

# Local Approaches

# Doing it, Making it Work

JobTown, an URBACT Network 4  
Youth Employment & Opportunity



April 2015

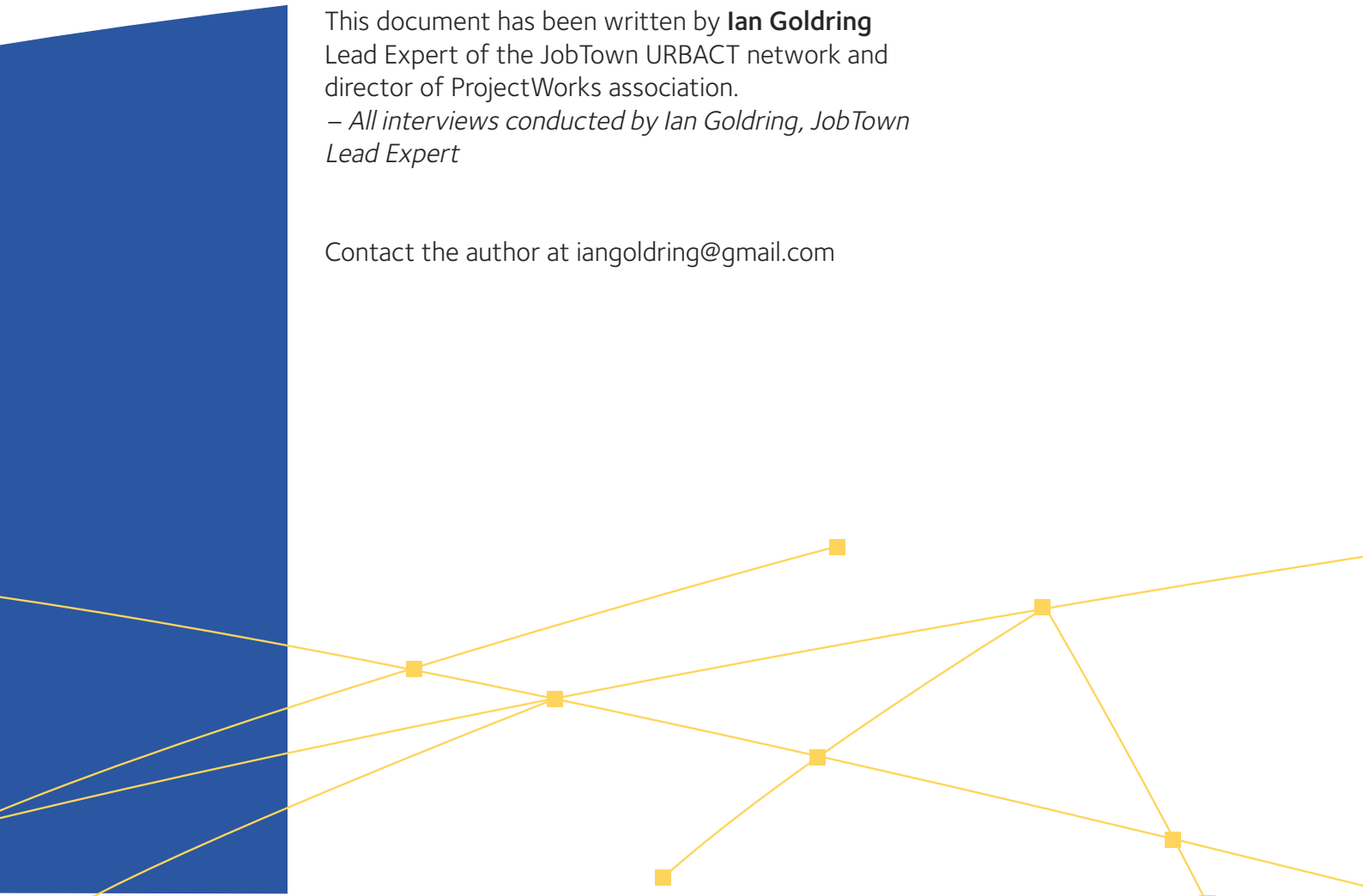


Connecting cities  
Building successes



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HOW YOU  
BILD UP YOUR  
PARTNERSHIPS



RELEVANCE OF  
EDUCATION  
TO LABOUR MARKET



JOB TOWN  
WORKS ON  
5 ISSUES

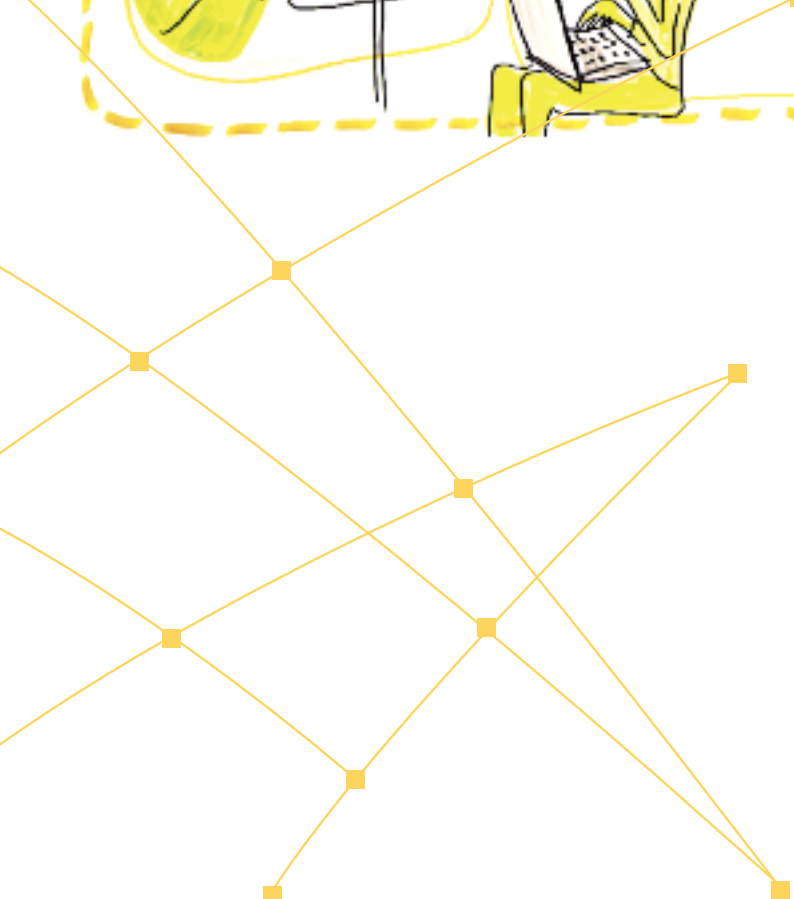
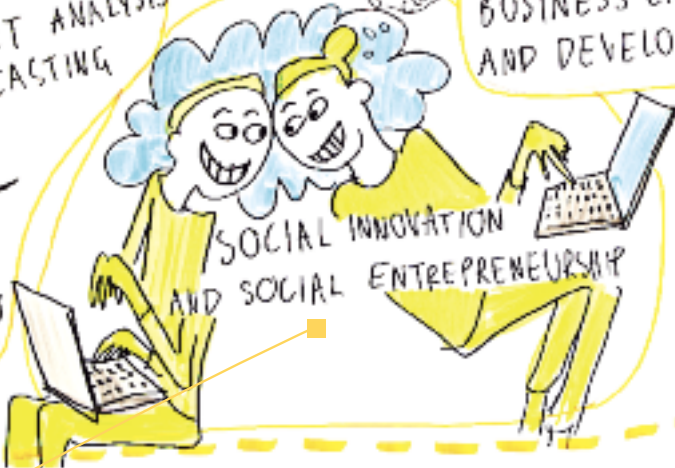
SUPPORT  
SELF-EMPLOYMENT,  
BUSINESS CREATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT



LOCAL FUNCTIONAL  
LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS  
AND FORECASTING



SOCIAL INNOVATION  
AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



# Foreword

Youth unemployment rates are predicted to stay high in many countries as the recovery remains too weak to provide sufficient job opportunities to the many young jobseekers.

What the OECD LEED - Local Economic and Employment Development - Programme has learnt from the past and what the JobTown project shows is that ensuring employment success for young people is a policy issue of particular relevance locally. Barriers preventing young people from successful transition into employment are often multifaceted in nature and responses need to come from a wide array of policy areas. It is at the local level that government policies can be integrated and combined with place-based initiatives to provide responses that work. Yet, in practice, too often programmes are delivered in isolation from each other, with uneven degrees of coverage and limited capacity to reach out to the most in need.

Rigid policy delivery frameworks, insufficient capacities, and a lack of strategic approach at the local level are often the reasons that undermine support for youth. Local areas need flexibility from the national level to tailor national programmes to local level contexts and needs. Additionally, for real local partnerships to emerge, local level actors need to have the flexibility to adjust programmes, targets, budgets as needed (as opposed to just coming together to share information about programmes).

And partnerships are indeed needed as they can put in place a 'pathways' approach to follow young



people from education/training, to finding employment or to being self-employed and to sustaining employment, which is more effective than single shot interventions. A "pathways" approach requires the co-ordination of schools, training institutions, public employment services, employers, to ensure that services are aligned and that young people are guided from one stage to the next.

The JobTown project 'journey' allowed participating cities to learn what has worked for others and put minds together to think outside the box on their own defies. Contexts and challenges may be different from one city to another but an informed policy exchange among local practitioners can indeed help to put in place better policies that will improve youth employment prospects.

**Ekaterina Travkina, OECD  
Local Economic  
& Employment Development  
Programme (LEED)**



# PANEL DISCUSSION

HOW CAN THE EU BUILD ON THESE ACHIEVEMENTS AND HELP ADDRESS THE LOCAL CHALLENGES

THE WAY TO BELONG TO SOCIETY IS TO HAVE A JOB



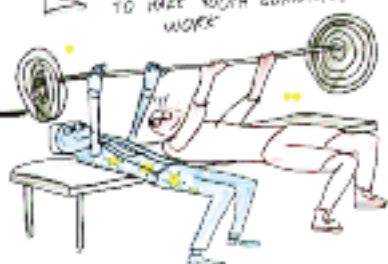
IT'S EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CREATE A START-UP IN MANY COUNTRIES!



CONTINUOUS MONITORING AND IMPROVING IS NECESSARY



WE NEED A VERY GOOD COOPERATION BETWEEN EU AND LOCAL LEVEL TO HAVE YOUTH GUARANTEED WORK



IN DE WE ARE CONSTANTLY STRUGGLING TO HAVE ENOUGH FUNDING FOR FRONT-LINE SERVICES



IN DE WE ARE AN ENORMOUS MARKET FOR HIGH-EDUCATED YOUNG PEOPLE



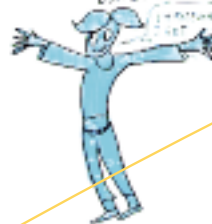
SOME GOVERNMENTS SEE YOUTH GUARANTEE AS A SOCIAL CONSPIRACY



WE NEED WARM BODYS WITH AGOUT TO HAVE A SALARY TO REEMPLOY UNEMPLOYED IN DE!



BUT NOT EVERYTHING WHAT'S GOOD IS EXPENSIVE



IN DE MANY PEOPLE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT YOUTH GUARANTEE

IN HUNGARY WE HAVE A GREAT PROBLEM WITH NE EDUCATED PEOPLE AND THEY LEAVE TO US, ALSO CONGRAT

QUEST TO MIGRATE

THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IS EUROPE'S TRINITY



SARA THOMA

FACEBOOK.COM/JORNEEDIA

# Introduction

This document sets out to review the overall experience and achievements of JobTown, as well as the main learning and insights that might be relevant to others pursuing similar goals and partnerships, and the Policy Recommendations made to the European Parliament and Commission, on the basis of three years of this network's efforts, in the field, in support of employment and local development.

It is primarily intended for policymakers, practitioners and anyone concerned with effective local approaches to supporting employment and opportunity for young people.

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This introduction finishes with a brief overview of what JobTown is, then we begin with a selection of **interviews** with different key participants in JobTown – a highly supportive Mayor in Spain, an optimistic Coordinator of an URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG) in Germany, an experienced local business leader and an engaged local politician in France, and an innovative training provider in the UK – giving their more personal views on how they've experienced JobTown and on their local approaches and priorities for supporting employment and economic development in their communities.

This is followed by a series of 'posters' highlighting the different localities **top achievements** in the JobTown project.

Then, the reader is walked through a review of the main **learning and insights** gained through the process of participation in and developing JobTown. This might be of particular interest to others concerned with similar local processes, whether through URBACT or other contexts, in favour of employment and development – e.g. the networks approach and experimentation with **organisational learning and capacity building**.

Following that, the reader is offered the complete set of **Policy Recommendations**, as they were presented at the JobTown final conference in Brussels, March 2015, to participating **Members of the European Parliament and European Commission officials from DG Regional and Urban Policy and DG**

**Employment**. These are broken down into three groups – those concerning capacity building, those directly aimed at young people themselves, and those concerning more governance issues.

In closing, we present a synthesis of **conclusions** of all previous JobTown publications and some closing remarks about **going forward** in our collective efforts to tackle youth unemployment and poor employment.

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JobTown is a network of 11 localities across Europe, co-financed by the European URBACT programme for promoting sustainable urban development.

- Cesena, Italy as Lead Partner
- Aveiro, Portugal
- Avilés, Spain
- Enfield, UK
- Gondomar, Portugal
- Kielce, Poland
- Latsia, Cyprus
- Nagykovács, Hungary
- University of Kaiserslautern, Germany
- Rennes, France
- Thurrock, UK

The JobTown network believes that youth unemployment, poor employment and inactivity need to be understood as structural problems pre-dating the economic crisis (though severely worsened by it), and as such must be treated by systemic approaches.

The network understands efforts for the creation of youth employment and opportunities, and local development strategies, as ultimately two sides of the same coin.

In keeping with the URBACT approach, each JobTown locality has established a Local Support Group, as a basis for developing sustainable Local Partnerships.

For more information on JobTown and to access its full range of publications and other outputs see:  
<http://www.urbact.eu/jobtown>  
 or <https://projectworks.wordpress.com/>

# What is JobTown?

- JobTown is a network of 11 Local Partnerships for the Advancement of Youth Employment and Opportunity across Europe
- JobTown believes Youth unemployment, poor employment and inactivity need to be understood as structural problems pre-dating the economic crisis and as such must be treated by systemic approaches
- JobTown addresses the creation of youth employment and opportunity and local development strategies as two sides of the same coin

## JobTown works on 5 issues:

### 1 Effective Local Partnerships

How to develop effective **models of cooperation** by establishing and articulating **Local partnerships** for the advancement of Youth Employment and Opportunity

### 2 Relevance of Education to labour market

How to make **Education** and **Vocational Education and Training** more Responsive to the Needs of the Local Labour Market

### 3 Local Functional Labour Market Analysis and Forecasting

How to develop or improve the identification and forecasting of needed skills and competences, stemming from developments in specific local/regional labour markets and the resultant shifts in demand for skills and worker profile

### 4 Support Self-Employment, Business Creation and Development, and Improve the Business environment

By addressing 5 pillars key to any entrepreneurial ecosystem: (1) access to funding, (2) entrepreneurial culture, (3) Tax & regulation, (4) Education & Training, (5) Coordinated support.

