, Ilot Stephenson, like the housing rehabilitation in Boulogne-sur-Mer, was considered a problematic zone within the initial urban renewal plan. Faced with deadlock situations such as residents' protests or the retrenchment of welfare services, local policymakers opened their minds to new ideas and agreed to explore new urban solutions. Consequently, the political will of the mayor was fundamental for long-term support for the architects in the face of scepticism expressed at the beginning by a number of social landlords, local urban planners and social workers. Secondly, the national reputation of the architect and his connections with the political network are another important factor, not only for launching such a specific experiment, but also for integrating and legitimizing it with networks, processes and resources from other scales. Thirdly, it is worth noting that the contract mechanism used for this experiment is also unusual for this kind of urban operation. Whereas local authorities usually turn to public procurement for urban planning projects, this was a partnership agreement (*convention de partenariat*), which provided the contractual frame between the architects' firm and SEM Ville Renouvelée. An adapted contracting mechanism is favourable to this sort of tailor-made urban project.

Finally, the Ilot Stephenson case is interesting because conceptualisation is an ongoing process, expressed by the slogan *Faire ensemble, Le Grand ensemble* ["Working together to build the whole urban area"], which has been tested successfully in other places, such as the rehabilitation of all the precarious housing on a street in Boulogne-sur-Mer. This ability of the Construire architects to transform local experiments within a specific context into a more or less mainstream concept is crucial for being able to influence collective representations of what is or is not innovative, and to become relevant to people and institutions from outside. Architects regularly conceptualise and communicate on a new urban approach to social housing construction and urban rehabilitation through publications, conferences and videos.

In addition, one of the architects who worked in the Stephenson neighbourhood throughout the entire project won a prize for young urban planners in 2012. The Ilot Stephenson project has been subject to local publicity and media coverage with a special website and numerous articles in the regional press. The inhabitants' organisation was often solicited by journalists. Stephenson has gradually become a kind of showcase project, with all the risks of overexposure in terms of expectations created. Whereas the Ilot Stephenson was a local political problem at the beginning of

the 2000s, 10 years on, it has become an emblematic success promoted by the local authorities. Attention for the project goes far beyond the local community. Many professors and students of architectural schools, delegations of technicians from other cities and even international visitors have visited the building site and met the architects and urban planning team.

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# Chapter 14

## Pamplona: Neighbourhood Children Services—A Grassroots and Local Council Initiative

Manuel Aguilar Hendrickson and Marta Llobet Estany

### 14.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we analyse a programme that was born of a grassroots initiative of several neighbourhood associations and was taken up by the local council of Pamplona. During the early 1990s, several neighbourhood associations set up educational activities for children that the local authorities integrated into their children services structure as “community children teams” aimed at providing “community preventive action services”. This has developed into a specific model of local public service provision by community organisations where many of the complexities and ambivalences of the co-production of services and of social innovations may be seen.

### 14.2 The Context

Pamplona is the capital of Navarra, a small region in Northern Spain. Its urban area of 353,000 inhabitants makes up for slightly over half of the region’s population.

The regional and local governments have frequently boasted of having a level of social service provision clearly above the Spanish average, and of “pioneering” the development of social services. Financially and politically strong regional and local governments in a small, comparatively wealthy and less unequal region has allowed for a stronger development of social services. In some cases, especially during the

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1980s and early 1990s, this meant the introduction of services previously unknown in the region.

Civil society organisations have a long tradition in Navarra. This stems from a strong conservative tradition of local self-government, going back to the “Carlist” traditionalism of the nineteenth century, from the strength of the Catholic Church and its organisations, and from the complex political development of these traditions since the 1960s. The radical changes undergone in Navarra since the 1960s transformed a rural agrarian region into an industrial and service-based one, concentrated most of its population in the capital, Pamplona, and opened up dramatic political cleavages between left and right, and between Basque nationalism and Navarrese regionalism.

Third sector organisations emerging of these processes are generally very much respected by most of the political and social spectrum, as they represent the solidaristic “soul” of Navarra and its concern for the weakest. Although social innovation does not seem to be an explicit political priority, new initiatives coming from these organisations are usually seen with sympathy, even when they challenge the dominant views in the political sphere. In many cases, the orientations and values of these initiatives openly depart from dominant orientations, as for example when flexibility and “informality” in the way of addressing users are opposed to formalised “managerial” approaches, or when the social value of workplace relations is opposed to dominant “work-first” activation approaches (Aguilar Hendrickson 2013).

These innovative initiatives may be integrated in several ways. In some cases, they may be seen as limited actions for some special cases that fall out of the mainstream programs, and require a careful personalised treatment, for which TSOs seem to be the perfect solution. This may be widely accepted by the left (as a way of expanding social action when it is not possible to do it directly by means of public programs) and the right that feels quite comfortable when expanding the role of TSOs and limiting direct public provision. In other cases, a widespread political consensus may not translate into actual priorities. The possibility of integrating the initiatives into two different (and sometimes opposed) narratives helps to establish consensus in many cases.

Aside from TSO initiatives and government predisposition towards allowing TSOs to develop their initiatives, pressure from the European Union (EU) and the central government have played a role. The pressure to establish action plans for social inclusion (Navarra set up its own plan long before it became compulsory) has eased the development of some initiatives (something has to be done in a specific field). On the other hand, the widespread discourse on “best practices” has encouraged the development of innovative initiatives, although they do not always make their way into the mainstream.

### **14.3 The Development of Neighbourhood Children's Services in Pamplona**

The group of associations we are analysing in Pamplona carry out social activities aimed at the prevention of social problems amongst children. It is the result of a movement of community associations that developed leisure activities for children and of their integration into the local government structure of social services, while retaining a peculiar way of working.

The first of these associations, Umetxea Sanduzelai, was created in 1990. They tried to keep a balance between their traditional "political" role of claiming for more and better services in their neighbourhood and a new role as service providers. They tried to create social and cultural projects, mostly aimed at children, pooling the resources of several neighbourhood groups. These projects became quite successful. By 1994, some people in the local social services begin to see that these associations are being more successful in this field than their own public prevention programs, which many people in the neighbourhoods thought quite useless.

The neighbourhood associations have been suspect for possible sympathies with radical left wing parties and radical Basque nationalism, which in the context of political violence and of a serious political cleavage between Basque nationalism and Navarrese regionalism certainly did not make relationships easy. Somewhat surprisingly, it was a centre-right regionalist councillor who decided to establish a long-term agreement between the municipality and the associations. Although there was a strong and politicised debate, in the end the councillor said that "they work fine and they are much less expensive than other providers".

Since 1995 in one neighbourhood and since 1997 in the other three, these associations are responsible for the so-called Community Preventive Action Service, a part of the local Family and Children Welfare Program. The typical activities of these programmes are leisure activities for different groups of children, including activity groups and playgrounds for the youngest, summer camps, neighbourhood festivals and networking amongst teenagers (2011). In some cases, it has meant not encouraging but supporting and accompanying actions like the squatting of an abandoned factory.

The future of the program has been uncertain in several occasions. The agreements established in 1995–1997 ended in 2013. The local council has favoured since the late 1990s private providers that fit better into an entrepreneurial model, with whom they agree specific outcomes and targets in a much more managerial way. The existing TSOs are much more flexible, they are able to mobilise much more local resources, but they do so by being less hierarchic and formal in their relation with the local government. After a complex process, the agreements have been renewed for several years.

### ***14.3.1 Conceptions and Ways of Addressing Users***

The traditional boundaries between practitioners and service users are somewhat blurred in these projects. There are certainly practitioners, who get paid for their job and are bound by a contract with the local council, but they are neighbours as well, and a local neighbourhood association hires them. Since they organise activities for the young and children, volunteer neighbours who take part in the activities carry out a large part of the actual implementation of the project (thus, they are service users and producers at the same time). And although some specific work is done to integrate children with special difficulties in the activities, there is no visible difference between them and other participants. “In our projects volunteers are as important as professional practitioners. Volunteers are not of the kind that shows up for an hour, but people who live here. (...) We promote the rights of the kids, so the kids are our bosses. They [the local government managers] don’t think in terms of rights, they told us don’t talk about rights, talk about problems and needs”.

The concept of neighbourhood is central to the work of these projects. Even if neighbourhoods may be relatively small, the feeling of belonging may be very strong, and it is very significant for newcomers (migrants) as well.

In Pamplona the question of locality is very important. Whoever hasn’t experienced it and doesn’t know a neighbourhood has a citywide outlook. That’s what happens to local councillors, (...) who don’t know about it and don’t understand it. If you take away the idea of neighbourhood from these kids you’ll kill them. For migrants, their only identity here is that of the neighbourhood. They’re neither from Pamplona nor from Spain, but they’re certainly from San Jorge [the name of one of the neighbourhoods].

The project works specifically with children with special needs both integrating them into activities and offering personal support and accompaniment. This role is different from the one played by ordinary child support services, which should be seen as different and separated. “[Control and support] should be separated, not only conceptually but in practice as well. Our space should be a space to look ahead and theirs as a space of protection if the children’s rights are being violated”.

### ***14.3.2 Organisation and Modes of Working***

The concept of working to promote the rights of children appears to be connected to the concept of autonomy of the projects, even if they belong to the local government. The projects consider themselves accountable first to the children and the neighbours.

[In our case] either the project is based on the concept of rights or we don’t do it. The question of our autonomy is basic, because without it we can’t carry them out, and our autonomy has practical effects, for it allows us a margin of flexibility and of method innovation that other projects don’t have. In our team sometimes each [of the three formally hired educators/social workers] takes responsibility for an area, but sometimes a few youngsters join us and its 5 or 6 of us managing the project. We can do that, but public employees can’t, and private providers can only do it at the expense of their workers.

### **14.3.3 Governance**

The triangle made up of the local council (responsible for the service as a whole), the associations (who have a legal agreement with the local council to carry it out) and the practitioners (who are employees of the association but are, in practice, integrated in the local social services organisation) allows for the aforementioned autonomy of the projects. Practitioners tend to speak the same language (with some nuances) as the local social services staff, but the leaders of the associations are local neighbours with a strong commitment to their neighbours and tend to be much more “straight to the point”.

The kind of associations we work in is special, and our bosses are our fellows in all its complexity. (...) There was one of those meetings with the local council after a cutback of 50 per cent of our activity budget. We were very angry, and we as a team wrote down a document against the cutback, and the director of social services said she had nothing to talk with us and that she'd only talk to the leaders of the association, to our bosses. OK, go ahead! Now she prefers to talk to us.

The relationship between the associations and the local council is quite conflictive, in spite of, or maybe because of, a close relationship as direct providers of services commissioned by the local council.

## **14.4 Conclusions**

The experience of the Neighbourhood Children's Services raises some interesting questions on the political and social conditions of innovative practices. One might tend to believe that innovations are more likely to appear and develop in contexts where there is a strong political commitment to promote innovation and where such commitment is more consistent, less affected by partisan quarrelling, and where actors such as governing bodies and innovation developers are open to cooperate in good terms. One might as well associate innovation with developed and knowledge-oriented environments. This case seems to support a rather different view. Some successful innovations (having lasted almost 20 years and a positive record of results is arguably success) may be possible in a context where innovation was not a priority and where political rivalries and mistrust (specifically between innovation developers and governing bodies) were, and still are, quite strong. This suggests that in some cases “disorganised” and conflictual environments may leave more gaps open to innovative initiatives than consistent ones. It certainly does not make the life and work of innovators easier, but it may give them more leeway. Innovations may be “easier” in such contexts when it is possible to integrate them into different, sometimes opposite, narratives. In our case, proximity to users, flexibility and user participation and coproduction could be put into a left wing innovative and participatory narrative, but also into a right wing traditional conservative narrative on community involvement.



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# Chapter 15

## Berlin: Kreuzberg Acts—Entrepreneurship in the District

Benjamin Ewert and Adalbert Evers

### 15.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at *Lok.a.Motion*, a social enterprise in the district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg in Berlin, and specifically one of its projects: *Kreuzberg Acts*.<sup>1</sup> The project stimulates entrepreneurship among job-seeking residents and supports local entrepreneurs. The intellectual framework in which Lok.a.Motion is embedded is made up of three discourses: on social entrepreneurship, urban and community development and the local economy. In practical terms, the *Kreuzberg Acts* project pursues a twofold approach towards social inclusion: on the one hand, jobseekers and local entrepreneurs receive comprehensive consultancy. For instance, participants are coached in how to apply for public subsidies for entrepreneurial activities or how to launch an effective marketing campaign. On the other hand, the project is striving for street credibility by building bridges to the local economy. From a funding perspective, the project bridges European, federal and local labour market programmes and thus breaks the usual patterns of vocational training. In order to illustrate and contextualize Lok.a.Motion and *Kreuzberg Acts*,<sup>2</sup> we will describe five dimensions: (1) the innovative aspects of the project, (2) the types of services and

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<sup>1</sup> The project ran from 2009 to 2012. Nevertheless, the chapter is written in present tense to allow for easy reading.

<sup>2</sup> Besides the analysis of grey literature (conceptional guidelines, internal documents, press releases) and newspaper articles, this chapter is based on two expert interviews with the managers of Lok.a.Motion and *Kreuzberg Acts* and one interview with a female entrepreneur—an experienced user of the project. The interviews were carried out in August 2012 and transcribed by the author.

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the way of addressing users, (3) Lok.a.Motion's internal organization and modes of working, (4) the embeddedness of the project in the local welfare system and (5) to conclude, the general lessons to be learnt from the innovation.

## 15.2 *Kreuzberg Acts: The Innovation*

Innovation results in the intertwining of economic and social concerns by linking two issues that are usually separated: on the one hand, individual consultancy and guidance for entrepreneurs seeking to strengthen their businesses; on the other hand, a concern with community revitalization by restoring confidence among local stakeholders. *Kreuzberg Acts* thus combines approaches that have so far been pursued in parallel, that is, in the sectors of employment and urban development.

Originally founded as a nonprofit organization for youth welfare and the local economy, the provider of the project, Lok.a.Motion, recast its organizational form by itself becoming a social enterprise (see for an overview Nyssens 2006; Ridley-Duff and Bull 2011) that generated a culture of mutual trust among relevant stakeholders in the district. In practice, as stated by Ms. Kiczka-Halit, the manager of Lok.a.Motion, "wrap-around activities" such as networking, lobbying and public relations work help to foster sustainable cooperation and partnerships between local authorities, businesses and civil society actors (see for an overview Blokland and Savage 2008). As an intersection between European and federal (vertical) programmes for promoting self-employment and local (horizontal) approaches that promote urban development, Lok.a.Motion opens up new opportunities for supporting jobseekers and struggling entrepreneurs by devising small-scale business ideas that are compatible with the local social ecology. Hence, the social enterprise's work is characterized by the tailor-made bundling of resources, a commitment to urban renewal and a unique understanding of the nature of local governance. Dedicated to people's *economic* and *social* inclusion, Lok.a.Motion wants to make a difference in a district that is characterized by a challenging degree of diversity and inequality. Respective needs are met through networked, continually refined, schemes that are carefully adopted to the specific character of the local economy.

### 15.2.1 *Types of Services and Ways of Addressing Users*

According to the conceptual guideline of *Kreuzberg Acts*, social inclusion is thought of as something that is present in a local environment and depends strongly on the range of people's opportunities to realize their entrepreneurial potential. As such, service offers are twofold: On the one hand, people are encouraged in their decision to become self-employed by the provision of support to improve their skills as entrepreneurs before applying for a start-up financing grant. On the other hand, individual consultancy and coaching is accompanied by collective support for the

local community of existing entrepreneurs who are struggling to stabilize their businesses. The collective dimension of the project includes developing common marketing campaigns, facilitating networking and boosting joint ventures between local businesses. “We not only help individual local entrepreneurs to make the best of their potential, but we also feel responsible for the long-term development of the district’s local economy”, explained the project manager.

