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Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education

WORKING PAPER

**INTERSECTION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND OTHER AREAS OF
SOCIAL POLICY**

Project 5 Work package 18

UNOTT

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CREA-UB

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University of Barcelona



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1. INTRODUCTION

The present Working paper's objective is to gather the findings of the preliminary reports elaborated by the different Project 5 participants (SIAE, CEPS, UNIFI, DUK, UNOTT and UB) about the Integrative Actions analysed in this work package.

Project 5's WP18 corresponds to the operational Objective 5.1 that is, *to review the intersections between educational policies and other areas of social policy* (Annex 1, p. 40) and will contribute to the main goal of Project 5 which is *to analyse the mixed interventions between educational policy and other areas of social policy and to identify which are making steps forward to overcome social exclusion and build social cohesion in Europe* (Annex 1, p. 5).

This paper is based on the results of the Integrative Actions (mixed interventions)¹ analysed by the partners involved in this working paper: UNOTT, UNIFI, CEPS, CREA-UB, DUK and SIAE. The Integrative Actions being analysed and the results of which are being presented here have addressed the *intersection between Education and one or more of the four other areas selected*: health, housing, employment and participation and the distribution of this analysis has been done as follows:

- SIAE: Education and Health
- UNIFI: Education and Housing
- DUK: Education and Employment
- CEPS: Education and Participation
- UNOTT and UB: Education in the 4 areas

This distribution has allowed us to identify the role played by Education within policies covering different social areas. Furthermore, the analysis needed to identify the degree

¹ As a consequence of the development of the research project, the research team identifies that the term Integrative Action and Integrative Successful Action better addressed the reality being analysed. From now, we are going to use these terms.

of success attained by each explored Integrative Action in order to identify elements for success.

The findings of this working paper together with the reports to be drawn from next WP19 analysis, will jointly constitute the basis for the elaboration of Project 5's Report 7 entitled: *European policies: Education and social cohesion*.

2. METHODOLOGY

Following the orientations defined in Annex 1, the main goal of this work package was to elaborate a working paper which collected the findings of the in-depth analysis of **18 Integrative Actions** (three integrative actions per partner) addressing different areas of society, as seen above.

Prior to the selection of the Integrative Actions to analyse, a Literature Review about successful practices was conducted on Integrative Actions at international level. The specific goal was *to collect scientific contributions focused on analysing successful practices on mixed interventions at international level, that is, policies which connect education to other areas of social policy and which have achieved the most significant results with regards to the overcoming of social exclusion in the four studied areas (Draft, p.8)*.

For the smooth development of the literature review among all the partners, a Literature Review Guide was elaborated among by UNOTT and UB. The selection criteria were defined here as well as the distribution of the areas to account for in the search, as follows:

Literature Review	Integrative Actions	Partners involved
Identification of successful practices related to Integrative Actions	Education and Health	SIAE
	Education and Housing	UNIFI
	Education and Employment	DUK
	Education and Participation	CEPS

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	Education, Health, Housing, Employment and Participation	UB
	Education, Health, Housing Employment and Participation	UNOTT

Each of the partners proposed 4 Integrative Actions in the areas set, which needed to respond to the following criteria:

- Policies, interventions, programmes or strategies that connect education to other areas of society (Public policies analyzed must link education and at least one of the selected areas, improving the situation in both, education and the specific area).
- To be successful and/or efficient (that must be proved with data in the selected articles)
- To contribute to social inclusion or social cohesion (improve the situation and prospects of their area of intervention, in particular, if it benefits the most vulnerable groups).

a. Data collection

Each of the partners searched for Integrative Actions in their corresponding area according to the above distribution and selected four most significant ones according to a first approximation. From the 24 Integrative Actions proposed, 18 were selected according to the intersection between education and one or more of the four social areas on the one hand, and on the presentation of evidence of success on the other. In some of the cases, further evidence was requested in order to finally select the Integrative Actions to be analysed in depth.

The selection of the documents and the other sources that needed to be analysed responded to the information requested for each Integrative Action, particularly focusing on the implementation process and the evidence of success of each Integrative Action.

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The sample of the documents that have been explored by the different participating institutions includes:

- UNOTT: web pages and other electronic material i.e. DVD; telephone conversations were also made in gather information about some of the programmes which resulted from the Integrative Action analysed;
- UNIFI: internal documentation and electronic material to be found on the internet. Contact with the representatives of the programmes was also sought in order to add more evidence to the analysis of the success of the Integrative Actions being analysed.
- CEPS: evaluation reports, project reports, manuals, website. The information was complemented through email communication as well as telephone interviews to gather specific information.
- CREA-UB: the documentation analysed referred to evaluation reports, project presentation documents, project reports, online public presentations, news clip and other public and internal documentation. Telephone interviews were also made in order to complement information regarding the necessary evidence for the assessment of the Integrative Actions.
- DUK: internal documentation and electronic material to be found on the internet, evaluation reports, project reports and website.
- SIAE: finals reports from the programmes, project reports, websites and Publications from the analysed Integrative Actions.

The final Integrative Actions selected for analysis are the following:

	AREAS	INTEGRATIVE ACTION	PARTNER
1	Education and Health	The European Network of health Promoting Schools	SIAE
2	Education and Health	The Programme MURA (in the scope of the CINDI programme)	SIAE
3	Education and Health	National Programme of Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Diseases	SIAE
4	Education and Employment	Verein Sprungbrett	DUK
5	Education and Employment	TEP. Territorial Employment Pacts in Austria	DUK

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6	Education and Employment	DYNAMO	DUK
7	Education and Employment	Young people at risk of offending	UNOTT
8	Education, Employment and health	IWPD Programme	UNOTT
9	Education and participation	West Yorkshire Programme for the integration of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women	UNOTT
10	Education, Employment, participation	Integrated Plan for the Roma people of Catalonia	UB
11	Education and Health, Employment and Participation	The Urbanitas Plan of the City of Albacete. URBAN Community Initiative program of the European Commission	UB
12	Education and Employment and Participation	Connecta Network	UB
13	Education and Housing	Cooperativa Sociale Biloba	UNIFI
14	Education and Housing	Coabitazione solidale	UNIFI
15	Education and Housing	Fondazione Casa onlus	UNIFI
16	Education and Participation	Citizens' panels, Bringing disaffected youth to policymaking	CEPS
17	Education and Participation and Housing	FORUM's Resident Housing Workshops	CEPS
18	Education and participation	New Citizens Voice, "Your Voice Matters" workshops	CEPS

b. Data analysis

Different sources have been tapped in order to attain relevant evidence explaining both the implementation process and most interestingly the evidence on the extent of its success. Remarkably, the different institutions involved in this work package have complemented the documentary analysis with personal communication either via email or via telephone conversations with the staff responsible of the different programmes stemming from the Integrative Actions.

To guide the process of policy analysis a document was elaborated and distributed among the different partners entitled **Guide for Policy Analysis I** where different methodologies were proposed, ranging from the content analysis to other complementary documentation, in order to be able to contribute relevant evidence to the

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analysis of each particular Integrative Action. This guide presented those **variables** to be taken into account for the analysis of the Integrative Actions in order to respond to the objective of the work package, namely:

- 1) Target group of the Integrative Action (e.g., criteria and process of selecting participants, level of involvement of participants in the implementation and decision making process).
- 2) Implementation process of the intervention (who implements, who is involved, involvement of stakeholders, community, resources used, etc.)
- 3) Level of decision making to implement the intervention (European, national, regional, local)
- 4) Analysis of success in achieving the objectives of the intervention. Evidence provided.
- 5) Analysis of how the intervention has contributed to social inclusion and empowerment of the targeted groups.
- 6) Analysis of improvements these policies have achieved in the different areas being studied, and their connection to educational results.
- 7) Main factors leading to success of the intervention.

Furthermore, information regarding a description of the Integrative Action and the sources tapped for the analysis was also requested:

- 8) Short description of the Integrative Action (areas of intervention, objective, target group, measures taken, level of decision making and geographical area of intervention).
- 9) Information sources used.

The provision of data referring to the success of the policies' implementation has been a key focus of the analysis conducted. With the information tapped from the Integrative Actions' analysis each of the partners prepared a Preliminary Report presenting the most relevant information of the three Integrative Actions analysis that responded to the goal of the analysis. The work carried out allowed for the identification of two types of findings:

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- On the one hand, concrete findings on the achievements of Integrative Successful Actions in the four social areas were identified.
- On the other hand, successful elements within the implementation process and from the development of the different Integrative Actions were highlighted.

WP 18's Policy analysis I has been devoted to *observe the kind of improvements these policies have achieved in the different areas being studied, especially taking their connection to educational results into account* (Draft, p.8). The findings and conclusions of each partners' work was elaborated into different **preliminary reports** covering the intersections between Education and the other four areas selected. The present working paper is based on the contrast of the findings and conclusions from each of the preliminary reports.

The findings of **Policy analysis I** collected in each partners' preliminary reports have conformed the basis for the elaboration of the present working paper on *Intersections between educational policies and other areas of social policy* necessarily focuses on the final aim of Report 7. This document will present essential conclusions on *European Integrative Actions and policies that reduce and overcome educational exclusion and promote social cohesion*.

3. CONNECTION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND OTHER AREAS OF SOCIAL POLICY

The literature review conducted at the start of this work package has shown **the relevance of educational components in the development of successful social policies**. We have seen how training activities and educational programmes lay behind the social policies which are demonstrating to contribute to overcoming social exclusion in particular areas: housing, health, social participation and employment. Additionally, it also states the need to identify which sort of educational provision and components are those which have a wider impact on these social policies (Listokin & Listokin, 2001; Hutson & Jones, 2002; Mircea, 2010; Gregg, 2001).

In this section we will present the educational components identified in the analysis of Integrative Actions and how they have contributed to improvements in other social areas. Identifying these components allows providing guidance on the kind of educational initiatives that must be taken into account in the social policies in order to contribute to social inclusion.

3.1. Education & Employment

We present here 7 Integrative Actions in the areas of education and employment from 3 European countries.

1) Integrated Plan for the Roma people of Catalonia (Spain)

The **Integrated Plan for the Roma people** is a public policy elaborated with a twofold goal: on the one hand it analysed the situation of the Roma people in Catalonia and on the other hand, it proposed a series of actions in different social areas to be developed in order to tackle the situation of exclusion experienced by the Roma community in Catalonia. The policy actions comprised in the Integrated Plan for the Roma people stem from two sources: **a study of the successful actions identified by the international**

scientific community as well the demands of the very Roma community (Sánchez, 2003), which were gathered in an extensive fieldwork carried out with the associations of the Roma community in Catalonia. The result was the identification of nearly 100 actions in different social areas such as social assistance and citizenship, trade, culture, women and gender policies, education, sports, housing, language policy, participation, youth, rehabilitation of historic centres, public health, safety, sustainability and work. These actions defined jointly by the scientific community and Roma became the first Integrated Plan for the Roma people in force from 2005 to 2008. The Plan 2009-2013 is the continuation of the former and contains 106 actions in 16 areas. The following section focuses on how the participation of the Roma people is promoted throughout the implementation of the Integrated Plan, as a defining characteristic. In the next one, among the different actions implemented, we gather the example of the training course for school canteen monitors for Roma women, for the success achieved.

Democratic and inclusive management. Representatives of Roma organizations in decision-making and management

The Integrated Plan for the Roma people of Catalonia, is not only defined with the Roma associations but they are also present in management and decision-making spaces. The implementation of this policy lies in two main executive bodies - the Interdepartmental Commission and the **Advisory Council** of the Roma People. The Interdepartmental Commission is made up of policy makers from different departments (education, social services, health, employment and housing) of the Government of Catalonia. The latter consists of a group of **representatives from the Roma community in Catalonia with the goal to advise policy makers** on the development and implementation of policy to ensure that once designed and implemented these actions meet the real needs and demands of the groups they target. It is an effective way to incorporate the full participation of the Roma people promoting coordination between the Roma people and the Government. Another important body that voices the demands of the Roma community and which is key for the implementation of the Integrated Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia are the **Working Groups**. These groups **define the concrete activities to be carried out in accordance with the general action plan**. Working groups are formed by representatives of Roma associations and the corresponding departments of the government. In this way the voices of the Roma community are

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taken into account when giving shape to the planned activities according to the necessities of the target group. This aspect has been emphasized as an **efficient practice in the evaluation of the program allowing for the implementation of really useful activities which are demanded by the end-users.**

Overcoming the triple exclusion of Roma women: labour inclusion and positive role models in schools

The training course for **school canteen monitors** is aimed at Roma women outside of the labour market with no or limited educational qualifications. Roma women with low academic level suffer a triple situation of inequality: for being women, for belonging to a cultural minority and, for not having access to education. This course helps to overcome the inequality they suffer. It is organised in the most excluded neighbourhoods with limited educational activities or none at all, and in the selection process of the course participants, preference is given to those women with less education in order to support the ones most in need. This course consists of a vocational course providing Roma women with an **educational certificate and practical work experience in schools** and it is run by a nonprofit association, the Roma Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen [Which in Roma language means Path to Freedom]. The course comprises 308 hours in total: 158 hours of lectures, 150 hours of practice. After the completion of the theoretical part, the practical part is carried out preferably in schools of the same neighbourhoods where the women who have followed the course live. In addition, 25 hours will be devoted to writing a final essay for the course.