### 5 Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship

Development of tools to facilitate the understanding and advancement of Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Helping administrations do more with less.

## How does JobTown work?

- Strong **Political** support and involvement
- Helpful **relationship** with the policy priorities of ESF and ERDF 2014-2020 Operational programmes
- **Intensive Training and Exchange** workshops with practical tools
- **Knowledge Transfer Toolkits**
- Local **Knowledge Transfer Workshops** to systematically transfer knowledge to local organisations
- Online **Mutual Learning Helpdesk**
- Didactic **Learning Modules**
- **Multi-stakeholder** Policy Formulation and Action Planning



# Voices of JobTown

## “A local administration can make a difference”

– Interview with Pilar Varela,  
Mayor of Avilés, Spain

*Pilar Varela, Mayor of Avilés (a JobTown partner), has given the project a lot of personal attention and support, attending personally and participating actively in our June 2013 Transnational Workshop in the city. She has accorded us an interview in which she explained how the employment has changed in Avilés during the years, which strategies have been adopted in tackling youth unemployment, why a local administration could play a key role in promoting job opportunities and what are her expectations from JobTown and URBACT methodology, strongly based on networks and partnerships. Here below the interview.*

Avilés (pop. aprox. 90000) is a northern Spanish city that had traditionally been heavily industrialised and has now transitioned to a larger emphasis on the service sector and diversification, while maintaining a significant level of value added industry.

8400 of its citizens are unemployed, about double the number in 2007. Being somewhat less exposed to the construction boom and bust, Avilés' unemployment rates hover consistently around 4 or 5% below the national averages; Spanish unemployment is now at 27%, and 56% for 18-25s (2013 figures).

### How has employment changed in Avilés?

*In the 1970s if you asked a young person here what he/she wanted or expected to do – they would have likely said they expected to work in some large industrial firm or perhaps work for the government.*

*All that has **changed irrevocably**.*

*We're moving from a few very big companies dominating the labour market, to lots of small companies and start-ups – typically involving 1-4 people.*

*This is a large shift, and a shift in mentality comes along it; people are more and more having to see how they themselves have to be **part of their own solution**.*



*What's more, the big corporations and industries are the most vulnerable to **de-localisation**; they are all part of multinational structures now and decisions about them are taken far away, that you have little or no control over – in New York, Geneva etc.*

*And when such decisions are taken the consequences can come **fast**.*

*For our future, we have to think a lot more about activities that are solidly **linked to our territory**. If companies are more connected to a territory, if the owners are from here, they feel differently; they are bound to the place in a way someone taking decisions somewhere far away simply isn't. You see this in the attitudes of both local businesspeople and our trade unionists.*

### What role does entrepreneurship play in tackling youth unemployment?

*Nowadays, people can't only think in terms of 'someone employing me, giving me work'. Young people today need to consider the option of creating their own job; of course they won't all become independent business people, but more and more of them will be turning to this option. For years we've been working to promote entrepreneurial culture; it has to start in **primary education**. Learning about risk taking, personal initiative, teamwork, how to evaluate and take decisions... things like that.*

*We find as this is introduced in schooling around **15%** of students at the secondary level express a motivation to pursue an entrepreneurial path. And there is **plenty of demand** for training in entrepreneurship.*

*If a business fails, we have to allow people to pick themselves up and carry on. Spanish society isn't*

like in North America, where it looks good on your CV to have changed careers or gone through a business start up that closed down – that's considered **valuable experience**.

Here if a business fails, society adds to the sense of failure in how it judges the person and makes that person feel.

**This has to change**, and I believe we are seeing change. It's slow because you are talking about changing culture, but it's happening.

### How can a local administration make business and self-employment easier? Or to support youth employment?

Helping you solve all the problems that have nothing to do with your actual business. Help you find suitable business premises, cut through the paperwork, etc. We provide training and advisory for entrepreneurs, resolve red tape, provide investment capital (e.g. €3000 business start up grant to approved small business proposals).

**A local administration can make a difference;** start-ups receiving the kind of support we can provide, have a significantly lower failure rate. The companies that have gone through our business incubator – La Curtidora – have a survival rate after 3 years of **77%**. After 5 years it's **68.6%**.

That's good. Normally failure rates of business start-ups are significantly higher than that. It would be **wrong** to just say well the crisis and economic forces are what they are and there's nothing much we can do.

To have an impact the administration has to make effective use of its **resources and its networks**.

On another front, we've collaborated with the national and regional governments, to bring **energy** providers and large consumers together to negotiate better deals, thus allowing our local companies to stay competitive. Without efforts like these job losses would have been a lot worse. In terms of supporting employment, our services have to be thinking in terms of **specific people** – i.e. very individualised support and follow up, with a stable contact person. Moreover, it has to be holistic; **people rarely have just an employment problem**, it's likely to go hand in hand a whole set of related issues – housing and so forth.

We have done a lot to join up our services, and thus our thinking and approaches.

However, we are not going to be able to find a job for everyone. We are going to have to live

through a time of significant unemployment – this has to be faced. We need to help people stay active and not slip into defeatism. Public administration has to do what it can to **palliate the damage** of unemployment.

### What do you want from JobTown?

We want to learn, along with other European cities, how to build and use **networks**, which are effective in enabling more young people to find their place on the labour market.

### What role does partnership – the cornerstone of URBACT methodology – play in all this?

The administration has to work with the key economic and social actors in its territory, come to shared agreements with them and work on that basis.

Just this month the municipality signed a new Pact – Avilés Acuerda – with the local employers association and the main trade unions active in the area, to set out a strategic vision for the city. We work with the region in a programme we co-fund, to support young people in getting their first job.

Companies receiving contracts from the Municipality are required to follow practices that are pro youth employment.

### How would you characterise your approach to partnership here in Avilés?

I believe as a government we have to make public resources as effective as possible, and to do so we have to work in **partnership** with economic and social actors – we are moving to more and more of that kind of approach.

The municipality is the local actor best placed to **join up** the different partnerships and participatory processes going on in the locality, to ensure coherence and communication among them.

To work this way, we have to be coherent, patient and build **trust** – you have to go into it without prejudices and establish trust, without it things won't happen.

### Apprenticeships and the Dual Educational system have become hot topics in Europe; what's the perspective in Avilés?

The local administration can **facilitate linkages** between training and education providers and companies – because we have the local

knowledge you need for that. We have an intermediary role.

In the past we had a very developed apprenticeship system, and it all got **dismantled in the 1980s**.

We can't just go back to the past though, now **we look a lot to Germany** to learn about good Dual Education. It's still early days though, so it's difficult to form any conclusions on the matter yet. Over the next two years the picture will become a lot clearer, as reform initiatives now underway get rolled out.

Though I would say that what we've experienced in on-the-job learning so far has been positive – for employees and employers.

As we look at adopting Good Practice in apprenticeships and dual education, a lot of the current rigidities that exist in business practice and in the unions will have to change. Education and training providers are going to have to be **flexible** too, and adapt to a changing reality for them too; education and training have to react **faster** to what's going on in the labour market. The relation between employment and education and training has to be a lot **closer, and permanent**.

A local government can do a lot to foment those kinds of relations. We're using our Participation in **JobTown** as a tool to help make that happen.

### Are there perception issues?

An important **societal change** we are seeing now, is how we are looking again at vocational education and placing more value on it. For many years, vocational education had a real **lack of prestige** – it was seen as something for people who couldn't do better, a second-class option. Now this is changing; lots of young university graduates are looking at doing some kind of vocational training – it's a new strategy you see emerging.

Generally we have a lot of university graduates and a lack of people qualifying in more technical fields.

### How can the target group – young people – be meaningfully involved in decisions on the policies and programmes that concern them?

More needs to be done to hear from young people themselves; it's one of the things we want to work on in **JobTown**.

We find it can be effective to have youth **'antennas'** – i.e. young people who go out to communicate information to other young people, and also to gather information on the views, concerns and situations of young people.

They make plenty of **sensible** suggestions – for example, that there should be training on how to do a job interview and how to present your CV effectively in the interview process. That's a good practical idea.

### What impact is youth emigration having on Avilés?

A lot of well-educated young people are emigrating – it's a loss for us, but they are going to grow and learn from the experience. I believe a lot of them will come back, all the better for the experience – speaking other languages well, with good work experience etc.

Emigration now is nothing like it was in the 1960s – back then a lot of them were semi-literate and did low level jobs. **Now they're engineers** and the like.

Here in Asturias, we have an example from the past – the **'Indianos'**, people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who went to the Americas to make their fortune and come back. Those people built a lot of our schools and cultural institutions here, and brought back a lot of knowledge with them. These young people now might be our **new 'Indianos'**.





## *“A lot of experience coping with big changes”*

### **– Interview with Michael Lill, Coordinator of the Kaiserslautern ULSG, Germany**

Kaiserslautern – represented through its university – is JobTown’s German partner and the host of our second Transnational Workshop in October 2013. The Workshop focused on approaches to making education and training more responsive to the labour market, and was chaired by the coordinator of the Local Support Group himself, Michael Lill, also manager of the consultancy firm IHK Zetis GmbH – Centre for Technology and Innovation Consulting Southwest (<http://www.zetis.de/>). I’ve interviewed him to learn more about the situation in his patch of Europe, and to share any insight he might have, based on his experience coordinating an URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG).

### **– What do you hope to get out of the JobTown experience?**

We have our problems in Kaiserslautern, and we can always learn from other experiences. We’ve got a lot out of other EU projects.

For my part, I’d like to see us develop a much **better understanding** of this complex topic – youth employment policy. There are so many stakeholders involved, so many projects and activities, but there’s not enough **coordination** and strategic planning.

I hope we can do much better work as economic developers. I want youth unemployment close to **zero**.

### **– Do you think that’s possible?**

Yes. Reducing the unemployment rate as much as we can **must** be the aim.

### **– What’s the employment situation like in your city and how does it compare to the national situation?**

Employment rates in Kaiserslautern are **average** or near average, with general unemployment rates of 9-10%, matching the national average. Youth unemployment is 8% versus a national average of 7%, so a bit higher, but not by much. We have many jobs with high skill qualification profiles, because of the university, the research institute, the tech sector and so on.



On the other hand, we have problems in sectors like health, hotels and restaurants. The problem is there are jobs offered there, but we have not enough people able to do them.

### **– So the supply gaps are mostly in service sector jobs?**

Yes.

### **– Aren’t demographics a big concern for Germany?**

Yes, the German economy is doing ok for now, but in a few years intense demographic problems are going to hit us. We have to get ready to face that future.

### **– This brings us to immigration.**

We will need **openness** in all our companies, to skilled people from other European countries – otherwise, we’re going to have a big problem. We will need people who are academically qualified, but also people with trade skills and so on – middle and high skilled.

### **– We’ve talked about the Urbact project OpenCities,<sup>1</sup> which I was part of – are you confident in your city’s ability to accept new people coming in?**

Perhaps the city could look at starting integration projects, to raise openness.

Though, I’d say we already have a good openness. We have lots of American people living here, lots

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/Open\\_Cities/outputs\\_media/7\\_Concept\\_Paper\\_01.pdf](http://www.urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/Open_Cities/outputs_media/7_Concept_Paper_01.pdf)

of Portuguese... we're **used to getting along** with different people.

Admittedly, it's true, integrating different cultures and religions can be a challenge. For example some Muslim people have had a hard time integrating in our local culture. Not the Turks though, we're pretty familiar with each other. The politics can get complicated. Some people think immigrants are a burden, that they come here and cost us money – but that just isn't the case. We need them.

We need to integrate people into our German society, we don't need ghettos.

**Language** is key to long-term integration on all levels.

However, in our IT companies, a lot of the work is done in **English** – some even run their meetings in English. I know a company where 60% of the employees are from outside Germany, from 22 different countries.

The **university** also offers courses in English, and they have students from around 170 different countries.

Here, if you speak good English and good German, you'll have all the opportunities anyone has.

#### – *Do people understand the need for immigration?*

A few weeks ago, we ran a survey in our region on hiring people from other European countries and entrepreneurs turned out to be very interested in bringing in high skilled people from other European countries. The **pressure** on them is still not high enough, to make them turn to international solutions.

This is completely different in the region of Ludwigshafen and Mannheim (*neighbouring area, where his company is also active*). There's a different dynamic there. They are more **aware** of the need to supplement the workforce with skilled foreign people. They have **bigger companies**, with more obvious job offer and demand issues.

I think in 3 to 5 years, we'll have the same awareness here. Thing is, change can come so fast, and that can lead to a **lag** in doing what needs to be done, in time.

#### – *The smaller actors have less of a long-term understanding, and the larger companies do studies and see the long-term projections more clearly?*

Right.

From 50,000 companies we have in our region, there are only 300 with more than 100 employees. The average company we deal with has **5-6 employees**.

#### – *Kaiserslautern stands out as a city that has undergone significant regeneration; how has the place changed over the last 20 years or so?*

We've had intensive change here. We were an old industrial region, with big factories – pretty run down (*laughs*). Nowadays, we are a **hi-tech** region, and our workforce has much **higher levels of education**. Around 10% of our companies' staffs have strong academic qualifications; 20 years ago it would have been perhaps 1 or 2%.

There has been a major **structural shift**; it's a completely different region now. I can see it because I grew up here. Things were outdated, now with the university and research institute, and university spin offs, we have a fresh climate – it's more **future-oriented**.

#### – *Has perception of the city outside Kaiserslautern kept up with the pace of change?*

There is still a lack of understanding about Kaiserslautern; it's doing very well, but the **image** is not in accordance. Many people don't know that Kaiserslautern is now a very future-oriented city. When we contacted people who were educated here maybe 20 years ago, and who now work somewhere like Munich or Stuttgart, and we told them about the latest developments, they just didn't believe it.

We invited a group of them back for a weekend, and their jaws dropped. They said 'wow, we didn't expect this'. Our problem is one of misperception. Externally there is either no image formed of us, or one we wouldn't want.





Sometimes all they know about us is **soccer, not the Max Planck Institute**, etc.

*– Are you looking at city-region Marketing strategies, like Glasgow in the 90s, that sort of thing?*

**Yes!** Really professional regional Marketing is very important for the future of Kaiserslautern. Targeted Marketing will be a big part of our coming work.

*– What about festivals and events, using them as a way to attract attention to the city and see how it has changed?*

Absolutely. We should go for new events. **Glasgow's a very good example** in this regard; they did this well. All over the country, we want people to see what has happened in Kaiserslautern, we need to bring them here. Back in 2006, Kaiserslautern was one of the host cities for the World Cup, and the world was here. We had a great atmosphere, and people saw Kaiserslautern as the friendly and attractive city it is.