The project has reinforced local social inclusion in various ways. First of all, stabilizing and building up local business helps people to keep in the world of work and to get them *off the dole*. However, project leaders apply a broader notion of social inclusion, meaning more than just being independent of social assistance. Social inclusion is understood as an open process that is not divided into single stages consisting merely of on-the-job training. Instead, two aspects are intertwined: qualifying and strengthening of people as local entrepreneurs and helping to bring about a vivid local community that people belong to and can participate in easily (Blokland and Nast 2014). Perceiving project users as social beings embedded within a local context calls for an approach that is sensitive to people’s multiple ties and requires complex ways of addressing users. For instance, one entrepreneur, a 25-year-old owner of an American diner restaurant, reported that she had been visited continuously by a consultant of *Kreuzberg Acts* who addressed her from the beginning as a member of the local community of entrepreneurs—a dimension of belonging she had not been aware of previously. After strengthening the “we-feeling” through, for example, regular get-togethers of local entrepreneurs and/or joint ventures (e.g. exhibitions from local artists in shops and bistro cafés), project users have been addressed in other identities too. First of all, as local entrepreneurs, they have been challenged to adapt their businesses to the local environment in a sustainable way. This requires not only a solid entrepreneurial spirit—namely, “being fully convinced of their own business idea and ready to work on it seven days a week for at least 14 hours”, as one entrepreneur user put it—but also a sense of the neighbourhood where the start-up should succeed. In order to develop the latter, project leaders organized several workshops where participants mapped the diversity of the local economy, identified vacancies, analyzed needs and consumer preferences and were trained as experts for the respective location.

Moreover, *Kreuzberg Acts* addresses project users both as citizens with social and economic rights, who are entitled to subsidies or start-up grants from the federal state or the European Union, and as active citizens, who can co-shape the development of the urban space in which they live and work. On the one hand, this means consulting entrepreneurs about existing financial support schemes, legal rights and duties. On the other hand, project leaders activate their clientele as active community members, focusing on the social and political processes that may affect their economic success as (future) entrepreneurs. In short, due to strong local references, *Kreuzberg Acts* addresses entrepreneurs as citizens and community members within the local economy. In all these roles, project participants learn not only that their entrepreneurial success depends on their individual competences and on sufficient incubation time for their business idea but also that it is inseparably linked to the overall development of the local area.

### 15.2.2 *Internal Organization and Modes of Working*

*Kreuzberg Acts* operates in three neighbourhoods that have special development needs. All of them belong to the *neighbourhood management* programme that combines spatial and urban planning with sectorial policy interventions. The project is funded by a federal programme of the European Social Fund (ESF) called *Education, Economy and Labour in the Neighbourhood*, which aims at innovative interventions in managed neighbourhoods. *Kreuzberg Acts* is one of several projects organized by Lok.a.Motion, an organization that operates at the crossroads between the European and federal labour market programmes and the local level. In recent years, Lok.a.Motion has run four major projects and has initiated several forms of cooperation with local stakeholders. Pursuing an increasingly entrepreneurial approach, Lok.a.Motion now has the legal status of a nonprofit limited liability company. Its managers apply their conviction that labour market policies have to combine social and economic aspects to the development of their own organization. Gradually, a project-orientated consultancy has emerged that now comprises a core of eight to ten permanent employees and a wider pool of contract-based freelancers, who are engaged when their services are required.

With respect to internal working relations, Lok.a.Motion represents a sharp contrast to the traditional public administration, in which the number of staff is stable and jobs are socially protected. The enterprise thus promotes a working culture that can withstand financial uncertainties and changing situations concerning project tenders in an unstable environment. Having few permanent staff enables Lok.a.Motion to decide whether a certain project actually suits its key professional principle: that any engagement must pursue the development of the social environment where it takes place. The flip side of this high degree of flexibility is that Lok.a.Motion is not a good employer in traditional terms. The social enterprise relies on insecure, precarious jobs. “Everybody who works for us knows that her/his job is limited but could be extended through the approval of future projects”, states Ms. Kiczka-Halit, the manager of Lok.a.Motion.

### 15.2.3 *Embeddedness of the Project in the Local Welfare System*

*Kreuzberg Acts* is a hybrid in the local welfare system, being both embedded and disembedded at once. This ambiguity is mirrored in the project’s relations to the job centre and local authorities, the two most important welfare providers at local level. Although both institutions acknowledge the work of the project, *Kreuzberg Acts* is perceived mainly as an *ad-hoc consultant* for vocational training while lacking the status as an *ordinary* service provider with regular funding. As a result, *Kreuzberg Acts* fills a rather uncertain intermediate position that requires a cooperative manner and a trust-generating relationship with local stakeholders.

However, this approach has its limits due to the constant need for “co-competition”—a term coined by Ray Noorda, founder of a software company, for the business sector (Brandenburger and Nalebuff 1996, pp. 4–5)—which refers to both a *co-operative* and *competitive* relationship with other projects. On the one hand, social enterprises such as Lok.a.Motion have to defend their project designs and modes of working against the theft of innovative ideas (a danger that calls for a patent law for innovative concepts). On the other hand, close cooperation and regular knowledge exchange with similar projects is a precondition to having a stake in the local welfare system. Nonetheless, fruitful cooperation with competitors *and* partners is still possible, as demonstrated by common workshops for developing integrated approaches to socio-spatial challenges, for example.

In comparison to the working culture of established welfare institutions, the way of addressing users is what differentiates *Kreuzberg Acts* the most. This is a world away from the job centre approach of integrating people. Here, the project’s process-orientated approach, which involves encouraging people to realize their entrepreneurial potential in a gentle way, coincides with the job centre’s perspective based on the verdict of employability. “There is no lobby for the unemployed founding a start-up as an aspect of social reintegration”, says the manager of Lok.a.Motion, who misses sufficient opportunities and time for people to develop their own ideas. Instead, the job centre, in its rush to get people into employment, fears that the self-employed, especially when starting up, will become still more dependent on transfer payments and therefore will not disappear from the unemployment statistics.

Measured in terms of cooperation with local and state authorities, Lok.a.Motion is a fairly well-embedded partner. Within the past ten years, Lok.a.Motion took part continuously in a range of local programmes that dealt with the support of entrepreneurship and raised hopes for regular financing. However, the fundamental federal law for *start-up financing*, which applies to all the relevant programmes, has been reformed several times. As a result, the route to self-employment became more complicated. Instead of being “pushed” into self-employment schemes, applicants must nowadays be “pulled”, receiving grants after a complex procedure to prove that they cannot find a “normal job” as an employee and that they have sufficient entrepreneurial skills to risk self-employment. Based on these changes, the Berlin Senate and district authorities reduced their financial commitment to imposing programmes for future entrepreneurs. “We are noticing a backwards development”, says Ms. Kiczka-Halit, adding that especially at the Senate level, the term *entrepreneur* is used exclusively for high potentials that should build up the city’s much-vaunted creative economy. This kind of risk-averse attitude is typical of the Berlin authorities, which allow innovators on the ground very little leeway for experimentation but are only prepared to commit if social investments are absolutely *sure* to pay off. For instance, Lok.a.Motion’s proposal for providing start-ups with a so-called “experimental budget” that may help them to build up operating business structures was rejected by district authorities.

Despite these shortcomings in terms of institutional support, Lok.a.Motion has developed strategies for using the local welfare system for its own goals. In this respect, gaining *change agents* for certain endeavours has proved a promising ap-

proach. Convincing the district mayor or the manager of the job centre of a specific project, for example, has turned out to be more successful than attempting to break down routine patterns of vocational training all at once. Thus, as Ms. Kiczka-Halit puts it, “building up networks of open-minded supporters” is a precondition for transforming an inventive approach into an innovation.

### 15.3 Conclusion

Is the innovative approach of *Kreuzberg Acts* transferrable to or replicable in other welfare systems? Basically, the project is dedicated to improving labour market perspectives for local citizens facing socio-economic change in their neighbourhoods. However, the way that the project responds to this challenge is not bound to a particular location. Three general lessons can be learnt from the project:

First, social and economic concerns need to be bridged by an integrated approach that is adapted carefully to a manageable area. Hence, a tight bundling of local key issues, such as urban development, unemployment and citizen participation, is necessary in order to arrive at coherent solutions.

Second, innovators have to cross the divide between enabling individual project participants on the one hand and a collective commitment to community work on the other hand. As such, investments in wrap-around-activities beyond the core of the project and efforts to gain strategic partners (who may further disseminate the innovation) will pay off in the long term.

Third, people’s overall benefit from an innovative project seems more sustainable if they are addressed as full persons with multiple identities and numerous ties within a social environment. Thus, entrepreneurs should also be strengthened as embedded citizens (*civic entrepreneurs*) and community members by locally appropriate support measures.

Finally, a critical reflection is needed on the overall status of *social* innovations. In contrast to socio-technological innovations (e.g. car-sharing) or creative start-ups (e.g. in the fields of design and lifestyle), piecemeal innovations such as *Kreuzberg Acts* seem to have less sex appeal. Aiming at social cohesion and community renewal in the first place, social projects have difficulty garnering sufficient support—especially at a time when public policy is focusing on stimulating all kinds of entrepreneurialism, purely and simply.

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# Chapter 16

## Milan: “We Help You to Help Yourself”—The Project of the Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano

Stefania Sabatinelli and Giuliana Costa

### 16.1 Milan and the Context of Innovation in Welfare Policies

Milan is the economic and financial capital of Italy, as well as one of the most dynamic cities in the country. A shift to tertiary and advanced tertiary sectors has been the main characteristic of the city’s economy in recent decades. Nevertheless, the financial and economic crisis that first erupted in 2008 and is still on-going in Italy hit the city rather hard, with an increase in unemployment, the use of short-time work schedules, as well as the use of atypical freelance and fixed-term contracts instead of permanent ones. From the political point of view, the city underwent a radical change in 2011: after 20 years of right-wing local governments, the municipal elections were won by Giuliano Pisapia and his centre-leftist coalition, thanks to a campaign focused on the ideas of change, transparency and citizens’ participation. Since then, the new administration’s action has been somewhat restricted by severe budget constraints due to the concurrence of the following factors: the increase in social demands related to the economic crisis; the introduction of austerity measures, with cuts in transfers from the national government to local authorities; and the negative consequences of risky financial investments made by the previous administration (Costa and Sabatinelli 2012).

Nevertheless, the administration, along with other local stakeholders, has sought to cope with emerging needs by pledging that “nobody will be left behind” and devolving resources to innovate its welfare system. It should be borne in mind that, thanks to ample opportunities for social inclusion through employment, Milan has long had a reputation for social solidarity. A deep-rooted legacy with mediaeval

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(religious) origins defines “Milanese citizenship” as a status that anybody coming to the city may obtain by contributing to its welfare through work. This distinctive feature has been reinterpreted in the economic crisis. In 2010, during the previous administration, an anti-crisis fund was put in place for a wide variety of support actions, but due to very stringent access criteria, it was practically never used. Since 2012–2013, the new administration has changed the access criteria and pluralised its destination. Moreover, given the insufficiency of public resources with which to tackle the increase in economic needs, nonpublic actors have created solidarity funds that distribute forms of support, monetary and in kind, to individuals and families hit by the recession. These funds are managed rather independently from the municipal administration. For example, The Catholic Archbishop and Curia have created a solidarity fund that pays modest benefits to individuals and families signalled by municipal social services which cannot help them because they are ineligible for municipal income support, which is severely limited by budgetary constraints.

The case of social innovation presented here refers to the recently instituted *Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano* (Milan Welfare Foundation, FWA). Created on an anti-crisis logic and perspective, the FWA’s action combines traditional elements of Welfare Ambrosiano<sup>1</sup> with new ones in order to help people overcome their economic and social difficulties or alleviate them. Thanks to a complex alliance among diverse stakeholders, the Foundation addresses uncoped needs by promoting guarantee funds to facilitate access to credit via the micro-credit instrument (Yunus 1998). This is its core activity at present, and it constitutes a new kind of support in the local welfare system.

## 16.2 Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano: Basic Features

The Fondazione<sup>2</sup> Welfare Ambrosiano is a quite new agency in Milan’s welfare system. It was created through the efforts of Milanese trade unions, which had accumulated 6 million € during the 1970s from collective bargaining and allocated this capital to the city for the implementation of social development programmes. The FWA was set up by a heterogeneous group of stakeholders: the Municipality of Milan; the Province of Milan; the Milan Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture and the three main trade unions (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, CGIL, Camera del Lavoro Metropolitana; Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori, CISL, Unione Sindacale Territoriale di Milano and Unione Italiana del Lavoro, UIL Milano e Lombardia). After being announced in 2007 by the former mayor of Milan and created in 2009, the foundation began its activities only in 2011 under the new municipal administration. The long gestation was due

<sup>1</sup> The expression refers to the distinctive welfare system of Milan. “Ambrosiano” is synonymous for “Milanese”, which stems from the name of the city’s patron saint, Ambrogio.

<sup>2</sup> A foundation is a body made up of capital used to pursue a specific goal, either directly, through its organisation, or indirectly, by financing other subjects that pursue the same goal.

to “technical difficulties” related to the possibility of issuing loans to citizens, for which it was necessary to reach agreements with banks that decided to join the project (Percorsi di secondo welfare 2011). The FWA pursued an agreement with the National Association of Banks, but the attempt was unsuccessful.

Two thirds of the available budget is allocated to innovative local welfare initiatives designed and developed jointly by the members of the Foundation and other third-sector bodies, such as Caritas Ambrosiana and Fondazione Cariplo, a large bank foundation. The FWA’s mission is to support individuals and families that either live or work in Milan or want to start a business within the city’s administrative boundaries, regardless of their place of origin and their previous or current type of work contract, and that are in temporary need for various reasons (job loss, illness, etc.). They may be either persons who are not protected by existing, category-based social protection measures, and are therefore exposed to new forms of social exclusion, or persons or families that are not in disadvantaged conditions but are at risk—due to temporary and unexpected difficulties—of falling into real poverty. The aim, therefore, is not to substitute for the existing institutions assisting long-term situations of need (such as long-term unemployment); rather, the aim is to intercept the short-term risks of workers or jobless people with exceptional economic problems that often have serious long-lasting negative effects for the entire household. For instance, families with budget problems may make decisions, such as interruption of the children’s university education, which they would not make in other circumstances and which may affect the future of family members in the long run, since they are hard to catch up later.

The targets of the foundation’s measures are therefore all persons living or working in Milan with economic problems that make it difficult for them to make ends meet. The definition of the household is flexible: for instance, it disregards whether the applicants are married, separated or cohabitating. This reflects the secular orientation of the foundation and its members, which distinguishes it from other bodies, especially confessional ones, acting in the area. Two fundamental features of the foundation’s action are an *active approach* and *rotation in the use of funds*. The *active approach* is reflected in its slogan: “We help you to help yourself”, which underlines that recipients must commit themselves to projecting their own pathway in solving their problems. *Rotation in use of the funds* is obtained—as we shall see—by privileging financing tools such as micro-credit, as opposed to nonrepayable loans; this policy is specifically due to the intent of the trade unions involved to create economic capital for the city that will last in time.

### **16.3 The Core Activity: Micro-credit Guarantees, a New Welfare Instrument**

The first goal of the foundation is to build instruments to counter one of the main negative effects of the present financial and economic crisis, that is, the credit crunch, which prevents—more than ever before—many individuals with few re-

sources from accessing bank loans however deserving their need and/or feasible their projects may be. The FWA favours access to micro-credit by so-called non-bankable persons, that is, ones with little or no chance of accessing bank credit because of a lack of guarantees and/or past records as “bad payers”.

Two basic types of micro-credit are foreseen:

- “Social credit”, reserved for persons who—especially, but not only because of the crisis—cannot afford expenses such as the payment of university fees for their children or unexpected healthcare costs
- Credit for self-employment, in order to overcome unemployment or underemployment or severe job precariousness

The micro-credit is accessed through a network of selected local bodies operating as “front desks”, which intercept needs. The idea is not to create new structures or offices besides the existing ones, but rather to work with organisations already dealing with poverty and vulnerability in the city so that they become the “operational branches” of the FWA. These bodies are asked to stand “moral surety” for the families that they introduce to the foundation. They carry out a first screening of applicants and may direct them to other welfare agencies (managed by public or third-sector bodies) that may be more appropriate for their case. If the case appears to have a profile that fulfils the requirements for access to micro-credit, a second interview is organised with an expert of the Association of Bank Volunteers for Social Initiatives (Volontari Bancari per le Iniziative nel Sociale, Vo.b.i.s.). During this interview, an analysis of needs and/or the project is carried out, a feasibility study is formulated, and a business plan is outlined in the case of enterprise development. If the person is accepted into the microcredit scheme, moral and bureaucratic support is provided throughout the project’s development.