The creation of contexts of dialogue has been essential to contribute to the labour insertion of these Roma women. These contexts have been generated through the creation of spaces especially designed to give voice to those who have normally been excluded from the decisions that concerned them. In this case, the **Roma women have been able to decide about the training that they needed in order to find a job. The course was the result of a request of the very Roma women.** Having identified a lack of positive Roma role models for children in schools **they dreamt, in the context of dialogue in the Roma Association Women Drom Kotar Mestipen Assembly, of having more adult presence in schools to promote the presence of Roma role models** (Responsible of Drom Kotar Mestipen, Personal communication,

February 22nd 2011). They have also **participated in the planning and implementation** of the activity: it is the Roma women from the neighbourhood where the course is to take place who are in charge of organizing it. This involves for instance looking for appropriate facilities and spreading information to engage course participants, which promotes the impact and dissemination of the activities and encourages greater involvement of the Roma women. The **tailoring of the activities to the prior knowledge, skills and needs of these women** also stems from the inclusion of the Roma voices, and is seen as a key element for the success of the Integrative Action. This means for instance, adjusting the class **hours to the requirements² of Roma women or providing child care during these trainings.**

It is important to highlight that as a result of the training course for school canteen monitors, **the participants have obtained an educational qualification accredited by the Government of Catalonia** as well as practical work experience in this area which provides them with better employment prospects. In 2009 and after the course had been carried out for the fourth time, 90% of the participants in the course, started working in school canteens, proving the high rates of effectiveness of this intervention. The program's success is due both to high rates of inclusion of the Roma women in workplaces, and the positive influence that the presence of these women has in the schools. **This contributes to improve the living environment in schools. Roma women become role models not only for Roma children but for everyone.**

The success of this course suggests that there are key elements to account for, in order to define effective social policies. **Training that responds to the vulnerable groups' skills, potential and needs** has been identified as **playing a key role** in their success. When **contexts of dialogue are created through which to define successful educational provisions the education provided to the vulnerable groups can account for their needs:** their previous experience and skills, and the potential it has. This education will bring about the success needed to overcome the situation of social exclusion.

² For the course on school canteen monitors, in the first session of the course, participants decide on the most convenient on different issues (i.e. the most convenient class hours) which contribute to ensure that they can have full access to this educational and labour opportunity.

2) The Urbanitas Plan of the City of Albacete. URBAN Community Initiative program of the European Commission (Spain)

Dialogic Inclusion Contract. Policy makers, researchers, associations and neighbours with a common objective: overcoming the ghetto

Dialogue and participation of the community has also been one of the key elements in the definition and development of the following Integrative Action which is having a large positive impact in different social areas and with particularly vulnerable groups: the Urbanitas Plan. It is an initiative of the Albacete City Council in collaboration with the Government of Castilla-La Mancha, which is funded by the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) through the program URBAN Community Initiative of the European Commission. This program is an instrument within the EU Cohesion Policy dedicated to regenerating urban areas and neighbourhoods in crisis. Urban program involves enormous financial resources which aim to achieve effective urban and social transformation in deprived areas in Europe. Within all the actions that this plan has started up, we will focus here on the activity of the Miguel Fenollera Association regarding the **employment** creation in the neighbourhood, as well as other initiatives promoted by the city of Albacete. Prior to this, we will set the action in the context of the neighbourhoods where it is being implemented. We will also introduce the **Dialogic Inclusion Contract** which is the **successful process** that has led the Urbanitas Plan to **improve the lives of the residents of neighbourhoods contributing to overcome the ghetto**.

The origin, definition and development of this Integrative Action (Urbanitas Plan of the City of Albacete) **are fundamental to contextualise its success and impact in different areas**. The Urbanitas Plan is developed in La Milagrosa and La Estrella, two of the most underprivileged neighbourhoods in Spain, located on the outskirts of the city of Albacete. Today, people in this area suffer from high levels of poverty based on temporary and informal jobs such as selling scrap iron; above 35% of the working-age people depend on social welfare. They are mostly Roma and immigrants; 7% are illiterate and 79% have not completed basic education (Ministry of Education, Social Policies and Sports, 2008; Padrós, García, de Mello & Molina, 2011). In fact this same

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neighbourhood had already been awarded an URBAN plan in 1999, and ten years later the situation of the neighbourhood and that of its inhabitants was the same or worse than it had been before, with no changes in unemployment rates, health condition or social exclusion (Aubert, 2011). The first project funded by the URBAN plan to improve the situation of exclusion that suffered the district failed to meet its objectives. The community did not take part in the decision-making processes about how to manage the financial funding and on what actions to invest it. These issues were decided by professionals and other external staff, following a top-down model. This process -often followed in the design and implementation of plans and projects addressed to overcome similar situations of exclusion- cannot be separated from the analysis of the whole programme's failure to overcome social inequalities (Padrós, García, de Mello & Molina, 2011).

As ten years later the government was still struggling to find an effective solution to the marginalization of the neighbourhood, a new Urban Plan was defined with a different orientation this time. **The neighbourhood had a successful model in the school's transformation³ which was the result of joint discussions and reflections among the main interested parties:** representatives of Roma associations, other associations and entities which work in the neighbourhood, families of the children of the school, teachers, social educators and social workers, representatives of the Albacete City Council and the Government of the Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha and the research team. As a result of the former success, people from the administration and members of the community saw an opportunity and hope for a new URBAN plan. They started a process of deciding on the specific actions to be carried out which were gathered from the international scientific community, for the transformation of other social areas of the neighbourhood. **These agreements were reached through the process of argumentation in which all the views of different stakeholders were considered from the point of view of the validity of the arguments.** That is, the decisions were taken according to the argumentation that the different participants in this decision-making process gave, each one from its position, providing different knowledge to attain the ultimate goal of the plan: to get people out of the ghetto

³ The school had gone through a process of transformation into a Learning Community, which means the implementation of the successful educational actions identified in the literature and with a positive impact upon the educational results of the children (Gatt, Ojala & Soler, 2011)

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(Padrós, García, de Mello & Molina, 2011). The new approach provided was the result of a Dialogic Inclusion Contract (Aubert & Flecha, 2009). The **Dialogic Inclusion Contract** consists of a dialogic procedure in which researchers, end-users and policymakers recreate successful educational actions through egalitarian dialogue. That is, they analyse the actions which need to have been proven successful elsewhere and through a dialogue with the community these actions are recreated according to the new context and to the needs expressed by these end-users, guaranteeing that the decisions are taken by the people who have been democratically elected within the neighbourhood to do so (Aubert, 2011). This is the process which was followed here to decide on the specific actions -gathered from the international scientific community- for the transformation of different social areas. Among all the actions taking place within the framework of the Urbanitas Plan we are focusing here on the achievements of the Miguel Fenollera Association and the process of the **employment** cooperative.

Cooperatives: generating self-employment drawing from the experience among the community and the collaboration of experts in labour market analysis

The Association Miguel Fenollera is currently leading a process for the creation of the Cooperative which will take the same name (Miguel Fenollera). This cooperative is currently in the process of constitution through community assemblies that are being organized to decide on the setting-up and the action plan of the future cooperative (Miguel Fenollera Association, 2011). Meanwhile, important progress has already been made by the Miguel Fenollera Association. This association is identifying market needs and jobs in the neighbourhood and beyond and organising the assemblies where families from the neighbourhood take part together with other people related to the association, some of them with a great knowledge of the business world, the economy and the labour market (Miguel Fenollera Cooperative Project, 2010).

The idea of creating a cooperative started with people in the neighbourhood reflecting on the fact that some of **the activities common in the informal economy could be more efficiently done and provide alternatives to self-employment** if they were realized in the framework of a cooperative. The nature of a cooperative would give the opportunity to exploit the strengths of the community, identifying possible sources of employment and enabling the conditions for it. Therefore, creating a cooperative became

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thus one of the main goals to improve employability of many families who are already working within the informal economy in different areas like street vendors, construction, cleaning services, carers for older people.

The goal of the cooperative which is being created (Cooperative Miguel Fenollera Project, 2010) in the context of this Urbanitas Plan is to ensure the employability of a group of people that already has working abilities and who are at risk of social exclusion resulting from different personal situations, namely: long-term unemployment, unemployment of all members in working age of one family, lack of education, recovering from alcohol or drug abuse and violent family situations; with the aim to create a long term sustainable employment. Contacts are being established with different companies in the region, the chamber of commerce, the university, neighbourhood associations and the public administrations in order to establish collaboration partnerships within the context of the cooperative. Currently, several agreements have been signed with relevant banks of the area like Caja Castilla la Mancha and Caja Rural, as well as competitive employers' associations like ADECA (Asociación de Empresarios del Campollano, [Association of Entrepreneurs of Campollano]) and Asociación de Empresarios del Parque Empresarial [Association of Entrepreneurs of the Business Park] to fund the activity of the cooperative as we can see in next section on the creation of jobs. The University of Castilla la Mancha has also signed an agreement (García Ortiz, 2011) where one of the priorities is also the **training and preparation of the members of the cooperative in the business areas that are being developed**, building on all the background knowledge that they already have (Cooperative Miguel Fenollera Project, 2010). The association Miguel de Fenollera counts on the support and counselling of a training team at the University of Castilla-La Mancha in order to create the coop (Miguel Fenollera Association web site, 3 February 2011).

The knowledge, experience and resources of these entities are at the service of people and the community in order to create a cooperative that generates decent self-employment, stable and sustainable, offering effective and useful services to the community and surrounding areas. Collecting the professional experience of the community -whether formal or informal- different sectors have been identified in which the association will offer services such as: leisure, cleaning, gardening, assistants in

schools and nursing homes, industrial mounting and assembly, construction and telemarketing assistant (Miguel Fenollera Association web site, 3 February 2011).

Jobs for the neighbourhoods' families in projects that implement successful educational actions in the community

Within the framework of the Urbanitas Plan, **relevant employment opportunities have been created following the different successful educational actions initiated through the school transformation.** People have been hired in the context of the successful educational actions as to have parents in the community to become officially accredited basketball coach; others working as an assistant on social and educational tasks; or as responsible for the morning reception class and educational leisure activities that are organised in the framework of the Educational Project in the neighbourhoods La Estrella and La Milagrosa (PEBEM, Educational project of Albacete's La Estrella and La Milagrosa districts). Summarizing the impact of these programmes in 2010, the mayor of Albacete recently stated that they have promoted the creation of more than 100 work-places in the neighbourhoods of La Milagrosa and La Estrella (Miguel Fenollera Association web site, 3 February 2011).

On February 18, Miguel Fenollera Association signed an agreement with Albacete's Fundación Caja Rural [Rural bank Foundation of Albacete], to fund the association in order to organise training for young people to become monitors of leisure time in the neighborhoods of La Estrella and La Milgarosa. In addition, the main goal of the employability of these young people is to prevent them from criminality and drugs, through sports and especially through basketball. The leisure activities developed by this association with the aim of preventing delinquency and drug consumption has gone in recent years from working with 40 to working with 400 children aged 4 to 16 years, (L.V. 2 March, 2011).

The Dialogic Inclusion Contract has proven to be a successful action which has contributed to the overcoming of the ghetto. This has been achieved by joining the knowledge from the scientific community about the actions that best work in contexts like this one into a direct dialogue with the end users, who best know how these actions can be recreated to be successful in their neighbourhoods. By so doing, not only

educational results have improved but also improvements in other social areas have been achieved.

3) Into Work Personal Development Programme. IWPDP (UK)

Dialogue overcomes personal and social barriers for the labour inclusion of people with a disability

Another experience analysed is the Into Work Personal Development Programme (IWPDP), in the UK, where **people with arthritis are seeing how their job prospects improve**. In light of welfare reforms in the late 1990s which resulted in threats to disability benefits in the UK, a number of research studies were conducted as a matter of some urgency (e.g. Barlow & Cullen, 1996; Barlow & Williams, 1999; Cullen & Barlow, 1998). Psychological interventions in the area of education, employment and health “aim to reduce the negative impact of unemployment on the individual’s psychosocial well-being” (Barlow et al, 2001: 207). One prime example of these interventions is the IWPDP programme, the purpose of which is to assist people with arthritis in **maximising their social and employment prospects by promoting a positive outlook for the future** (Arthritis Care, 1996). The programme aims to address the internal and external barriers faced by people with arthritis in seeking to fulfil their potential (Barlow et al, 2001: 207). The programme goes beyond the provision of information and employment-related training: **participants are encouraged to challenge their habits, beliefs and attitudes and to take new, more assertive routes of action**.

Information regarding the **IWPDP programme** was circulated in the Arthritis Care network and the programme was offered free of charge to unemployed adults with arthritis (Arthritis care, 1996; Barlow & Cullen, 1996). **All participants enrolling on the IWPDP programme were invited to take part in the study**. A comparison control group was recruited through the Arthritis Care network from the pool of network members who had not enrolled on the IWPDP programme. A total of 97 participants completed the assessment prior to the intervention; 15 failed to complete the follow-up assessment giving a final sample size of 79 (37 in the intervention group, 42 in the control group).

Prior to the IWPD, trainees identified a number of barriers directly related to employment and training. The main barriers discussed in all three pre-course focus groups concerned the lack of understanding about arthritis in society, transport difficulties and fear about not “being able to cope at work” (Barlow et al, 2001: 213). A number of focus group participants reported intrapersonal barriers associated with a general lack of confidence in their own abilities, low self-esteem and negative thinking. Family and children were also considered to be a barrier restricting personal development. In general, **prior to the IWPD programme focus group participants had few ideas about how these barriers could be overcome.**

Comparisons of change scores between intervention and control groups showed significant differences on anxiety, depression, negative and positive moods, self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy and satisfaction with life. In the intervention group, there was evidence at the six-month follow-up that **fewer participants perceived barriers to employment. There were trends towards viewing access as a barrier and the way in which participants approached such barriers had changed.** A range of strategies for overcoming barriers was mentioned including planning, analysing problem situations, defining clear goals and understanding arthritis as something positive. Participants reported that they realized that **many more opportunities were available to them than they had appreciated. Educational goals dominated the focus group discussions and ranged from improving general education to taking highly specialized courses** (e.g. sign language). Work-related goals encompassed voluntary work, recording a demo tape and setting up small businesses. **In addition, participants had become more aware of employment opportunities, such as working from home.**

Participants in the intervention group reported greater job-seeking self-efficacy. For a greater proportion of participants, employment was no longer associated with perceived barriers and the IWPD programme appears to be effective in promoting positive change in terms of personal development and **confidence in the ability to attain educational and employment goals.** Furthermore, people with arthritis who attended the programme demonstrated **significant improvements on psychological well-being** (i.e. less anxiety, lower depression, more self-esteem) **and generally felt**

more confident in their own abilities to cope with the practical skills associated with seeking employment.