You need to attract attention, but you need the **substance** to be there – something you can raise awareness about. You need to understand how companies think, follow a very professional systematic strategy, with vision and multiple steps.

You can't just pull it off with a one-weekend event; you have to keep the strategy up for years.

*– Tell me about your Local Support Group and how it's coming along*

They have **known each other for many years**, but they have **never really worked together** in a very concrete focused way like they are now.

**JobTown** has been a way to get them together. We've got people from the Chamber of Crafts, the Chamber of Commerce (which I am representing), the Development Office, and people from concerned associations (3rd sector). Our last meeting in December 2013 was very good. Group work – what everyone does, their roles – is very **transparent**.

*– How did you proceed?*

We began with a **review** of all our running projects and rated them.

We put a big list of projects and actions **on the wall**, and we saw that sometimes we had good activities, but only for a specific target group – teachers for example.

Based on that, we are identifying the gaps among what's already being done. This proved surprising, as the participants hadn't previously realised those gaps were there – **it wasn't on their radar**. Now we're looking at covering those gaps.

We're thinking both in **lateral** terms – that is, developing similar actions for other target groups – and in terms of completely **new** initiatives. I feel so far we've taken some very good steps. Now in 2014, the plan is to develop the new projects. The team is really **motivated**.

*– What makes a Support Group successful?*

We have to keep them motivated. Every time we meet each other, something needs to have been achieved in the meanwhile. People need to **see some progress** being made.

**Minutes** should be well taken. The next steps, **actions** to be taken clearly stated.

We have to ask people on an individual basis – **personally** – about how they can contribute.



*– I'm very concerned with avoiding tokenism. How do you think young people can be given a meaningful voice in this process?*

This can be a challenge in Germany, like elsewhere. We have to bring young people together, on a regional level.

Associations can play an important role. Chambers and players in the educational field need to work with young people, involve them and raise awareness among them.

For example, the Chambers have **special consultants**, who go out and talk with both businesspeople and young people directly, to find out about their needs, their working and learning atmosphere, and so on.

Companies should also go into the **schools** – the future-oriented ones do.

*– What do you think Kaiserslautern's experience might offer to others?*

Perhaps our working very closely with the **region, the university and economic stakeholders**.

For 20 or 25 years, we weren't getting the economic spin offs we wanted from the university. So together, we started a lot of coordinated initiatives and the result was that now we have about **300 hi-tech companies** in Kaiserslautern.

The politics, the research and the economics had to work closely together – **this is the secret**.

Also, we can offer a lot of experience coping with big changes – **change management** if you will.

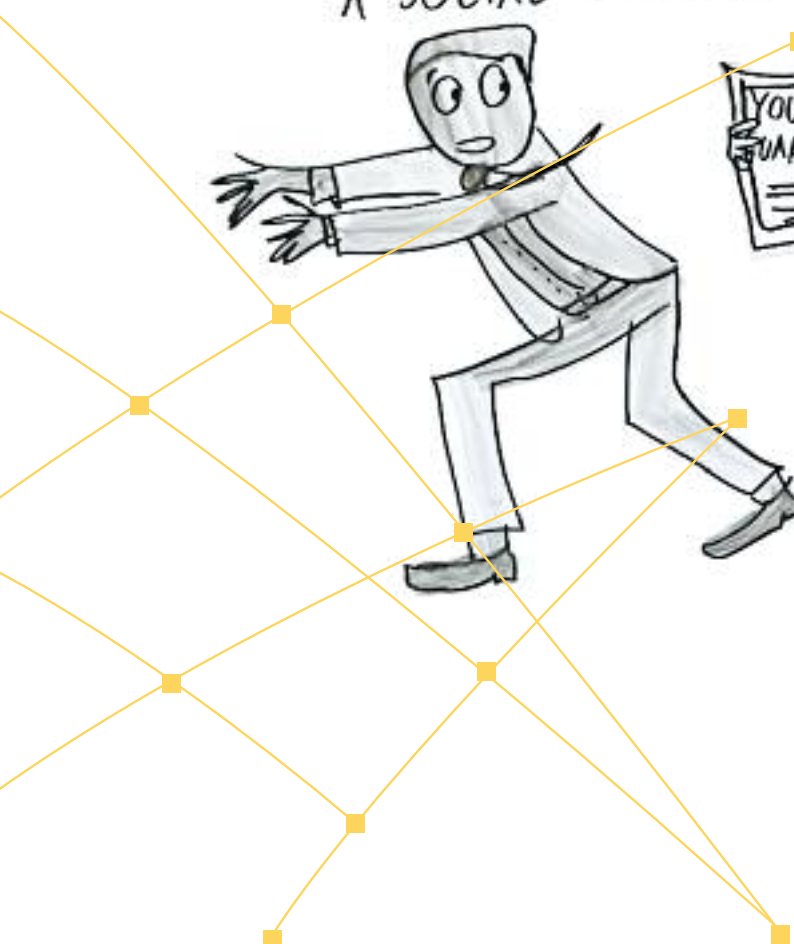
*– Where's Kaiserslautern going?*

We have to continue in the direction we've taken, but **expand** it; we need to extend cooperation to the other cities and regions around us.

Over the next 10 years, we have a chance to become the most attractive city in the southwest of Germany – because, on one hand, we can grow a very strong hi-tech environment and, on the other hand, we can offer quality of life, in a nice city with lots to offer and beautiful forested surroundings.



SOME  
GOVERNMENTS SEE  
YOUTH GUARANTEE AS  
A SOCIAL CONSPIRACY





## “And tomorrow was today”

### – Interview with Rémy Langlois, Local Business Leader in Rennes, France

*Rémy, local business person from the retail sector, chosen representative of the Rennes Chamber of Commerce and Industry, leader of “Employment in Trade” group liaising with the local authorities, and participant in JobTown’s third Transnational Workshop, February 2014 in Rennes, France.*

#### – What do you hope to get out of JobTown?

In terms of exchange, I’m interested in everything to do with **partnership tools**. There’s a lot that can be done by companies working together, for example transferring employees to a different company if a company is unable to maintain job posts.

#### – What sort of examples do you look at internationally?

People here don’t tend to look much outside France, and entrepreneurs are usually too busy just working.

There are issues of a lack of **awareness**.

#### – What’s the employment/unemployment situation like here and how does it compare to the national situation?

Traditionally Rennes has outperformed French averages, with relatively lower unemployment rates, but this advantage has been eroding. Unemployment here is now 8.5%, versus 10.5% for France as a whole.

A lot of **industrial jobs have been lost**; in 2007 PSA Peugeot Citroën employed 12,000 people, now, in 2014, it’s 4,200.

While we enjoy a **growing ICT** sector, this hasn’t created as many jobs as were lost.

#### – Is it a supply or a demand problem?

Both. A lot of educational paths **aren’t preparing young people adequately** for work, and there just **isn’t enough work** out there.

#### – Where are the gaps?

Here it’s hard to fill posts in **retail**, there’s a lack of suitable candidates. Typically, you get most supply issues in **new emerging** sectors. With some sectors it’s an **image problem**; people have aspirations and don’t want to go into construction, become a butcher or fishmonger.



#### – How can those image problems be overcome?

**Money**. Money does a lot to change an image. Pay people enough and they’ll sell fish.

#### – How have the local economy and labour market changed over the years?

I was **born in Rennes and grew up here**, and I’ve seen how it’s changed.

With digital, the **photo studios** are practically all gone.

Separate **car mechanic** and body shops are disappearing, and moving to an all-in-one model. People don’t bother **repairing their shoes**; it’s usually cheaper to throw them out. It’s only worth it to do maintenance for expensive high-end shoe products.

Businesses have to evolve and keep **finding the added value**; the right specialisations survive.

#### – And the job market?

It’s a different world now. 20 or 30 years ago, **you didn’t worry about getting a job**; companies were competing to hire you. They used to come into the schools to try and attract us, convince us to work for them.

Now the **situation is reversed**; young people have to bend over backwards to convince someone to hire them.

#### – What about people from immigrant backgrounds who seem to have more difficulty entering or advancing in the labour market?

We don’t have a **ghettoised** situation here; we’ve been careful to support integration over the years.

– *Earlier you said ‘educational paths aren’t preparing young people adequately for work’ – can you elaborate?*

Too many young people, of whatever background, are being held back by a **lack of skills, or the wrong ones**.

Many who pass a baccalaureate (secondary schooling) in commerce are still **not work ready** in lot of fields.

There’s a lot of **demand for IT skills**, in lots of ways – such as tech knowledge in salespeople. Saturn (a tech retail company) has difficulty hiring people who can understand and explain their tech products.

**e-Commerce** is a big growing sector, so there’s a need for people with the corresponding qualifications. Retail needs to adapt, bring in new employee competences.

– *What’s causing the problem?*

Education is behind the times. Curriculum is maybe 3 or 4 years **outdated**.

– *Why?*

Inertia. **Central government** controls education, so change moves slowly.

In the private sector, training takes **resources** smaller companies don’t have. **SMEs need support**, in adapting management, in anticipating change and in achieving the right diversification.

**Chambers** of commerce have a role here.

– *As you know, our Transnational Workshop hosted in Rennes is about analysing and forecasting local labour market needs. How’s Rennes at doing that?*

We have a pretty good knowledge of what current skills demands are – the problem is **we don’t do enough** about it.

**Forecasting is weaker**. I’d say we could do with a better understanding of where things are going. That said, even when we have told people about what trends were coming, they typically ignored

it till change had finally materialised **and tomorrow was today**.

People hear about problems, but **don’t really react until** they have their backs up against the wall.

You need to start with the **early adopters**.

– *Early adopters, what else works?*

**Second chance schooling** works.

You have to go into the neighbourhoods where young people are – pursue practical things, like finding **transport** solutions. There are effective programmes that lend young people a vehicle to get to an interview.

**Older people can volunteer** to teach young people to drive.

Creative solidarity is a wonderful thing, and it’s growing under the pressure of the crisis, but it’s not enough. The problem is always resources.

– *How about city-region cooperation? That’s one of the priorities among the JobTown partners in their approaches to tackling employment issues.*

We Bretons are known for tending to cooperate well together, **we’re natural networkers**.

– *Where is Rennes going? What will we find if we come back in 15 years?*

Rennes is becoming a dynamic **hub and regional capital**. We’ll be better connected to Europe and to France, with stronger linkages between city and region. Rennes will be the entry point for Europeans into the region.

We have cards to play and a strong capacity to **experiment**.

– *That’s Rennes, how about France? From outside, there’s a generalised perception of France as being blocked. How does it look from inside?*

**France is not blocked – but it is complicated**.



## “We have to combat unequal access”

– Interview with Gwénaële Hamon, Local Political Leader in Rennes, France

*Gwénaële, Vice-President of Rennes Région Métropole, Head of Economic Development and Employment, President of Rennes' Maison de l'Emploi and the Plan Local Insertion et Emplois (PLIE)*

– *What do you hope to get out of JobTown?*

Rennes wants to learn about better **matching** the skills companies need with the offer in the population and the training taking place. This is essential for economic **growth**, and all the more so at a time of economic difficulty like the present.

**Participation and partnership** – involving all partners concerned with employment – is key to success.

And, as in much of Europe, **youth employment** is a priority issue for us, particularly in the more **disadvantaged areas** of the city, where youth unemployment reaches up to **40%**.

**JobTown** – with its opportunities for comparison and exchange with our European partners – feeds into our understanding around this issue, and thus contributes to us taking **more effective actions**.

– *What's the employment/unemployment situation like here and how does it compare to the national situation?*

Our local economy is still quite dynamic, but not evenly. The **car and food** sectors are fragile.

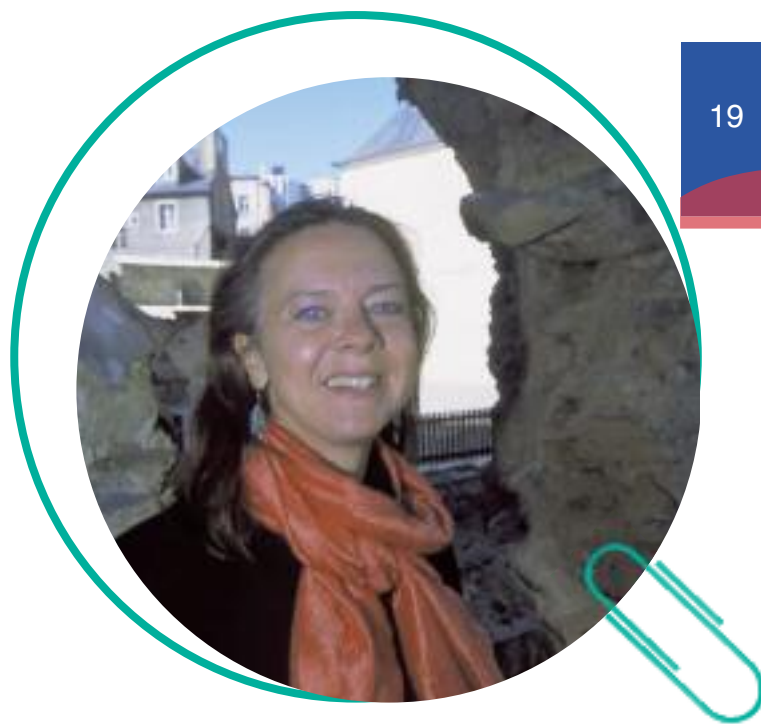
A lot of the hiring is in **IT** and the **'green'** sector. These tend to be fairly **highly qualified**, skilled jobs, though other sectors are hiring lower skilled profiles.

Our job is to reinforce these opportunities with the **right training offer**.

The unemployed will not just be automatically picked up by new job creation. We have to take actions to **support those having more difficulty**, be it because of skills, life issues... whatever.

– *Is it a supply or a demand problem?*

Clearly it's both. We're working, **with the region**, to put in place innovative approaches to training, which closely match needs and demand.



– *What about people from immigrant backgrounds who seem to have more difficulty entering or advancing in the labour market?*

A lot of analysis on this issue has been carried out, and we're using it in JobTown.

**Discrimination is a factor** – be it about people's origins or their gender or some combination, and so on.

As soon as a given job or internship candidate is **associated with a 'bad' neighbourhood, their chances decline** or disappear. Nonetheless, a lot of young people in these stigmatised districts are **highly qualified**.

There are **perception problems** – vis-à-vis young people and companies, and young people and institutions. On both sides.

– *What to do?*

A lot of our response to the problem needs to be about **networks**. We have to combat **unequal access** to networks. What is missing for a lot of young people in disadvantaged areas is fruitful social networks.

We can tackle this through neutral employment selection processes (anonymous CVs etc.), or actions to support and accompany those having difficulty – actions for overcoming **disadvantaged starting points**.

There are **prejudices** and we have to undo them – **people meeting people** can do a lot for that. Plus, we've been doing a lot of **long-term work with companies** on this issue.