The sums loaned range between 2,000 and 20,000 € per applicant. On the basis of the preliminary inquiry, the front desk submits the application to a commission of the FWA, which may or may not approve the project. If the project is approved, the FWA issues a guarantee of 80% of the capital. With this guarantee, applicants can apply for credit at one of the banks that have signed the agreement with the foundation,<sup>3</sup> which in principle should process the application within 30 days and—if it is approved—allocate the money. The aim of FWA at this stage is to ensure that the banks have no reason to refuse the credit request.

The loan is granted essentially on the basis of a trust relationship. The interest rates are much lower than the average bank rates, and they are differentiated by type of credit: 4% for social credit (against an average rate for credit to persons of 11.2% set by *Banca d’Italia*) and 6.5% for self-employment credit (against an average rate of 10.2% for credit to firms). The repayment terms are such that they should be sustainable by all borrowers: during the first year, only interest is repaid; capital repayment begins after the first 12 months and can be spread over up to 6 years. In the case of insolvency, the foundation covers up to 80% of the capital. This level

<sup>3</sup> Banca Intesa Sanpaolo, Banca Popolare di Milano, Banca Popolare Commercio Industria and Permico (an operator specialised in micro-credit and a partner of the FWA).

will soon be changed to 75% because new laws have imposed a maximum level on guarantee percentages.

According to the analysis of the applications received in the first 2 years of the programme, between October 2011 and December 2013, a total of 881 applications were officially registered, 71% of them for social credit and 29% for self-employment (Bramanti and Spina 2013). About 347 credits were issued, representing 40% of total applications (85% for social credit and 15% for self-employment ones) for a total of 2,271,900 €. More than 50% received a negative evaluation by the FWA’s technical committee, because of unfulfilled requirements or excessive indebtedness (Mallone 2012).

Three quarters of applicants were resident in the municipality of Milan; they were rather balanced by gender (56% men and 44% women in the overall period), but diversified by age: 33% were aged 41–50; 26% 31–40; 22% 51–60; while those aged over 60 represented only 6% of applicants in 2012 (Bramanti and Spina 2012). Applications by young unemployed persons living with their parents were generally refused because such applicants did not match the profile of beneficiaries that could overcome a temporary difficulty with the FWA’s help.

Among social credit applications, the main reasons for them were housing expenses, debt discharge or reduction, and family needs, followed by training expenses, healthcare expenses and mortgage loans. Indebtedness of the household was responsible for most of the applicants’ situations, together with job loss by one of the family members, or the presence of atypical contracts (Mallone 2012). Social credit was granted to migrants in 47% of cases, and to Italians in the remaining 53%. The amounts awarded were rather modest: 60% of applications for social credit were in the lowest amount range, between 2000 and 5000 €, even if the average sum was 5625.93 € (Bramanti and Spina 2013).

Applications for self-employment credit concerned start-up projects in half of the cases; in the other half, they were made because of economic difficulties or the need of already-existing businesses to purchase goods or services. The amounts paid were higher than in the case of social credit: 43% of self-employment applications were for between 17,100 and 20,000 €, but the average sum paid was 15,768.52 €. Most beneficiaries of this kind of credit were Italians (69%). The selection for self-employment micro-credit is rather strict: around 30% of applications were accepted in 2011–2012 (Mallone 2012), and less than this percentage thereafter. Most start-ups are in the personal services sector.

According to the most recent information on repayments, the vast majority of beneficiaries of micro-credit loans are repaying their debts without problems after the first 12 months. Only a few of them are in arrears or already in litigation. An interesting fact is that 60% of recipients are employees, which shows the extent to which the FWA is working to fill the gaps in the existing welfare system. In 2013, the number of micro-credit recipients decreased markedly, partly because the programme had no longer been advertised since its launch.

## 16.4 New Frontiers: FWA as an Innovator in the Local Welfare System

The FWA case shows that social innovation can stem from the need to use available resources differently, and that in times of hardship, it is all the more important to continue the commitment to welfare issues and not abdicate it because of the lack of resources. The crucial factor has been the endeavour to implement the circular use of available capital to enhance the recipients' participation and empowerment as they are helped to overcome a transitory difficult moment by also mobilising their own resources and being responsible for their personal project.

Created as an anti-crisis initiative, the FWA is currently envisaging its role also beyond the end of the recession. New projects are in progress. A programme that aims to anticipate the payment of unemployment benefits and short-time work schemes to concerned workers has recently been started because the bureaucratic procedures generally last several months before the benefits are effectively paid.<sup>4</sup> The FWA and the partner banks will then be repaid by the National Social Security Institute (Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale, INPS), thus maintaining the rotation of resources approach. The FWA has instituted a separate guarantee fund (2 million €) for this purpose, and between September and January 2013, it received more than 450 applications for cash advances.

Another recent project involves support by means of long-term “honour loans” to specific students and their families. At present, the beneficiaries are students at the “Accademia Teatro la Scala” of Milan, who must study for many years before being able to work and earn a living. Other projects in progress aim at revising and updating—after a proposal by the trade unions—the nineteenth-century tradition of the *società di mutuo soccorso* (friendly societies),<sup>5</sup> the purpose being to fill the gaps in category-based social protection as it has evolved in Italy. The intention is to develop the first open (not category-based) health fund to cover targets and needs not addressed by the existing National Health System.<sup>6</sup> Based on a prevention philosophy, the programme will furnish dental assessment for children, cancer screening for women and/or different forms of home care for older adults. The newest project run by FWA (since 2015) is “Abitare Sociale”, an agency whose aim is to find affordable housing solutions in the private market for those who are not eligible for public housing, supporting both tenants and homeowners with guarantees for arrears and advice in the application of a specific contract called “canone concordato” (Lodi Rizzini 2015).

In 2013, a new microcredit scheme was launched by the FWA jointly with the Milan municipality, which decided to dedicate a specific guarantee fund (800,000 €)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.fwamilano.org/index.phtml?Id\\_VMMenu=1010](http://www.fwamilano.org/index.phtml?Id_VMMenu=1010). Accessed 13 April 2015.

<sup>5</sup> A famous case based in Milan was the Friendly Society of Railway Workers of Northern Italy, now named “Cesare Pozzo”, after one of the first and most influential presidents of the association.

<sup>6</sup> In Italy, health protection has been universalistic since 1978, when the National Health System was created. Some corporatist funds continued to exist in parallel, granting a wider coverage only to their members.

to potential young entrepreneurs (aged under 35) who are not fully bankable. The maximum loan will be higher than that of the micro-credit scheme illustrated above: 25,000 €. Given that the selection for this kind of credit has been quite hard these 2 years, a special focus on the youngest applicants has been considered a strategic goal for local actors. The FWA and its network are involved because of their experience and skills in managing micro-credit projects. Those selected will benefit from professional consultancy and monitoring from FWA.

To conclude, it should be stressed that supporting access to micro-credit can prove to be a good solution only for some applicants, and it is not appropriate for all of them (Moiso 2012). Applicants should demonstrate that they are committed to their projects and not being too vulnerable to assume relatively high indebtedness risks. The FWA is working to increase life chances of some groups and even if the numbers are still rather low, it is innovating the local welfare system in order to enlarge its scope and capacity to intercept grey areas of needs. The strength of the FWA’s activity is that it does not substitute for existing forms of protection but instead attempts to fill the gaps in the existing welfare system for specific targets with well-timed interventions.

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# Chapter 17

## Stockholm: Innovative Ways of Supporting Children of Single (Lone) Mothers

Marie Nordfeldt, Ola Segnestam Larsson and Anna Carrigan

### 17.1 Introduction

Innovation within the field of social welfare is a recently awoken interest in the Swedish context. Innovations have been, and are still, very much related to the launching of new products, inventions and technical development. Welfare development has, by tradition, not been considered as innovative (Rønning et al. 2013). Innovation has also mainly been related to the private—for-profit—sector and, since the development of the welfare state in the mid-1900s, the field of welfare in Sweden has been dominated by services produced by the public sector. However, there is awakening political interest in social innovations and social investments, both at national and local levels. This development is taking place in a changing welfare context with structural changes in terms of deregulation and privatisation. These changes have opened up opportunities for alternative producers of welfare services (see e.g. Svedberg and Olsson 2010). Moreover, with strained budgets and unsolved social problems, local and central governments are looking to the for-profit and the non-profit sectors for innovations and entrepreneurial initiatives (Carrigan and Nordfeldt 2013, WP5).

In this chapter, we describe an innovative project developed within a civil society organisation named *Fryshuset*. The local context for this innovation is the city of Stockholm in Sweden. Stockholm can be described as a growing city with a strong labour market of, for example, advanced businesses and information and communications technology (ICT). (OECD 2006). Compared with the rest of the country,

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Stockholm stands out as having the highest rates of employment and highest activity rate and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (Hermelin 2011).

On the other hand, Stockholm is struggling with many problems similar to other large cities in Europe, for example, housing shortage, homelessness, segregation and social exclusion. A fast growing population puts enormous pressure on the housing market, and the construction of new housing has not kept pace with this demand, which has led to a severe housing shortage in the whole Stockholm region (Länsstyrelsen 2012; Boverket 2012).

The high employment rate does not apply to the whole population. Unemployment rates for young people are substantially higher than for the older groups, and young adults are increasingly employed on temporary contracts. This is also the case for inhabitants born abroad and especially for migrants from countries outside the European Union/European Free Trade Association (EU/EFTA; Nordfeldt 2012, WP3). Among the young unemployed, there is a group at risk of long-term exclusion from the labour market and consequently at risk of deprivation and problematic living conditions (Angelin 2010). This is the group of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). The NEET group is, in comparison to many other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, relatively small in Sweden. However, the group is still significant and over-represented in certain areas in the city of Stockholm (Arbetsförmedlingen 2013). These young people, at the risk of social exclusion, are a main target group for the organisation *Fryshuset* that will be further described below.

### **Diversity and Choice—Catchwords in the Local Political Debate**

Deregulation and legislation on competitive procurement (LOU), ideas of “user choice” and a new legislation—the Law on Freedom of Choice (Lagen om valfrihet, LOV)—have made it possible for municipalities to engage alternative service providers in social welfare. In Stockholm, the governing right-wing majority, which was in power between 2006 and 2014, pursued a strong policy of marketisation and privatisation.

This development could serve as a window of opportunities for innovation (cf. Ahrne and Papakostas 2002). Still, there does not seem to be any outspoken interest in ideas of social innovation among politicians and other local stakeholders in Stockholm. This lack of interest may appear somewhat contradictory considering the strong emphasis on diversity and consumer choice described above. So far, this has primarily been implemented by private businesses (and, to a more limited degree, civil society organisations), being involved within the field of health care, social services (primarily within elderly care) and the housing market (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013, WP4).

In the local political debate, there seems to be agreement across the political scale regarding the role of civil society in local welfare, that is, as long as the discussion does not comprise civil society actors in relation to privatisation of social welfare. The issue of alternative actors producing welfare services is subject to political disagreements that follow the traditional political lines with, for example, political parties on the right side of the spectrum for alternative organisations, such as private

and civil society organisations, while the political parties on the left prefer publically funded and publically produced welfare services (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013, WP4). Between the local government and civil society organisations (CSOs) working in the field of social welfare, a “compact” has been formulated and agreed upon. The aim of the compact is to serve as a platform for dialogue and cooperation between the local authorities and CSOs. There are pronounced expectations on the civil society to play an active part in the renewal of social welfare (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). There seems thus to be some ambivalence inherent in this interest when, at the same time, the procurement of services from CSOs are very limited compared to private businesses.

## 17.2 Children of Single (Lone) Mothers (Barn till Ensamma Mammor)

The project, Children of Single (Lone) Mothers, was developed as an activity within in the frame of the foundation Fryshuset, headed by the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). When Fryshuset started in Stockholm in 1984, it was located in a former cold storage building (hence the name Fryshuset, meaning “cold storage” in Swedish). The creation of the organisation can be seen as a response to young people’s needs.

During its lifetime, Fryshuset has become a well-known and entrepreneurial organisation with a wide range of different activities. Today, Fryshuset runs schools and social programs as well as vocational training and seminars and conferences. Further, it also runs courses in theatre, music, sport, hosting events, concerts, parties and discotheques. Public funding covers around 5% of the activities, and the rest is financed by a mixture of grants, endowments and fees for services such as educational and social programs (fees that are not paid by young people or individual clients but by cooperational partners and government agencies). Fryshuset also runs activities in Malmö and Gothenburg. Throughout its lifetime, Fryshuset has worked to find new and innovative solutions to social youth issues and problems. Within the organisation, new projects have constantly been started. Fryshuset also cooperates with a range of public and private actors (Engel et al. [forthcoming](#)).

Since 2007, Fryshuset has run a project addressed at children of single mothers in Stockholm. Since then, this project has also been started in Malmö and in Gothenburg. The focus for this activity is the children, but indirectly the activity also affects the mothers. And, as a part of this activity, Fryshuset offers parent education and different kinds of lectures for the mothers. The aim is to support and strengthen children that are living with a single mother in economically vulnerable circumstances. Fryshuset describes the support as being provided from a health perspective with focus on the children’s and the mothers’ everyday situation and especially wellbeing. This concept is based on Aaron Antonovsky’s thinking of *saluto genesis* and the importance for the individual of a *sense of coherence* (see Antonovsky 1987).

It can be argued that this activity has been developed in a clearing (see Segnestam Larsson et al., Chap. 6) identified by Fryshuset in the social landscape, including support for single mothers and their children. The approach on health and empowerment offers a complementary activity to social services based on legislation and more acute problem-solving. The focus on both children and their mothers is also unique to this project.

### **17.2.1 Internal Characteristics**

The goal of the project is to provide positive childhood memories to children living in vulnerable situations of different kinds—economically, socially or being victims of abuse. This is based on a belief in all children’s right to play, laugh and to be seen. A ground for this work is the Children’s Convention (UN 1989). Ultimately, the objective is to enhance the children’s sense of self-esteem and confidence.

In practice, three types of activities are offered to single mothers and their children. The first is the *monthly meetings*. On normal occasions, the participation number in a meeting is around 100 persons. At the monthly meetings, mothers and children form separate groups. The group of mothers can, for example, participate in lectures concerning aspects of health, during which they will also have time to network and support one another. Meanwhile, the group of children is divided according to age and take part in sports, arts or music workshops together with volunteers—so called “amigos”—in the project (interview).

The fundamental idea behind these monthly meetings is that children living in situations of vulnerability need to have somewhere where they can enjoy themselves and laugh without thinking about, and taking responsibility for, the family, which is not uncommon that they do. In the project, the children can try out different activities, for example, different kinds of sports. The project provides suggestions on creative activities that are not costly. The ultimate idea of the project is joy, says the project leader, “we are good at joy” (interview). She continues explaining that the project wants to give these children positive childhood memories. “The children can come here and know that they don’t have to look after their mothers while they’re here, which is something that the staff experience a lot”. According to her, children behave according to their mothers’ state of mind and do not allow themselves to feel happy. At the project, it works the other way around as well; single mothers with total responsibility for their children can take a “break” or time to just sit and relax for a while, knowing that the child is having a great time in the other room (interview).

The second activity offered by the project is called “activities”. The idea with these activities is to take the whole group, mothers and children together, to do something out of the ordinary. This can be visits to museums, a public swimming pool, a fun park or a zoo. An example in Stockholm is a visit in the summertime to a large zoo about 3 h away from the city. Six filled buses went from Fryshuset to the zoo at the same time. The visit took some effort to organise: “We have become

experts at arranging events” the project leader states. The main idea behind these activities is to build up and support the relationship between mother and child. The project leader argues that in the child’s view these activities are things their mothers take them to do, without having to think about the cost, and this is a way to build up the role of the mother in the eyes of the child. In these activities also, the children can see their mothers laugh and have a good time. This part of the project is costly and the three people employed in the project have worked out a special way of fundraising. The staff offer lectures to companies and invite them to co-organise these events with them. In that way, the companies will experience how the funds have been used and it can create some added value for the companies (interview).