Particular channels were designed in this study in order to include the voice of a vulnerable group which was not being heard. Awareness among the vulnerable group was increased through **participation** in this study. The rich, in-depth information gained from the focus groups supported and added greater insight to the results from quantitative data analyses, particularly in areas where there are no suitable standard measurement tools. **The dialogues established by participants were a major factor in promoting change** and the help, advice and support offered by other group members arose in these contexts.

4) The young people at risk of offending programme (UK)

The young people at risk of offending programme represents a variety of projects run at local level which have been funded as part of the initiative of the national strategy for the reduction of youth offending in England and Wales. This report is based on the data published in the National Evaluation of the Youth justice Board's Education, Training and Employment Projects (2004).

The projects were a direct response to the call of Youth Justice Board⁴ (YJB) inviting bids for projects in England and Wales with potential to reduce youth offending, putting into practice the national strategy for the reduction of youth offending. It is important to point out that many of these projects were dealing with young people with difficult living circumstances and few life skills, compounded by having committed offences in the past. Their situation of vulnerability became increased by the fact that many of them had literacy and numeracy difficulties and were disengaged with education.

All projects developed under supervision of the YJB fell into three broad types: **those which provided education, training or work experience; projects of a career**

⁴ The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) is an executive non-departmental public body. The board members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice. The YJB oversees the youth system in England and Wales. It works to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people under the age of 18, and to ensure that custody for them is safe, secure, and addresses the causes of their offending behaviour (<http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/yjb/>).

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service type which sought to match students to suitable training establishments or employers; and projects providing diversionary activities

(Hurry & Moriarty, 2004:4).

The programmes which were focused on education, training and work experience were generally more intense (for instance the INCLUDE programme upon which we have focused). These projects are the most intense with a provision of six months and with a focus on three main components:

- Education/training through local providers such as further education (FE) colleges (literacy, numeracy and information technology [IT])
- Personal and social development through one-to-one work with the project manager, group activities, etc.
- Work experience with local employers.

Initially some preliminary work is done with the project manager, identifying the students' key skill deficits and areas of interest. After that, the student will spend his or her week distributed among college (studying literacy, numeracy and IT), the Programme's premises (engaged in social and personal development activities) and three days work experience.

The main factors identified by the evaluation report as key for the programme's success refer to:

- aims and objectives that were understood and agreed by all agencies and professionals;
- a good understanding of the client group;
- appropriate staff recruitment and professional development processes;
- rigorous but manageable assessment and evaluation systems that all staff valued and were prepared to implement;
- a programme of delivery that had been piloted with the target group;
- these factors were more frequently found in bodies with some national Organisation (Hurry & Moriarty, 2004).

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Further on, two crucial points were made: **the project to be successful needs to be tailor-made including materials used during the course.** *They should be developed and piloted with the intended target group before programmes start* (Hurry & Moriarty, 2004:48). Therefore, the specific nature of the target group should have a strong impact on the materials and methods used, choice of staff, length and kind of provisions that are being offered. The second important factor of success is related to a mixed character of the projects. **To be effective they should cover more than one aspect of social life.**

It is relevant to highlight that recent UK social policy has been elaborated in recognition of all the evidence in support of certain programmes in the scientific literature. Factors for success were gathered for the definition of projects for young people at risk of offending, as the evaluation of these programmes proves. Regarding the success of this intervention, **the evaluation of these actions report progress at different levels: in educational improvement, in personal and social skills and in insertion in the labour market.**

Firstly the fact that **attendance was very high** – around 81%- is already reported as a positive indicator given the complex profile of the target group addressed by this measure. This is due to the fact that **attendance levels on post-16 training programmes are a significant factor in predicting future employment.**

The projects which aim to educate or train are managing to support **50% or so of their students through to qualifications, and in some cases a substantial proportion of those students without qualifications are working towards them** (Hurry & Moriarty, 2004).

Beyond qualifications gained by the young offenders following this programme, other successful results can be highlighted. This refers to the students' destination after completion of the programme. The evaluation of this Integrative Action **refers to how approximately 60% of the students on the database left their project for a positive destination.** This is understood as a real achievement by local evaluators, particularly taking into account the range of problems that these students face. The fact that these **students end up inserted in a job placement or further studying**

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/being trained is highly valued by local evaluators. In the same line, the contribution of these programmes to remove barriers for learning processes was also identified by local evaluators as a significant positive outcome. For example, one local evaluator cites as a significant positive outcome the reduction of students in care from 30% to 17% as well as improvement of self-confidence, and other personal skills.

Actions including education and employment were highly valued by the participants and evaluators as most effective in dealing with the complex situation of previously offender youth and also those at risk of offending. This case also shows that one of the most important factors influencing success is the well-established infrastructure and highly skilled staff. Good relationship with tutors and proper provision had a strong impact on empowerment of the target group. It is argued by many authors (Debidin, 2009; Sparkes, 1999) that **there is a strong correlation between offending, poor literacy, language and numeracy skills, and low achievement and truancy at school**, and some of the governmental initiatives are based on this statement.

5) TEP – Territorial Employment Pacts (Austria)

The efficiency and effectivity of resources through the cooperation of the community and the stakeholders

Territorial Employment Pacts (TEP) in Austria is another Integrative Action analyzed, in which there **is a joint and coordinated work between all actors involved in the community**. The purpose of this experience is to contribute to improving the labour market situation in the Austrian regions, in order to improve efficiency and effectivity of resources used, to give a better support for target groups, to save and create employment and to secure sustainable funding⁵. The initiatives implemented under this program are based, thus, in a joint effort of public administration both at national,

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<http://www.bmask.gv.at/cms/site/dokument.html?channel=CH0688&doc=CMS1232968021>
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regional and local levels, as well as social partners and the private sector. These are specifically involved in the process of implementing the Public Employment Service Agency, Provincial Governments, Federal Social Welfare Office, Economic Chamber, Chamber of Labour, Austrian Trade Union Federation, Federation of Austrian Industries, Gender Mainstreaming Officers, Municipal Representatives of the Associations of Political parties, regional managers, NGO Representatives, educational boards and Institutions. TEP were introduced in Austria in 1997 by the regional branches of the Austrian Public Employment Service Agency (AMS). The Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection in 1999, had the mission to coordinate unit's structure for the whole of TEPs nationwide. Nowadays, it receives funding from the Federal Ministry and the European Social Fund, Operational Programme "Employment" for Austria 2007-2013⁶.

The target groups of the projects implemented under the TEP are vulnerable groups who have more difficulties entering the labour market. Youth, older persons, long term unemployed, disabled persons, returners from parental leave/maternity leave and women traditionally form target groups within the Austrian labour market policy. These projects implemented in the context of PTSD are based on a connection between the labour market and social and educational policies. Between 2010 and 2011 there have been 100 projects implemented in different regions of Austria.

Employment and educational inclusion of women and young immigrants

Measures consist of projects offering awareness raising, prevention and intervention, case management, clearing, professional counselling and activation, qualification measures, assistance during vocational integration, adequate and low-threshold **employment opportunities combined with stabilising socio-pedagogic support, measures for vocational stabilisation and stimulation, assisting studies and evaluation** and also pilot projects concerning the above mentioned restructuring of the Austrian welfare system for people outside the labour market (Territoriale Beschäftigungspakte in Österreich Zwischenbilanz 2011). Many of these projects aim to

⁶ www.pakte.at

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insert vulnerable groups such as youth and immigrant women into the labour market as well as in education.

One of the projects implemented in the capital of the Styria region aims at qualifying the instructing personnel in working with migrant co-workers. The development of a manual for integration of migrant employees and employers is another measure in this region (Territoriale Beschäftigungspakte in Österreich Zwischenbilanz, 2011:29). In the region of Salzburg several projects are addressed to immigrant women and young people without compulsory school leave certificate. These projects emphasize educational measures, as well as the inclusion in education and in the labour market (in Österreich Zwischenbilanz Beschäftigungspakte Territoriale, 2011). In the Tyrol region, the Regional Government and the regional branch of the Employment Agency are funding two public schools in the non-formal education sector. These schools are aimed at young women 15 to 19 years, with special attention to immigrant women, with low academic background. **It offers training in various professional fields, as well as education aimed at personal and social development.** The schools work together with families. These schools are not yet part of the formal educational system. They might achieve this status after a positive evaluation is passed (Territoriale Zwischenbilanz Beschäftigungspakte in Österreich 2011: 30). There is another project in Vienna which is organising in primary schools training in science, German language, math, art, culture, computing and technologies for immigrant mothers without basic education. These women's participation in these courses learning the language and improving in basic education **is promoting their involvement in the school learning of their children, contributing to improving their school careers. It also allows them to start working on a gainful employment or start their own business.** In addition, many of them participate in other training activities promoted by the Public Employment agency, for which they need language and basic education. **Without the training received in these schools, these immigrant mothers encounter many difficulties to find work and to participate in vocational training which requires minimum basic skills** (Territoriale Zwischenbilanz Beschäftigungspakte in Österreich, 2011)

The years of experience of the regular cooperation between the Employment Agency, the Regional and Local Governments, associations, NGOs and schools have improved

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employment and social policies aimed at vulnerable groups. They have helped for the insertion of the vulnerable groups both in the labour market and in the educational system. Political stakeholders and actors have become increasingly aware of the relevance of the TEPs which has also increased the possibilities for implementing measures in a sustainable way (Huber 2003:104)

6) Dynamo - Network on the supply of basic qualification and educational degrees for Youths and for the integration in the education system and labour market (Austria)

Vocational training and claim for social, employment and educational rights of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees

Dynamo is a network which comprises three projects: Project Jubiz – Vhs Ottakring Volkshochschule (adult education centre), Project Jugend, Bildung und Arbeit – Verein Projekt Integrationshaus (Project working with refugees and asylum seekers, who have a specific difficult situation concerning access to education and employment in Austria) and Project ISIS – Vhs Rudolfsheim Fünfhaus Volkshochschule (adult education centre). **Here students in vocational schools are being supported through individual learning coaching in small groups.** The main target group is young migrants aged 15 to 25 years who have come to Vienna recently in order to live with their families, or who are acknowledged asylum seekers or refugees referring to the Geneva Convention, or who are subsidiarily in need of protection (Judy, Rieder (o.J.)). The project Dynamo is being funded by European Social Fund (ESF), the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK), the municipal administration responsible for migration (MA 17) and the Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfonds - Vienna Employment Promotion Fund (WAFF⁷). The project is being implemented by three institutions within the field of non-formal adult education in Austria: two Volkshochschulen (adult education centres) and one institution specialised in asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Austria.

⁷ The WAFF is an institution specially geared to active labour market policy. It is part of the purview of the Executive City Councillor of Finance and Economic Affairs. Its activities are primarily funded by the Municipality of Vienna.

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The intervention is confronted with a legal situation where access to education and employment is extremely difficult for refugees and asylum seekers in Austria. For asylum seekers it is almost impossible to have access to the labour market in Austria. Especially for youths seeking for asylum, one difficulty lies in the fact that they are legally excluded from the dual vocational education system and from apprenticeship. Therefore, unemployment or rather being kept away from the (legal) labour market holds true for most asylum seekers. But not only asylum seekers face a difficult situation concerning employment in Austria. Migrant youths in general have a far higher risk of being unemployed⁸ than youths with a non-migrant background, this shows that access and permeability are still problems that need to be solved, both within the education system and the labour market. Under these circumstances, a project like Dynamo is of great importance in Austria, but it cannot make up for discriminating legal circumstances the target group of this measure is confronted with. **Despite these legal difficulties, the entities operating, such these projects, are part of the social movement that demands more rights for these people, access to education and concerning labour market**

Community involvement: students or retired people involved as volunteers

In addition to having qualified staff to develop the different activities in the Dynamo project, **volunteering also plays an important role. Volunteers contribute to the improvement of the results by supporting the work of the professionals.** Sub-project Jugend, Bildung und Arbeit, managed by the Institution Integrationshaus which is specialised on refugees and asylum seekers, has organised voluntary educational helpers who work with their clients. Many of these volunteers are students or retired people interested in assisting the young migrants. These projects allow that very different people within the community join to become involved in the responsibility to contribute to social inclusion of young immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Empowering young migrants: valuing Multilingualism as a skill for inclusion in the labour market. Vocational and personal guidance and counseling

⁸ In 2007, over 60 percent of all unemployed youths in Vienna came from a migrant background, while on the whole only 35 percent of all youths came from migrant background. See also: http://www.vhs.at/fileadmin/uploads_vhsat/presse_texte/0811_PA_VHS_Dynamo.pdf

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Another element which is key in the Dynamo network projects is the recognition of the **Multilingualism** as an added value. Many of these young people know different languages. This factor is recognized as an important skill for social and labour inclusion of these youth, and for their empowerment and self-esteem. In general terms, Dynamo's projects use a broad and holistic concept of qualifying. They are also based on the specific needs expressed by young people which are different from the needs of adult immigrants. Therefore, a fundamental element in these projects is **the guidance, monitoring and counseling in the decisions for their professional and personal lives.**

**7) Verein Sprungbrett für Mädchen – association stepping stones for girls
(Austria)**

Integrated approach: professional training and advice related to issues affecting them in their decisions regarding their personal, educational and professional future.

The non-profit non-governmental association Sprungbrett is an institution which has worked in the field for 25 years **stimulating and supporting the participation of girls and young women in technical vocational fields.** The association's activities are aimed at girls and young women aged from 10 to 21 years old. Almost 80% of girls and women who attend are of immigrant origin. In Austria, vocational education is strongly built on a dual vocational education system, where young apprentices are being trained while working in companies. These youths also follow vocational school for a certain time, but training in companies forms a major part of this system. This Austrian dual vocational education system is similar to the one in Germany and resembles also similar systems in other countries like Finland.

As female participation within technical sectors of the labour-market is particular low in Austria, supporting girls and young women to find access to these vocational fields is of great importance. Though several measures are being funded also with government money e.g. through the Public Employment Service (AMS) in Austria, participation of women in technical fields is very slowly raised, concerning all different educational levels from compulsory schooling to university education. Studies find cultural and broader

framework conditions within Austrian society to still form obstacles for girls and young women to participate in male dominated vocational fields like technical occupations (where often higher pay and higher level of job security can be achieved than in comparable female dominated vocational fields). In this regards, 48% of all girls are opting to choose one of three jobs dominated mostly by women: hairdresser, retail saleswoman or office administrator⁹. Working in these sectors is often poorly paid and can not provide sustainable employment.