– *A lot of people I've talked to here look at me strangely when I bring up this issue of discrimination. How is it that they don't believe it is a significant problem, or they're quite unaware of it?*

Some people in the private sector are aware of this problem and very collaborative, others are farther from it and not as aware. Admittedly, in Rennes we don't have the kinds of ghettos some cities have. Some citizens just don't perceive the problem; they don't encounter it in their own lives. But I can show you the figures. Like it or not, **unemployment rates are at least double** in these 'priority' (i.e. disadvantaged) neighbourhoods.

– *As you know, our Transnational Workshop hosted in Rennes is about analysing and forecasting local labour market needs. How's Rennes at doing that?*

We have the tools to anticipate change, and change is speeding up across all sectors, but we have to maintain some sense of **long or medium-term action**, we can't allow ourselves to be caught up in a short-term reactive attitude.

– *How do you involve young people in the process, give them a voice?*

Institutions don't find it easy to involve the voice of young people in their decision-making. **Local associations** often work most effectively with young people. We have to pay attention to them, and we do, but it's **not structured**, it happens more on a local basis, from neighbourhood to neighbourhood.

– *How about city-region cooperation? That's one of the priorities among the JobTown partners in their approaches to tackling employment issues.*

Cooperation with the region is extremely important for us; we work in tandem with the region, coordinating employment strategies and training, anticipating skills demand. More generally, we have a **strong partnership culture** in the city and region. **Bretons work together** on common projects and aims.

– *Where is Rennes going? What will we find if we come back in 15 years?*

You'll find a more **digital** city, more open to working in new ways, with **big data** and so forth. **Greener transport**, more electric cars, friendly for both people and the environment. A strong centre for **research**. More economic and job **diversity**.

– *That's Rennes, how about France? From outside, there's a generalised perception of France as being blocked. How does it look from inside?*

It's difficult here compared to Germany – and also to Spain, as we weren't hit as hard by the crisis. **Rupture is harder here**. Questioning accepted *acquis sociaux*, expectations for a certain type of life, is difficult.

I don't mean we should accept to take a step backwards, but we have to ask the hard questions about debt, retirement. There are blockages, some of them **cultural**.

I understand people outside France must have an impression of a country that has a hard time questioning itself. I get it.

Nonetheless, we have a lot of innovators here, more than ever. **The energy is there**, but also structural blockages stemming from the past.

Now I have to go back to work.



## “Think beyond the status quo”

– Interview with Andrea Stark, Chief Executive, High House Production Park, Thurrock, UK

At High House Production Park, in Thurrock, UK young people are being trained to make sets, costumes, handle lighting and all sorts of technical skills for the creative and cultural sector. The work they do goes to support anything from productions at the Royal Opera House to a band's world tour.

What's more, there is high demand for the skills these young people are acquiring and, happily, the programme she leads is a success on many levels. She believes on-the-job real world learning and close cooperation with employers is the key to that success.



### The Set Up

High House Production Park is a collaboration between:

- **Creative and Cultural Skills** – a UK sector skills council, they manage the Backstage Centre at the production park, which delivers a range of training for the backstage. Together, Creative and Cultural Skills and the Backstage Centre form a National Academy – effectively a hub, in Thurrock, for training in the sector throughout the UK.
- **The Royal Opera House**
- **High House Artists Studios**
- **Thurrock Council**

These partners combine their efforts around training, outreach and education for school age young people, by building relationships with schools and the wider community since the outset of the Park nearly ten years ago.

The Park provides an extensive range of sector-focused training, for different skills, student ages, levels and lengths of course, and so forth – the constant being an emphasis on **work-based learning** driven by employers themselves.

The goal is to provide high quality accredited qualifications that are in strong demand and recognised by hirers in the sector.

– *So, really, what kind of demand is there for set builders, costume makers, lighting technicians and the like?*

The film industry, for instance, is **regularly stating that there is a lack of highly skilled technical workers.**

Across the sector, there is a skill shortage and the most **experienced crew are hired months in advance.**

We are really not doing it (training for technical and specialist craft skills) in the (right) numbers, and if the skills gaps are not covered, there will constantly be a lag on what the industry can deliver.

– *So how do you go about it?*

We work **hand in glove with employers;** promoting apprenticeship as a key means to establish high quality work-based learning. We would prefer, frankly, to have all learning in the workplace.

There are specific issues that the industry has pointed out as things it wants. That might be augmenting health and safety for lighting technicians; being up to speed on using the latest equipment and technology. Keeping pace with industry developments is best done by training being delivered in the workplace and examined by **assessors who are also working in our industry.**

– *Why this approach?*

We firmly believe that the **best way to train up people for our industry is with a hands on experience** of that industry. It should not to be a linear progression – where it is classroom first then industry.

We think that's wrong, that's not working. Bolting something onto an academic course is not necessarily the most efficient way to go about





Royal Opera House Thurrock site

training a technical and crafts-based workforce. We're not saying 'apprenticeship good, academic bad'. I think we want a more pluralistic approach. We're also planning progression partnerships into higher education. So we are talking at the moment to University of the Arts London as a progression partner so that someone can do an apprenticeship, get a certain level of qualification from that and choose, if they wish, to go on to further progression (education).

**– If I were one of these young people, what sort of experience would I be having?**

You might be doing one of the many courses in technical areas of the creative industries, offered through our partnership with a local further education college. As part of their course, a student would spend time at the Backstage Centre. So you'd come here and be able to '**work shadow**' (i.e. learn on the job, from actual employees doing a job) when industry itself is using the building.

For example, when **a band comes in to do its final tech run before a world tour, or a film production comes in**, you'd work as part of that, perhaps as a *runner* (general entry-level assistant on a set) or taking on duties – assisting with technical setup, lighting, anything that has to do with the technical sector of production.

**– What are the benefits of providing training this way?**

It **saves employers time and money**, because they have people who are **job ready**. We believe it increases the likelihood of a young person getting a job, as they are applying for work, already having work experience.

It's a way – particularly for smaller companies –

to take the risk out of taking on people.

Furthermore, we find it makes **employers more engaged** – by being able to articulate what they require in terms of training.

We're getting our industry to realise what it needs to do if it is to have sustainable growth.

**– Who are these employers?**

Historically it has been an industry made up of **micro-businesses**, so you don't get big training departments, and the nature of the industry is that one person will pass on their skills to another in an informal manner.

The future is not about large companies; it's about micro-business.

**– What kind of results do you have to show?**

For instance, Further Education (FE) courses based at the Backstage Centre, are achieving **100% retention** rates (rates of course completion), and **in excess of 80%** are going straight into, either, work or further progression (further education).



Royal Opera facility



Backstage Centre

That's a really good outcome – as FE can have variable success in terms of retention. The local FE college, which partners with Backstage Centre in providing these courses, are absolutely thrilled and has increased the provision of more industry relevant courses as a result.

*– If this is so clearly a more effective way to do it, why isn't everyone doing it your way?*

Not every college is interested; engaging with employers in a more creative and direct manner, takes time and effort and **can appear at first be a bit of a hassle** – to get small employers to articulate what they actually need and to change current training provision accordingly.

Some colleges may not see that form of quite labour intensive engagement as a priority. I think that will change. Government are asking a lot more of colleges, in terms of their business engagement, because of their concern that **more and more young people are coming out of these courses not able to move successfully into workplace.**

*– How did it start?*

Some 10 years ago, Creative and Cultural Skills did a **labour market analysis** to look at where the major gaps were and where the next challenges were.

They found – and this has remained consistent – that **technical, craft skills, along with digital skills, are some of the highest skill shortages.** Our industry finds it **difficult to recruit** for them. This shone a spotlight on what our industry is doing about skills, on whether training was fit-for-purpose and on where the skills gaps were. So we began to do something practical about these gaps; the Production Park translates what

they discovered, into doing something about it. The UK may not have the scale manufacturing base it used to have, but if you think of the level of **high quality craft skills** that go into set building and making productions, **we are the best in the world at these highly specialized making skills.**

If we don't do something about maintaining those skills, we'll simply lose our footing in things that we are really good at.

*– And you have just kept growing?*

Yes. We're only just starting a new collaboration with the Royal Opera House, the local Further Education College and University of the Arts London; to create a three-year degree course in **costume construction** – all its technical craft skills, like pattern cutting, fitting, and so on. This course is designed based on what the Royal Opera House costumiers tell us they require from entrants, that they can't get from normal degree courses.

So for instance, if the Opera House needs 35 waistcoats, that becomes a live brief for the students to deliver on time and in budget.

The Opera House will move its costume making to Thurrock, and we've built two new costume-making studios.

Or, we recently bid successfully to become a **national college for creative and cultural industries** – a kind of elite technical college. This is part of a national policy agenda around higher-level apprenticeships, higher-level technical skills and a big emphasis on progression.

That means that we are now beginning to put together an employer-led curriculum, delivered fundamentally through apprenticeship. The **Production Park will be the hub, of a national**



The site and Thames river frontage





Royal Opera facility

**operation** working with employers across the country.

*– How does all this fit in with more general strategies for development and regeneration in the area?*

Thurrock as a place had **not diversified its skills base**, as a consequence of that it had limited job opportunities, particularly in middle and high skills.

And what I wanted to do, with others, was to find a way of bringing **a new sector of jobs**, into an area that had not recognised that sector.

However, because of Thurrock's proximity to a world city (London), which has pre-eminence in this sector, **the opportunity was there** to be had.

I've been advising Thurrock Council on establishing strategic priorities for culture, and, about a year ago, the Council agreed a set of **three thematic priorities**:

A **cultural entitlement** for every child in Thurrock.

That the **creative industries** will be prioritised as a new economic sector, and measures will be taken to encourage more creative businesses to locate here.

To **re-engage communities** through creative and cultural programmes.

For instance, as a result of this policy commitment to a cultural entitlement, the Council have now commissioned the **Royal Opera House to spearhead a cultural education programme**, with an ambition to reach every school in Thurrock. So, they are engaging children, parents and the teaching community in high quality cultural experiences.

As a part of these experiences, young people, parents and teachers are being primed to seek – but also **in terms of the opportunities** to progress later on into the industry. It's all part of the Council's vision about Thurrock as a place that can have a wider range of industries.

*– And in terms of physical regeneration?*

In the local area, High House is a place that local people can enjoy as a **public park**, feel comfortable in and, through it, understand how a new industry works.

Recently, a developer, active here locally, has gone into a partnership with a consortium to **build a film studio**. The Council believes that quality of developer would not have approached Thurrock without the Production Park being in place.

*– What do you personally like about working the way you do?*

I think this form of deep cooperation **unlocks hidden value**.

I think the do-it-yourself effort we've made has grown our confidence about challenging established ways of doing things. We have the vision and the confidence to **think beyond the status quo**.

I like breaking new ground, innovation, when it's purposeful. When you can see the potential in a place or in an idea, and the only thing that's holding us back is that there is a *status quo* that locks it in – then you challenge it.

*– What advice would you give someone trying to do something similar to what you've achieved in High House?*

Two things.

One, **you can't do it by yourself**, so look at who you have around you, in a place. To be real and credible, you need to get guys who are **working in the industry** who are interested in the wider agenda.

And it's incredibly important to get people who are **working in the education** field who are interested in challenging the norm.

Two, for me, it is about saying that it is possible to have a **really strong ideal, and strong vision** for what the place can become.

The one thing we now know about what we recently experienced, in the downturn is that

**nothing's forever**, and that means, on the upside that you can **think differently about inventing different futures**.

The old certainties of big employers and the same job for life, I think, have gone away. Being able to look afresh and think the unthinkable can be quite a positive process.

The **old certainties are not something that you should base your future vision on**.

*– That's a source of great anxiety for some people.*

I know, but I think that what makes me **more anxious is not facing the future**, not building a new shared vision.

The idea that the only future our prospective future governments can offer us in the UK is **austerity** – that's no vision.

*– More generally, how do you feel about the situation of young people at this time?*

I think it is the **most challenging that I've known it in my lifetime**, in terms of young people's opportunities.

It's not just to do with our general financial situation – which it has a lot to do with it of course. It's also to do with how, over time, **we've lost connection with certain types of industries**.

Some of those industries are never going to come back, but some of the **competences and**



Royal Opera interior

**skills sets** of those industries are still very much in evidence.

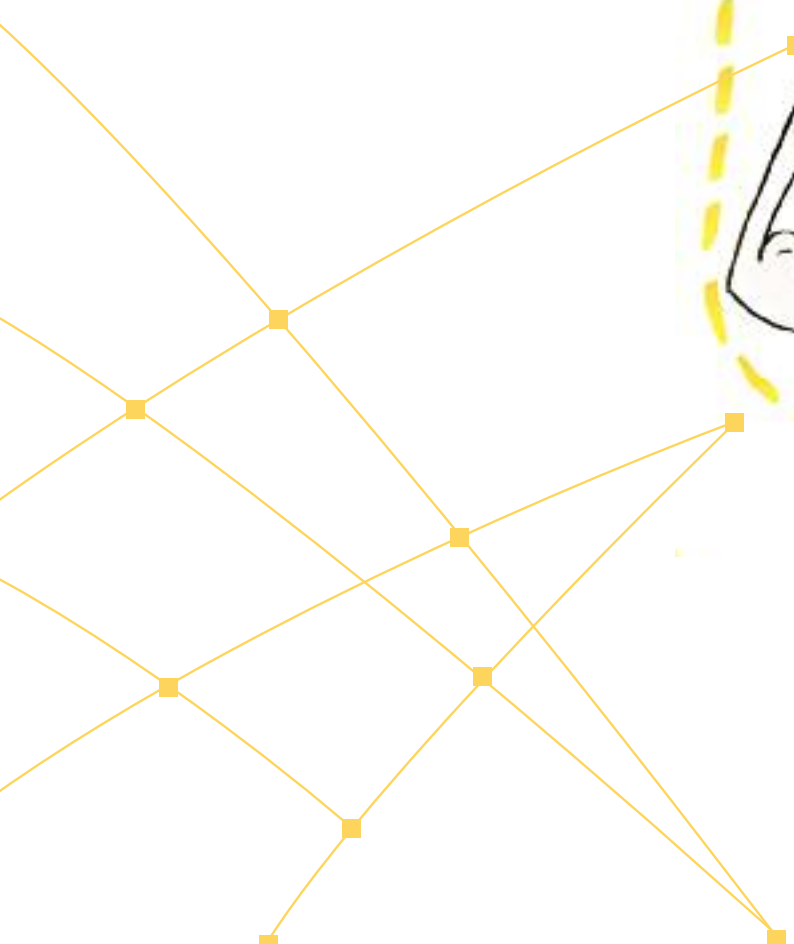
Like our high quality making skills in the UK; **we are brilliant at making things**.

I think what we'll see over the next ten years, if we do our job right as adults, is a generation that will be absolutely able to operate on a **self-employed and freelance** basis, successfully.