The third activity at Children of Single (Lone) Mothers is called the “boomerang meetings”. This is a part of the project that has been going through many changes and had, by the time of the study, reached a form that the project staff was very pleased with. At the beginning of the project, the staff received many calls from mothers having all kinds of problems. These could be related to legal issues of custody matters, or health, or questions about how the social services function and act, and often these were questions that the three project leaders did not have the competence to answer. This resulted in an idea to arrange a fair twice a year where they invited experts from different fields and institutions to come and give personal counselling to the mothers. For many of the mothers, this meeting can be a first step to establishing a relationship with the appropriate institution. During these and all meetings, the project invites volunteers. The project leader explains that she and her two colleagues could not possibly meet all the needs and answer all the questions of the participants. The volunteers are called “fellow human beings” in the project and they are there to support the mothers during meetings (interview). Different kinds of advice are also given on the Internet. Persons can pose questions on the project’s webpage.

Beside these activities, the staff does a lot of work “behind the scenes”. They give lectures and try to represent and make visible the group of children of single mothers. “There is much to be done to make people recognize the problems of these children”, the project leader states (interview). The special method of fundraising, mentioned above is also a way to make more actors recognise this group. The project has also recently initiated cooperation with a university college in the Stockholm area, where they give lectures to university students who are studying to become teachers. Here, the project leader sees a good opportunity for influencing the general view of this group of children (interview).

The mothers that participate in the activities become members (free of charge) of the activity. At the time of the case study, there were just over 1000 members in Stockholm. Only single mothers can attend. The reason for this is that there are mothers among the participants who live with a protected identity and risk feeling threatened if men participate in the activities.

At the time of the study, three persons were working in the project. This staff had developed skills as “event experts” and they organise most of the target group’s activities. Beside a grant from the local government, the staff needs to raise funds and apply for allowances, from, for example, different kinds of foundations. Volunteers

were engaged in the project as so-called “amigos”, who attend to the children, and “fellow humans”, who support the mothers. Fundraising and advocacy are important responsibilities taken on by the project staff, and both responsibilities seem to fertilise the other.

### ***17.2.2 Dealing with Local Context***

There are elements of advocacy in this project. There is an ambition to raise attention to the issue of child poverty and the situation for unemployed or low-income single mothers. The staff at Fryshuset implements this in different ways, for example, by cooperation with a university college and by giving lectures and seminars to different stakeholders, including private companies and politicians.

When talking about these issues with politicians, the project staff is experiencing a lack of knowledge of these families’ situations and, sometimes, prejudices, considering situations to be self-induced. By making this group visible, there is an ambition in the project to contribute to long-term changes for the target group, concerning both the children and the mothers.

The project also concerns the question of more flexible opening hours within the childcare, which is an issue on the local political agenda in Stockholm. The possibility of working “uncomfortable hours” is stressed by several political parties and pointed out as important for single parents. This means childcare should be open in the evenings, at nights and even weekends (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013, WP4). Childcare in the evenings and at nights could be an important basis for single mothers to get a job, though many jobs in occupations that are still female dominated, within health and social care, for example, have uncomfortable working hours.

Another field of advocacy for the target group is the discussion about the national norm of social welfare benefits, which today includes neither leisure time activities for children (for example, fees for sport or music lessons) nor monthly internet costs. This latter could mean that some children cannot receive information sent out from their schools or from other organisations that communicate mostly through the Internet.

## **17.3 Concluding Remarks**

*Children of Single (Lone) Mothers* is an example of an innovation initiated within the civil society by an organisation acknowledged for its entrepreneurial ways of working. Fryshuset is a Stockholm-based organisation but with networks and contacts in municipalities in different parts of Sweden. As described above, the Swedish welfare system has been opened up to alternative producers of welfare services. A parallel development is that during the last few decades civil society organisations have attracted growing interest and have been granted greater legitimacy from both

state and local governments. However, this has only to a limited degree resulted in a growing rate of social services produced by CSOs. But there are political expectations on CSOs to deliver new solutions for unsolved social problems and help to strengthen the welfare system by filling gaps.

One might argue, though, that the project *Children of Single (Lone) Mothers* is in line with traditional roles and expectations of a CSO, which also have been strengthened during the latest decades, namely to focus on new needs and new groups with needs that are not covered in other ways. The foundation Fryshuset has taken on this role in relation to vulnerable youth since the mid-1980s. They have served as pioneers and offered services that are not covered by the public sector (Engel et al. *forthcoming*).

The working in the project is based on the methods developed in Fryshuset—advocacy for their target group, direct services and also with the aim of empowerment, which in this project is implemented by the advice given in boomerang meetings. The mix of funding for the project and the cooperation with different stakeholders are also in line with the overall ways in which Fryshuset works.

The project has been subject to some diffusion, which is also in line with the ambitions of Fryshuset. During the organisation's nearly 30-year lifetime, the organisation has had the motivation to spread its know-how and methods to other municipalities. This has partly succeeded, but there have also been many obstacles to spreading locally initiated activities to other places and stakeholders. Fryshuset's answer to the problem of diffusion has been to build networks with local entrepreneurial actors and initiatives (Engel *forthcoming*).

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# Chapter 18

## Nijmegen: Work Corporations—for the Unemployed, by the Unemployed

Joost Fledderus, Taco Brandsen and Francesca Broersma

### 18.1 Introduction

In 2011, the municipality of Nijmegen, located in the southeast of the Netherlands with approximately 165,000 inhabitants, decided to adjust its re-employment policy. This reform was necessary because national retrenchments severely cut the municipal budget for re-employment services—from 30.3 million € in 2011 to 11.5 million € in 2014 (Gemeente Nijmegen 2011). A large proportion (68%) of this budget was being spent on created, subsidised jobs. Given that these jobs were proven to be expensive and unsuccessful instruments to get beneficiaries back to the regular labour market, these were put to an end (Gemeente Nijmegen 2011). The belief of most local political parties was that the resources must be spread more equally among all recipients of social assistance (i.e. benefit for long-term unemployed). Instead, the concept of work corporations (*werkcorporaties*) was introduced to modernise their current policy in an “innovative fashion” in order to “realise the ambitions” with respect to re-employment (Gemeente Nijmegen 2011).

Work corporations resemble social enterprises (Defourny and Nyssens 2012), which are run primarily by beneficiaries themselves, though with professional guidance and possibilities of education, and which aim towards the re-employment of the participants within 2 years. This chapter describes how work corporations are organised, how users are addressed, the position of work corporations within the local welfare of Nijmegen, and ends with observing current developments. It is

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primarily based on interviews with the Alderman of Work and Income, two policy advisors of the municipality of Nijmegen, and 17 participants, held during October 2012 and July 2013.

It should be noted that Dutch municipalities have a fairly large degree of discretionary space to determine their policies when it comes to providing services to social assistance beneficiaries. Social assistance benefits are distributed according to the Work and Social Assistance Act, which applies to those who receive little to no income from work. All municipalities receive a budget for granting benefits, which may complement one's income up to 70% of the minimum wage as well as a budget for re-employing beneficiaries. Because this latter budget was shrinking fast, the municipality had to think of new ways of organising their re-employment policy.

## **18.2 Work Corporations**

The concept of work corporations was introduced to the city by the local Labour Party (Partij van de Arbeid, PvdA) in their party programme of 2010. In no more than two sentences, the party expressed the need for the development of work corporations in order to preserve subsidised jobs. When the Labour Party formed a coalition with the Green Party (GroenLinks, GL) and the social-liberal party Democrats '66 (Democraten '66, D66) in 2010, work corporations were included in their common manifesto. The municipality then involved existing organisations operating in the field of subsidised labour or re-employment services to develop a concrete plan for work corporations.

### ***18.2.1 Internal Organisation***

Work corporations intend to re-employ recipients of social assistance (i.e. income support which is regulated by the Work and Social Assistance Act, WWB) with a considerable distance from the labour market by offering a combination of work and education. Basically every entrepreneur can initiate a work corporation, as long as it complies with a few conditions: People should be offered an opportunity for personal development (mainly through education), the service or product delivered should have societal relevance (which may be interpreted very broadly), and a work corporation should be able to be self-sufficient by selling these services or products (though it should remain non-profit). After a maximum of 2 years, people should leave the organisation and are supposed to find a regular job or continue with an educational programme.

Although most of the first work corporations were part of non-profit welfare organisations or concepts, for-profit companies have also started up work corporations (for instance, to educate potential future employees). A key factor of these corporations is that participants are responsible for generating revenues through unpaid work and that these revenues are invested in running the organisation.

Work corporations in Nijmegen include a restaurant, a sewing workshop with its own fashion brand, maintenance companies for public spaces and public housing, and a bike service shop. By 2012, over 400 people had participated within more than 40 work corporations.

When needed, a starting grant will be given to a new work corporation. Instruments that are used for the re-employment of participants (such as coaching and education) are also financed by the municipality. Structural overhead costs and non-structural development costs must, however, be compensated by the income the organisation earns by selling the services or products it offers. In the first year and a half, this will be partially funded by the municipality, but after 2 years, this should all be covered by the work corporations.

Both the municipality and the work corporations have distinct responsibilities. The work corporation selects participants, creates a personal re-employment programme/development plan for the participant, guides the participant during the development process, and provides education/training, often in collaboration with an educational institute. The municipality has the primary role in the recruitment of participants, if possible in cooperation with the work corporation; provides required facilities for the re-employment programme; and monitors the output target. The municipality sets up a contractual arrangement with the work corporations, the content of which is adapted to the corporation. Some work corporations have to comply with a performance target in terms of outflow of participants towards work or other educational programmes. Others do not have to fulfil any targets at all, although it is unclear why. The municipality does expect higher rates of outflow for work corporations with good labour market prospects.

### ***18.2.2 Ways of Addressing Users***

For the municipality, the most important aspect of the work corporations is that, after a year or two, users will gain sufficient skills to be able to find a job on the regular labour market. They attain these skills partly because they are required to work from the very start and partly because they are supervised and educated throughout the programme. Hence, the policy combines elements of “Work First” (Bruttel and Sol 2006) and more capability enhancing or empowering approaches (Bonvin 2008). Work corporations teach not only technical but also social skills. Participants learn the basic elements of being an employee, such as getting in on time, asking for a day off or planning holidays, calling in sick, etc. But it also means learning to work with other participants, taking responsibility, and being an active employee.

The municipality states that for every individual it must be assessed whether working in a work corporation is the most suitable re-employment strategy and, moreover, whether the available work suits the client since work corporations also differ from each other (Gemeente Nijmegen 2011). Thus, there is some level of personalisation involved: Not every person that receives social assistance benefits automatically qualifies to join a work corporation.

Almost all users of the work corporations must have an intake interview or sometimes even a formal job application. For two important reasons, intrinsic motivation is a key criterion for selection: (1) It is almost impossible to complete the programme successfully without a certain passion or preference for the profession and (2) the performance target set for outflow to work cannot be reached with unmotivated workers. Nevertheless, after a relatively successful start, the municipality found that it became more difficult to find voluntary applicants for the work corporations. Therefore, they began to organise compulsory job markets where eligible individuals were obliged to take a look at the work corporations and are very much stimulated to declare their interest in one of them.

People enter work corporations for different reasons. For some, this includes obtaining a diploma; for others, it is the first step towards a higher level of education. Still others value the social contacts at work and the rhythm of a working life. There are also those who mention that a change in home life—for instance, arranging child care—already ensures that their world broadens. However, participants might also lack any form of motivation, especially when they feel that participation is mandatory. In this case, sanctions might be imposed. Users sign a contract with the municipality where basic rights and obligations are described. A sanction may include a (temporary) reduction of the received benefit—for example, if a user has repeatedly not shown up. Until now, this measure has been rarely used.

In general, the concept of work corporations stems from the idea that people who are in need of guidance in their search for a job are still able to be active and thus able to generate income. In this sense, the municipality looks at what recipients of social assistance are capable of doing rather than at what they cannot do.

### ***18.2.3 Interaction with the Local Welfare System***

In the beginning, the abolishment of subsidised labour and the introduction of work corporations were accompanied by some opposition, especially from the Socialist Party (SP) and obviously from those who occupied subsidised jobs. Subsidised jobs were related to values typical to the left-wing municipality such as solidarity and equality (because vulnerable individuals are appreciated for their valuable work). Some argued that work corporations did not incorporate such important values. However, in 2010, the Alderman of Work and Income<sup>1</sup> (from the PvdA) stated that “participation remains the starting point”. Yet, work corporations do seem to break with traditional beliefs in the city of Nijmegen. All stakeholders are now given an active role in re-employment: civil society, the private sector, local government, and the beneficiaries. Hence, work corporations can be both regarded as a co-production between participants and professionals and as a co-management structure between the municipality and the private and third sector (Brandsen and Pestoff 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> Aldermen are part of the local Council of Mayor and Aldermen, which is responsible for implementing and executing municipal policies.

According to the Alderman, the ideal situation would be plenty of successful, self-sufficient work corporations for clients to choose from. This way, the municipality will still be able to give everybody the chance to participate in society when resources are limited. Shifting the responsibility of the municipality of re-employing beneficiaries towards organisations in the field has probably been the largest implication of the innovative reform. In particular, organisations that were used to working with subsidised employees are now required to think differently about the future of the participants. Re-employment was never something these organisations had to worry about.

An important topic within the field of social enterprises is the concern for unfair competition with the private sector (Brandsen and Karré 2011). However, even though they do not have to pay the participants, the work corporations are unable to sell their products and services for a below-market value. This is because the revenues should cover all overhead and development costs. Actually, many work corporations recognise the importance of close collaboration, rather than competition, with the specific economic sector to be able to assure outflow to regular work. For example, a bike repair shop cooperates with a big bicycle company because they are in need of employees. This increases the chances of participants to find a job there.

### 18.3 Future Developments

The municipality of Nijmegen clearly states that it does not work on the basis of a blueprint. Rather, it has been trying to develop a flexible model, which suits the local welfare system of Nijmegen. The municipal coalition as well as the administration would like to take enough time to see whether the concept can develop into a successful instrument. A first evaluation at the end of 2012 showed that 18% of all participants (88 out of 484) have successfully found a new job or higher educational programme (Gemeente Nijmegen 2013). This is less than the desired target of 25%. The most important point for improvement was to give more responsibility to the municipality during the final phase of activities, in realising the outflow to regular employment. Work corporations often do not have sufficient expertise to guide participants towards the labour market. Therefore, the evaluation suggests that the municipality will have to put more effort in finding a good match between the job seeker and the work corporation and make more use of its network. In short, there should be a more intensive relationship between the municipality and the work corporations than anticipated.

Also, as mentioned, it appeared to be more difficult to get people enthusiastic to join a corporation. The coercion used by the municipality to assure participation has led to the involvement of less motivated beneficiaries. Because the managers of the work corporation are dependent upon the cooperation with and between its participants, a lack of motivation can seriously obstruct the work process. A better understanding of the motives of participants to join such programmes might help to avoid such a tension.

Meanwhile, opposition towards the new policy seems to remain relatively mild. This might be due to the fact that the policy has been developed together with the third sector (i.e. the non-profit organisations which started the first work corporations), that there remains space for work corporations to adapt to specific conditions, and that the core ideas of the innovation are in accordance with the dominant values of the local welfare system.

Until now, Nijmegen appears to have been the only municipality that has implemented work corporations as a core element of their re-employment policy. Yet the core idea behind this initiative can be relatively easily disseminated across other European cities. That is, trying to involve all parties that potentially contribute to the inclusion of disadvantaged jobseekers, such as welfare organisations and private businesses. Also, it points at the possibility of investing in the unemployed on the one hand and to require some contribution from citizens (in the form of work without pay) on the other. Keeping in mind some of the difficult aspects of the policy, work corporations—or similar initiatives—may prove to be a fruitful co-production between citizens, local government, business, and the third sector.

## 18.4 Conclusion

Due to financial constraints, the municipality of Nijmegen has had to revise its re-employment policy. The result—work corporations—represents a sharp break with local traditions and therefore amounts to a social innovation. Moreover, as the work corporations all have freedom to determine their internal organisations, the policy also encourages innovative structures at the sub-organisational level. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether work corporations will prove to be resistant to (local) political changes or whether they are merely a transitional structure in the shift towards another type of policy.