One of the elements of success is that the activities start from an approach of integrated development of boys and girls. **Not only advise and counseling and professional training is offered but also training about other issues that affect the decisions in their lives. For example, training about family and relationships and in the prevention of gender violence.** All offers are free of charge for the clients. The girls who are interested in developing a technical career are supported in a special way. Issues here can be: schooling, vocation, apprenticeship and future life planning; crafts and technical jobs; IT and new media; self-assertion; Body and sexuality; Family, friends and intimate togetherness (Sprungbrett für Mädchen 2010). **In the definition and development of activities the voice of the girls is accounted for according to their interests, objectives and needs and their living conditions.** In 2009 Sprungbrett has organised 142 group counselling workshops concerning technical vocational tracks, 44 group counselling workshops concerning sexuality and empowerment and had 865 single counselling contacts throughout the year. These are only some figures showing the amount of activity (Sprungbrett für Mädchen, 2010).

Professional women working with all agents in the community and families, for the educational, personal and professional success of girls

About 30 experts work in this institution and all of them are female. They have various backgrounds and are involved in different measures and projects as well as in counselling. These professionals **promote a joint work with all the community.** Among the agents they work with there are parents and caretakers (also in residential communities and crisiscentres), schools (different Austrian schools at level of lower secondary cycle, vocational -medium and higher- schools), teachers and people working

⁹ see http://portal.wko.at/wk/format_detail.wk?angid=1&stid=595207&dstid=694

within teacher-training, multipliers in youth welfare services, other counselling services and initiatives for youths, educators working in pre-primary schools, companies, especially those where apprentices can receive training in technical vocational fields, instructors in companies, NPOs and institutions specialised on labour market affairs (Public employment agency, different agencies in the sector of public funding of further and vocational education and training, social partners) and media (print, websites, radiobroadcasters, television, specialised journals) (Sprungbrett für Mädchen, 2010).

Among these professionals, there are some experts in **advising companies to hire apprentices**. Counsellors are working with companies throughout the training process of these girls. One measure that improves both chances of girls to take part in technical and craft related job training and labour-market can be seen in the yearly awarded "Amazone"-prize. This prize is awarded to companies and employers where girls are supported to become apprentice. **It aims at raising awareness among companies in technical and crafts-related fields to support the inclusion of girls and women within their workforce.** It is combined with a PR-campaign organised by Sprungbrett which is offered also as a benefit for companies competing for the prize: both bigger companies and SMUs. The prize has been awarded in different categories since 2000. This prize shows the great importance of raising public awareness for increasing girls' opportunities concerning vocational education (especially within the apprenticeship-sector) and job-opportunities in technical and mechanical sectors. **Sprungbrett also recognises the importance of influencing public opinion and media in favour of empowering girls in their vocational career perspectives.**

3.2. Education & Social and Political Participation

As follows, 6 Integrative Actions are described which are being developed in 3 European countries in the areas of education and social and political participation.

1) Roma students meetings. Roma Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen (Spain)

Roma girls, young women, mothers and grandmothers traditionally excluded from opportunities for participation deciding on their education and future

This action is being developed in the context of the Integrated Plan of the Roma People of Catalonia. The **Roma students meetings** are organised by the Roma Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen. The goal is to increase the presence of Roma girls and women in training activities both **encouraging young girls to stay in education through high school and university but also to promote training for adult Roma women**. As it is presented here education is being a key element to increase their social participation, contributing to overcome the situation of social exclusion of the Roma community.

The Roma students meetings are addressing Roma women, particularly those with no academic degrees, although the activity is open to all Roma women concerned with the education of their community. These events are organized in different neighbourhoods with a significant presence of Roma population. **The women from the communities where the meeting is being held are directly involved in the preparation of the contents** of the congress as well as on its dissemination with the support of the Drom Kotar Mestipen Association. A similar agenda is usually followed in these meetings, seeking a twofold goal: on the one hand, **the presentation of experience of Roma girls and women who are studying at different levels and who are positive role models for the rest of the participants** and, on the other hand, on the working groups with all participants to share experiences and concerns, and discuss different alternatives and proposals.

Different critical issues for the Roma community are tackled in the context of these meetings, such as overcoming Roma school drop-out and increasing role models in schools and universities (Drom Kotar Mestipen, 2007; 2008; 2009). Thirteen meetings have already been organised in different provinces in Catalonia witnessing an impressive increase in the numbers of participants, so the last edition gathered over 200 participants from different places in Catalonia (Drom Kotar Mestipen, 2009). This activity has proved to be very successful in involving Roma women without academic qualifications that are usually excluded from social participation.

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One of the positive effects identified is the fact that these women become actively engaged in the organisation and development of this activity which has become an empowering tool that leads to their **further social engagement** in the Roma community, in their neighbourhood and schools (Drom Kotar Mestipen, Personal communication, February 22nd 2011). Through these meetings Roma women, girls, adolescents, mothers and grandmothers **share a special discussion forum to dialogue about the education of Roma women**. In these spaces of dialogue -created by the same people who have traditionally been at the margins of public debate and decision making- they can exchange and decide on common requests, interests, and needs. This promotes that they become the protagonists of the actions of the initiated processes of personal and collective transformation to improve their social situation.

As for the results, these meetings are contributing to foster educational inclusion of Roma people in many different ways. To start with, they constitute a forum where Roma women exchange their experiences in the educational institutions of all levels and together look for possibilities on how to increase the educational success of Roma students, for example, by providing additional support and **incorporating Roma people in the school which are role models for Roma girls and boys**. Furthermore, these meetings have a strong impact on setting **high educational expectations** for Roma students and motivating Roma families and increasing their expectations. This is achieved -among other ways- by organizing round tables of Roma women in higher education or with university degrees. By sharing their experiences, they act as **role models in the Roma communities** proving that it is possible to access higher education and work in professions like lawyers, doctors, teachers and others (Drom Kotar Mestipen, 2007; 2008; 2009).

Another evidence of their success is its high impact in terms of networking as they **provide a forum to discuss a wide range of issues and express the concerns of the Roma women. After these encounters some of these women became involved in associations or created their own new associations, increasing their participation in the community** as a result of their experience of active participation in these events. The meetings helped to express and formulate the necessities and ideas for many further activities to continue working together for the inclusion of the Roma.

Roma women are becoming direct interlocutors with public administration in the local, national and European domains

As one of the most critical impacts of the **Roma students meetings**, it is relevant to highlight the **1st International Congress of Roma Women: The Other Women**. One of the key elements to stress is the fact **that the idea of the congress arose from the proposals of the Roma women taking part in the Roma Students' meetings**. The possibility to have a context of dialogue and discussion enabled them to think of such an event. The congress is the result of the work of different associations of Roma women throughout Europe, promoted and facilitated by the Drom Kotar Mestipen Association. It took place in Barcelona in 2010 from 8th-10th October and **gathered 300 Roma women from 14 European countries¹⁰**. **Most of the participants represented most excluded Roma groups as many of them have low educational levels**. For most of the women, this was the very first time that they were given voice to express their concerns and dreams as Roma women. Unlike other public spaces for debate of vulnerable groups, the very Roma women were the ones who spoke out and exchanged their experiences, discussed ways to overcome discrimination of Roma in different areas, and especially how to foster educational success of Roma pupils and university students (Catalan Television, 9th of november 2010). As a result of the direct dialogue among the Roma women from different European countries, **relevant conclusions were gathered with concrete proposals for the inclusion of the Roma women in all spheres of society. Education stood out among them as a fundamental element therefore**. One of the most relevant impacts of this congress is that for the first time, the very Roma women -without intermediaries-, defined their priorities in the Final Conclusions. These key messages were directly sent to the European Commissioner of Education, Culture and Multilingualism and Youth, who did also take part in the congress through video-conferencing. From this exchange, plans for future actions, stemming from these women's ideas are set out (Responsible of the Drom Kotar Mestipen, personal communication).

2) The Integration and Diversity in Education in Europe (IDEE). Citizens Panels. Slovakia Nadácia dokoro Skol (Wide Open School Foundation). (Slovakia)

¹⁰ <http://dromkotar.org/en/>

Roma youth participating with other agents in the community forums for debate on education, identity and social inclusion

Contexts of dialogue are thus being created throughout Europe in order to give voice to those groups traditionally excluded. Another initiative in this line is the Integration and Diversity in Education in Europe (**IDEE**) **initiative**, one of the Integrative Actions analysed. It aims at **building active citizens and increasing young people's participation in democracy by making room for student participation, engaging and empowering youth**. The initiative is funded by the European Commission and the Open Society Foundations and is implemented by different organizations. The IDEE initiative, in collaboration with five institutions (Integrated Education Fund, Interkulturelles Zentrum, Life e.V., Nadacia Skola dokoran and Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association) in different European countries (UK, Austria, Germany, Romania and Slovakia) developed a set of activities aimed at establishing citizens panels (CP). These were particularly directed at dealing with the inclusion of disenfranchised groups, as well as their empowerment.

In the context of the IDEE initiative we have focused on the **Citizens Panels** conducted through the Slovakia Nadácia dokoro Skol (Wide Open School Foundation) especially interesting for the impact they have among Roma youth. In these panels, **young Roma students from the poorest parts of the country take part, which is a group who is traditionally excluded from the spaces of participation and public debate**. These citizens' panels were not only composed of young Roma but **also included Roma adults, teachers in different types of school and with different positions, representatives of associations, local authorities and public institutions**. The purpose of these citizens' panels was that **all the involved agents would participate in the discussion, definition and selection of three thematic priorities: improving academic attainment, quality education for Roma and the importance of involving the Roma community in discussions on these issues**. Improving the academic attainment and quality education for Roma is crucial in Slovakia, where the Roma is the second more populated minority, the poorest and most excluded from the society, concentrated in the poorest Slovak regions, many of them with 100% unemployment rate. Roma students have very high compulsory school absenteeism and are the group of students most frequently suffering from unequal treatment and

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exclusion, up to the point that they are overrepresented in special schools for children with mild mental impairment without justification, due to their difficulties to succeed in a standard primary school.

The topics discussed within the Citizens' Panels included the position of Roma in Slovakia, education and employment prospects, education of Roma and non-Roma communities; the position of disenfranchised Roma in society; and the possibilities for obtaining better education as well as a job. Another crucial aspect of the discussion covered the Slovakian educational policy (the functioning and ways for improvement) and the fact that **the Roma youth was able to have a say on their educational system and on the Slovakian educational policy to identify solutions** (Halbmayer, 2010). One element of success of the citizens' panels is that **policymakers** when deciding about these issues were **sharing a space for dialogue and participatory democracy with a group like the Roma community which has traditionally been excluded from the processes of decision making** (Halbmayer, 2010).

Roma youth present their proposals in Europe

As a result of this initiative participants were able to learn how to intervene at the political level. The group improved their **rethorical capacity, along with the argumentative skills**, which can have an impact on their potential for advocacy of their own situation and that of their community. Furthermore, the prospect of having these conclusions **presented at European level provided an extra motivation for the youth involved**. This contributed to the target group, becoming more aware, not only of their rights, but also of the possibility to enact them in democratic terms. The conference "Overcoming social exclusion and marginalization in education in Europe: Bringing local voices to policy making" took place on 16 November 2010 in Brussels. It was attended by over 100 people including a wide range of EU policy makers, members of the European Commission, the European Parliament and civil society organisations.

Citizens Panels can be considered a method of "direct participatory democracy" (Halbmayer, 2010). The involvement and the interaction with local political leaders, as well as experts, teachers and similar stakeholders gives the target group the chance to involve itself in the participative process and to put it into perspective. What is most

relevant in these events refers not only to the identification and discussion of the main issues **that are highlighted by the very participants, but mostly by the fact that they are the ones to present these topics and conclusions to decision-makers.** In the case of Roma youth in Slovakia, “for many of the participants, it was the first time talking about their concerns regarding educational affairs” (Halbmayer, 2010).

The main outcomes and recommendations brought forward emphasized the role of the wider community and stressed the **importance of contacts and cooperation between the Roma minority and rest of the population**, the importance and relevance of Roma identity, the key role of schooling, changes and improvements to the school system, and the provision of assistance for Roma pupils inside and outside school. Adding to that, recommendations also took into account the role of the media and the importance of stronger Roma role models particularly in the media, **which youth could have as examples of Roma people who have studied a university degree.**

3) Urban Plan in Albacete. PEBEM -the Educational Project of the Neighbourhoods of La Estrella and La Milagrosa- and Weekend Centre (Spain)

Family participation in decision-making and management. Extension of successful educational actions in the schools of the two neighbourhoods

The relevance of these **spaces of dialogue** which are enabling the Roma people to speak directly with the administration in order to define successful actions is also identified in the case of the **Urban Plan in Albacete (Spain)**, through the educational project of the community. The PEBEM –the Educational Project of the Neighbourhoods of La Estrella and La Milagrosa in Albacete– aims to implement in three educational centres the successful actions being developed in La Paz school. The educational actions implemented in La Paz school are based on the participation of the families and the community, which generates many benefits: increasing the academic results, improving coexistence, coordinating family and school, as well as having an impact on the life of the neighbourhood. The actions being implemented are family assemblies, mixed committees, meetings with entities, management meetings with the administration, family training, etc. Among these successful actions, we need to highlight **family**

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participation in the three schools in the neighbourhoods of La Estrella and La Milagrosa, which **is carried out through mixed committees in each of these schools - committee of voluntary work and family training- with a twofold goal.** Their aim is to involve families into participation in the school and at the same time promote their continuous education in order to improve the possibilities for their own future as well as for the transformation of the entire neighbourhood. The committees consist of family members, teachers and other members of the community.