That's the big challenge, – how to **shift into a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy** that is predominantly small and micro business

I think it's beholden upon anyone who's grown up and is in good work to be absolutely thinking outside of the box now about how to create opportunities for young people – who will not just to take a job but instead have the confidence and skills to **make a job for themselves**.

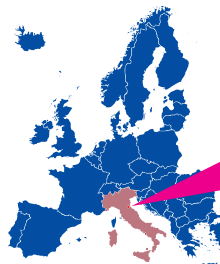
TO HAVE  
SUPPORT FROM  
A VERY SPECIFIC  
SECTOR



# What We Achieved

The following is an overview of the Top Achievements of the localities participating in the JobTown network.

## Cesena – Italy



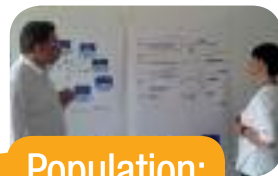
Population:  
**97,484**

- ‘Pacchetto lavoro’**  
 a package of actions & measures to improve the functioning of the Local Labour Market, defined & created through a large Public Consultation process. The process works in a Loop of Consultation, Implementation then Evaluation, which feeds back into the following wave of Implementation.
- Tax-Free Area**  
 A new programme, whereby the municipality alleviates the tax burden on Start Ups by refunding a range of national & local taxes, throughout their first 3 years of operation.
- CESENALAB**  
 A local Incubator, specialised in IT & Digital business, largely driven by Young Entrepreneurs, promoted by a partnership established between the Municipality, the University of Bologna (which has a campus in Cesena) & a local Savings Bank (Cassa di Risparmio di Cesena). The Incubator provides a range of free services, specialised support & connection to industrial investors & investment funds. This facility supports the re-orientation of the city & its hinterland, towards greater competitiveness in a key growth sector.
- ‘Impresa Creativa’**  
 To encourage entrepreneurial spirit among local young people a new contest has been created. Young people generate competing Business Proposals; those judged the top 10 win a spot in a 3-month workshop for developing their business plans. The top 3 get seed money, a place in the local incubator & some business-related services.
- Co-Working Infrastructure**  
 As part of the drive to develop infrastructures that increase competitiveness across the territory, a new co-working facility is being set up. This being achieved through cooperation that is cross-sector & cross-administration: principally Cassa di Risparmio di Cesena (local savings bank), the Municipality & the Province (Regional Administration has also been invited to join). The initiative – inspired by Rennes’ Cantine Numérique, discovered by Cesena through JobTown exchange – is a direct result of the transnational learning made possible by DG Regio’s URBACT programme.
- New & Better Ongoing Coordination Structures**  
 The JobTown process has integrated the coordination of a set of once disparate local task forces. Cross-sector partnership of local actors has been established, in the form of a ‘Job Alliance Round Table’, which now meets regularly. Cross-institutional cooperation has been strengthened, by building links among the city, the regional administration & the Managing Authorities of Structural Funds.
- The Youth Guarantee Scheme**  
 is being implemented in Cesena, through the JobTown Local Action Plan.

### Main Issues:

Need for greater Economic Competitiveness, in existing & new sectors – Mismatch between Labour Market demand & education/training, with significant levels of Youth Unemployment accompanied by qualified job posts going unfilled.

## Kaiserslautern – Germany



Population:  
**99,790**

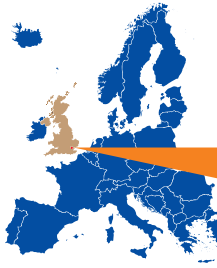
- New Cross-Sector Institutional Coordination Structure**  
 Cooperation & cross-institutional coordination related to Youth Employment issues, established because of JobTown, that did not previously take place in any stable or structured way & that will carry on after project end. Cross-sector: with Public Administration & Educational institutions, & strong on Business involvement, e.g. Chamber of Crafts, Chamber of Industry, Regional Business Promotion Agency.
  - Youth Consultation**  
 A participatory process prepared by the Youth Employment Agency & a representative of the Business Promotion Agency. The objective is to understand better what support local young people need & to reduce participation barriers for young people.
  - Improvement of the ‘Information Guide’**  
 A comprehensive virtual & physical Guidance platform for young people facing school to work transitions and/or educational & training choices. Complete coverage of work, training & education offer (including Vocational) in Kaiserslautern.
  - ‘From the Lecture Hall to Craftsmanship’**  
 New cooperative programme between the University of Kaiserslautern & the Chamber of Crafts, supporting university dropouts in successfully re-orienting their educational & career plans.
- Conceptual development of:**
- ‘Pimp my Schrott’**  
 New low-cost activity giving young people a fun ‘taster’ experience of working with mechanics & related activities, by ‘pimping’/restoring old cars. The activity supports career Guidance in providing practical no-risk experience to see how the youngsters like (or not) that type of work.
  - ‘Jobmatch Speedating’**  
 A new local activity, for bringing young people & employers together, to learn about what each side has to offer the other.
  - New Qualifications for Student Teachers**  
 New capacity building for those studying to become teachers, equipping them to better help young people with complex needs (multi-factor at risk profiles).
  - Seminar for Teachers**  
 One-day event, in which teachers visit the University of Kaiserslautern to be briefed on opportunities for study & VET at the University. Another seminar matching teachers & the Youth Employment Agency is in preparation.

### Main Issues:

City Image & Brand Recognition problem – Need to attract young people to live & stay in the city of Kaiserslautern & the region – Economy shifting from Old Manufacturing to newer ICT & High Tech activities – Need for economic & Demographic growth – Need to forecast future labour market requirements – Need to adjust educational programmes to changing labour market skills demands .



## Thurrock – UK



Population:  
**159,700**

- **Local Partnership for Youth Employment, Economic Development & Skills**

Ongoing Cross-Sector Partnership: Employers, Training & Education Providers, Public Administration & Bodies, focused on local employment & skills issues via Information sharing & shared design of actions. Pre-existing Coordination structures revised & streamlined into new, more operative Partnership built around signed Memorandum of Understanding.

- **Labour Market Needs Info Supply**

New improved cooperation between Municipality & Local Employers to study & identify their workforce planning needs, for future employment opportunities.

- **Council/Job Centre Partnership**

Formal agreement between Thurrock Council & the local JobCentre Plus, to facilitate a more joined up approach & data sharing on local labour market (job seeker) statistics.



### Main Issues:

Image Deficiencies, Low Brand Recognition – Fast Growing Changing Population with New Entrants: London Commuters & Immigrants – Poorer than Surrounding Region – Inadequate Skills & Qualifications Levels, Insufficient Aspiration – New More High Skilled Jobs Arriving.



## Gondomar – Portugal



Population:  
**49,000**



- **Creation of a New Vocational Training Course**

Precisely matching skills demand in local specialised jewellery industry, modernising practice & strengthening entrepreneurial capacity in the sector. Created through Cross-Sector partnership with employers & training providers.

- **Creation of “GOLDEN GENERATION”, a Social Centre to Support Unemployed Youth**

Created through cooperation with a social sector organisation to recycle an abandoned building & provide guidance services to youth on employment, what skills are in demand & how to acquire them, & entrepreneurship. The absence of such guidance had previously been a key local weakness.

- **Creation of the Occupational Observatory in Gondomar**

Equipping local administration with tools needed for the analysis of local labour market skills demand – Oxford Economics Skills Forecasting tool, Occupational Barometer & a Statistical Model for the Monitoring of Young People's Situation in the Labour Market, discovered via JobTown & adapted to local data needs. The acquisition of these new capacities was done by partnership with Local Job Centre & Schools.

- **Jewellery Sector Business Park**

Support infrastructure for key cluster of local SMEs. Construction co-financed by the Municipality, Local Business & EU Structural Funds. Plan agreed to reinforce the facility with an association made up of Representatives from the Sector, Municipality & University, with other institutions likely being incorporated later.

- **Agenda for Employment & Employability**

Local Social development Pact for Employment, inspired by contact via JobTown with other cities' approaches to Public Consultation for Local Employment & Development policy & action.

- **Council for Social & Economic Development**

Ongoing Social & Economic Partnership, established as a legacy of the JobTown project.

- **Local Action Plan**

Focus on using EU Structural Funds for Community Led Local Development (CLLD).

### Main Issues:

Lack of resources & need to work with other partners to achieve things – Low levels of, or inadequate qualifications among young people – Low employment demand – Inadequate supply of actionable data on local labour market demand & dynamics – Need to support key local Jewellery Cluster & improve Vocational Education – Need to foment & strengthen Entrepreneurial Skills





## Enfield (outer London) – UK



Population:  
**313,900**

### • Better Skills Forecasting,

Linking skills provision to local business needs – A new Economic Skills Forecasting tool is being put in place, built on partnership among the Council, Job Centre Plus (national government agency) & key actors including businesses & further education colleges. The tool will forecast skills demand, particularly in 4 Growth sectors: Construction, Logistics, Health & Adult Social Care, Green Industry (recycling). Barnet & Southgate College is leading, with close collaboration & using intelligence from the Sector Boards & associated partnerships. The implementation of this tool is included in Enfield's Employment & Skills Strategic Action Plan – see below.

### • Employment & Skills Strategic Action Plan

Learning from JobTown has been channelled into Strategic Action Plan. The Plan focuses on: Enterprise, Self-Employment & Regeneration (new jobs & new employment options); Development of hard (vocational) & soft (life or employability) skills; Entrenched Worklessness; In-Work Progression (employers investing in their workforce); Child poverty (work that pays, affordable childcare, shift patterns for parents & carers in work). Implementation will be interlinked with other key strategies, such as Enfield's Child & Family Poverty Strategy.

Measures in the plan include:

- Embedding employability skills into school curricula
- Widening opportunities for apprenticeships, traineeships & volunteering.
- Increasing employer engagement in schools to promote local job opportunities
- Rolling-out of online Careers Coach toolkit, linked with skills forecasting led by Barnet and Southgate College
- Developing new access routes into employment for vulnerable young people
- Developing measures to prevent youths aged 17–19 from becoming disengaged
- Support for 18+ youths to go into sustained employment or further/higher education
- Support for self-employment & business start-ups

### • EnfieldThinks - Pop-up Learning Shop

A first for Enfield, driven by a partnership of Birkbeck, University of London; Enfield Council; Barnet & Southgate; Capel Manor and Haringey, Enfield and North East London Colleges. The 'Shop' – active spring/early summer – gives guidance on educational options, workshops, practical demonstrations, lectures, panel discussions, film screenings and performances facilitated by tutors from all partner institutions.

### Main Issues:

A first for Enfield, driven by a partnership of Birkbeck, University of London; Enfield Council; Barnet & Southgate; Capel Manor and Haringey, Enfield and North East London Colleges. The 'Shop' – active spring/early summer – gives guidance on educational options, workshops, practical demonstrations, lectures, panel discussions, film screenings and performances facilitated by tutors from all partner institutions.



## Latsia – Cyprus



Population:  
**16,774**

### • Training for Unemployed Youth

As a result of participating on the URBACT Local Support Group of local stakeholders, the Open School of Latsia is developing Workshop for the capacity building & support of unemployed young people. A system with units awarded to unemployed people according to their attendance will be used.

### • Local Employment Office

European exchange allowed the municipality to draw on 2 useful practices, in designing its own Employment Centre: 1) the German (in Kaiserslautern) 'All Under One Roof' approach to placing a range of youth services together in the same facility, to practice a coordinated & tailored approach to different young people & to supporting them into employment, 2) Rennes' online platform for providing accurate current info on local labour market supply & demand (jobs). Establishment of the Centre is being done in phases, the first phase currently underway is setting up an online employment database, similar to Rennes'.

### • Latsia LSG

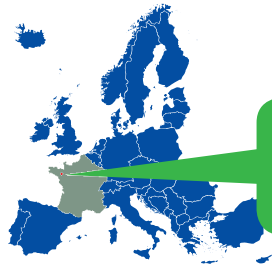
New Model of Cooperation of Local Youth Employment Partnerships has been established; the JobTown URBACT Local Support Group, a project-based platform for Youth Employment Stakeholders, has become a permanent structure renamed the Latsia Local Support Group. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by all participants, agreeing to preserve & grow their cooperation, inviting other local & national institutions – e.g. educational institutions (local public schools), the Public Employment Services, the Ministry of Work, social insurance & Welfare & the Human Resources Development Authority.(CLLD).

### Main Issues:

Structural Economic Crisis causing Sharp Drop in Labour Demand – Need to Work in Partnership to balance Limited Competences & Resources of Municipal Administration – Need to improve Labour Market Analysis & Guidance – Latsia effectively part of greater Nicosia Labour Market.



## Rennes – France



Population:  
**209,860**

### • Influence ‘Contrat de Ville’

Rennes' Current Urban Policy has mainstreamed ('axes traversaux') pro-youth & anti-discrimination priorities. As JobTown's focus in Rennes is directly in line with these priorities, it (its transversal process & its findings) has been used as a tool to support the design of the new Contrat de Ville – a kind of pro-inclusion strategic plan or pact for a city's deprived areas, laying out projects to be undertaken & the participation of different stakeholders & partners in said projects. The 'Contrat' is pushing to improve access for young people, especially those at risk, to services, programmes & employment & educational opportunities.

### • Mentorship

Development of new Mentorship experiences, supporting young people in accessing Internships. New & better linkages between this process & existing Career Guidance Structures (l'Exploratoire des Métiers).

### • Dual Training

Improved information supply to College & University Students on dual training opportunities in studies (allowing young people to work & study).

### • Job & Empowerment Events

Improving & increasing the Participation of young people & Youth Platforms in Job Fairs & related events.



### Main Issues:

Young Graduates from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods, facing social & ethnic discrimination on the Job Market – Need in the Administration to better understand & liaise with local young people – Large Young Population – Regional Capital & Pole of Attraction – Key Infrastructure Investments & Shifting Growth Sectors mean the city is experiencing multiple Transitions.



## Avilés (Asturias) – Spain



Population:  
**85,000** (approx.)

### • ‘Avilés Acuerda’

Social & Economic Pact & Policy Framework – For several years Avilés has been functioning in terms of an overall Policy Framework called 'Pacto' – a sort of Strategic Plan & Partnership Agreement among key actors and institutions – which it develops through a range of public consultation processes (in which the city is quite experienced). The current 'Pacto', 'Avilés Acuerda' (Avilés Agrees), has directly spliced in the policy objectives and recommendations developed by the local JobTown partnership.

### • Youth Consultation Fed into Local Action Plan

3 distinct groups were consulted: 1) Qualified young people from the City Council Employment Plan and the First Work Experience programme, 2) Unqualified young people who have taken part in the Avilés Youth Guarantee project, 3) Qualified young people from the Avilés Youth Guarantee project. Their input and the expression of their priorities were directly channelled into the final Version of the Local Action Plan.

### • Labour Market Analysis

Tools & Practice Transfer – Plans set in motion to develop a tool similar to Rennes' 'Exploratoire des Métiers', discovered thanks to the JobTown project.