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# Chapter 19

## Birmingham: The Youth Employment and Enterprise Rehearsal Project

Nadia Brookes, Jeremy Kendall and Lavinia Mitton

### 19.1 Introduction

The Youth Employment and Enterprise Rehearsal (YEER) project provided business support to black and minority ethnic individuals who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Birmingham, UK. The YEER project was designed to provide business-specific training and assist young people from developing an idea to starting their own business. The project was run by a social enterprise, The Future Melting Pot (TFMP). This chapter briefly describes the city context, how the YEER project was organised, how it interacted with beneficiaries of the project and some key context factors that influenced the innovation.

Birmingham is located in the West Midlands region of England and is the largest city in the UK outside London with a population of just over 1 million inhabitants. Local government for the city is the metropolitan authority of Birmingham City Council, the largest local authority in the UK made up of 40 wards (administrative/electoral districts within council boundaries). It has the youngest population of any major European city; over half the population is under 35 years old. Birmingham's population is significantly diverse in terms of ethnic composition. The city has unemployment rates twice the national average, and in some areas over 50% of the working-age population is not in employment.

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Labour market policy is largely a function of central government who are responsible for activation strategies in local areas. However, due to Birmingham containing some of the most deprived areas with the highest levels of unemployment in England, various central government initiatives have been implemented locally through the city council since 2000. These initiatives have had addressing unemployment as their sole objective or as part of wider neighbourhood or regeneration strategies. The Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), which came from the national Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions of the previous Labour government, was a key programme for Birmingham. The city was allocated £118 million over 3 years from 2008, and almost half of the WNF resources specifically targeted worklessness (worklessness is a wider term than unemployment as it includes everyone of working age who does not work no matter what their circumstances). The funds were allocated as part of a general grant given directly to local authorities. This was not ring-fenced, and so local authorities were able to use it as they saw fit to support the delivery of local, regional and national priorities. Therefore, the remainder of the WNF was allocated to strategic partners to address barriers to worklessness and other key priorities such as supporting business, improving educational attainment and skills, addressing health inequalities, encouraging active involvement in sport and culture, improving energy efficiency, reducing the number of people living in temporary accommodation and making the city a safer place.

Significantly, the WNF enabled the development of a targeted approach at a local ward level to select and commission organisations to help people find work (described in the following chapter). It also led to the Worklessness Innovations Fund which provided small grants of up to £25,000 for feasibility studies, research and demonstration projects. In 2010, 44 organisations were awarded resources to try new and interesting ways of helping people gain employment, of which TFMP was one.

The organisation responsible for YEER, TFMP, is a social enterprise set up in 2009 after identifying a gap in the market for an organisation to support the aims and aspirations of disadvantaged young people in the West Midlands. The organisation works primarily with women and young people, particularly those classed as NEET and from ethnic minority backgrounds. The philosophy of TFMP is to “enable and empower young people to achieve their potential through enterprise”. The concept is very much about developing individual ideas and talents, to “open new gateways to disadvantaged groups who find it hard to engage meaningfully with traditional business networks”. TFMP focuses on self-employment and enterprise creation and encourages the individuals they work with to develop new social enterprises to benefit local economies.

Underpinning their work is that services and opportunities should be those that young people have determined they want themselves, not just with them in mind.



## 19.2 YEER Project

In 2010, TFMP successfully obtained funding from the Worklessness Innovations Fund to set up the flagship YEER pilot project. The aim of the project was to provide business support to black and minority ethnic individuals who were NEET with the main aim of participants being able to set up their own businesses or social enterprises. The project included training, support and access to accredited advisers. The approach could be characterised as intensive, personalised support to stimulate entrepreneurialism. Creating young entrepreneurs was seen as helping to address the breakdown of the traditional route usually taken where young people progressed to employment after school (or university). There were already various agencies in existence to support businesses but only once the business was developed to a certain point; no support, however, was provided to explore options or with the set-up phase.

The project provided a structured yet flexible programme of support in a “safe and welcoming atmosphere”. Young people had to be over 18 years old and on welfare benefits for at least 3 months. There were a limited number of places, and young people had to complete an application form and take part in an interview. Participation therefore required a certain amount of motivation and commitment from the outset. The usual timeframe for young people to be engaged with the project was 6 months or less.

Participants were offered the chance to improve personal development; nurture their entrepreneurial “mind”; start the business they had always wanted to start; create their own work and become their own boss; and make a difference for themselves, their family and their community. An action plan was drawn up with a mentor and participants received support in developing business ideas from initial design through to completion. Training covered confidence building, time management, personal goal planning, ideas generation, market research, business planning and the practical aspects of setting up a business. It provided the opportunity to explore the option of self-employment through a personalised approach led by the needs of the individual and where feedback was incorporated into the project. The project responded to the different learning paces of individuals, and more advanced learners could benefit from a “fast-track” approach to courses and additional sessions.

The project’s approach was innovative in that it offered excluded young people an alternative to unemployment or ad hoc paid employment. This differed from conventional employment support and the focus on “getting a job”. It used innovative approaches to communication and retention using the preferred method of communication identified by participants, for example through Facebook and other social media.

The YEER project was delivered by TFMP staff and volunteers, along with expert mentors and advisers. The mentors were recruited specifically for the project so that they had existing networks that participants could tap into. Partnership development was seen as a large part of the success of the YEER project giving participants the opportunity to network effectively from the start, both between the agencies involved and by giving the young people access to these networks and individu-

als. The city council, Business Link (government advice and guidance service until 2011), Advantage West Midlands (government regional development agency until 2012), local entrepreneurs, the Creative Community Coalition, the Business Development Service (group of professional business advisers), I-Social Entrepreneurs (social enterprise development organisation) and Young Enterprise (enterprise education charity) were all counted as partners.

The project supported 20 young people in its pilot phase, of those some set up their own businesses, some gained employment, and some started volunteering or education and training courses. All developed business skills, improved their careers prospects and gained an awareness of the business world even if they did not take their ideas forward at this point. One young person, for example, received assistance with developing a business plan, researching their idea and mentoring from a local social entrepreneur. They subsequently set up a business running drama courses for children that they continued whilst taking up a teaching course to further develop their skills. Participants reported that as well as practical skills the project had given them confidence and a greater understanding of what they wanted to do.

The services TFMP provides are the product of a series of consultations and focus groups in which over 300 young people participated to give their views on what support they would like to see available for young entrepreneurs. The main request was for more personalised, innovative support particularly for people who have an idea for business but are unsure how to take it forward and turn it into a reality. YEER was an attempt to meet that identified need. TFMP see their positive, practical approach and individual focus, coupled with the promotion of innovation and creative thinking as allowing the delivery of a personalised service to all of those they help.

### ***19.2.1 Context***

There were a number of key contextual factors that enabled the existence of the YEER project in Birmingham. Birmingham has a much higher percentage of NEETs than other areas of the West Midlands, and this project directly addressed local authority concerns about this group and their future employment prospects. In addition, the target group focus on those from ethnic minority backgrounds tied in with local political discourse about community cohesion and social inclusion. The project also connected with the national and local neighbourhood and worklessness agendas by supporting young people into self-employment based in their local communities. As part of gaining WNF funding, projects had to demonstrate how they added value to the citywide employment and skills strategy. The funding opportunity combined with Birmingham's willingness to use the resources to try some different and interesting things also provided the environment for the innovation to be supported. It also linked with the move to working in partnership and a desire to increase involvement of the third sector.

However, the YEER project was intended to be a time-limited, small-scale, pilot project; it received only £24,977 of funding and during the pilot supported 20 young

people. With the end of the WNF as a source of funding in 2011, the city council and the local strategic partnership did not make resources available to continue with the project, despite early successes. Be Birmingham (the local strategic partnership) who administered the Worklessness Innovations Fund focused on the provider's strategy for sustainability rather than providing them with continued support when giving out grants and many projects closed. Funders and providers were all aware that the main feature of the fund was to accrue learning for future strategies and projects rather than sustaining and replicating the innovations supported; for example, a best practice guide for setting up projects in the future was produced.

This kind of pilot funding will always result in limited impact on the local welfare system as a whole and a struggle with issues of scaling up. TFMP as an organisation is in a position where, should funding become available, they could run the project again in this format. TFMP still has an extensive volunteering programme aimed at providing work opportunities and improving the employability of young people in Birmingham, particularly for those from their target groups, and continues to work in partnership with existing business support providers as well as other organisations sharing a similar purpose in order to complement service delivery. This multi-agency approach of public sector partnerships, private sector alliances and community networks is seen as a way of ensuring clients receive the maximum benefit in achieving their goals and sustainability for the organisation.

### 19.3 Conclusion

The YEER project could be adapted for different age and client groups, and there is no reason to assume this could not be replicated in other cities and countries. It was a small-scale project and so low risk for the local authority and local strategic partnership to support, but therefore also the potential for impact on the local welfare system was limited. The project did shift the focus away from getting people into work to supporting entrepreneurial activities, which had not often been central in policy discussion and even less so for this particular group considered difficult to engage with. It was an example of the increased involvement of the third sector in delivering services and the application of business practices to areas of social concern, integrating economic and social development through stimulating entrepreneurialism, social enterprise and start-ups.

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# Chapter 20

## Birmingham: A “Locality Approach” to Combating Worklessness

Nadia Brookes, Jeremy Kendall and Lavinia Mitton

### 20.1 Introduction

The locality approach to worklessness in Birmingham, UK provided a framework for an area and individual-level focus for commissioning employment and skills services. Worklessness is usually defined as the unemployed and the economically inactive combined (ONS 2009). The approach involved a range of local welfare partners. This chapter briefly describes the city context, how the locality approach was organised, how it interacted with beneficiaries and some key context factors that influenced the innovative approach.

Birmingham is located within the West Midlands region of England and is the regional centre for business, retail and leisure. The city is disproportionately affected by worklessness, having many areas with high unemployment and deprivation which has persisted for many years. Birmingham has unemployment rates twice the national average, and in some areas over 50% of the working age population are not employed. The city has the highest rate of youth unemployment in the UK. These entrenched problems of unemployment, a shortage of appropriate jobs and fragmentation of support had all been identified as issues locally.

Birmingham has had a wide range of regeneration and renewal programmes and initiatives over the years targeting both the city centre and neighbourhood areas. When the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) was allocated to Birmingham by

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central government for 2008–2011 to help tackle worklessness and low levels of skills and enterprise, it was recognised that a more strategic approach was needed to the use of resources in tackling long-term unemployment, barriers to employment and other elements of deprivation in the city.

## 20.2 A Locality Approach to Unemployment

### 20.2.1 *Internal Organisation*

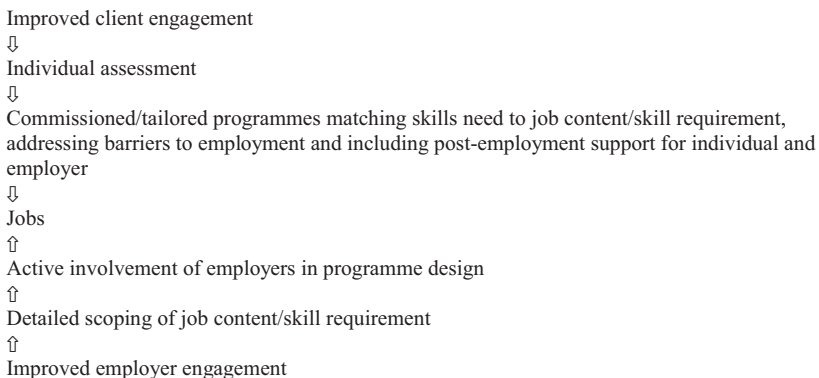
Birmingham developed an innovative approach to tackling unemployment for those living in the most deprived areas and with high levels of unemployment (25% or more). The two key innovative features were a model to integrate employment and skills provision at an individual level and contracting of services at a local or ward level (these were electoral districts with an average of around 27,000 residents), the integrated employment and skills (IES) model and the Neighbourhood and Constituency Employment and Skills Plans.

#### **Integrated Employment and Skills (IES)**

The IES was the primary means by which activity to tackle worklessness was delivered in the city. Figure 20.1 illustrates the IES model.

#### **Neighbourhood and Constituency Employment and Skills Plans**

The decision to use this approach was driven not only by a desire to include local priorities in the programme but also to use lessons from previous initiatives about involving local people in decision-making whilst ensuring that services remained strategically commissioned. As a result, Neighbourhood and Constituency Employment and Skills Plans were drawn up in the first year of the WNF programme. The neighbourhood plans covered seven Birmingham wards that had more than 11



**Fig. 20.1** Integrated employment and skills model. (Source: Birmingham City Council)

priority areas for deprivation within them, and 9 constituencies were the subject of constituency plans (which also captured the needs of smaller clusters of priority areas lying outside key wards). These were put together by local welfare partners, local providers, community groups and local councillors.

The purpose of these plans was to set out key actions and targets for activities to support residents where worklessness was high to access sustainable employment opportunities. The goal was to create a framework to ensure that service delivery was more effective and better focused on the needs of residents. The aim was to achieve the following: analyse the need in local areas and calculate local targets to be achieved; gauge and record the impact of existing provision; identify service gaps and propose additional activity to be commissioned to address service gaps.

The employment and skills provision eventually contracted tended to provide a relatively standard set of options for support, but the local and IES-driven approach to delivery on a city-wide scale, the development of the employment and skills plans approach and the contracting process were innovative. This was a move away from the usual arrangement of a single contract for the whole city to one with tailored contracts to meet the needs of local people. The deliberate targeting of local areas, groups and individuals was a key innovative feature of the approach.

The IES model and the employment and skills plans provided a foundation for a focus at the client level and the provision of targeted action and support that each individual required (whether this was education, skills or employment) no matter what provider they accessed. The approach was designed to ensure that local needs were taken into account and overall contract values set at a level to allow third sector providers to tender for contracts. It also facilitated the development of a number of innovative projects to address unemployment such as the Youth Enterprise and Employment Rehearsal project supporting young people to explore setting up their own businesses (described in Chap. 19) and the job bus run by a third sector organisation, a mobile jobs bus equipped with employment and training experts and technology to provide information on jobs and services.

In terms of responsibilities for the management of the approach, Be Birmingham was responsible for the effective delivery of the WNF and as the Local Strategic Partnership played a key role in bringing partners together to coordinate action on unemployment through focusing on the most deprived neighbourhoods. The Birmingham Economic Development Partnership was the thematic partnership responsible for the management of elements of the fund. Responsibility for the development and approval of projects was delegated to an Employment Sub Group of the partnership, which included the local authority, Jobcentre Plus and Skills Funding Agency representatives. The local authority was the accountable body for the funding, and so processes and governance needed to comply with both Be Birmingham and local authority requirements.

The approach was largely bottom-up in that priorities were identified through the employment and skills plan process, which were then fed into a delivery plan. The Employment Sub Group management team agreed upon the priorities and commissioned projects and activities. An appraisal panel made recommendations on which projects should go ahead for approval and the group approved projects (except for

those over £ 300,000, which went to Be Birmingham for approval). The thematic partnership made programme-level decisions and received project information. Be Birmingham received updates on performance and a local authority. Cabinet Member approved projects in line with financial regulations.

Forty-three contracts were let to a variety of provider types at ward level through the Neighbourhood and Constituency Employment and Skills Plans process: private sector; third sector organisations and consortium; and social enterprises. Individual projects specifically targeted a range of groups: the disabled, lone parents, the over 50s and those who are not in education employment or training, carers, women and vulnerable clients (alcohol users, offenders). The employment and skills support provided included making contact with clients, skills-assisted planning, mentoring, subsidised work placements, support into business start-ups and social enterprise, and English language and basic skills. There was also support to local businesses to provide job vacancies for local residents. In one constituency, the Skills and Job Match contract provided a range of services to assist people into employment. Clients were provided with support to develop curriculum vitae, get interview experience, to conduct job searches and access voluntary work. In another local area, the Intermediate Labour Market contract enabled good links to be established with local employers including a local medical practice, training centres, local shops and social enterprises (DC Research and Focus 2011).