Mixed committees with families, teachers and other community members as direct dialogue with the public administration

Through these **committees**, the residents of the neighbourhood act as **interlocutors between their demands and the educational needs of the community and the public administration.** The close relationships of the committees with the representative of the administration who gathers the demands and developments in the neighbourhood, **allows for a more efficient collaboration.** For instance, one of the decisions of the mixed committee of the La Paz school was to address the need to provide training for adults who wanted to attain the degree on compulsory secondary education. **The dialogic organisation of the Urbanitas Plan was key because it takes into account the committee members' reflections and demands as a means to provide efficient solutions** for the community's needs. It facilitated to establish the contact with the public administration at a regional level, to voice and argument this demand in order to make the secondary education training a reality which was implemented in the La Paz school two years later, in 2009-2010.

Successful educational activities for the whole community from Friday at 5 pm until 8.30 pm on Sunday

Within the same Integrative Action, and included in the Dialogic Inclusion Contract, one of the requests of the community focused on developing a centre that would be **open during the hours that the school is closed, including the weekends.** The neighbourhood's representatives together with the public administration and following the successful actions proposed by the international scientific community decide to carry out an educational initiative, the **Weekend Centre [Centro FINDE]**. Through the

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Weekend Centre young people and the whole community will have leisure activities as an alternative to being in the streets, **helping to reduce the risk of the problems that exist in the neighbourhood around the consumption and trafficking of drugs.** This leisure activity provides the young people with access to resources that are not available to them at home. The centre has become a place where people from all ages and with different interests find a context for training and leisure where participation of community members is key in decision-making as well. Intergenerational relationships arising in this educational context are also promoting social cohesion in the neighbourhood and is one of the assets of this successful action.

As a result of this demand, from Friday at 5 pm until Sunday at 8.30 pm, the facilities of the La Paz school are open to serve for a wide variety of activities, around three axes: learning and training, information and communication technologies (ICT) and leisure. The first axis –learning and training– promotes activities that help to foster the learning of children and young people according to successful actions, such as a **tutored library** and **additional educational support**. The second group of activities revolve around increasing the learning motivation and facilitating the access and use of ICT. Within this axis the creation of a WiFi network for the two neighbourhoods will be promoted so that the residents can have access to Internet and its resources, such as finding a job through the Internet or taking part in workshops for producing online content. The third axis focuses on overcoming the problems of coexistence and conflicts in the neighbourhood caused by the consumption and trafficking of drugs. So a range of cultural, environmental and sports activities are being developed responding to the demands of the participants.

The Weekend centre provides children and young people (50% of the population is under 30 years of age) and other neighbours of the La Estrella and La Milagrosa districts with an **educational and social space that involves all groups of the neighbourhood in the transformation of the educational and social context** (Real, October 24th 2010). This implies that people who are traditionally excluded from participation spaces are now participating in decision-making processes which contribute to the overcoming of their situation of exclusion. Now with the Weekend centre, the **children and young people do not have to spend time on the street after professionals finish their working week** (Padrós, García, de Mello & Molina, 2011).

The Weekend Centre is an initiative which is transforming the participation, the educational results and the social life of the neighbourhood. It arises from the **direct dialogue between the administration at local level and the community which evidences the relevance of the spaces and processes of dialogue for the inclusion of some of the most vulnerable groups.**

4) Connect Network (Spain)

Participation of the community, government and NGO's: Overcoming the digital gap and promoting social cohesion

Digital competence (European Commission, 2005) is one of the eight core competencies defined by the European Commission that everyone should achieve in the current Information Society. In Spain, **the Connect Network project is contributing to overcome the digital gap especially with young people from 13 to 30 years, women with difficulties to access employment, long-term unemployed and people with social integration problems.** As the analysis has identified, at the same time this project is increasing the social participation of these communities' members. Connect Network Centres are an initiative of Esplai Foundation and have the support of different national ministries that develop policies relating to job, social affairs and immigration as well as private entities in the field of communication technologies and information as Microsoft and DELL.

The Spanish educational law in force understands the ICT learning of high importance and regulates that the educational administrations promote ICT use amongst the educational contents as early as in pre-primary education. The regulation states that all the students must be guaranteed the possibility of acquiring a basic digital culture before finishing Primary education (CREA, 2007).

A methodology based on the orientations of the scientific community: involvement of end-users and community in decision making and management activities. Networking among government, NGOs' and the private sector

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The **CONNECT NOW project** is developed by Connect Network, a network of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Spain. Through its e-Inclusion programs, the goal of this network is to overcome the digital gap and improving digital literacy, and ultimately to promote social inclusion through the Information Technology and Communication (ICT). **The project follows a methodology in its implementation in the context of the ICT in line with the theoretical contributions of key authors in the social sciences.** The Connect Network project counts currently on 64 telecenters in 16 of the 17 autonomous regions of Spain. Since 2005, 353.000 persons have been trained and 82 associations have used the telecentres, consolidating in the suburbs or villages where they operate.

The characteristics that define the Connect Network interventions - unlike other projects of access and learning of ICT-, relate to **being grounded in the work of associations, the community approach, and the networking and partnership between sectors.** The **involvement of the private sector, government, NGOs** and the combination of their efforts to promote social inclusion in the information society makes the development of this project possible. Other entities involved in this initiative are associations related to programs for drug abuse prevention, job placement centres, resource centres for associations, rural development centres and federations.

There are many network projects in the international arena that have arisen from the need to address the inequalities created by the digital gap, seeking to promote social cohesion. Among these, the projects that are **successful in achieving this objective are those in which the participants and the entities that are part of these networks generate a sense of belonging through direct participation in decision-making and management** (UNESCO, 2003). In this line the exchange of experiences and resources and the mutual support are central features in this type of networks being highly valued by people involved in them and identified to being behind the success of the Connect Network.

Regarding the assessment of the project, in an initial evaluation of the programme conducted in 2002, the conclusions were highly positive regarding the benefits for participating people, overall: increased self-esteem, autonomy in the use of the computer, trust in the own learning capacity, and the acquisition of knowledge (Castro,

2004). The keys pointed out for these improvements referred **to the role of the facilitator, the methodology and resources, the heterogeneity of participating people or the adaptation of the proposal to each territorial reality.**

Furthermore, **participation of end-users in the design and implementation of the digital literacy programmes is critical for success.** The participation of the users in the project is highly significant: 91% of the facilitators declares to incorporate in the courses the proposals of participants gathered through a survey. According to data collected (Castro, 2004; Fundación Esplai, 2006) the project CONNECT NOW had benefited 20.513 users by 2004 and up to 33.644 users in 2006. Both the networks' facilitators and its users greatly appreciate the initiatives of CONNECT NOW: 95% of facilitators consider that the community is taking advantage of the resources provided from the centre, proving the consolidation of the project in the suburbs or villages where they operate.

Different aspects of the implementation methodology stand out as being critical of this programme's success. Data in the analysis shows that the 67% of the facilitators of the Connect Network centres inform that the **starting point in the training of adults is what they already know and their interests**, in order to connect it with the new knowledge, just as recommended in the pedagogy for adults. Besides, 86% said that the **dialogue between the participants and the facilitator is a key element to promote individual and group learning.** They also play a fundamental social and educational role: according to the perspective of these centres, facilitating does not mean just giving the courses, but it is also essential to guarantee the smooth implementation of the methodology underlying the project. This means that the facilitator accompanies participants in the learning process, **promotes an egalitarian dialogue and respectful relationships, motivates them to participate and works on their self-esteem;** they also establish contact with the entities of the area and channel their requests.

One of the successes of these initiatives is the increased participation it achieves. **Most of the centres in Connect Network count on the work and support of volunteers:** the 67% of facilitators who participated in the project evaluation stated that there were volunteers working in their centre. **Volunteers allow accommodating for the needs**

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that facilitators alone cannot cover for -as for example to extend the opening hours of the centre or providing a variety of social profiles that promotes the learning process of individuals and groups which are themselves very diverse. In some cases, for instance, volunteers of Arab origin have promoted the communication with people belonging to their culture contributing to their learning process and providing support in using the resources in open access areas to find a job or housing. The analysis reports how after **having participating in these spaces, many people end up becoming involved in the project as volunteers or getting involved in other social projects in the neighbourhood** which they heard from through the Connect Network, extending their activities and contexts of social participation.

In this line, the Connect Network project is encouraging the participation of groups of people that have generally been excluded from decision-making and participation processes. As a consequence of their **increased participation, social cohesion in their territories has been enhanced**. Available data shows that, according to **95% of facilitators, the centres where they are working have a relationship with other entities and organizations, and prepare joint activities and provide resources and technologies available to the community**. This relationship has allowed other entities to have access to their resources such as neighbourhood associations, women associations, immigrant associations or old people's homes, institutes and vocational training centres, to have access to their resources; amplifying the effect it has upon the social cohesion in the community.

Education and training in the Connect Network activities increase **participation** of the end-users to different extents. On the one hand, **a great number of participants become encouraged to get involved in other social projects or associations**. On the other hand, many participants end up being volunteers within the same centre where they have been trained. Evidence in this regards reports how i.e. in Young Conecta, the 88% of adults' state that they will **continue being trained** after their first course, and the 44% of young people participating in the Youth Conecta project **continue collaborating in social initiatives of the suburbs**. Furthermore, through these ICT related activities young people and immigrants have been two of the vulnerable groups which have seen the positive impact. On the one hand, **young volunteers from 16 to 18 teach socially excluded adults and older people or people at risk of being**

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socially excluded, on the use of ICT. Young people are given the opportunity to participate in transforming their environment, reducing the digital gap among adults and older population, creating citizens ties. On the other hand, the data analysed reports the **remarcable increase of the participation of persons from migrant origin** throughout the years of implementation of the project (Fundación Esplai, 2006; Red Conecta, 2011). Evidence shows that the fact that the same courses were offered for all the neighbours together following an inclusive approach –regardless the origin- , instead of offering different courses for each social group, has been an element that contributed to improve coexistence and social cohesion in the involved communities.

Education and participation stand out through this programme as two closely related variables that are contributing to improve the lives of participants but also the conditions of the areas where they live and learn.

5) The UNITE programme (UK)

Integrated approach to social inclusion of third country national women

The UNITE programme is part of a major project funded under the European Commission within the framework of the European Integration Fund (EIF) Community Actions Programme and the Directorate General of Home Affairs for the Integration of third-country nationals¹¹. The objective of the EIF is to provide financial support to promote the integration of third country nationals in the Member States of the European Union. The main objective of the UNITE project is to support the integration of 600 newly arrived women (spouses) in West Yorkshire who are third-country nationals (mainly from Pakistan and Bangladesh) into British society. The project started in 2010 and is on-going.

The United Kingdom is currently experiencing an unprecedented period of inward migration. In the final quarter of 2006, the latest period for which data is available, people born overseas accounted for 12.5% of the UK working age population, up from 7.4% a decade earlier. The UK is therefore facing a considerable challenge to ensure that it remains integrated and unified (Home Office, Communications and Development Unit,

¹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs>

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2001). According to the Office for National Statistics (2001), the largest of the UK British population were White (92%) while 7,9% belong to other ethnic groups. Among them, 50.3% were Asian or Asian British while the majority of that group comprised of Indians followed by Pakistanis. During the 2000s many third country nationals, mainly from Indian sub-continent started arriving in the UK as Highly Skilled Migrants. The people who migrate as Highly Skilled employees and their spouses need to improve their English language skills so that they can be successful and active citizens in the UK. Considering these factors, the home office through the UK Border Agency administers number of integration projects in different parts of the country.

The UNITE project implements its intervention programmes under the direction of the UK Border Agency who administers all the EIF projects conducted within the UK. However, the project management and day-to-day activities are planned and managed by the QED UK with the help of the participants, and the staff members of the organisation. The UNITE project aims to achieve its main targets through courses running at five different centres at West Yorkshire. The different types of activities aim to contribute to social inclusion of third country nationals women. For this, activities of **learning the English language are developed, as well as activities designed to understand and use all services and institutions of the community. The impact of these activities improves social participation of these women, their inclusion in the educational system and their employability.**

The project delivers 12 week part time English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and citizenship and integration programme at five community locations where there are many ethnic minorities of third country nationals. The ESOL course provides the participants with the opportunity to improve their basic English language skills and prepare them to attain an accredited English language qualification. The integration course helps the women to learn the ways in which they can become part of the British society in an active and inclusive manner.

One of the activities that has had the greatest impact is the **visits to different spaces, facilities and institutions of the community and the use of these services** such as: health and housing services and banks, the use of public transport, police, leisure

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and cultural facilities, and legal services; trips to shops, supermarkets, and other retail outlets; and familiarisation with different faith settings.

The staff working in this project notes the significant results achieved in the first year of the project. Also, women participating in the project are providing reference of how much they have had a **positive impact in the project and have improved their chances of employability and inclusion in the educational system and the new community**. In terms of learning the English language, 400 third country nationals have achieved an accredited and recognized English qualification (ESB/OCN accredited). Women participants explain how much **they have improved their English skills and how this has enabled them to access jobs as well as, considering continuing to higher education or participating in other training activities that improve their chances of employability**.

Egalitarian relations: ongoing staff monitoring, equal relationships between members of different cultures living in the territory

As for the visits (trips), are considered by participants as a "real treat" to improve their knowledge, to understand education, law, employment opportunities and cultural heritage of the British society and the history of immigration in places like Yorkshire in order to work in the textile industry. Participants say that the **information, advice and the opportunity to ask questions offered on visits make them feel like they are not strangers in the new society and feel at the same time included**. Women participants say that this helps team members to encourage asking.

Another element that women participants identify as contributing to the success of these visits, is the language used by the professionals of those services and institutions that serve them. They use a language that includes them as members of the community. When referring to the service or the institution they represent phrases used: "you have three councillors", "it is your right... no matter you are...", "you are free to..." or "your community". **The women claim that this helps them to feel part of the community**. In UK DVD life produced by QED-UK within the UNITE project summarizes these testimonies.

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Under the UNITE there are also meetings being organized with **both British-born people as people from other European countries and other cultural minorities**. The outcome of such meetings are aimed at **promoting better understanding of each others culture, and helps easing off the tensions in local communities**. These meetings have facilitated, as explained by the women participants, that some participants who have only been two or three months in the UK have made friends who do not belong to their own community.

