



# YEPP IRC "YEPP" as a Key Approach for Urban Development

If you are interested in empowering youth and communities in urban areas, please contact us:

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## Urban Youth in Europe

Europe is a Union of cities and towns; around 75% of population of the European Union have chosen urban areas as their place to live. For young people living in urban areas and in particular economic and socially disadvantaged areas can be quite tough. It depends very much of the characteristics of the situation, but some of the common challenges for young people in Europe's (sub)urban areas are as follows:

- Poor economic situation: one parent families, unemployment, little money, illegal income ...
- Feeling of insecurity: higher crime rate, anti-social behaviour, gangs, prostitution, vandalism ...
- Bad housing: high rise building blocks, dilapidated buildings, over-crowded areas ...
- Challenging social network: 'wrong' friends, over-crowdedness, intolerance between different cultural groups ...
- Drug and alcohol abuse: to be part of the group, survival mechanisms ...
- Lack of leisure time offer: limited access to youth activities, no bad or expensive sport infrastructure, reluctance of youth workers to work in difficult areas ...
- Lack of access to education and vocational training ...

## Empowerment of Urban Communities

The work with marginalised and disadvantaged communities has convinced the YEPP International Resource Centre (YEPP IRC) that enabling urban communities to improve their situation, and especially the situation of youth, should be one of the highest priorities.

YEPP IRC builds on the expertise of the Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme (YEPP) which was implemented in Europe in 2001-2011 and transformed into YEPP IRC in 2012. The "YEPP" approach and methodology was developed to promote social inclusion of disadvantaged groups in Europe.

## The "YEPP" Concept of Change

The "YEPP" Concept of Change is based on the following set of principles which are put into action to achieve the goal of youth and community empowerment in urban areas:

- Building a common ground at local, regional, national and transnational levels through dialogue and advocacy activities,
- Building cross-sectorial partnerships of local stakeholders, e.g. municipalities, local foundations, NGOs, residents and young people,
- Promoting active citizenship and the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in decision-making processes,
- Facilitating non-formal learning of young people and local stakeholders at all levels with participatory and interactive methods
- Building capacities of local stakeholders in the field of youth and community empowerment, entrepreneurship, media work and advocacy
- Monitoring and evaluating local activities with participatory methods involving young people
- Training young people in conscious use of the media and on how to make their voices heard through new technology

## The urban areas where the "YEPP" approach and methodology has been implemented and led to significant changes are:

### Dublin North Inner City, Ireland:

In this area with significant social and economic disadvantage and some of the highest levels of deprivation in the city, young people work on projects focused on education, capacity building, employability and (social) entrepreneurship as well as address mental health and drug abuse issues.

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## YEPP IRC "YEPP" as a

### GörlitzZgorzelec (Germany-Poland):

GörlitzZgorzelec was one city before the Second World War. The rivers Oder and Neiße which divided the city became the new border between Germany and Poland after the end of the war and two cities developed. In recent years, young people have worked on overcoming this division and fostering cross-border collaboration. Many projects are being implemented by the young people from both parts and they have recently engaged in an (social) entrepreneurship programme ("Build Your Future") in order to develop entrepreneurial ideas which can involve (young) people from both countries in intercultural and cross-border collaboration.

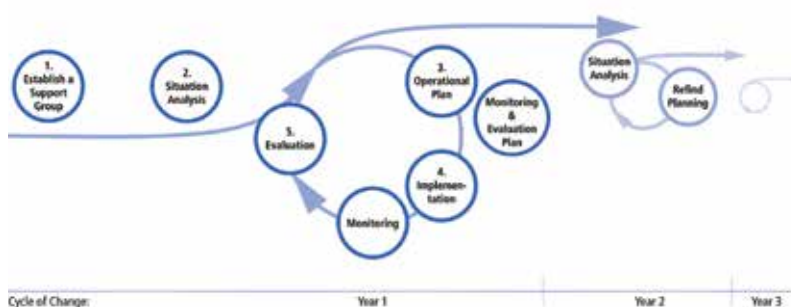
### Albenga, Genoa-Cornigliano, La Spezia, Turin-Porta Palazzo, Turin Falchera, Italy:

In Italy where the "YEPP" approach and methodology is implemented in several different disadvantaged urban settings, young people influence policies by being involved in decision making processes at the municipality level. The projects of young people range from (social) entrepreneurial initiatives such as urban gardens, peer counselling to promote employability and mobility solutions to cultural and social projects. They include music, video making, photography and cultural events aimed at social change and at improving the conditions and the quality of life in their area of the city.

## The "YEPP" Cycle of Change

One of the essential parts of the YEPP Concept of Change is the "YEPP" Cycle of Change. It is driven by an ongoing process of analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and aims at bringing about sustainable social change to local communities.

In the "YEPP" approach and methodology, young people are seen as a driving force in their community. They work together with local stakeholders, such as NGOs, schools, business representatives and local authorities and are guided through the participatory process of the "YEPP" Cycle of Change by experienced youth workers. In this process, young people are enabled to participate in local decision-making processes, create change within their communities and become active citizens in the wider society. The local work is combined with international capacity building workshops and trainings in advocacy, media work or entrepreneurship. It is enriched through exchange with peers from other communities and countries in the YEPP Community Network. Currently, the "YEPP" approach and methodology is being implemented in more than 100 communities across Europe, including Bosnia & Herzegovina, Ireland, Italy, Finland, Germany, Poland and Slovakia. From 2016 onwards communities in Greece, Spain, Romania, Czech Republic and Sweden will also start working with this approach and join the YEPP Community Network.



## Benefits of "YEPP" for Urban Youth and Their Communities

- Young people's voices are heard and youth takes actively part in decision making processes
- More positive local identity, learning to appreciate the local environment, as well as available resources
- Stronger self-confidence through participatory learning methods
- Team-working skills and experience in working hand in hand with local authorities and community stakeholders
- Experience of community-rooted project management through the needs assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of common projects
- Stronger creative and entrepreneurial skills, inspiration to start new projects, local initiatives or businesses which can greatly benefit urban communities
- Stronger analytical skills due to monitoring and evaluation processes
- Intercultural competence and increased sense of tolerance for and interest in other cultures after YEPP transnational youth meetings and conferences
- Stronger English skills
- Better visibility for local youth work at the European level as a result of joint advocacy work in the YEPP Community Network