### ***20.2.2 Interaction with Users***

The areas with the highest levels of unemployment are also usually the most deprived, and the aim was that by supporting people into sustained employment in those areas there would be benefits to the localities as a whole. This was a proactive drive to pursue the development of community-led, neighbourhood-specific approaches, actively engaging those individuals most at risk of unemployment and furthest away from the labour market, including the long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

The IES model underpinned the delivery of the unemployment approach and focused on making changes to the way the infrastructure works, including improved partnership working and more joined-up services. The support process included employability skills to overcome personal barriers; skills support linked to existing vacancies; and support to and through sustained employment. The key features of the IES model included:

- Improved local information to effectively target resources to the needs of a particular group or individual
- A wide range of outreach and contact strategies to effectively engage with groups or individuals
- A strong client-focused approach that addressed the needs of specific individuals
- A range of interventions to address the needs of individuals
- Client tracking to support individuals to access employment and post-employment support

- Engaging with employers and providing bespoke training to match priority clients to vacancies
- Continuity to ensure a joined-up approach, assurance to clients and opportunities to build on learning
- Local unemployment champions

The service providers commissioned indicated that having provision available at a local level was essential for engaging with service users. Many people did not want to travel outside of their neighbourhood, and so it was important to have a visible presence in the community and to use organisations that potential users of the service would be familiar with.

### **20.2.3 Context**

IES is a policy that predates the current national Coalition government in the UK, and various models were developed trialled and delivered on a national, regional and local level. The thinking behind it came from the Leitch Review of Skills (Leitch 2006) which emphasised the need to improve the national skills base to facilitate growth in productivity, improve national economic competitiveness and increase individual social mobility. After participating in one of the IES trials, Birmingham decided to continue with and develop the model. There was also an impetus from the previous national Labour administration to build responsive services at a local level to tackle unemployment and improve skills through initiatives such as the WNF.

There were a number of key contextual factors which enabled the development of the locality approach to worklessness in Birmingham. The approach linked into the local political agenda around localism or devolved decision-making which was seen as key to dealing with social problems. As a city, Birmingham was and is highly committed to tackling unemployment, and social inclusion is high on the political agenda. Commissioning at a city level was not seen as suitable for a city as diverse as Birmingham. The IES model was the principal means by which activity to tackle unemployment was informed and sat at the heart of the city strategy (the core strategy to provide a 20-year framework for sustainable growth in Birmingham, with proposals to provide 50,600 new homes and deliver 100,000 new jobs by 2026) and the local area agreement (steps to deliver the city strategy).

The major players in the local welfare system all agreed and signed up to the IES model, including the local authority, Jobcentre Plus and the Skills Funding Agency. It provided a well-understood model against which to commission activity and assess performance. There was a significant amount of political scrutiny mostly related to the wards wanting to have greater independence over spending and to be able to hold providers to account. Political involvement in the process led to some delays (and the slow start resulted in criticism from national government within the local authority and local press) but having the engagement of local councillors also helped to embed and raise the profile of the delivery contracts of the employment and skills plans in their areas (DC Research and Focus 2011).



Stakeholders and service delivery organisations believed that this approach provided local support and got many people into work, training and volunteering opportunities. The approach also supported partnership working which was a characteristic of the local welfare system emphasised by local government. A number of organisational partnerships came together for the first time to deliver contracts, including those of different sizes and different sectors with a range of geographical and target group focus (DC Research and Focus 2011). For example, Prospects (an organisation providing education, employment and training services across the UK), the Jericho Foundation (a Birmingham charity providing support into employment) and Birmingham Enterprise (a local enterprise and employment support organisation) formed a partnership to support people into business start-ups, social enterprises or work and into further education or development of skills in one area of the city.

Many third sector providers came together solely for the purpose of delivering WNF contracts. Private sector providers also felt that their relationships with many community and third sector groups had improved during the delivery phase of the employment and skills plans. It also enabled projects to develop new relationships with employers, which increased opportunities for clients to access available jobs.

The locality approach has had issues of sustainability and currently does not operate in some of the original areas where it was implemented or not in the way originally intended. This was seen primarily as a knock-on effect of the loss of resources for neighbourhood management which supported the process. The contracts with service providers set up through the locality approach were also linked to the Working Neighbourhoods funding which came to an end in 2011. The withdrawal of funding was as a result of cuts in budgets through the Coalition's Spending Review in 2010 as a response to the financial crisis. This innovative approach did have the potential for significant impact on the local welfare system with its approach to commissioning and delivering services, and there is still support for the approach. There are plans to refresh this strategy under the current council's localism agenda.

### **20.3 Conclusion**

The IES model and local delivery approach arose out of a particular set of circumstances in Birmingham and a willingness to undertake major change; however, elements of this approach could be replicated elsewhere. It enabled an in-depth understanding of issues for local residents where unemployment was high, which provided the opportunity for different provider organisations to work together for the first time and to develop small-scale innovative projects (such as the Youth Employment and Enterprise Rehearsal project described in Chap. 19) and capture learning, useful not only locally but also for the setting up of projects more widely.

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# Chapter 21

## Münster: How Prevention Visits Improve Local Child Protection

Andrea Walter and Danielle Gluns

### 21.1 Münster—City Context and the Field of Local Childcare Policy

Münster has around 300,000 inhabitants and is located in the biggest German state. It is a relatively wealthy city (compared to other cities in North Rhine-Westphalia) and can be characterised by a rather young (with around 50,000 students) and well-educated population with low unemployment rates. Its economy is dominated by a strong tertiary sector with a large spectrum of both public and church administrations, university and other higher education, science, healthcare, communication, insurances and financial institutions. Therefore, Münster has not been hit as hard by economic crises as other cities.

Social policy in Münster is influenced by a strong Catholic tradition, which leads to an emphasis on solidarity and subsidiarity and a connection to the concept of communitarianism (Vorländer 2001). Consequently, society has the duty to care for those who are not able to do so for themselves, whereas the smallest possible entity (the individual, the community etc.) should be responsible in order to avoid unnecessary collectivisation (Leuninger 2002, pp. 21–26). The foundation for this claim lies in the high value of personal autonomy in the Catholic tradition (Focke 1978, p. 192; Leuninger 2002, pp. 20f). Thus, the state should enable everyone to contribute actively to the society which stresses the social political focus on prevention and investments in human capital as a basis for competitiveness and participation (Leuninger 2002, pp. 113–116, 121).

These traditions are mirrored in local childcare policy, of which the prevention visits (see below) form a part. In this field, German municipalities have been a

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driving force for a long time. Making the reconciliation of work and family life possible for well-educated women has been the main objective in Münster. This aim is in line with the national legal requirement to increase the number of places in childcare for the under 3-year-olds. To sum it up, adequate supply of childcare facilities and more flexibility as well as increasing quality standards are seen as important for the individual wellbeing of families as well as for improving the attractiveness of the whole city. All in all, a broad consensus among the relevant actors from local politics and public administration as well as from organised civil society about promoting childcare policy can be identified. Concretely, the welfare associations and other stakeholders such as parents' initiatives are strongly involved. The main cleavage in this field regards promoters of affordability and accessibility on the one hand and promoters of high-quality care on the other, while there is agreement on the overall need for a high amount of institutional childcare.

## 21.2 Internal Characteristics of the Prevention Visits<sup>1</sup>

### 21.2.1 *Improving Local Child Protection by Assisting Every Family—Goals and Ways of Addressing Users*

The prevention visits are a new kind of service in the field of childcare policy and were initiated by the Youth Office in 2008. The Youth Office in Germany is responsible for child protection (§ 1 Abs. 3 S.3 SGB VIII). For this aim, the office can intervene in families where the wellbeing of the children is threatened and can, as a last resort, decide to take children out of their families. Due to this, the Youth Office has a negative reputation in Germany, which is aggravated by the role of the Youth Office during the Third Reich and in the German Democratic Republic. With its staff of around 1,400 employees, the Youth Office in Münster is the largest administrative unit within the municipality (Youth Office Münster 2012, p. 163).

The general proceeding of the innovation is that all parents in Münster with a newborn child receive a visit from Youth Office employees.<sup>2</sup> From a practical point of view, these prevention visits aim to assist parents with their children's upbringing. From a political point of view, these visits serve as an operative instrument to improve local child protection based on intensive and early family contact. Concretely, the responsible local authorities hope to improve the relationship between families and the Youth Office (improving the office's image) as well as to prevent worst-case scenarios like abuse or neglect of children or even infanticide. The local media coverage in June 2008 especially focused on the cases of 5-year-old Lea Sophie from Schwerin and 2-year-old Kevin from Bremen. Both died a horrible death

<sup>1</sup> Methodically, this chapter is mainly based on two expert interviews with representatives from the youth office, annual reports of the office as well as local newspaper articles.

<sup>2</sup> All facts about the family visits in the following subchapters without any designated sources are based on the newspaper article "Jugendamt will jedes Baby besuchen" (05/06/2008) as well as the website of the Youth Office.

caused by child neglect (WN 05/06/2008). The implementation of the prevention visits was an initiative by the Youth Office itself. The concept of these visits is oriented at the so-called *Dormagener Modell*<sup>3</sup> of prevention visits that was developed in the city of Dormagen in 2006. The actors of the Youth Office adapted the concept to the situation in Münster. A specific aspect of this Münster model is that the prevention team who is responsible for coordinating and realising these visits aims to visit every family in Münster, not only socially disadvantaged ones from poorer areas as it is done in other cities. The participation in the family visits is voluntary for the parents.

The innovation works in the following way: First of all, each family with a newborn child (these are about 2,400 per year in Münster) gets a letter of inquiry by the Youth Office. If they do not object, they receive a second letter in which the prevention team suggests an appointment. The concept offers different services: First of all, the prevention team informs the parents in an individual way about different issues relevant to parents: parental benefits, childcare facilities and preventive healthcare offers. In this context, the families get information leaflets, which are in line with the respective nationality of their child and the district of the parents' home. If desired by parents, a midwife accompanies the visits. Furthermore, the first parents' letter (*Elternbriefe*) is handed over to the families personally. These letters present, in total, 46 educational assistances (i.e. advice on breastfeeding or protective vaccination) and their dispatch to the families is staggered over the period from the first month of life up to the eighth birthday of the child.<sup>4</sup> The parents' letters are conceptualised by the working group *Neue Erziehung e.V.* which is a nationally organised non-governmental organisation (NGO).<sup>5</sup> They are available in many other municipalities, but not every Youth Office sends them to the families for such an extended period. As mentioned above, one of the main goals of these prevention visits is to ameliorate the negative image of the Youth Office which is amplified by the supra-regional media.<sup>6</sup> To underline this aim, every child gets a welcome gift from the Youth Office. This toy symbolises that the prevention team does not want to take the children away from their parents, rather it wants to bring all families real benefit. The parents should get the impression that the Youth Office might be useful for every family member and in every (difficult) situation. The families should realise that they can rely on the Youth Office as a service provider. Ergo, these prevention visits are seen as a sort of door-opener<sup>7</sup> by the employees of the Youth Office.

<sup>3</sup> The so-called *Dormagener Modell* is the title of a local programme, which aimed to develop instruments for preventing child abuse and intra-family violence. This pilot project was developed in the German municipality Dormagen in 2006. Many other municipalities were convinced of this new concept and adapted this model. See source "Dormagener Modell".

<sup>4</sup> The description of the parents' letters is based on the website of the Youth Office.

<sup>5</sup> The working group *Neue Erziehung e.V.* was founded in 1946 by teachers in Berlin. After the period of inhuman National Socialist and fascist tyranny, the members of this NGO aim to develop a new conversational understanding of education. Source: Website of Arbeitskreis Neue Erziehung.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with a representative of the Family Office.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with a representative of the Family Office.

### **21.2.2 *Internal Organisation and Modes of Working***

The prevention team is composed of six qualified employees working part-time who coordinate and implement the appointments and visits. Every member is an employee of the Youth Office. This underlines the main purpose of the prevention team that its members should serve as ambassadors for the office. Volunteers, as in other German municipalities, would not have direct access to the services of the Youth Office.<sup>8</sup> That is one of the reasons why the Youth Office decided to integrate the visits into the office itself. Each of the six employees should care for about 400 newborn children per year. Actually in the year 2009, 2069 families were visited. The visits are financially sustainable since they are funded as part of the annual budget.

#### **21.2.3 *Context of the Innovation—Interaction with the Local Welfare System***

The prevention visits were initiated by the head of the Youth Office itself, who is one of the key players within the elite network of the city. As head of the office, she is a member of different administrative and local political networks (round tables, working groups etc.). Despite her network position, at the beginning, she had difficulties in finding political majorities for this program. Many politicians did not want the prevention team to visit families living in wealthy social environments as well. But the head of the Youth Office refused to accept any compromise and underlined that child protection is a universal issue concerning every family.<sup>9</sup> The office aimed to achieve public consensus by arguing to prevent worst-case scenarios which are built up by media, politics and society. At the same time, they emphasized the supportive function of the visits as opposed to controlling families. Finally, this strategy succeeded. The political factions agreed. Today, the Youth Office is very satisfied with this innovation. The head of the Youth Office highlights its success and importance for the strategy of the Youth Office.<sup>10</sup> This is also acknowledged by the local media.<sup>11</sup>

The high number of prevention visits which have been carried out over the last years (2009: 2,069, 2010: 2,314, 2011: 2,080) shows the high demand as regards the prevention visits by families. In a quarter of those prevention visits in 2010 (497), the Youth Office identified a high need for advice, information as well as support. In more than 1000 cases, the prevention team informed parents about the offers of local services focusing on childcare (Youth Office Münster 2012, p. 87). In this way, the prevention visits have contributed to the intended image change of the Youth Office: from a control instance to a kind of service provider.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with the head of the Youth Office.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with the head of the Youth Office.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with the head of the Youth Office.

<sup>11</sup> "Reicht ein Besuch?" a comment of the local journalist Karin Völker in WN 05/06/08.

For evaluation, Münster takes part in an empirical study about German municipalities, which have introduced the instrument of prevention visits. With reference to the first results of the participating municipalities as well as the high demand of this instrument by municipalities in North-Rhine Westphalia, the empirical study evaluates the instrument of prevention visits positively and sees it on the path towards a regular offer (*Regelangebot*) (Frese and Günther 2012, p. 251). In addition to this, the evaluation of prevention visits in different cities underlines the positive effects of the specific Münster model: Parents participating in the study emphasise the positive effects of both working with employees of the Youth Office as well as visiting all parents in the city (Frese and Günther 2012).

### 21.3 Conclusion

The prevention visits can be seen as an important instrument in the process of image changing and improving child protection in Münster. The deep impact of this social innovation for the local welfare system can be explained by the following three context factors:

*Being Part of the Prevention Approach as well as of the Local City Strategy* This innovation supports the core value of prevention and especially the prevention program of the Youth Office. Furthermore, with their customer focus, these prevention visits help to improve the Youth Office's image as well as to strengthen the field of local childcare policy identified by the local elites as an important factor for the city to become more attractive for young families. Thus, this social innovation became an important pillar for the urban local welfare policy strategy.

*Being an Integrated Part of the Local Welfare System* Since its implementation five years ago, the instrument of the prevention visits has become firmly institutionalised within the field of local welfare politics in Münster. This is apparent in the merger of the prenatal advice and the prevention team in 2010. In June 2011, the unit "Prenatal advice, prevention services and family visits" was founded. This enables better networking between early services and the expansion of existing cooperative governance structures (Youth Office Münster 2012, p. 85). Furthermore, the visits are institutionalised in a financially sustainable way.

*The Impact of the Local Network Governance for This Innovation* A change in the welfare governance architecture can be identified. Local welfare policy in Münster seems to work more and more in networks as opposed to operating in a hierarchical process. This is underlined by the implementation process of the prevention visits, which was led by the highly embedded and active head of the Youth Office. Because of its new understanding as a customer-oriented institution, the Youth Office increasingly acts as a partner for civil society (families), not as a hierarchical instance. The negative reactions in the beginning have shown that local politics and civil society still perceived the Youth Office as an intervention authority

(*Ordnungs-/Eingriffsinstanz*). The new governance forms offer some advantages for the success of this innovation: Problems and challenges (like financial issues) can be directly discussed between the involved actors. Solutions can be developed together before disagreement results in unbridgeable differences.