One of the elements of success of the UNITE Programme is according to the staff, **the ongoing coordination with the agents of the community** as well as the provision of these, to contribute to the program. **Other elements of success identified by the staff and the participants, is the systematic processes conducted by the staff for the monitoring of each of the participants.**

6) Your Voice Matters. New Citizens Voice (UK)

Increase of political participation from vulnerable groups

Another Integrative Action which has identified an impact on the participation of vulnerable groups is the **Your Voice Matters (YVM)** programme developed by **New Citizens Voice (NCV)**, a UK-based non-profit organization founded in 2003. The origin of this organisation responds to the **need identified by a small team of professionals who had recently acquired British citizenship to elevating “the status and visibility of Britain’s new communities”** (New Citizens Voice, 2007). NCV works to promote the active involvement of “new citizens” in the country’s social, political and economic life via the implementation of civic education activities among citizens which have recently acquired British nationality. As we have seen in other Integrative Actions analysed another of the successful factors is the **involvement of different types of entities**. NCV’s funding and sponsoring is provided by different entities, namely the Lottery fund, the royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the City of London, the UK Parliament, the Trust for London, the Home Office, the Electoral Commission (through the New Initiatives Fund, created to support and promote “new ways of raising awareness about voting and democracy”), Southwark Council, Western Union, Westway

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– Development trust and by the Community Development Foundation (New Citizens Voice official website).

The need to express their concern and objectives through dialogue and interaction with each other as well as with political figures, led its founders to create a practical and interactive platform. **The activity YVM provides civic education and supports political engagement of cultural groups who recently acquired British nationality.** This was done through **YVM workshops which stemmed from the needs and interests of the people whom they were addressing** through different actions: a focus group meeting is held within NCV to discuss and evaluate the main concerns and necessities of the target group; the activity is thus tailored to meet these needs and concerns. Secondly, during the activity, the target group is given the possibility to decide, during the activity who will be the person for whom they vote, based on the appreciation of the speeches delivered and on the training provided; finally participants evaluate the success of the activity. **The emphasis placed on the participants' role in the process of political participation and the fact that participants can influence decision-making is a success-leading element.** Another barrier that is accounted for is the language. Therefore ESOL teachers are involved in the participative training, helping them to be more politically and socially involved.

The YVM workshops had the aim to help participants understand the nature and implications of civic engagement. For instance, a booklet was distributed which details the importance of politics, including a glossary of terms, explanations concerning who can vote, how to register, what are local government elections, what is the European Union, the European Parliament, the Houses of Parliament, as well as the importance of local government elections. One of the workshops developed within the Your Voice Matters activity was called "Mock Local Election in the Council Chamber". As the name points out, it consisted in developing a didactic election for participants to precisely understand what their political rights consisted in and how to use them. The objective was to explain to participants the procedure for voting, and to have them filling in the same documents in order to avoid mistakes during the real elections. In this process, the target group was able to better understand the British political procedures. Such **an activity also contributed to reinforcing their capacity to influence local and**

national decisions that affected their daily lives and to provide them with the tools to participate.

Participants assessed that the Your Voice Matters workshops allowed to better understand the British political system and the relevance of voting in this process. The participants' increased **political awareness was demonstrated by their enhanced knowledge of the political structures of their community and of the ways for intervening. The understanding of which services are provided by the Council was increased as 47% of the participants said they now understood it very well and 43% quite well** (New Citizens Voice, 2007).

These elements help new citizens understand the importance of participating politically in procedures which directly affect them. **50% of the inquired people said that their degree of understanding concerning how politics can affect them every day after the workshop is "very good", with 44% answering "good"**. Adding to that, 33 out of 35 participants said that they would be more likely to vote after the workshop and 30 participants (out of 45) to attend a Council meeting. These results should be contrasted with the **64% of participants who stated not knowing, before the workshop, that they could attend Council meetings** (New Citizens Voice, *Your Voice Matters – Final Evaluation Report*, May 2007, p. 15).

The main factors leading to the success of this intervention include the implementation of an activity with both clear **education and political component, the tailoring of the activities according to the participant's needs and the involvement of a wide range of actors.**

3.3. Education & Health

In this section 3 Integrative Actions are explained including the areas of education and health, in two different countries.

1) Health Promoting Schools network (Slovenia)

Integrated approach for a healthier life-style for families and the community.

One of the Integrative Actions which has proven to increase health conditions from the basis of education and training are the **Health Promoting Schools network** in Slovenia, to promote health in the community. This network of schools is part of the Schools for Health in Europe network. The network is coordinated by NIGZ, a **WHO Collaborating Centre for School Health Promotion**. Until 2007 the project was named the **European Network of Health Promoting Schools**, which was a project initiated by **World Health Organisation (WHO), Council of Europe and European Commission**. 43 countries cooperated in this European network with approximately 500 schools, thousands of teachers and more than 400.000 students. In many countries national or regional networks exist, which connect further 5000 schools¹².

In Slovenia the health promotion programmes developed within this network are framed within the objective set in the legislative reforms of the 1990s prompted by the 1995 White Paper of providing for greater educational opportunities for the socially disadvantaged and facilitating transfers across different categories of education. Additionally, Slovenia's educational reform takes into account the importance of **organisations offering education in parallel with their main activity, such as organisations in the field of culture, leisure activities, clubs and associations, as well as non-formal education programmes designed for special target groups, such as young adults and the elderly**. According to the educational reforms, these principles should be realized through a broad range of organizational forms and activities within programmes, of which The European Network of health Promoting Schools is an example.

In 2010, 268 schools cooperated in the network, which comprised 43% of all Slovene schools (212 primary schools, 49 secondary schools and 7 secondary school children halls of residence). The characteristics of the Slovene network of Health Promoting Schools are the following: **Learning about health**, which is integrated into other subjects (**health is a crosscurricular topic**); **hidden curriculum** (life at school should

¹²For more information check: www.schoolsforhealth.eu

enhance health – regulations, climate, interpersonal relations, the organisation of school meals, extracurricular activities, and projects etc.); the **cooperation with parents, health and other specialised services and with a community.**

Each year the activities of Slovenia's **Health Promoting Schools programme** are evaluated. The results of the evaluation of the school year 2006/2007, conducted by the teachers, showed that the average grade of the success of the project was 3.97% (1-not successful, 5-very successful). The elements which were identified as contributing to the success of the project **are work on interpersonal relations between all who cooperate in the educational process:** teachers, students and parents. In the school year 2009/2010 most of the activities (91.3%) were successfully implemented (assessed with 4 or 5 with 5 being the highest grade), and 6.2% of the activities were assessed as successful (assessed with 3)¹³.

In the same year 2006/2007, in order to implement the evaluation with the students, 49 workshops were organised in 20 schools, where the students answered the question *Why is my school a healthy school?* The answers of students can be divided into the following topics: **nutrition** ("we eat more fruit and vegetables... we can always eat fruit... "); **physical activity** ("we do a lot of exercise... "); **interpersonal relations** ("friendship, good relations with teachers, teachers are kind, we have a nice time"...); **physical environment** (fresh air, waste reclamation, ecological attitude...); **hygiene** (regular washing of hands, clean school and its environment) and others (Pucelj, 2010).

One of the **successful elements** of the Integrative Actions where we find an intersection between education and health is the **permanent training** in health issues that teachers and health workers receive. More than 145 seminars for more than 4.000 teachers were organized¹⁴.

The results of the evaluation of the project Health Promoting Schools showed that it is an efficient method of health promotion at schools (Pucelj 2010). In 1998 the project was **awarded by the World Health Organisation (the Regional**

¹³ www.ivz.si (3. 2. 2011)

¹⁴ For more information see www.ivz.si (3. 2. 2011)

Office for Europe) as the best project for the health promotion for children and women.

2) Programme Mura (Slovenia)

Socioeconomic and environmental development for achieving better health and quality of life

In the same line, another of the Integrative Actions analysed is the **Programme Mura also in Slovenia** which showed **increased knowledge, skills and awareness of healthy lifestyles and increased physical activity levels**.

The **Programme Mura**¹⁵ in Slovenia has developed an integrated approach that involves various sectors (**Ministry of Health, Education, Agriculture and Labour**) to endeavour **the health of the inhabitants of the Pomurje region, one of the most deprived in the country**. It is relevant to point out that this region has the highest unemployment rates in Slovenia with nearly 20% in certain towns¹⁶, with the highest percentage of long-term unemployed in Slovenia and with the lowest GDP. "As income, employment and education are determinants of health, with more disadvantaged populations often having higher rates of morbidity and mortality, it is no surprise that the population has relatively poor health. Life expectancy is the lowest of any region, and the number of years of lives lost per 1000 people under 65 is the highest" (Buzeti, Maučec Zakotnik 2008: 11).

The aim of the programme Mura was to identify, develop, implement and strengthen best practices in the field of **socioeconomic and environmental development for achieving better health and quality of life of people in the Pomurje region**. "The greatest challenge was in identifying **common interests between the sectors** and jointly establishing goals in a way that all **partners saw a win-win or win-neutral situation**" (Buzeti, Maučec Zakotnik 2008: 57). The programme has been organised to

¹⁵ The Programme Mura is named after a river Mura which is the main river of the Prekmurje region of North-Eastern Slovenia. The river Mura is also the border river between Croatia and Slovenia.

¹⁶ www.stat.si (30. 3. 2011)

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promote the **co-ordination mechanisms at the national and regional levels** between the governmental project group for health and sustainable development in Pomurje, the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota, the Centre for Health and Development which was established within the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota and the Regional Programme Council (in 2008, 25 organisations were actively involved in the project). **This multilayered, interinstitutional collaboration** which has been identified as successful in other Integrative Actions included the WHO Regional Office for Europe, which provided technical support, the Ministry of Health which financed the project, as well as EU funds, such as Phare and Interreg.

Some of the actions of this comprehensive approach have included for instance the creation in 2004, of a consortium of fruit and vegetable producers, as well as ecological centres supporting organic farming to strengthen the supply of the Pomurje region. **These activities were supported by awareness-raising programmes in the field of healthy nutrition.** Education has played a key role also through the development of new programmes in the field of higher education, **as for example Agricultural Management and Biotechnics and Management of Tourism.** A new regional Research and Education Centre in the field was also developed, which can contribute to the sustainability of the programme.

Other social areas have also been addressed through this programme, as it is the case of the development of **tourism; initiatives were developed to increase the infrastructure of ecotourism, to develop health-promoting and culinary products.** In this line, the region has developed health spa tourism and at the same time it is developing as a cycling and walking tourist destination. In the field of ecology the efforts focused on supporting and advocating for the construction of a regional drinking water supply system and the education of people on nature preservation and environmental protection.

In 2001 the "Let's Live Healthily" health promotion programme was piloted in the **municipality Beltinci in eight communities, in 2008 it operated in 50 communities.** The "Let's Live Healthily" health promotion programme focuses on specific risk factors and a reduction in heart disease, cancer, diabetes and hypertension. "The goal of the programme is to improve health and to enable the inhabitants of rural

communities to take active role in health promotion and protection” (Buzeti, Maučec Zakotnik 2008: 13). Education for a healthy lifestyle has had an important role in the development of the Mura Programme. Different discussions are organized on the topic of healthy food in which many people participated. The activities of the Programme Mura were evaluated with a particular focus on assessing changes in risk factors: unhealthy eating habits and a lack of physical activity. The results of the study showed **significant favourable changes both in lifestyle and biological factors. The evaluations of “Let’s live healthily” showed increased knowledge, skills and awareness of healthy lifestyles and increased physical activity levels.** It was emphasised in the interview that in the years following the introduction of the programme, the **people of Pomurje started to eat more vegetables and to drink less alcohol, besides they started to smoke less.** In 2001 and one year later they made a follow up study of a random sample of 303 inhabitants aged 25-64. While 42.4% of the inhabitants of the Municipality Beltinci used lard for food preparation before intervention, only 27.2% of the inhabitants used lard after the intervention. That means that 39,1% of those who were using lard for food preparation before the intervention, changed it for vegetable oils (Buzeti, Maučec Zakotnik, 2008). According to the results gathered by the National CINDI Health Monitor Survey conducted in 2001 and 2004, **“people increased their consumption of fresh vegetables, used less animal fats and more olive oil in cooking, and consumed fewer fried foods, sweet, beverages, and less added salt”** (Buzeti, Maučec Zakotnik 2008: 15).

As for the results of the evaluations, they show **sustained nutritional changes** among the majority of participants as it is shown in the table bellow:

Perceived change of lifestyle (self-reported)	% Participants
Nutrition (any change)	95%
Consumption of more vegetables	67%
Consumption of more fruit	53%
Consumption of less fat	64%
Consumption of less salt	36%
Increased physical activity	36%

Self-rated increased knowledge about healthy lifestyles	65%
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Source: Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota (in Buzeti, Maučec Zakotnik 2008: 44).

Beside sustained nutritional changes, the participants reported on **sharing the information about the programme with their friends, family members and neighbours, contributing to their life style being more healthy.** Participation of the community in this programme has improved progressively. In this regards, self-support groups for physical activity (exercise, walking, biking) were established in all 50 communities where the programme was running and local communities organized other activities as well.

The results of the evaluations of the programme Mura showed that it contributed to a healthier lifestyle in the Pomurje region. This is especially relevant due to the fact that this is one of the most deprived areas in Slovenia and through this programme **particularly vulnerable groups are enjoying better life conditions like favourable changes in biological risk factors such as systolic blood presurre, diastolic blood pressure, the cholesterol level, Body Mass Index.**

3) Programme of Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Diseases (Slovakia)

The Programme of Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Diseases started to be implemented in 2002. In this programme men who are between 35 years old and 65 years old are included, as well as women who are between 45 years old and 70 years old. Until the end of 2008 nearly 600,000 preventive screenings were made (Fras, Maučec Zakotnik, 2009). According to Fras et al. (2009) the data show the wide range of some major independent risk factors for cardiovascular diseases in adult population in Slovenia. Especially those risk factors which are connected to unhealthy life-style (obesity, the lack of physical activity) are extensively spread in the regions of Southeastern Slovenia. The program is conducted in **61 health community centers** established in each region, by the Ministry of Health. Since 2008, 200.000 people participated in these educational health programmes (Fraser, Maučec Zakotnik, 2009).