### • New Company-VET Coordination

A Spanish version of the Dual System is being implemented in the area; to this end Avilés has used JobTown to learn from concrete German examples of the practice & the Municipality has facilitated new connections between local employers and Vocational Education & Training (VET) providers, as the basis for adapting VET to better match Demand.

### • Generic Skills

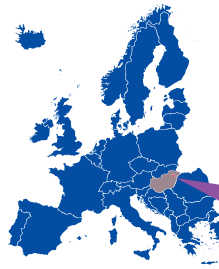
The administration brought together local Employers and Young People, in 2 Round Table events, entitled 'How are generic skills delivered through training in the current local labour market?', so as to identify: the current state of Soft/Generic Skills Transmission, the Generic Skills in Demand by Employers and those most valued in Hiring decisions, the perceptions & priorities of Young People in the area regarding Generic Skills. The Consultation Process across groups was well implemented, & results fed into the Local Action Plan.



### Main Issues:

Economic Crisis and Severe Spanish Youth Unemployment levels – Transitioning Local Economic Model – Mismatch between Education/ Training & Labour Market Demand, Need for ongoing Reform of Education & Training.

## Nagykálló – Hungary



Population:  
**9,792**

- **New Vocational Training Course**

Catering training, in demand locally, in partnership with local Business Support Centre & Incubator.

- **Creation of a local Construction Cluster,**

bringing together small local enterprises from the building sector & organising shared activities. The clustered businesses can relocate in the new Local Industrial Park, which offers improved infrastructure & advantages of cost reduction & efficiency gains.

- **Public Employment Programme for the Unemployed**

This programme provides temporary employment opportunities for long-term job seekers, to rupture the effect of sustained worklessness.

- **Creating Better Living Conditions**

A local development policy framework has emerged, focusing on Improving Living Conditions in Nagykálló & Place Attractiveness, so as to better Retain the existing Youth Population & attract new residents, particularly young families. The neighbouring large city has strong potential as a 'Population Supplier', given its more expensive housing costs, less green character etc. & the relatively easy 20-minute Commute from Nagykálló.

- **Good practices**

developed by the RomaNet II project have been implemented, concerning more child-friendly urbanism.

- **“Development Through Employment” Local Action Plan**

The LAP contains 4 strategic objectives addressing the unemployment & economic inactivity of local youth, with Doable Local Actions. The underlying problems being tackled are multiple and exist side-by-side in the town, jammed together like a bee's honeycombs. Hence, we've dubbed the LAP's working methodology 'the Beehive'.

### Main Issues:

Lack of job opportunities for young people, leading to high emigration rate, particularly among the well-educated – Risk to long-term Viability of the town if local Demographics fall below minimums for Population Sustainability – Jobs for young people pay poorly – Low skills level – Significant youth unemployment, particularly among the large Roma population – Need to increase Attractiveness of the town to Retain & Gain population.



## Aveiro – Portugal



Population:  
**73.335**



Top JobTown Achievements:

- **Enhanced administration staff competences**

for dealing with employment, SME support, internationalization, research, education and training policies and actions.

- **Social Innovation workshop**

and integration of SI and SE into the Platform to Support and Enhance Entrepreneurship and Innovation (PAVEI).

- **Education for Entrepreneurship**

– integrated program building entrepreneurial skills and competences, from Primary to Secondary and VET.

- **New actions to support entrepreneurship and job creation**

based on direct consultation with Entrepreneurs.

- **'Public Policies to Support Economic Development and Entrepreneurship'**

Seminar, publicly presenting new local policy.



### Main Issues

Country Hard Hit by Crisis, Significant Unemployment and Budget Cuts – Need to Build on Close Cooperation with Local University – Need to Support the Creation of New Social Enterprises as Strategy to Provide Social Services Despite Resource Constraints – Need to Improve Entrepreneurial Education, from Primary School Level up – Need to Establish a Comprehensive Local Employment Network

## Kielce – Poland



### • New 'German Style' VET Centre

JobTown gave city officials an opportunity to examine German VET practice *first-hand*. A new VET Centre is being created, with construction due to finish June 2015. The Centre will consist of 16 laboratories & workshops, among which: CNC machines room, automation & mechatronics workshops, industrial & fashion design labs, a laboratories of new technologies & renewable energy. The conception, practice & contents of the centre are heavily based on the learning JobTown made possible.

### • Region-City Policy Coordination

New links have been created between the city & Świętokrzyski Region to coordinate their Youth Policies.

### • New Cross-Sector Partnership

JobTown was the first major attempt initiated by the Kielce City Hall to build partnership between entities involved in professional activation of the unemployed. The ULSG will be the basis for further partnership & information sharing.

### • Jewellery Sector Business Park

Support infrastructure for key cluster of local SMEs. Construction co-financed by the Municipality, Local Business & EU Structural Funds. Plan agreed to reinforce the facility with an association made up of Representatives from the Sector, Municipality & University, with other institutions likely being incorporated later.

### • Functional Economic Area (FEA)

The Kielce Department for Structural Projects & City Strategy is the local coordinator of JobTown, & also leads the region's FEA. Through JobTown, governance of the 'Kielce Functional Area' was revised, based on direct learning from Enfield's participation in the 'London Stansted Cambridge Consortium' FEA.

### • Spin off Projects

JobTown cooperation led to cooperation with the University of Aveiro (Portugal) in an Erasmus project focused on Internet Learning.

### • New Statistical Information

ULSG partnership, equipped the city administration with new statistical data on the demographic outflows of young population cohorts.

### • Groundbreaking Consultation

JobTown led to a public consultation action with young people – regarding their views of the city, employment & job seeking experiences & related issues – which was innovative in the local context.

### Main Issues:

Qualified youth leaving for metropolitan centres – More pro-entrepreneurial attitude & environment needed – Lack of access to good information & advisory – Need better skills/aptitude detection & suitably adapted training – Need to improve Consultation processes in designing Policy – Currently rolling out New Vocational Education & Business Support Infrastructure, which needs to be modelled on best practice.

For more exhaustive information see each partners Local Action Plan document.

For a video overview of the partners' achievements see: <https://youtu.be/IxLtFMW7XRo>

Individual videos by each partner on their achievements, available here:

<https://projectworks.wordpress.com/blog-posts/jobtown-videos/>



# Doing it & Learning from it

*An overview of the challenges, different approaches and learning experienced throughout the process of engaging in the JobTown network*

## **Same problems, different solutions**

While the **same general problems** – such as skills mismatch, inadequate guidance, insufficient competences and resources locally, adapting to changing economic and production models, etc. – seem to crop up pretty much everywhere, perhaps varying by degree of severity, there is no universal *silver bullet*.

All JobTown localities found they needed a **basket**, or mix, of measures, the specifics of which varied greatly, according to need, from place to place, even within the same countries and across relatively moderate distances.

## **Real Local Labour Markets**

It came out clearly, that **Real Labour Markets** – the ones actual people move about in, make personal choices and decisions in, and encounter success or failure in – are local affairs. Not necessarily as defined by municipal boundaries, but by the practical spaces, flows and distances people move about in – i.e. commuting distances, poles of attraction, clustering of economic activities, and so forth. We dubbed these **'Functional Local Labour Markets'**, drawing on the more general concept of a Functional Economic Area (see JobTown Policy Recommendations below).

Local authorities need to make policy, plans and budgets in relation to the Functional Local Labour Market they find themselves embedded in.

Now, the need for policy to be fact-based is generally accepted. However, most available data on employment and labour markets is of an **aggregate** nature, not really describing the specifics of a concrete locality or directly actionable at that very local level. In JobTown, it emerged just how important it is for local authorities to have autonomous tools or processes for understanding the needs, trends and opportunities of their own Functional Labour Market; that is, labour market analysis that asks

the questions they need answered and provides the information they need when they need it. Moreover, these 'functional geographies' are not etched in stone; local authorities can shift and grow them.

**Examples:** In the UK, **Thurrock** – whose citizens were more locally focused in the past – is making itself and its people more a part of the opportunities of a greater London, or Southeast England, space. Similarly, in Eastern Hungary, **Nagykálló** is moving policy for its own economic development, into a more regionally integrated focus – e.g. accessing employment opportunities for Nagykálló's people in neighbouring Nyíregyháza, or providing attractive new residential opportunities in Nagykálló for Nyíregyháza's people.

## **Variety**

Unfortunately, the term 'holistic' is overused, and so its weight and meaning diminished. Nonetheless, it became clear early on in JobTown that it is simply not possible to talk about a young person's challenges and problems, in relation to employment, as if these issues could somehow be detached from the **young person as a whole**. Such a narrow approach is artificial and simply does not seem to work – particularly with more difficult cases (see JobTown Policy Recommendations 'All Under One Roof' below). Likewise, thinking about jobs needs variety, going beyond the obvious and much talked about – e.g. ICT, Green Energy, Bio Tech, Services for the Elderly, etc.



**Examples:** In Enfield (UK), **horticulture** is a promising career path. In Gondomar (Portugal), **jewellery** making is a key employer.

### Partnership

Working across a variety of territories, a variety of potential employment and a variety of youth-related issues (i.e. linking employment to other issues, e.g. health etc.) means working in partnership. Strengthening **skills for establishing and managing partnerships**, for making them more effective and efficient, are fundamental requirements, if local authorities are going to be successful in making cross-sector partnerships work. This type of capacity building needs to be delivered; URBACT in particular has an obvious vocation to address the need.

**Examples:** In Poland, Kielce found it had to overcome a certain **reluctance** ('Why should we?' 'To do what?' 'What do you expect from me?' etc.) about involvement and partnering with public authorities; a range of local actors were unfamiliar with such an approach and sceptical. By the end of JobTown, Kielce had broken through this polite resistance and established new and useful cooperation with employers, other institutions and young people – notably, JobTown led to a Youth Consultation process that was the first of its kind in the locality.

Conversely, in the UK, Thurrock started with, in a sense, 'too much partnership'. That is, the situation was one of a somewhat dispersed and confusing array of partnerships and related initiatives; greater clarity and focus were needed. The Borough came out of JobTown with a **more streamlined**, operable and compact set of partnerships, with clear agendas (employment, skills).

The Italian city of Cesena, JobTown's Lead Partner, used JobTown to build a new depth of **cooperation with its regional government**, Emilia-Romagna. From the point of view of Cesena, the region has competences it does not, so to get things done it needs to work with the region. From the region's perspective, the local authority offered complementarity to its own goals and an opportunity to identify and develop best practice it can scale up across the region. Emilia-Romagna's **Brussels representation office** was instrumental in supporting Cesena,

and the JobTown network more generally, by disseminating and hosting events in Brussels; these events involved and were attended by key policy people from the European Commission, MEPs and representatives of relevant Brussels institutions and representations.

Good things happened thanks to partnership.

### Learning

Learning is a gradual process, and so is learning about learning.

JobTown was built around five sub-themes:

- Effective Approaches to Partnership
- Making Training and Education More Responsive to the Labour Market
- Improving the Analysis and Forecasting of Skills Demand in Local Labour Markets
- Local Approaches to Supporting Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment
- Social Innovation and Enterprise, and Doing More With Less

In most cases, it was only as the project unfolded and matured that partners fully grasped how these different issues were interrelated and significant to their own work. This more complete view of the problem and its dynamics was ultimately fed directly into local policy.

**Examples:** Rennes' *Contrat de Ville*, Avilés' *Avilés Acuerda* strategic policy framework, or Enfield's *Employment and Skills Strategic Action Plan*.

### Organisational Learning & Future European Projects

**Organisational Learning** is a key challenge to most European projects; often individuals represent a given administration or organisation, attending Workshops and the like in the name of said organisation, and **when said individual leaves the organisation, their learning leaves with it**. JobTown set out to address this common problem, from its initial design, by embedding organisational learning into project design. This was done through **Knowledge Transfer Workshops (KTW)**, and accompanying **KTW Toolkits**; these were Workshops held locally by each partner, subsequent to each Transnational Workshop. The Transnational Workshops – five in total, each corresponding to one of the sub-themes (see above) – were designed as

'Intensive Learning' sessions, with a focus on practical and transferable tools.

After the Transnational event, each partner held their KTW – involving relevant stakeholders and people in the local administration who hadn't attended – so as to explicitly transfer learning from the Transnational Workshop to local organisations. The KTW Toolkit provided a resource the partners could draw from and/or supplement with their own materials from the Workshop.

Each partner was encouraged to use a format of the KTW they judged most suitable, and to prioritise contents as they deemed most relevant for their organisations and partners. In this way an excessively **prescriptive** approach was avoided (which would risk being resented by those asked to implement it), and partners could **experiment** with different approaches and compare.

There was some **learning curve** on all sides getting the process established, understood and regular, but by about mid-project it had taken root smoothly and partners had made the KTWs their own. The materials and events created and organised for doing the KTWs became incrementally more fit for purpose, and succinct. Organisational Learning became a conscious goal and criteria for the project throughout.

The central point to the success of the KTW practice was making organisational learning an **explicit** pursuit; participants had to sit down, devise approaches and priorities for their organisational learning and think about how well, or not so well, any given approach or action worked in terms of achieving that goal.

Organisational Learning became a self-aware process.



This kind of explicit Organisational Learning needs to be further explored and built into **future EU-funded projects**, particularly those concerned with capacity building and learning, as it addresses a fundamental issue of great import and relevant to all such projects – achieving meaningful and sustainable change and improvement, with public money.

### *Future URBACT*

A key learning – in relation to this issue of sustainable Organisational Learning, and particularly in relation to future URBACT networks – was the need to move focus from the Local Project Coordinator as being 'the partner', to the **locality itself**. This meant moving focus and (relevant) **communication more directly towards the stakeholders (ULSG)** as a group.

The Local Coordinator needs to be more explicitly cast as an enabler, bridge or facilitator, not the fundamental object or target of the project – all the more so where the ULSG Coordinator is distinct from the Project Coordinator. In the latter case, the ULSG Coordinator needs to be brought directly into the discussion with other partners, and their stakeholders.