The analysis of the prevention visits in Münster demonstrates the necessity of innovators to connect to locally prevalent norms and values. The local welfare system not only structurally, but also “culturally” determines opportunities and obstacles for social innovations. Furthermore, the successful implementation of prevention visits in a given local context will depend on an active “policy entrepreneur” who can mobilize supporters and resources.<sup>12</sup>

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## Chapter 22

# Barcelona: A Citizen's Agreement for an Inclusive City

Teresa Montagut, Gemma Vilà and Sebastià Riutort

### 22.1 Barcelona's Sociopolitical Structure

The administrative decentralisation of the political structure in Spain grants regional and local councils a set of legislative and executive competencies which, in the case of social welfare services, are very far-reaching. The social innovations that we find in Barcelona today are related to two basic factors: the continuity in city government and the dynamics of civil society.

From the first local elections (after the re-establishment of democracy) and until 2011, a period of over 30 years, the city council of Barcelona was in the hands of the left (the Socialist Party won the elections and governed in coalition with two other left wing parties). The main characteristics of the social welfare system of the city, therefore, are (1) continuity in the government team over a long period of time, (2) starting from zero, that is, they had to build the system from scratch, and (3) citizens who—after the long period of dictatorship—wanted to be involved in political action, to participate. Municipal policymakers made the most of this potential when it came to setting up the local welfare system, as did other political actors (the opposition parties and civil society) to some extent. The civil society in the Autonomous Community of Catalonia has traditionally been participative and enterprising, as demonstrated by the large number of cooperatives that existed in Barcelona at the end of the nineteenth century.

Another element that helps to understand the context is the fact that in Barcelona we find an objective that cuts across all areas of political action: the “modernisation” of the city. This is a manifestation of the desire to recover the spirit of enterprise that

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the city once had, to recover its own brand of economic and cultural dynamism that was forbidden during the years of dictatorship. It finds its expression in the construction of the “Barcelona model”, a model that can be seen clearly in the changes in urban development as a result of the 1992 Olympic Games, the success of which was to a large extent due to the involvement of civil society, although it also affected other areas of society. In this way, policymakers in the Social Welfare Department set themselves a basic goal of building a social services model that was participative. As no welfare services system yet existed, there was no widespread culture of commitment to, or participation in, the city’s social welfare. The structures used to encourage and enable people to commit themselves to collective responsibilities would also have to be created.

The search for a “Barcelona model” has meanwhile continued ever more seriously in various political arenas, and collaboration with civil society in social welfare matters has also increased significantly, representing a force for social innovation in the city.

## **22.2 The Programme “Citizen’s Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona”**

### ***22.2.1 The Programme***

The programme Citizen’s Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona (CA) is an example of social innovation that fits in with a new form of governance. It establishes both a new form of participation and policy-making. The CA is not only based on new practices but also introduces changes in social responsibilities (public and private) in the local welfare system. By bringing about a new culture in the management of the welfare system, it also affects attitudes and values within local government. It is an example of social innovation resulting from a two-way process: (1) A top-down process, in the sense that it was proposed by the municipal government, which (2) intersects with a bottom-up process based on the effort and interests of different organisations and social networks that work within the city’s social welfare system. We consider that this is a programme with great potential, and it could be implemented in other cities with similar conditions.

The programme was established in April 2005. The ultimate goal of the programme is to redistribute responsibilities in the social welfare sector in Barcelona through a broad agreement among representatives of the main social agents in the sector. The intention is to create a strategic framework shared by all participating entities. This is a new philosophy, which integrates the diversity of activities that are carried out in the local social welfare system into a single framework or joint strategy. It is based on a policy decision to coordinate the diverse activities of different social actors. No one loses their space for action; rather, it is possible to improve results by combining efforts.

At the moment of its creation, a total of 235 entities of diverse nature (organisations, businesses and universities) signed the agreement. Since its public presentation, the number of institutions and organisations involved and attached to the agreement has grown each year. In December 2011, there were a total of 467 participating organisations, institutions and businesses (doubling the number of participants in 5 years), and in 2013 there were more than 500.

The agreement has been promoted and is coordinated by the municipal government. Currently, the more than 500 participating entities work in such distinct spheres as the economy, culture, education, social action, housing, health and labour. The values that the CA promotes are identified in the strategic framework that defines the programme: coexistence, cooperation, social cohesion, creativity and community. From the perspective of the internal administration of the agreement, the aim is to encourage values like democratic governance, networking and quality of work.

To sign the agreement means joining a network that provides opportunities for access to and exchange of information, resources and knowledge. It also promotes projects in which cooperation between diverse entities and organisations in the city is key.

The CA is organised on different levels: (a) there is an annual meeting of all the signatories to the agreement, in which participants provide an account of the work they have carried out during the year and agree on the direction of the work for the following year; (b) there is a governing council, which is a deliberative and decision-making body that shapes the development of the agreement and its actions; (c) there are work commissions, formed by organisations that temporarily work on concrete issues, and (d) there are action networks formed by organisations, institutions and other bodies that work in specific sectors, which establish common objectives to improve the work they do.

### **The Action Networks**

Direct action depends on the networks. The organisations and city institutions in these networks share concrete methodologies and goals; they cooperate and direct their shared work toward common strategic and operational objectives. The networks begin with a desire to work together on a particular issue or matter and to achieve improvements in the respective fields of the participants. Each network is independent and has, based on its objectives, its own dynamics and working plan. At the time of this study (2013), ten networks had been formed:

- Network for the Reception and Support of Migrants in Barcelona
- Network for Assistance to the Homeless
- Network of Businesses with Social Responsibility Projects
- Network for Social and Labour Market Integration (now: for “Social Economy”)
- Network of Centres for Children and Teens
- Support Network for Family Caregivers
- Inclusion Housing Network
- Cultural Network for Social Inclusion
- Network for Children's Rights
- Network for Coexistence and Prevention

Some of the networks have progressed more than others, and some have managed to agree on common citywide projects or programmes. In terms of the CA's direct impact on social welfare policies, there have been two networks in particular that have achieved significant results: the first one is the Network of Centres for Children and Teens, which has agreed on one model for all the city's centres, both public and private, providing assistance for children and teens at risk. The other one is the Network for Assistance to the Homeless, which has created a solid network for the exchange of resources and information.

### **Network of Centres for Children and Teens**

This network is formed by 17 organisations and was established in April 2006. Its aim is to improve the city's responsiveness to children and adolescents in situations of social risk. It was an initiative of the organisations that manage or run centres for children and teens (outside school hours), the aim of which was to gain greater recognition for the work they were doing. Through the network, the member organisations would work on developing a common model of care for young people for all the centres in the city, even though managed by different entities.

Today there is one model for the centres agreed upon by all. During the work carried out, new centres have been established, and today there are centres that depend on the city and centres that depend on the social organisations, all of them with the same programme for teens and children.

### **Network for Assistance to the Homeless**

This network was created in November 2005 and consists of 26 organisations and federations. The social organisations participating in the network are committed to working together to help homeless persons regain autonomy and social relations. Various working groups were established and together they have carried out diverse actions, such as the following: a count of the number of homeless persons in Barcelona; preparation of a document with proposals on how to improve healthcare for the mentally ill; coming to agreement on proposals for action; sharing information and data and creating an open online catalogue of all the resources and services available through government and other entities.

The network has representation and dialogue with officials of local and regional government. The administration, politicians and professionals with responsibility in this area have embraced this new way of working horizontally with third sector organisations. This network has made it possible to create a new form of governance in this area.

## ***22.2.2 Impact of the Programme***

The CA has had an interesting impact on social welfare policy in the city. Not only has it made it possible to share resources and information but it has also changed forms of governance. The groups involved see themselves as actors who can have an impact on social welfare. It has led to the participation of citizens and social

organisations in welfare policies through different forms of deliberation and action. The programme has changed the social welfare system in the city in various ways. For example, the structures of the CA represent a new form of governance, in particular the dynamic in the Executive Commission, which allows and promotes proactiveness with a very high level of reflection and production of documents (I-6)<sup>1</sup>. There is participation in the overall welfare system, which also improves or facilitates the activities carried out by each of the participating entities.

The importance of the CA in the city's social welfare system can also be measured with the change in the municipal government. The municipal elections in May 2011 led to the election of a *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) centre-right nationalist coalition government. After 30 years of left-wing hegemony in the municipal government, a centre-right party came into power. This change concerned the participating groups in the CA: "When the new council member entered, we all had concerns about what would happen with the CA because, of course, the CA is an uncomfortable space.... but at that time, we discovered that not only was the CA not cancelled, but it seems to have been strengthened" (I-12)<sup>2</sup>. Clearly, the new government in power has given its support to the programme. In the words of the member entities: "the new government has made it theirs".

## 22.3 Conclusions

The balance of the work carried out and the challenges and difficulties involved—or that had to be overcome in the framework of the CA—are different if we take as a reference the CA programme in its entirety, or if we consider the action networks. It is necessary to separate these levels analytically to better understand the CA.

### 22.3.1 *The CA Programme*

The CA is an increasingly consolidated programme. The new administrative and governing structure of the municipal government considers it a flagship programme. It is not considered a programme designed and developed by its political rivals but rather as one the current government has chosen and wants to strengthen. The member entities say that "come what may, and whoever is in the municipal government, it will continue and has to continue" (I-8)<sup>3</sup>. In fact, it can even be stated that in this period in which we have a centre-right municipal government, recognition of the CA on the part of the administrative structure (civil service) of the government has

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<sup>1</sup> I-6 Interview Third Sector entity

<sup>2</sup> I-12 Interview Technical Secretary of CA

<sup>3</sup> I-8 Interview Third Sector entity

advanced. In the process of the creation and subsequent development of participatory programmes, it was difficult for part of the government structure to understand that the CA was a space for sharing equal responsibility between the government and civil society; “it was the professionals and not the administrative structure that understood it and implemented it” (I-12). This was the greatest obstacle to be overcome; for example, there were difficulties ensuring that in the actions of the CA, the government and entities had the same visibility. However, it seems that relations with the administration are more fluid today and the consolidation of the CA is such (there are more than 500 entities involved in the programme) that it can be assumed that any attempt to eliminate or reduce its role would be too costly.

At this time (2013), a further step has been taken in the framework of the CA. This is the “shared strategy”. As the entities say: “... the CA was not formed and left as it was but is constantly being revised...” (I-8). The “shared strategy” proposal emerged when the municipal government presented its *Plan for Inclusion 2012–2015* in the CA plenary. The entities understood that although the Plan for Inclusion was a government plan, it was necessary that a distinct and complementary proposal emerge from the CA to establish a strategy for shared actions and policies between the government and the entities. The “shared strategy” covers a total of 936 projects and actions, channelling a total of around 500 million €.

### 22.3.2 *The Action Networks*

Regarding the balance of the work of the action networks, the results cannot be generalised, as each network functions independently and depends on the efforts of the entities comprising it. Each network depends on the dynamic that its component entities contribute. Thus, there are large and small entities, proactive and more passive entities, some which want—and have—greater roles and others that have less of a role. These characteristics, among others, such as the very goal of the work of the network, have an impact on the dynamic of each network. Although the two networks briefly discussed above seem to have found a dynamic of cooperative work and joint reflection that has allowed solid relations to develop to the satisfaction of their participants, we have also found that the political changes appear to have affected certain other networks significantly.

This is the case of the Social Economy Network (earlier, the Network for Social and Labour Market Integration), which is headed by the municipal institution *Barcelona Activa*. It seems that the change in government, combined with the effects of the economic crisis (government budget cuts as well as a decrease in money from the European Union for insertion programmes), led to a shift in the focus of the network that seems to have slowed the dynamic with which it had begun. Specifically, today there is more talk about self-employment than there is about social and labour market integration. The goal of the network is to “promote the social economy of the city”. The network has opened up to include companies (those with *corporate social responsibility policies*) which are more interested in self-employment than in

developing a programme with the city to create jobs or for the social and economic insertion of those groups with difficulties. In the very dynamic of how it operates, there is a lack of proactivity and its dynamism is much more dependent on Barcelona Activa. It does not meet as often, and it needs to find a common stimulus, which can—in these times of serious economic crisis—stimulate its work. It is necessary to monitor the work of the various networks in order to make a comprehensive evaluation of their functioning. This is one of the issues that the entities leading the CA have on the table for upcoming discussion.

Finally, and by way of conclusion, we can say that the “Citizen’s Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona” programme has had a strong impact, which is continuing to grow. It is proving to have a broad consensus, which is attracting other entities that have not yet become part of the agreement.

To a great extent, the programme’s success is a result of the relationships that are formed between the participants, who are essentially working in a network. But the participants also appreciate the fact that being focused on action, their impact is multiplied. They also value the influence the CA has at times had on municipal authorities.

It is possible to spread this innovation. In fact, it is a project that has been sparking a lot of interest in other municipalities in Spain and in other countries as well. However, this is a project that requires a two-way social process. It would not have been possible without the interaction between clear leadership in charge of the project and a dynamic civil society.

For an innovation in governance to become established, a broad consensus is required on the part of all the actors involved. And perhaps, not only a consensus on the idea but also regarding capacity, in other words: on the one hand, a clear idea and the real possibility of designing a new model by the government leaders responsible and on the other hand, the existence of a network of entities that want to be involved and participate in designing and managing the social services of the city.

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# Chapter 23

## Bern: Integration Guidelines

Maxime Felder

### 23.1 Introduction

The innovation we seek to address in this chapter is one that consists mainly of a ten-page document defining the migrant integration policy of the Swiss capital, Bern. Our aim in this short chapter will be to outline how a document may be considered a social innovation, and how it might function as a tool for guiding local policy.

Since the 1970s, the integration of migrants has sparked heated political debates within Switzerland<sup>1</sup>. In 2008, a new Foreign Nationals Act introduced “integration” as a legal notion. As article 4 states: “the aim of integration is the coexistence of the resident Swiss and foreign population on the basis of the values of the Federal Constitution and mutual respect and tolerance.” Furthermore, it is established that “integration should enable foreign nationals who are lawfully resident in Switzerland for the longer term to participate in the economic, social and cultural life of the society”. It should be noted that integration is further defined as a bidirectional process, requiring “willingness on the part of the foreign nationals and openness on the part of the Swiss population”.

As often happens within a federal system, implementation has been left open to the interpretation of the various cantons. Yet, compared to rural and peri-urban populations, urban populations regularly show more openness towards migrants<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary on the concept of integration in Switzerland, see Cattacin and Chimienti (2006), and the report *La notion d'intégration dans la loi*, Commission fédérale pour les questions de migration, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The results of the vote on the federal popular initiative to prevent the construction of Mosque minarets (2009), or the more recent vote on the initiative “against mass immigration” (2014) are meaningful examples.

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In the canton of Bern, the composition of the parliaments on the communal and cantonal levels reflects this political cleavage. The left wing coalition has held a majority in the city parliament since 1996, while on the cantonal level, the conservative party *Schweizerische Volkspartei*, Swiss Popular Party (SVP) is the most represented party, with right wing politicians representing two thirds of the parliament. Accordingly, as with other Swiss cities, Bern felt the need to develop its own integration policy.

A political majority does not prevent divergences, however. Civil servants who were interviewed reported a lack of coordination between the numerous actors involved in the field of migrant integration. The idea of working on “integration guidelines” was adopted, and the process of its development is at least as important as the result. We will first outline the context of Bern as a Swiss city before focusing on the integration guidelines as social innovation. This will commence with a short history of its development, before an analysis of its mode of working, the ways of addressing users and the interaction with the governance system.

## 23.2 The Context

Bern is the Swiss capital and home to the federal administration, government and parliament. It is the fourth largest city (130,000 inhabitants in 2014) and urban area (406,000) in Switzerland. Foreigners represent 24% of the city’s population, which is slightly less than most other cities in Switzerland. The unemployment rate<sup>3</sup> reached 3.3% of the active population in 2010 in Bern while the mean average for all Swiss cities was 4.4%. Bern is the chef-lieu of the second largest canton, both in area and population.