Holistic approach of the programme for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle: personal and social counseling and working with the community agents.

An important element in the development of this program is the holistic approach. The health professionals have additional training that enables them to develop health education activities by promoting a healthy lifestyle, for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases. **From the holistic approach different aspects of the program work through workshops for healthy life style, risk factors, healthy food, slimming healthy, quitting smoking and physical activities for better health** (Fras et al. 2009). The changes are gradual and the health professionals perform monitoring during the entire process (Lužná 2009). The health professionals come in contact with people involved with the different services and players in the healthcare system: "The functioning of health educational centre and the implementation of the **programme counselling for health is directed to an individual and a community**, which occurs in the partner spirit of respect, cooperation and finding of common solutions on the basis of taking into consideration all moral dilemmas" (Luznar 2009: 45).

From the program and the health educational centres a **joint effort is done with all these actors in the community.** For instance, the health professionals coordinate their action with the hospital staff, addressing the patients to the specialists with whom they had previously come in contact to introduce the case. They also **work with the media**, have a place in the press for responding health questions raised by readers and they publish news on health issues. They also **collaborate with schools in activities such as Eco day and parents' day, in order to work together with families and children, promoting a healthy lifestyle.** In addition they work in tandem with different **Non-Governmental health organisations and local community.** The programme responsables indicate that working together with agents of the community, is one of the reasons for the programme's success (personal communication with the responsible of the programme).

The network of intervention health education centres represents an important potential in the rational and efficient reorganisation of basic level of health treatment, which will enable more qualitative prevention and management of cardiovascular diseases (Fras et al., 2009: 25). **The same authors stated that the larger benefits of such**

preventive health education programmes are for people from lower socio-economic strata. These authors think that schools and health education centres are efficient places for such prevention programmes (more in Fras, Maučec Zakotnik, 2009a). The cooperation of the general physician and his or her team and the professionals of the health education centres in the preventive treatment of persons at risk due to the risk factors and chronic diseases, enables us to achieve effective changes of life style and the improvement of health of the population at risk (Fras et al., 2009:13). According to these authors the improvement of prevention means that **there are less new cases of diseases and consequently less death.** This is important especially for Slovenia, because cardiovascular diseases still represent approximately 38% of all the causes of death (Fras et al., 2009). Besides, the treatment of the patients with acute cardiovascular events has improved, especially the complications with diseases of coronary arteries. In the field of treatment of acute cardiac arrest, Slovenia is on the second to third place in Europe concerning the number of immediate coronary artery dilatations. The positive results of the programme are also revealed by the study of Euro Consumer Powerhouse which was written in 2008. They researched various aspects of the treatment of cardiovascular diseases: the informing of patients and public, preventive activities, the use of drugs, self-treatment, the level of mortality etc. Among 28 EU countries, Slovenia is on the 8th place. Fras and Maučec Zakotnik (2008) compare this result to the study on general condition of national health systems where Slovenia was on the 20th place.

Fras and Maučec Zakotnik (2009, 2009a) mention that the research in many studies¹⁷ confirms that the contribution of preventive activities and different forms of treatment is 50:50% - there are less diseases and deaths due to the prevention programmes.

According to Health For All Database (HFA – DB) maintained by WHO and the statistics of the National Institute of Public Health (Slovenia) the mortality in Slovenia due to cardiovascular diseases was reduced from 530.8 to 259.2 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants (-51.2%) in the period from 1985 to 2007. This is a similar reduction of mortality as it is evident in the developed countries with similar prevention programmes. In the same period the standardized mortality due to *ischaemic* or *ischemic heart*

¹⁷ One of the research teams was led by prof. Simon Capwell from Liverpool in Great Britain, the project was entitled Heart of Mersey (Fras and Maučec Zakotnik 2009a).

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disease (IHD) was reduced from 128.7 to 67.2 (-47.8%) (Fras, Maučec Zakotnik, 2009). According to the aforementioned authors the research results in Slovenia show that the impact of preventive activities is the same as in other countries. For those who received health education in the workshops the prevalence of smoking was reduced (for males from 27.4% to 25.3%, for females from 17.8% to 16.2%), the prevalence of high blood pressure (for males from 38.1% to 36.2%, for females from 36.8% to 35.0%, and the prevalence of hiperholesterolemia for males 70.5% to 58.8%, for females 76.1% to 68.5% (Fras, Maučec Zakotnik, 2009).

3.4. Education & Housing

In this section, we describe four Integrative Actions that are being developed in four countries including the areas of education and housing.

1) FORUM's Resident Housing Workshops (Netherlands)

The "Resident Housing Workshops" (RHW) is a local project within the **areas of participation, education and housing**. RHW have been developed since 2002 by FORUM - Institute for Multicultural Development, a Dutch non-governmental organization working in the field of integration policy in the Netherlands. The RHW are part of the social cohesion programme. The RHW have been implemented in 17 different cities throughout the Netherlands. 15 to 20 residents from a specific neighbourhood take part in each workshop and attend 10 two-hour meetings over a period of 3 months. The project was initially funded by the Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment for a period of three years, after which the subsidies were provided by both public and private entities.

The residents from different cultures decide on the urban improvements in their neighborhoods

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The RHW aims at facilitating and promoting the involvement of all residents in housing and residential development activities.¹⁸ **The participants to the RHW are identified within multicultural neighbourhoods that are about to be restructured and / or renewed.** This project has been designed on the basis of the assumption that *specific groups such as young people, the elderly, and non-native Dutch population are poorly involved in processes of this kind, and that very little knowledge has been accrued about the specific residential wishes and needs of these groups* (FORUM, 2005:15). Through the RHW, FORUM intends to address this by promoting a multicultural residential renewal process, promoting the participation of all in the development of their communities and neighbourhoods.¹⁹ On a longer term, this intervention aims at encouraging the involvement of all the residents in future plan development by authorities and housing corporations (FORUM, 2005:30).

The workshops follow five stages²⁰: in the first phase (stage zero), all the local parties involved, including the inhabitants come together to discuss the RHW program and explain the tasks and role expected from each. The residents then interact with each other (stage 1) and discuss their respective backgrounds, lifestyles, housing and neighbourhoods. Residents agree to several aspects concerning the remaining sessions, notably the applicable methodology and timeframe. The second stage consists of a discussion on the positive and negative aspects which characterize the neighbourhood. An exercise is also implemented which allows participants to put forward their preferences in terms of housing. Specific tasks such as taking pictures and analyzing their districts are attributed to each. Residents who are not directly affected by the regeneration of a specific area are invited to provide their contributions. Positive and negative experiences are discussed and potential improvements to the neighbourhood are identified. During the third stage, municipal authorities and housing corporations explain what the urban renewal program consists of and what the development plans are. In this process, **participants are encouraged to raise questions, seek explanations and voice their concerns and preferences.** The participants are then shown how to create a blueprint of the renovation plans based on their experiences and

¹⁸ Information provided by FORUM on their website: <http://archiefforum.nl/woonateliert/index-engels.html>

¹⁹ "The Resident Housing Workshops are orientated towards resident participation in general and not specific migrant groups or refugees.", OIRS

²⁰ FORUM official website, available at <http://archiefforum.nl/woonateliert/index-engels.html>

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knowledge. Finally, **an architect supports the participants to translate their thoughts into projects**. Participants then practice the presentation of the blueprints. They will then present these before an alderman, a housing corporation and resident organizations. This presentation, which occurs during the fourth stage, allows **the residents' to express and present their most pressing residential needs directly before the main stakeholders (municipality and housing corporation)** (FORUM, 2005: 34-39). After the presentation, the proposed design is integrated into the regular plan drawn by the Housing Corporations and by the Municipal authorities.

The identification of the participants is guided by the targeting of specific areas in need of restructuring facing a residential improvement. **These tend to constitute multicultural and demographically diverse neighbourhoods**. Participants must be willing to take part on a voluntary basis. So far, this workshop has been implemented mainly **with groups including migrants and minorities** but it is considered to be equally applicable to different specific target groups including the elderly, the youth and people with disabilities on various topics such as housing and care, housing and recreation, housing and meeting facilities (FORUM, 2005:29).

By **stimulating and facilitating the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in the development and improvement of residential spaces**, the RHW intends to promote their **involvement in the renewal process of their neighborhood**. The educational dimension inherent to this Integrative Action consists in the pedagogical process which leads to the formulation of the residents' wishes regarding the residential renovations and in guiding participants in taking part in decision making processes. Participants, who tend **not to be familiar with the overall decision-making process leading to restructuring of a neighbourhood, are here given the opportunity to participate and influence the implementation of renovations**.

The first evidence of the positive evaluation of this intervention is reflected by its geographical expansion throughout the Dutch territory. Having started in one neighbourhood (Malburgen) in one city (Arnhem), it was then expanded to eleven cities. The sustainability of this initiative indicates that it is considered as successful by the various actors involved in these urban renovation projects. The project was first

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launched as an experimentation by the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment in 2001 for a period of three years. However, the subsequent high demand for RHW has led various other municipalities and private actors to contact FORUM for continuing to develop the RHW.²¹ Furthermore, since its inception, the implementation of this Integrative Action has resulted in the design of several original designs including a drawing room hall, a community centre with shop facilities (bazaar) and a Mediterranean salon hall.

This intervention has allowed **gathering different cultures in a common activity and contributing to social interactions on common issue of concern**. Among its objectives, it intended to involve both **Dutch native and non-native residents in the neighbourhood, in order to promote the intercultural exchanges** within and outside of the workshops. This element is especially present during the first stage of the intervention, which is designed in a way which allows all residents, irrespective of their background, to get together and express their respective preferences and ideas.

These meetings and discussions contribute to bringing together **the different cultures and perspectives present at the local level and through this process, participants come to understand that their preferences are many times more similar than different**. "It was particularly notable that native Dutch residents were repeatedly surprised that they shared the same way of thinking, the same attitudes and the same experiences as the non-native Dutch participants."²² By way of example, as regards the use of public space, all participants, irrespective of origin, manifested their desire to have a place where they could meet and talk and where their children could play.²³ These interactions with other residents of a local community contribute to a better understanding of individual experiences and in this way promote mutual understanding. The learning is extended to the architect and to the trainer who are then able to better understand and make use of the preferences expressed by the participants.²⁴

²¹ CIEN, 6.3; OIRS document

²² R. , Sohilaït and C. Veldhuysen, *Housing workshops: between dream and reality – active participation by non-native Dutch residents in urban renewal*, FORUM, Institute for Multicultural Development, Utrechtconclusion, conclusion

²³ CIEN report, 3.1.6

²⁴ Sohilaït, Rein and Veldhuysen, Chris, op.cit., p. 8

This intervention is also considered to contribute to the empowerment and participation of the participants in these activities. In an article written focused on the active participation of non-native Dutch people in urban renewal²⁵, the authors argue that many **educational skills are acquired through participation in this intervention.** This largely relies on the approach which is chosen, whereby the **local context**, namely the living and residential environment of the participants provide the framing of the intervention. This affects and “influences the sense of responsibility of the residents”²⁶. This also contributes to “social learning” understood as the learning of four key competences: action, cooperation, reflection and communication. It allows taking part and intervening within groups, organizations or communities, in new, unexpected, unpredictable circumstances, focusing on unforeseen problems in the context, making use of the problem-solving potential of the group or community²⁷. This approach is referred to by Jansen as “learning to participate and learning through participation”²⁸. Participants learn how to engage in social, cultural, economic and political processes and contexts, feeling “responsibility for the state of affairs within their group”²⁹.

2) Fondazione La Casa onlus: social housing, Padua (Italy).

Education and training also lay behind Integrative Actions which are contributing to improve the housing conditions of vulnerable groups, as identified through the analysis conducted. One of these cases refers to the services offered by *Fondazione La Casa Onlus* (Padua) which is the first private body in Veneto to deal with social housing. This institution is addressed toward the **acquisition by users of skills and methodologies useful to find a welcoming home, fighting social exclusion and marginalization.**

²⁵ Sohilaït, Rein and Veldhuysen, Chris, *Housing workshops: between dream and reality – active participation by non-native Dutch residents in urban renewal*, FORUM, Institute for Multicultural Development, Utrecht

²⁶ Sohilaït, Rein and Veldhuysen, Chris, op.cit., p. 8

²⁷ The theory of social learning is associated, in this article, to two authors: T. Jansen, *Social learning towards an active societal participation of participants in social-cultural activities*, NIZW, Utrecht, 1999; and D. Wildemeersch, *Social learning for sustainability in the risk society*, 4th Stoutenberg lecture, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 2001 (the titles were originally referenced in Dutch). This is referred to in FORUM, *Housing Workshops: knowing what people really want*, vol. 2, Housing Workshops Booklets, 2005, p. 22

²⁸ Idem, p. 25

²⁹ Sohilaït, Rein and Veldhuysen, Chris, op.cit., p. 8

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Fondazione La Casa was founded on March 26th 2001 by will of the Chamber of Commerce of Padova, ACLI Padova, Nuovo Villaggio Cooperative and Banca Popolare Etica with the support of Fondazione CARIPARO and the Diocese of Padova. Later Provincia of Padova, Venezia, Rovigo, Comuni of Camposampiero and Vigonza Regione joined membership too while many private bodies and enterprises started supporting it.

The Foundation identifies and manages the public housing assets. It collaborates, through a specific agreement, with social enterprises for the management of social support to housing, work and care of the relationship with users. To ensure sustainability and a multiplier effect of its initiatives, the Foundation is also concerned to encourage research and development, communication and awareness about the territory, through the promotion of networking structures and operational coordination between the actors active in the social and housing policies. **The end users are unemployed, people living in poor conditions, migrant workers and families, trainees and students.** The social housing services are mainly institutional activities whose aim is to face any kind of social, personal and family difficulty caused by housing loss. It tries to **facilitate the integration of families into the economic and productive environment** of the region of Veneto (Italy), and helps them find their way into the social structure.