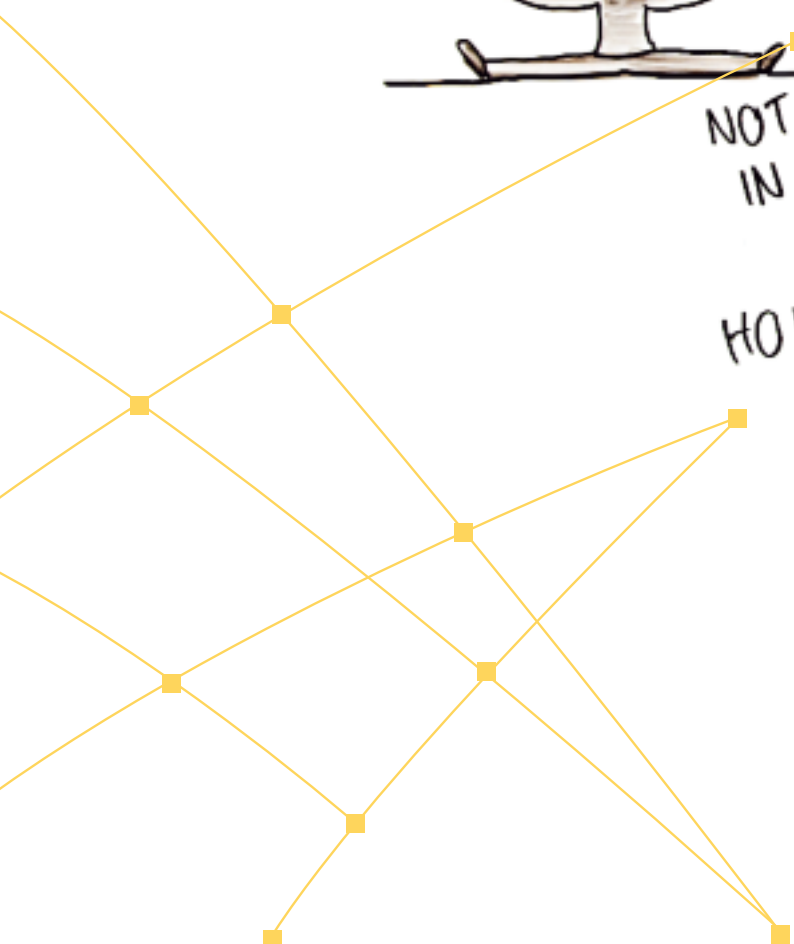
From the beginning, some sort of communication protocol needs to be explicitly established, empowering stakeholders to communicate, interact and be contacted directly (about content issues, never admin) – not as managed or mediated individuals. This needs to be **clearly emphasised from the outset**, before unhelpful reflexes and assumptions can set in, regarding power relations or territoriality ('my stakeholders' etc.).

**Cautionary note:** A laudable attitude towards directly involving stakeholders – compatible with a broader ethos in favour of empowered citizen involvement in 'Europe', and so forth – needs to be tempered with some practical consideration regarding 'delivery'. While people obviously like feeling involved and that their voices count, they don't like being detained by matters of no interest to them or being impinged upon by excessive demands or queries – i.e. involved = good, bored or harassed = bad.

IMPORTANT—  
FLEXIBILITY OF  
A COUNTRY



NOT ONLY INVESTING  
IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT,  
BUT ALSO ANALYSE  
HOW SKILLS ARE USED





# JobTown Policy Recommendations for the European Parliament and the European Commission

We, the **members of the JobTown network** – elected officials, public administrations and institutions, private sector stakeholders and engaged civil society representatives, from a diverse network of European cities and regions – offer the following concrete recommendations to the European Parliament and Commission.

They are put forward in a spirit of constructive contribution to policy debate and the design of future EU actions and programmes.

They are the result of three years experience developing *on the ground* responses to the Youth Unemployment crisis that is harming Europe in so many ways.

## The Recommendations:

EU competences and resources may well seem limited, however, at a time when resources are limited across Europe, **well-targeted** EU money – which is often a large part of a local or regional administration's **discretionary spending** – has a great potential capacity to **influence**. As such it should be instrumentalised to drive key Youth Employment-related policies, actions and reforms.

We suggest the EU, through its policymaking, programmes and funding, support the following:

### Capacity Building

#### Consultation

– **Capacity building for running effective Consultation processes.**

Complementary to the current emphasis on Cross-Sector Partnership, the EU should support capacity building (through training, exchange, dissemination, pilot projects) for all levels of public administration, in **conducting effective, fruitful public consultation processes** – very much from a **practical** point of view of 'how to do it so it really works', rather than excessive theoretical argumentation about 'why it's good to consult' (a view generally accepted in the abstract).

Likewise, more and better consultation needs to be supported and encouraged, from higher levels of administration with lower ones — e.g. national with local.

**Why?:** Many localities in the JobTown network find the lack of consultation and/or incorporation of local understanding of specific needs and opportunities is a **common barrier to more effective employment policies and actions**. Furthermore, consultation from central level to the local is often conducted **ineffectively**, or is **inconsequential** as to what is actually done after.

Likewise, policy, services and programmes are **less likely to be effective** or used by their target group – e.g. young people – if said target group is not consulted in how they are designed and implemented.

Too much consultation of youth (and other groups) is **tokenism**, not leading to anything concrete; this soon leads to disengagement and scepticism.

#### Support the Unemployed

– **Support to those young people experiencing unemployment**, reducing isolation, skill erosion and other negatives resulting from extended periods of unemployment.

**Why?:** Much of the policy, reasonably, focuses on treating unemployment through employment (getting a job); however in a long-term crisis environment, characterised by a fundamental (possibly structural) **lack of demand**, in much of Europe, there is a need to help people who are

**coping** with unemployment. The 'Youth Guarantee' is not a solution for all, either because it is implemented ineffectively where they find themselves, or, being over-25's, they are ineligible.

**Hysteresis or 'scarring'** – the long-term negative after-effects of experiencing extended unemployment, particularly at a formative stage in life, resulting in reduced lifetime earnings, further unemployment, health problems, etc. – is being inflicted on significant numbers of Europe's young, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

In societies facing long-term decline in **dependency ratios**, the minimisation of hysteresis – in addition to being a moral imperative – is in the general interest of society, not only that of the individuals suffering it.

**Minimising** this damage should be a top policy priority, accompanying efforts to achieve eventual employment.

There is a lack of available **know how** on how best to minimise the inevitable damage (scarring/hysteresis/skills erosion) of long-term unemployment; thus projects exploring and piloting ways to address this problem are already overdue.

**Youth Work** is one of the more obvious candidates for delivering and exploring such actions – through breaking isolation, supporting participation and involvement, skills exchange, and other such 'hysteresis-busting' activities – without, of course, limiting the potential roles and contributions of other actors.

### **Labour Market Analysis**

– Improve labour market analysis and forecasting **available to local and regional administrations**. The EU should strive to raise **minimum standards** and **interoperability** of labour market data.

Such data needs to facilitate concrete decision making *on the ground*; hence the data and projections need to offer enough **specificity and relevance** to be useful to a local context. Local administrations need a minimum **autonomous** capacity to supply themselves with data suited to their own needs.

The use of newer **low-cost efficient IT technologies** needs to be encouraged and

supported, to make labour market analysis accessible to administrations with limited resources.

**Why?:** Across Europe the quality of labour market analysis available to local administrations, and other employment-relevant actors, varies greatly; it often arrives late or **too late**, is **not actionable** in terms of concrete local (or even regional) decision making (being too aggregate or general), is not sufficiently specific about local circumstances and priorities (referring to the aggregate of a larger geographical area), and is not interoperable with the data of other European administrations (of particular importance in cross-border areas).

Dependence on other levels of administration for data supply hampers local administrations' access to the kind of data they need; more **autonomous capacity** is needed.

Innovative applications of IT data gathering tools – like '**Web Crawlers**' – offer new technical possibilities; they are highly flexible, tweakable and less expensive than traditional methodologies.

No policy-making in the dark: Administrations, and other concerned bodies, need to make fact-based decisions and planning. If the relevant information is inadequate or inexistent, decisions and planning will always be flawed – e.g.

**mistakes in resource allocation, training and education curricula, guidance and support, development strategy, investment** etc.

### **Advocacy Skills**

– **Capacity building for local administrations, actors and civil society has to include advocacy skills.**

**Why?:** To build cross-sector partnerships for employment – as was done in JobTown – local administrations need the necessary skills to successfully advocate participation and contribution from key actors.

Once such partnerships are set up and running, a large part of their work is that of making their case to other administrations, employers and decision makers.

This sort of capacity building is perfectly viable, as advocacy skills are learnt and taught regularly.

### Local Approaches 2 Business Environment

– The EU should do more to support and disseminate successful **local approaches to improving the business environment**.

**Why?:** Many local authorities **underestimate** the role they can play in improving the business environment. Wider dissemination of successful measures local authorities can take (e.g. supporting ‘maker spaces’, ‘hacker spaces’, support in navigating bureaucratic requirements imposed by other levels of government, ‘speed dating events’ for employers and young job seekers, etc.), within the limitations of their competences and resources.

### Social Innovation & Social Enterprise (SI & SE)

– Practical understanding of: **What Social Innovation and Social Enterprise are**, what **practical benefits** they can bring, and **how public administrations can support them**.

**Why?:** SI and SE are not generally well understood; they are often confused with charity or the outsourcing of social service delivery; i.e. the SE ‘business model’ is not well grasped. In a time of squeezed resources and austerity, SI and SE can be a way for public administrations to **do more with less**.

## Directed @ Youth

### Guidance

– **Improving guidance for career, study and training** choices.

Improving guidance for **entrepreneurs and start-ups**.

**Why?:** Too many young people have **erroneous and/or substantially incomplete knowledge** of the options available to them. Too many young people **drop out** of fields of study or training discovering too late they chose the wrong option for themselves.

Good guidance services are key to successful employment actions; yet across Europe, these services are underperforming.

Following OECD-LEED recommendations, good guidance support needs to: reach young people early on, in a **timely** way – i.e. well prior to when a young person has to make significant decisions,

be easy to **access** (online access is important), and be provided by **qualified** people. Moreover, guidance through ‘**tasters**’ and other more innovative *hands on* experiences – to help a young person learn if a given sector or activity really is for him/her – should be fomented and incentivised.

Efforts to reform and improve guidance (and to address more general issues of **(mis)perception of the World of Work** and different sectors) need to address not only young people themselves, but also the people around them that influence their choices – e.g. **parents, teachers, general public**, etc.

EU economic vitality depends on youth, as **most early stage entrepreneurs are young**. Quality of guidance available to young business start ups varies greatly across Europe and standards need to be raised; **guidance needs to come from qualified people** with personal experience of entrepreneurship or senior business management. In this regard, the UK’s ‘**Growth Accelerators**’ are a successful practice, whose dissemination and adaptation elsewhere the EU should support.

### All Under One Roof

– **The spread of the ‘All Under One Roof’ approach, to clustering and coordinating the range of diverse services that affect the same young people** – taking inspiration from current practice in Germany and Finland.

**Why?:** The practice is both effective and efficient. Putting youth employment within a complete view, of a young person’s situation and needs, leads to more effective outcomes; particularly where multiple factors are at play, as is often the case with **NEETs** and those **furthest from the labour market**.

Likewise, better coordination of services and resources leads to more efficient use of the same, reducing **waste and redundancy**.

Existing experience, in those countries where an ‘All Under One Roof’ practice is already established, can be drawn on for implementation of pilot projects and dissemination elsewhere.

### NEETs

– **Early action and prevention, addressing multiple causes and structural factors**.

**Why?:** The rising numbers of NEETs (young people Not in Employment Education or Training), while worsened by the economic crisis, pre-date it and stem from structural issues – which are likely to continue on after the conjuncture eventually improves. Better understanding of the multiple causal factors producing NEETs, and the approaches most suitable to addressing different causes needs to be achieved and disseminated. Tools and practice are needed to identify those at risk of becoming NEET, and to act early so as to prevent the condition; prevention is the most desirable outcome. Where already a NEET, the sooner help arrives the better; faster response needs to be supported.

EU youth policy has put much emphasis on for helping young people make successful transitions (school to work, school to further education or training) and more needs to be done.

### **Better Youth Outreach & Cooperation with Youth Work**

– Youth Work *know how* should be taken advantage of, to learn how best to design services, programmes, policy and actions concerning youth and in developing effective communication aimed at youth. The EU should capitalise on the specialist insight contained within organisations that work directly with young people and youth workers – such as SALTO-Youth.

**Why?:** Approaches to communication and communication channels used by young people are often divergent from those used by companies or institutions. Approaches to communication, by the EU and other public

bodies, are often ineffective with young people, who often feel a notable sense of ‘disconnect’. Youth workers – who shouldn’t be expected to become something they are not (employment agencies) – have a valuable *real world* understanding of how to connect with young people. Opportunities to capitalise on this capacity should be explored.

### **Perception Problems of Professions**

– **Correct misperceptions, misunderstandings and lack of awareness, regarding the opportunities that *in demand* trades and technical fields offer.**

Within the broader framework of reducing **mismatch** in skills supply and demand – the EU should support projects and actions that are corrective to problems of perception, misperception and lack of awareness affecting, in particular, many of the trades and technical professions.

Such communicative efforts should include, in their message, an emphasis on the **modernisation** of practice in many fields – about which the general public often retains an outdated and unattractive image.

**Why?:** Across Europe, many valuable trades, professions and career options suffer from negative perceptions associated with them or lack of awareness among young people, who could potentially do well for themselves in those fields. These image problems affect many of the **technical professions, crafts and trades**, and often stem from a misunderstanding of what it’s like to work in those fields, and of the opportunities available therein.





These problems, of perception and awareness, are a detriment to effective **study-career path choices** made by young people, and contribute significantly to mismatch between **skills offer and labour market demand** in the EU. From the employer point of view, these perception issues are an impairment to the supply of needed skills in many sectors.

Moreover, there is often a **gender** dimension to these prejudices – i.e. with stereotyping of what jobs are suitable for girls, and so forth.

### **Entrepreneurial Education & Attitudes**

– **Education** and training that reinforce generic **entrepreneurial skills and attitudes** (teamwork, initiative, problem solving etc.) **early on** and introduces awareness of entrepreneurship as part of the World of Work.

Change attitudes and other conditioning factors attaching stigma or punishment to **business failure**.

**Why?:** Europe needs more entrepreneurial thinking and entrepreneur-friendly social attitudes. Generic entrepreneurial skills are useful to a person whether or not they ever start up their own business. Education can do a lot to introduce such attitudes and awareness from an early age.

The **stigma** still attached to business failure is **holding the EU back economically**.

### **Modernisation of Education**

#### **– Generic/Soft Skills**

– Better inclusion of **generic (also known as ‘soft’) skills in educational objectives and approaches**. Continued efforts to support the **validation** of generic skills, and more generally of competences acquired informally or non-formally.

**Why?:** Education varies greatly across Europe; in too many locations education is outdated in approach, based on rote learning and weak in inculcating and valuing generic skills. EU youth policy has done much to advance this agenda, and much still needs to be done.

## **Governance**

### **National-local Coordination**

– **Macro to local coordination**. Better linkages and conditionalities **incentivising** greater and more effective consultation and coordination between the national level — of designing youth employment policy, programmes and actions — and the local level, where those things are implemented and experienced, and succeed or fail.

The purpose of such coordination is to make policies, programmes and actions more effective, and better suited to the specificities of divergent local circumstances.

**Why?:** JobTown localities consistently cite their own lack of competence or involvement in policy making as a fundamental **barrier to them taking action** locally in favour of youth employment. In many cases, this leads to a **‘hands off’** attitude towards youth employment – at a time when public administrations need to be **‘firing on all cylinders’** to combat youth unemployment. Each level of administration has a potential constructive role to play and can contribute – each with its respective strengths and advantages – to favouring the employment that European citizens want and need.