Since Switzerland is a federal state, responsibility for welfare is shared across the national, cantonal (26 cantons) and communal levels (2495 communes). Following the two guiding principles of subsidiarity and federalism, a large part of the welfare system is steered by the commune. The commune of the city of Bern has a wide and supportive welfare system and is seen as constantly growing, since the left holds a majority in the city government. Nevertheless, it should be noted that representatives from both the left and right agree with this vision. Even if there is some doubt regarding long-term viability, expansion of the city’s welfare system is not contested on a fundamental level. However, the two main coalitions regularly disagree on the extent of the state’s role regarding societal issues: a left wing coalition, commonly called *Rot-Grün-Mitte*, red-green-centre (RGM), is opposed to a right wing coalition, named by interviewees “die Bürgerlichen” (“bourgeois”, in the “conservative” sense). Since the early 1990s, the former have been the most prominent actors in the development of a kind of municipal socialism in the city. They are a good fit for Häußermann’s notion of an integration coalition (Häußermann 2006). The second coalition advocates a more liberal state and could be seen as a

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<sup>3</sup> It should be stated that this only counts people registered with regional unemployment offices.

growth coalition. However, a convincing consensus can be found when it comes to the welfare system's *raison d'être*. Along these lines, the dual coalitions function as what we might call an innovation regime<sup>4</sup>.

This consensus rests in a desire to enhance the location's desirability for people and business. Although it is the capital, as previously mentioned, Bern is only the fourth largest city in Switzerland. The head trio is Zurich, often identified as the financial capital, Geneva known for its banks and its numerous international organisations, and Basel, with its dynamic pharmaceutical industry. Each of these three has an international airport as well as close links with neighbouring countries. For its part, Bern is trying to identify itself as a social, open-minded and innovative city. Interviewees proudly recall how, in the 1990s, Bern was a pioneering city in the field of drug policy<sup>5</sup>. "Bern is a social city" or "Diversity is richness" are slogans promoted by the city government, so it comes as no surprise that Bern wants to be a city where no one is left behind.

Bern also invests in the promotion of a positive discourse concerning the issue of migrants, with voters' support showing that this orientation is more than simple city branding<sup>6</sup>. Due to the system of direct democracy at the communal level, orientation of the welfare system can be attributed in part to voting citizens. A significant number of Bern's citizens could be described as belonging to a "creative class" (Florida 2013). Despite the critiques that can be levelled at this analytical category, a number of interviewees spoke of an "urban mind", or an "urban minded population". This state of mind is considered to include values like global mindedness, solidarity, creativity, ecology and growth. Referendums on migration issues regularly show how urbanites distinguish themselves from the rest of the population. For example, 72.3% of Bern city dwellers rejected the recent vote against "mass migration"<sup>7</sup>. Meanwhile, on the cantonal level, 51.1% of the voters accepted restrictions on immigration. The values of openness and tolerance demonstrated by urban voters are consequently embraced by the city's government, becoming a framework for their policies.

### 23.3 Integration Guidelines

We will now outline the history of integration guidelines. In the second half of the 1990s, Swiss cities started to take control of the challenges surrounding the integration of migrants. Until then, right wing populist parties were alone in tackling the subject. Schönenberger and D'Amato (2009) attribute this change to the increasing

<sup>4</sup> Concept inspired by Häußermann, see Cattacin (2011).

<sup>5</sup> Interview with a third sector worker in the field of addictions.

<sup>6</sup> See for example the high scores of the government re-election of 2012 (almost 70% for the city president).

<sup>7</sup> Swiss popular initiative "Against mass immigration", February 9th 2014. Accepted by a slight majority of 50.34%. Detailed results for Bern available on the Chancery website: <http://www.sta.be.ch/sta/de/index/wahlen-abstimmungen/wahlen-abstimmungen.html>.

heterogenization and fragmentation of the social and urban structure and to the arrival of new lifestyles (of nationals and migrants). The specific urban context allowed cities to take a lead in negotiating this theme that, up until this point, had been largely ignored by the Confederation and the cantons. Consequently, several debates arose, with one of the purported problems being the implementation of the ageing foreigners law (1931). It had become necessary to adapt the policies to the present context and more current concerns. However, authorities on various levels offered minimal cooperation due to their differing understandings of procedures.

For these reasons, in 1995, the executive council of the city of Bern decided to establish official guidelines. The idea was to develop and possess a better knowledge regarding the integration of “people from foreign origin” and the fundamentals regarding potential alternative practices. A year later, the anthropologist Hans-Rudolf Wicker (University of Bern) delivered a report that highlighted the necessity of a coordinated and needs-related integration policy. Many actors within the fields of administration and civil society transmitted their feedback and, in 1997, a working group dedicated to the redaction of the guidelines was established. It included representatives from the Foreigners Police of Bern, from diverse departments like welfare, education, equality between men and women, from the federal foreigner’s commission, together with an anthropologist. Some nongovernmental organisations were represented, among other Caritas (charities), the information service for foreigners and the Forum for Migrants. It is noteworthy that representatives of migrant populations themselves were not invited. In 1998, the executive council received a first draft, which underwent revision until 1999, when it was finally voted on and accepted by the council.

The guidelines are composed of ten principles, intended to pave the way for a renewed understanding of integration, specifically within the realm of political discourse. Furthermore, they were meant to “open the way” to the implementation of lasting integration measures<sup>8</sup>. As an introduction to the newly established guidelines, the executive councillor at the time<sup>9</sup> underlined the importance of contributions made by migrants to Switzerland. Indeed, some migrants are amongst the most professionally successful people in Switzerland; however, it is the case that a disproportionately high number work in the low-pay sector or are unemployed. This could be interpreted as a sign of an economic, social and cultural disintegration that threatens Bern’s prosperity. Schönenberger and D’Amato (2009) state that while there has never been an active integration policy in Switzerland, the “declining” economic situation has intensified the challenges faced by migrants.

Ten years later, the need for an adaptation of the guidelines was felt. It had to encompass the emerging consensus on the principle of encouraging and demanding<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Claudia Omar-Amberg, preface to *Leitbild zur Integrationspolitik der Stadt Bern*, Stadt Bern, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> The social-democrat Claudia Omar-Amberg, in charge of the Department of Education, Health and Welfare.

<sup>10</sup> *Fordern und fördern* in German. Encouraging refers to the welfare benefits whilst demanding refers to the conditions attached to the provision of these benefits.

(impacting the whole urban welfare system) and the approach of integration as a bilateral process. The scene had changed with a new law regarding foreigners coming into force in 2008. The Confederation had taken over the debate about integration, which had started at a city level, and for the first time integration became a legal notion. Since 2001, the Confederation has offered a budget for integration measures; measures which migrants may be forced to follow (e.g. language classes). However, divergences remained when it came to the balance between encouraging and demanding and on the understandings of the respective roles of the migrant population and the “host” population. Meanwhile, a newly created “Competence Centre for Integration” was tasked with leading the update of the 1999 guidelines, supported by an expert group (internal and external of administration). A new study was ordered by the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies. In 2009, the Competence Centre for Integration organised a “guidelines day” in which 60 participants took part. As a civil servant explained: “we invited a lot of people for a day of discussion. They could make proposals, ask questions. It would have been unimaginable to come up with these guidelines and say ‘here, now you have to implement them’”<sup>11</sup>. This time round, representatives of migrant populations were not forgotten.

Ratified by the city council in 2010, the most significant aspect of the new version was a list of 37 concrete measures planned for implementation in 2011 and 2012. The intention was that the Competence Centre would help to coordinate and inform, whilst the city would draw from the global city budget in order to finance them. Some measures address the migrant population directly (e.g. financial support for German courses) while others address workers in contact with migrants (e.g. diversity management training).

### ***23.3.1 Internal Organization and Mode of Working***

We will now describe the 2010 version of the guidelines. The document starts with an introduction to the integration policy of Bern, first highlighting the diversity of the city’s population: foreigners represent one fifth of the population and exist in a heterogeneous population. Following that, the document defines integration as a way of reaching equality of opportunity and participation for everyone, understood as the basis for social cohesion. Integration is meant as a dynamic process that requires, besides financial means and time, the commitment of both migrants and national citizens. The importance of the many actors involved (e.g. welfare institutions, sport clubs, religious communities, associations, etc.) is also acknowledged.

The document details four guiding principles: “1. The city of Bern recognises diversity and difference as strengths of our society; 2. The city of Bern supports the potential of migrants; 3. The city of Bern commits itself to the fight against discrimination; 4. The city of Bern supports equality of opportunities and participation of migrants”. These principles are detailed in three or four sub-points. Then, the

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with a public administrator in the field of integration.

specific aims are detailed in several fields of action such as training, language and education; labour market; hobbies, culture and sport; health; civic and social participation; housing and environment; information and communication. Finally, the document names the actors involved and their specific roles in the implementation of the guidelines, namely the Competence Centre for Integration, the administrative services, external partners (associations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), etc.), the board for integration (group of experts) and the Forum for Migrants. The Competence Centre for Integration is meant to coordinate the work of a wide network of public, private and third sector actors.

Integration policy is thus a “cross-cutting” policy involving all sectors of a mixed welfare system. The Competence Centre is also the link between the different territorial levels: the Confederation, the cantons and the other communes.

Widely publicised by the Swiss administration, the document is available on paper as well as on the Internet, foremost addressing the administration and the civil servants of the city of Bern. The principles and aims presented in the document should lead their everyday work and orientate the action of their services. However, it cannot be assimilated to a work duty since no enforcement is planned to ensure the implementation of the guiding principles. Moreover, the document also addresses private and third sector actors, highlighting their potential impact on integration and suggesting ways of considering and dealing with people of foreign origin. Finally, it is meant to inform the population about the integration policy of their city. In 2010, the updated version of the guidelines became more concretised, encompassing a catalogue of measures. In this respect, the guidelines function as a basis for the proposal to existing structures of how they could participate, in real terms, in the city’s integration policy.

### ***23.3.2 Conception and Ways of Addressing Users***

The guidelines have many goals and thus address different categories of users. We could identify three user-oriented roles and two governance-related roles. First, through the development of the guidelines and the consultation process, experts and stakeholders (that were sometimes not considered or did not consider themselves as stakeholders before) are involved and encouraged to take part in the city’s integration policy. The purpose is thus to redefine the extent of the policy field. Second, the guidelines have a coordination role. Users here are agencies and units providing services in the redefined field of migrant integration. At the street level, users are the workers providing these services, for whom the guidelines are a code of conduct. Third, the guidelines have an information role, with users here being the city’s inhabitants and even potential inhabitants the city wants to attract with its migrant-friendly image.

The first governance-related role is practice oriented since the guidelines serve as a basis for concrete measures. The idea is that action needs, first of all, a consensus on the aims and definition of concepts. It states in black and white that the city

of Bern wants to promote integration and specifies what exactly is meant by integration, why it is important and who is responsible for it. Since reaching the aims relies on the coordinated work of many actors, clarifying all these aspects is crucial. By pointing out where integration is at stake, it opens the way for new measures and most importantly, new fields of action. The second governance role is political and strategic. As a civil servant said, “The guidelines were a political project. The idea was to show that they [the city government] handled it [integration]”<sup>12</sup>. The guidelines are used as a political tool, to legitimise measures of integration. Indeed, integration is a hot topic for debate. As Vogel stated for another Swiss city, establishing guidelines on this topic puts an end to countless discussions in the city council (Vogel 2006). Thus, it can be seen as a way of imposing a political program. As everybody agreed on the principle of promoting integration, the left managed to establish a model that bound the principle to measures in order to make them harder to contest.

### 23.3.3 *Interaction with the Governance System*

Integration guidelines can be considered as an innovative change within the governance of Bern’s local welfare system. Starting with a formulation of the principles, it contributes to the reification of the city of Bern, establishing it as an important actor regarding urban social life. Every principle and its sub-points start with “The city of Bern [dedicates itself to/supports/acknowledges/etc.]”. Repeated 18 times in a row, this anaphora suggests that dedication to the integration of migrants is a special feature of the city of Bern. It also insists on the communal stranglehold on integration issues facing the cantonal and federal authorities.

The guidelines are also an innovative feature of governance in the way they go beyond the usual decision-making process, usually involving elected magistrates and occurring behind closed doors. The development of the guidelines is in this sense as important as the result. First, by involving many actors, the competence centre acknowledged the fact that integration cannot rely solely on the state and its administrative agencies. Neither can it be reached through big projects or campaigns or on quotas and compulsory measures aimed towards civil society. Examples of inclusion, equality of opportunities and non-discrimination can be seen everywhere and everyday. As a civil servant explained: “People often think that there is no will to implement these guidelines. What we see is a lot of motivation yet perhaps a lack of know-how. People expect big projects. But integration is also a matter of details we do not necessarily see”<sup>13</sup>.

Second, this manner of discussing, negotiating and finally writing down guidelines is an innovative way of building social policies. It supports participation and acceptance through the consultation and involvement of stakeholders. It acknowl-

<sup>12</sup> Interview with a civil servant in the field of integration.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

edges the limits of enforceable rules in a field like integration. Definitions and responsibilities first have to be collectively defined and endorsed. The coordinating and informing role of the Competence Centre for Integration illustrates the innovative (in this context) role of the state as an encouraging and enabling actor. However, herein lie the limits of this way of governing. The city can somehow enforce its guidelines within its own administration and institutions; however, there is no legal basis for doing so in associations and private companies. Since there is no intention to make them mandatory, their implementation remains highly dependent on cooperation from third parties.

Another limit is related to the competences attributed to the Confederation. As an example, a journalist put forward the case of a migrant with an academic degree that is not recognised by Swiss authorities (Einhaus 2011). In such a case, the city has no leeway to offer him better job opportunities. The same problem weighs upon the naturalisation process and requirements. If Bern—its government and its population—predominantly think that naturalisation can be a tool to support integration, the city has no authority to lighten the requirements of the procedure. Those are defined by the canton and Confederation. At these upper levels, naturalisation is mostly seen as the reward for “completed” integration.

## 23.4 Conclusion

Two opposing interpretations can be made from this innovative feature of governance. On the one hand, this way of defining a policy and an agenda by consulting experts and stakeholders can be seen as a technocratic turn in Bern’s governance. Indeed, the clarity and univocality of the guidelines can mask the controversial aspects of the debate on what is integration and how we want to achieve it. Like Schönenberger and D’Amato (2009) argued, the guidelines managed to simplify a complex and controversial debate. This simplification and clarification allowed the city government to launch concrete measures on the basis of the collectively defined guidelines and thus, partly avoid the endless debates on integration. As MacLeod (2011:2632) argues, “This process of polic(y)ing and governing through a stage-managed consensus is serving to depoliticise 21st-century capitalism’s deeply antagonistic social relations”.

On the other hand, the guidelines can be seen as an acknowledgement of the eminently political character of integration policy. Instead of pretending the concept of integration is technical and unequivocal, this policy building process is based on a political debate. Integration policy has first been disputed among stakeholders from civil society and has then been voted on by the city council. This process requires consensus and reaching a consensus requires a deliberation process. The consensus has to be renewed, as it has been done with an update of the guidelines after 10 years. However, in the medium term, it allows for the building of coherent policy, where all stakeholders involved potentially work towards collectively defined aims. The guidelines could be a sign of an upcoming form of governance where the local state aims at facilitating and coordinating the implementation of policies (refer Øverbye et al. 2010 for more on this topic).



In either interpretation, such guidelines contribute to addressing the growing challenge of coordination. The multiplication of actors involved in the welfare system (see Kazepov 2010) increases the need for coordination measures. Integration guidelines have proven to be effective as a horizontal coordination measure addressing actors of the same (urban) level. However, it is less helpful with regard to the challenges of multilevel governance and the need for vertical coordination. These challenges are accentuated by the difference in the political majorities between the city (left wing majority) and the cantonal level (right wing majority). Nevertheless, the innovative features of the integration guidelines are strongly related to their development and their implementation on a local level. It allows a significant consultation process since the lower scale permits involving any interested actor. In that case, developing guidelines at the city level can increase inhabitants' identification with the city. The integration policy is not only a welfare policy. In the case of Bern, it is an intrinsic part of the city's image and attractiveness.

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