The training activities provided by this organisation refer particularly to **property management, facility management, companies' service provider** which contributes **to teach people the right way to home management.** It offers house hunt, house finding consultancy, support and social housing intermediation and short term accommodation. In particular, the advice in the search of house consists in giving to its users a consulting and guidance service, promoting the awareness of their rights and duties, opportunities available and how to use them effectively. On another level, the initiatives put forward by this organisation involve undertaking planning and consulting services for participation in regional tenders on construction of public housing and promotes initiatives and **training courses on social housing to support their development at local and national level.**

All this work is contributing to create **a network of local institutions that analyzes the origins of housing deprivation problems and looks for real answers.** The final

aim is **to inform people about housing rights and to educate them to a more welcoming society**. This is done through **networking and communication**, housing policy consultancy and research and development of “urban cohabitation”.

3) Fondazione Casa Amica: *agenzia di housing sociale* [Social housing Agency], Bergamo (Italy)

Another intervention which addresses housing issues through educational components is the **Fondazione Casa Amica**³⁰, a volunteer non-profit organization founded in 1993 and promoted by the Provincial immigration Council to facilitate access to housing for migrants and Italians living in poor condition or in exclusion situations. The association operates throughout the province and works with public agencies, municipalities, associations, trade unions, foundations and charities. The founding partners are: the Province of Bergamo, the Municipalities of Bergamo, Albino, Albano S. Alessandro, Costa Volpino, Dalmine, Lovere and Osio Sotto, the Builders Association, Caritas, CGIL, CISL and UIL, Misericordia, immigrant associations from Senegal, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast.

Housing Management training is a successful action which is also behind the activities of Fondazione Casa Amica as well. This organisation offers and promotes services and projects to accompany vulnerable groups living in risk of marginalization. These services offered different type of help: **advise for first home purchase; research on the market, ensuring the support and facilitate access to forms of concessional loan through agreements with local banks.**

This organisation provides **housing training and support for different vulnerable groups**. For instance, with migrant people, the association manages temporary housing for accommodation of medium-term immigrant groups. Its activities include training on the proper use and maintenance of accommodation and facilities, rules of communal living and self management. Furthermore, the association builds and manages housing for single mothers with children in poor housing conditions and social situation. It plans and implements, in agreement with the local authority, residential placement locations

³⁰ <http://www.casaamica.org/>; http://www.casaamica.org/vecchio_sito/, accessed on February 16th.

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within housing for disadvantaged people. The main objective is to promote paths aimed at acquiring the individual independency.

Among its activities, training courses for immigrants, volunteers, directors, officers and technicians on issues of housing, management and construction of housing policies and social interventions are implemented promoting systematic knowledge about legal instruments and financing instruments.

Through the development of the "*Progetto Triennale HELP: Tutela dei figli minori di famiglie monoparentali fragili e di famiglie multiproblematiche e accompagnamento dei genitori*"³¹ which aims to protect children living in troubled families, the organisation provides **specific action for children and educative support and training** for families to make them able to ensure **adequate protection to their children and their integration into scholastic education and in social and cultural areas**. The project is aimed particularly to minors and immigrant families, but also to cases of Italian families.

This project aims to develop in two directions: **protection of children and support to single mothers**, living in the "*Casa a colori*" reception Center and protection of minors and support to vulnerable families – including Roma families- living in apartments managed by the Association. The "*Casa a Colori*" includes a three-year educational project through which joint **work with families is conducted in spaces where their experiences and ideas are exchanged around topics such as the structure and management of the family and the cohabitation with the "Casa Amica" people and the community. In these spaces of dialogue, common solutions to the barriers that are suffering are being sought**. This resulted on the creation of an atmosphere of trust, in which families can talk and in which there is an atmosphere that promotes greater prosperity and welfare for their children. The apartments are bound for temporary reception of women alone or with children who, for particular economic conditions, need a bed and a socio-educational support aimed to build the conditions to get autonomy, through an accompanying process leading to stable housing solutions.

³¹ Triennial Project HELP: protection of children of single parent, fragile families and support of parents.

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Another activity developed by Casa Amica, are the actions addressed to **raise awareness of the public sector on the issues of housing problems and policies**. It offers to local entities administrative, planning and management advices in the field of social housing policies. Furthermore, the **association conducts research on ways of living, on housing needs, opportunities for intervention in the area through the direct involvement and interaction of public and private**. Researches are designed to intercept and promote new opportunities for action.

The aforementioned projects promoted by the *Fondazione Casa Amica* follow a socio-educational perspective which are achieving a relevant impact in end-users' housing conditions. For instance, concerning the accommodation of vulnerable groups, the data on period of 1993 to 2003 shows how the Fondazione has assigned **132 houses which imply around 565 people who are currently living under cover**. In the future it is expected to construct new buildings, around 46, which will be funded by local and regional governments³².

The combination of actions and policies both to offer affordable housing facilities and provide guidance and training for housing management, is becoming an effective response. In conclusion to be truly effective, this type of intervention must include **a combination of affordable housing to rent and personal services. The accompaniment through guidance and training becomes a prerequisite in the integration process of the individual and the family in the network of relationships in the neighborhood** and the local community.

At the same time in order to develop a genuine **process of individuals' empowerment** it is essential to build an **active participation in the social life of the local community**, interacting and sharing interests and opportunities. Experience of **social housing could promote social cohesion in the territory**, integrating housing and social policies.

³²http://www.casaamica.org/vecchio_sito/cifre.htm ;
http://www.casaamica.org/vecchio_sito/attivita.htm

4) Cooperativa Sociale Biloba: "Coabitazione solidale" [Solidarity cohabitation] (Italy).

The *Cooperativa Sociale Biloba* (Social Cooperative Biloba, Turin) consists of a group of graduates in science and humanities matters, educators and youth leaders with experience in environmental education and community development³³.

***Biloba* establishes strategies for integrated planning of urban ecosystems, for the development of community and active citizenship, for the prevention of discomfort and promote well-being.**

The pilot project of "*Coabitazione solidale*"³⁴ (solidarity cohabitation), sponsored by the Municipality of Turin has the main objective of promoting development of community and social networks in the district and building through solidarity cohabitation of young volunteers (18-30 years old). The project is coordinated by the Cooperative *Biloba*, which accompanies the volunteers during the duration of the project.

This project is part of the social housing initiatives promoted by the Housing Plan 2009 2010, approved by the municipal council, which defines the transition from housing policies to living policies through a range of actions that promote synergies and collaborations between public and private areas and encourage solidarity and development of local networks.

Biloba offers 5 furnished apartments of 45 square meters; each one is composed by two single rooms. **The solidarity cohabitation is composed by young volunteers who accept an agreement of cooperation with the Municipality and the Cooperative for the development of relationships, conflict mediation between tenants and accompaniment to social and health services of vulnerable people.** The agreement provides a **steep discount on rent for accommodation in exchange of ten hours of volunteer work per week to implement the project in collaboration with local institutions.** 10 hours a week volunteering involve the following activities:

³³ <http://www.biloba.it/>, accessed on February 16th.

³⁴ <http://www.biloba.it/coabitazione-solidale>, accessed on February 16th.

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- Preliminary training and ongoing aimed to territory knowledge, experience of social housing, and acquisition of basic skills for carrying out the various activities;
- Participation in the mixed group;
- Participation in an European research (Cat-med), a pilot experience of sustainable neighborhood;
- The development of community and social networks in the neighborhood;
- Support for people in need and mediation with local services;
- Support for the development and strengthening of good environmental practices;
- Time Bank³⁵

A **joint working group** composed by sectors of the Municipality, the District, the Territorial Agency for Housing and young people, **plans and assesses the development of the pilot experience**. The project includes training to territory knowledge and for basic skills for carrying out the various activities of Biloba. The experience of **solidarity cohabitation promotes development of community and social networks in the district and bulging through solidarity cohabitation of young volunteers** (18-30 years old).

4. DISCUSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Successful social policies promote Integrative Actions where an intersection between education and other social areas like employment, health, housing and social and political participation is identified. These intersections will be described putting special emphasis on the role of education in the overcoming of social exclusion and promotion of social cohesion. Next, we present particular educational components from the Integrative Actions which are common for the different social areas.

One of the successful elements identified is the **inclusion of all involved stakeholders in the decision-making processes**. This process includes the end-users (especially the

³⁵ The Time Bank is a type of association that is based on the free exchange of "time". Each member, therefore, provides a few hours to give another member a certain competence. The times given are calculated and credited or debited in the bank. All exchanges are free.

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vulnerable groups) in the decision about which educational actions would be implemented in order to contribute to improving the situation of exclusion. This is the case of the implementation process of the Urbanitas Plan in the La Estrella and La Milagrosa neighbourhoods in Albacete, Spain. The stakeholders, neighbours, policy-makers, teachers and representatives of the social associations and entities in the neighbourhoods decide on the implementation of the successful **educational** actions, which are being developed in one of the schools.

Another context in which we identify this possibility for decision-making is the Integrated Plan for the Roma People of Catalonia, which accounts for the voice of the Roma community in a diversity of forms. In this framework for instance, the Plan supports the Drom Kotar Mestipen, a Roma association of women which works for the progress of the Roma Community. The functioning of the Drom Kotar Mestipen allows for the Roma women to express themselves through creating open spaces for debate such as their assemblies and the meetings of Roma women and girls. By so doing, they state the need to have Roma role models in schools or they propose ways through which to improve their access to the labour market. These contexts are the source from which concrete proposals arise. The support of the Integrated plan allowed to start up a course of school canteen monitors proposed by these women. Most of the women who followed these courses are now working as monitors in school canteens, becoming positive Roma role models for all children and at the same time improving their employment situation.

In the same line, the Integration and Diversity in Education in Europe (IDEE) initiative in Slovakia allows for the Roma students together with other people from the Roma community as well as non Roma people to state proposals of improvement of the educational system through the citizens' panels, so that it responds to the needs of the Roma people as well as contributing to their labour and social insertion. In the UK, the participants of the *Young people at risk of offending programme* have participated in the process of elaboration of the activities and the didactic materials that will be used in the training courses through pilot tests. The activities and materials used respond thus to their needs and interests and as a consequence they have contributed to the improvement of their academic results.

The participation of all the stakeholders and end users in the processes of decision-making includes the evaluation of the activities in which they take part. In the Integrative Actions analysed, the assessment of the end-users about the utility of the training received, has been collected in order to measure its impact and to improve the development of future editions. Some examples in this regards are the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups conducted with the participants in the different projects for learning and for access of ICT from the **Connect Network** centres. As well as the people with arthritis that have taken part in the IWPDP Programme have also been requested an evaluation about how have their expectations changed regarding social and psychological barriers for their labour insertion. By collecting the assessment and evaluation of the end-users has allowed gathering very diverse evidences of the success that the Integrative Actions analysed are having regarding the overcoming of the situations of social exclusion.

The processes of collecting the interests, requests and assessments of the end-users are very different depending on the Integrative Actions while they also have common aspects. As we have pointed out, two processes are basically produced. One in which the vulnerable groups are included in the process of dialogue with other concerned stakeholders as it is the case of the Urbanitas Plan in Albacete, Spain; or in the citizens' panels in Slovakia. The other process is to create spaces for dialogue particularly aimed at the vulnerable groups as would be the case of the meetings of Roma girls and women and the workshops of unemployed people as the INTO WORK Personal Development, among others. There are cases in which we can find the two processes. Through these processes, spaces where the end-users have the possibility of being direct speakers with the public administrations and the policy-makers are created. This is the case for instance of the Congress of Roma Women held in Barcelona and the congress of Roma students that took place in Slovakia, spaces with an international impact in which the very end-users discuss and present their proposals to the policy-makers.

For these decision-making processes to be really inclusive for the end-users and, especially for the vulnerable groups, the training of educators, teachers, administrators and policy-makers is key. Different Integrative Actions analysed place special emphasis in this aspect. The *Young people at risk of offending programme in UK* gives priority to the quality of the professionals that are to work with the youth, accounting for their

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capacity to respond to the latter's needs and interests. In the Connect Network centres, a social training is given priority within the professional profiling of the facilitators and not just a simple administrator for the ICT learning courses. In the **Health Promoting Schools** programme in Slovenia, the training of teachers and health workers is also given priority so that they are able to work with the whole community, as this relationship with the community is one of the successful elements of the programme.

Training the professionals from this perspective can contribute to **give priority to the demands, needs and interests of the end-users, specially the vulnerable groups**, in the decision of the educational initiatives within the social policies. In this sense, from the Association Miguel Fenollera in Albacete, Spain, the people that are promoting the creation of the cooperative for the self-**employment** of the neighbours are succeeding in bringing together the professional knowledge of the community, whether it is accredited or not. This is done on the one hand, in order to improve these people's existing skills and abilities by developing training courses which respond to their real needs. On the other hand, identifying together with the end-users professional domains in which the cooperative can become specialised, collecting the potential which exists among the people in the neighbourhood, and at the same time accounting for the demands of the labour market.

For the educational activities that are part of the social policy have the maximum possible success in the contribution to the overcoming of social exclusion, another of the key elements is the existence of a **joint work which is coordinated with as much agents in the community as possible**. In the Integrative Actions analysed, we have identified how the joint work between administrations with different levels of responsibility, NGO's, universities, companies, health centres, voluntary workers, etc. has a greater impact in the improvement of the situation of the end-users in different social areas.

The educational and training initiatives developed through this joint and coordinated work: improve the labour insertion of the neighbours of the La Estrella and La Milagrosa in Albacete as for example does the Association Miguel de Fenollera; improve a healthier lifestyle for the families of the Pumurje region as a consequence of Slovenia's "Let's live healthily" Programme Mura and the **Health Promoting Schools** programme; contribute to



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overcoming the digital gap in vulnerable groups of different areas in Spain through the Connect Network centres and increase the social and political participation through the Your Voice Matters in UK, among other examples.

The interventions between educational policy and other areas of social policy which are successful in the overcoming of social exclusion and in the construction of the social cohesion in Europe are promoting particular educational initiatives. In these, the end-users -especially the vulnerable groups- are part of all the phases inkling the processes of decision-making. By so doing, a constant dialogue among all the involved agents is engaged with the sole aim of reaching agreements that lead to the overcoming of the situation of social exclusion.

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