### **Time Lag 4 New Education**

– Improving **throughput** of systems leading to the appropriate redesign of teaching, curricula and training contents and approaches – stemming from the identification of particular labour market skills demands (present and forecasted).

The EU should provide more incentive and support for pilot projects and actions for setting up, or improving, qualifications supply systems, adapted to specific functional (local/regional) labour market demand – improving and accelerating throughput, of systems for identifying labour market demand and translating that into adapted curricula.

**Why?:** The response time, in making needed changes in training and education offer, is **harmfully slow**.

There are a great many factors of **resistance or friction** in such systems; for instance, common bureaucratic and organisational inertia, missing qualification among teaching staff, a lack of incentive to update knowledge and skills, or the arduous delays that are often a barrier to reform where **national governments** control school curricula or must approve any changes. In the case of Vocational Education and Training, **outdated contents** and/or **inadequately qualified teaching** are a path to unemployment. The **need for competitive adaptation in Europe is just too great** to accept *status quo* in the current levels of throughput – from local/regional labour market analysis to the reform or adaptation of curricula, teaching or training matching the specificities of local/regional demand.

### *User(citizen)-friendliness*

– Reduce **administrative barriers to projects with good potential** to support young people's transitions from school to labour market, or out of unemployment – particularly those projects aimed at young people with more disadvantaged and/or with complex multiple problems. Calls for project proposals affecting youth employment, need to be written and designed with greater concern for **end user (citizen) experience, usability and accessibility**.

Language needs to be as accessible as possible, with criteria enforced for limiting excessive technical phrasing and jargon.

**Why?:** Many EU calls for project proposals effectively filter out those less skilled at navigating bureaucratic language and process, rather than prioritising the approval of those projects with the greatest potential for real world impact. While exercising the same level of caution with public money, EU authorities can introduce **criteria of usability and accessibility** to how documents are written and procedures designed – prioritising **end result over process**. Such concern for the experience of citizens taking part in EU application procedures would complement the larger task of making the EU, in general, more understood and accessible for European citizens.

### *Functional Economic Areas (FEA)*

– The adoption of '**Functional Economic Area**' structures, to better coordinate policy, resources and action, across organisational and administrative boundaries.

**Why?:** Efforts to tackle unemployment, particularly structural unemployment, and for regional economic development, necessarily involve multiple actors and institutions and integrated strategies and actions, over a '**messily**' defined territory. Moreover, administrative **lines on maps frequently do not correspond to how a**



**territory is used** and develops, in practice; mismatch between real geographic patterns of activity and administrative boundaries (e.g. city limits) can hinder effective action and policy. As such, finding the right governance structure is a real challenge – when pursuing ambitious goals, involving a complexity of actors and elements, over an ambiguous sense of territory.

Accordingly, there is demand for new types of city/regional networks suited to integrated development strategies and actions.

**'Functional Economic Areas'** – essentially territory as defined by the patterns and spatial flows in which people, live, work and study, rather than administrative boundaries (e.g. the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor) – offer a **model for governance suitable** to managing the above mentioned challenges of complexity and administrative 'messiness'.

An FEA allows for policy and implementation to match the real dynamics of a territory, and for public administrations to **achieve more than they could otherwise, with the same resources**.

There is much scope for the expanding of the practice throughout Europe, and **EU regional policy** can drive a growing awareness and understanding of the practice, and support different European territories in successfully adopting and adapting the FEA concept to their needs and priorities.

### **Organisational Learning & EU Projects**

– All projects funded by the EU, should incorporate into their design and implementation, measures and protocols to ensure organisational

learning that is **independent of any individual project participant**, and that will **live on after project completion**. Such an approach has been piloted successfully in JobTown's **'Knowledge Transfer Workshop'** (KTW) practice, variations of which should be incorporated into future EU-funded projects.

**Why?:** The individuals participating in European projects have opportunities for valuable learning; however, it is not always clear how much this **learning extends beyond them to the organisations or communities they represent**. Often when an individual leaves an organisation, the **knowledge acquired through EU projects leaves with that person**.

**JobTown piloted a 'KTW' process** whereby formal plans were drawn up and carried out, to communicate the knowledge acquired in European Workshops to the larger organisations that participating individuals represented or worked with. This practice **was successful and well received** (though it took some explaining at first).

With a view to continual improvement of process and a natural ethical concern for the maximum value and impact of spending public money, a dimension should be built into more EU projects (certainly those concerned with learning or capacity building) **addressing how participating organisations will, as a whole, absorb and retain the knowledge** or capacities generated.

The issue of organisational learning and, by extension, the impact of money spent is a fundamental one, and it **should be explored more explicitly** – what works best, in which sort of situation? For whom? etc.



OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH  
TO REALLY TRY OUT DIFFERENT  
PROFESSIONS

YES!





# JobTown participants endorsing these recommendations:

## JobTown Participants endorsing these recommendations

Pilar Varela Díaz, Mayor of Aviles, in representation of Avilés' URBACT Local Support Group.

José António da Silva Macedo, Mayor, Union of Parishes of Gondomar (S. Cosme), Valbom and Jovim.

Yolanda Alonso Fernández, Councillor for Social Affairs, Municipality of Avilés.

Francesca Lucchi, Councillor for EU Affairs, Cesena Municipality.

Cllr Alan Sitkin, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, London Borough of Enfield.

Councillor Richard Speight, Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration, Thurrock Council.

Jackie Chapman, Director of Employability and Employer Engagement, College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London Borough of Enfield.

Anna Loughlin, Interim Head of Service, Business and Economic Development Service, London Borough of Enfield.

Victor Manuel Fernández Martín, Entrepreneurial Promotion, Municipality of Avilés.

Dr. Zsuzsanna Antal, Project manager & Strategic planner, Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency, Hungary.

David Boyer, Business Development Manager, Capel Manor College.

Dr. Szilvia Kirilla, Member of the JobTown Local Support Group, Municipality of Nagykálló.

Annette McCone, Participation Widening Manager, Birkbeck, University of London.

Dr. Simon Miklós, FIDESZ-KDNP, Member of the Hungarian National Assembly.

Peter O'Brien, Regional Commissioning Manager (Young People's Education and Skills) London Councils.

Alcidio Manuel Pereira de Jesus, General Coordination, Local Development and Structural Funds Unit, Union of Parishes of Gondomar (S. Cosme), Valbom and Jovim.

Helen Price, Manager, Volunteer Centre Enfield.

Tawhid Qureshi, ESF Programme Manager, European Programme Management Unit, Greater London Authority.

Andrea Stark, Chief Executive, High House Production Park, Thurrock, UK.

Maxine Reed, Head of Skills for Work Service, London Borough of Enfield.

Elvie Shergold, Commissioning Manager, Barnet and Southgate College.

Nick Steward, Divisional Manager, Job Centre Plus.

Sándor Végheő, Manager, URBSNOVUM Town Development Company, Nagykálló, Hungary.



MAKING SURE THE  
CAREER CONSULTANTION  
IS REALLY EFFECTIVE  
IN OUR SCHOOLS



# Conclusions

## Synthesis

JobTown has produced five publications, each centred on one of its five JobTown sub-themes. Below is a summary of key points from their conclusions.

### 1) *On Developing Effective Local Partnerships for the Advancement of Youth Employment and Opportunity*

Cross-Sector partnerships vary widely in form and content. Is it a big **international project** or a **more local** thing?

**Who's driving it** – government or public administration? A youth organisation? Business association? Other? These are all very different animals.

Obviously, different circumstances and needs call for different approaches. The starting point is being clear about **what you are trying to achieve**.

The next step is **Stakeholder Analysis** – Whom do you need to partner with? For what? What are their motivations and interests? How to approach and convince them?

Any partnership arrangement is inherently the result of a series of **trade offs**; when setting up the partnership, the concerned parties need to **consciously decide** on what set of trade offs are right for them – e.g. what balance of obligation and flexibility is appropriate? The **OECD-LEED** programme offers a useful set of principles for establishing and evaluating partnerships and a handy 'Checklist' for partnership evaluation, which can be taken as '*off the rack*' tools to get a local partnership up and running effectively.

Involvement of the 'target group' – in this case young people – is of primary importance. However, it is key to keep clear that the fundamental purpose of such involvement is to make policy and actions better, more effective and more supported; involvement and consultation slip into **tokenism** all too easily.

**Lobbying** (or 'advocacy', according to taste) is key to building partnerships, and to their effective pursuit of what they want to achieve. Lobbying is a learned skill, and capacity building for local authorities and other organisations needs to teach it.

### 2) *Making Education and Training More Responsive to the Labour Market*

What works, according to JobTown experience and research:

- Involving **employers**
- **Qualified trainers/educators**
- Learning via **real work** in a real place of work
- **Locally** based approaches, embedded in local labour markets and communities
- Developing and providing training via **partnership** – i.e. with business, education and training providers, public administrations and other relevant actors
- **Good advice and information** about career paths and studies, easily accessible when it is needed.
- **Labour market analysis and forecasting**, that is reliable and actionable
- **Tailoring** to specific young people
- Accompaniment that is **intensive and sustained**
- **Transparency** – e.g. among services, regarding who does what, or regarding standards and what different qualifications mean
- **Mentoring**, and more generally adult figures who understand a youth's background and perspective
- **Holistic** approaches – i.e. employment as interconnected with social, family, cultural, health issues, multiple barriers etc. – coordinating different services that affect the same young person
- Developing training offer **on the basis of outcome after the course**, not course popularity
- Win-win involvement of **civil society** – helping target group, plus 'collateral' benefits for social fabric, citizenship, active aging, etc.
- Learning to **explain skills**. Validating skills – generic or otherwise – in a way meaningful to employers

### 3) *On Analysis and Forecasting of Skills Demand and Supply, on Real Local Labour Markets*

There are plenty of options, for labour market analysis and skills demand forecasting, suitable for a more local level of action.

For instance, Web Crawlers are great tools for analysing labour market demand, the use of which is set only to grow. There are a range of free, or cheap, tools for local labour market analysis – each with their respective strengths and weaknesses, and thus suitable to different uses, to even the smallest local authorities, and to any degree of technical *know how*. In practice, most public authorities and employment-related organisations will depend on a mix of such tools, combining their different strengths.

The point is to **have** a strategy for equipping oneself with the type and quality of information needed for real **knowledge-based** policy, thus having a minimum necessary autonomy, and not being held back by what others do or do not provide.

Moreover, the processes, generated around skills demand analysis and forecasting, go beyond the merely technical. They can be just as much about **participation and consultation** processes and building stakeholder *buy in*; some of the best practice out there has more to do with success in this regard, rather than innovation in *number crunching*.

#### 4) On Supporting Entrepreneurship & Self-Employment

Entrepreneurship and self-employment may not be for everyone – and that's fine – but they are an essential part of any overall strategy for employment and opportunity.

All the more so, because the generic capacities that go into making good entrepreneurs (problem solving, self-management, personal initiative, etc.) are **not just useful for self-employment**; they are useful as a modern employee, indeed for life in general.

Very different **business environments** produce very different business and employment outcomes – and condition mentalities differently. When discussing young people's attitudes to entrepreneurship, it's more constructive and responsible to put the emphasis on what can, and should, be done to make the business environment one which better facilitates and encourages initiative – **rather than blaming** the young for any perceived lack of business spirit. Moreover, facilitating the business environment has to focus well **beyond making the initial**

**start-up process easier** – what happens after the thing is created? How much of a burden are taxes, charges and the accumulation of administrative requirements, on an ongoing basis? Policy for sustainable employment and local development has to focus on the *whole widget* of entrepreneurship – rather than a superficial *magic number* of business creation. Attitudes to **business failure** – and the consequences thereof – are a problem all over Europe, and hold the EU back. In this regard North American practice and attitudes set an example to learn from. Of course, remarks such as the latter have been commonplace in Europe for years, but between everyone saying it, and actually doing something about it, there is a still yawning gap.

Another pervasive issue is the insufficient access to and supply of **quality guidance** – guidance that is relevant to the user's needs, arriving at a **time** when it can be most helpful and coming from people who are **qualified** to be giving such guidance. Practices like the UK's **Growth Accelerator** address this need and produce promising results, and this, or guidance practices equivalent to it, should be fomented across Europe.

Supporting young entrepreneurs is about more than helping those young people; it's about making the **EU as a whole thrive**. For, **most early stage entrepreneurs are young** (e.g. typically 28-32 in the UK, with comparable trends elsewhere). A robust ecosystem of young entrepreneurship is a *sine qua non* for the EU to be a succeeding economy in a globalised world. And local administrations can make a difference, by providing **direct support** or by **connecting young entrepreneurs** to other actors and organisations that can help them. To be effective, in either of these ways, local administrations need to work in **partnership with other stakeholders**.

The key takeaway is that actors at the local-level **are not passive agents**, in an economic landscape conditioned by higher up macro-level forces and policies.

Targeted, practical and well-reasoned local actions can make a difference; they can foster a more vibrant business environment and stir young people's *animal spirits*.



## 5) On Social Innovation and Enterprise – Doing More With Less

Social Innovation and Enterprise are on the rise, while budget squeezed public administrations look hopefully to the trend for inexpensive solutions.

A key question then, for public administrations to consider, is *how to support Social Innovation and Enterprise?*

In conjuncture, expectations needed to be managed; Social Innovation and Enterprise can help, but they aren't going to resolve any and every budget deficiency.

Rather the effects of the crisis on public administrations' ability to perform and improve performance depend on the strategies public managers use to implement financial cuts – with **targeted cuts**, driven by **efficiency** and the long-term, rather than equity in the short-term, being the most effective from a managerial point of view. To do this, managers need to navigate twin paradoxes of **autonomy** (having the power to take the decisions they would need to take) and **information** (knowing what they would need to know, to decide what to do).

Another key question is *how much SE is really SE?* Social Enterprises need to have a **commercially viable business model**. If not, we are talking about charity or the simple outsourcing of public services – which are something else. Too many practices in Europe that are presented as Social Enterprise turn out to be **dependent on public subsidies** or grants of some kind or other – which raises fundamental questions about their sustainability.

Nonetheless, once all the provisos have been digested, Social Innovation and Enterprise remain valuable – and potentially much more valuable – for society, and deserve to be nurtured.

A key **barrier** is the discouraging conceptual fuzziness of much talk of Social Innovation and Enterprise; its practitioners and supporters can do a lot to help themselves, by presenting SI and SE practices and achievements in accessible concrete terms, emphasising **usefulness and impact**.

The JobTown publications referred to above, go into these issues in much greater depth. These are:

*'On Developing Effective Local Partnerships for the Advancement of Youth Employment and Opportunity'*

*'On Making Education and Training More Responsive to the needs of the Local Labour Market'*

*'On Analysis and Forecasting of Skills Demand and Supply, on Real Local Labour Markets'*

*'On Supporting Entrepreneurship & Self-Employment'*

*'On Social Innovation and Enterprise – Doing More With Less'*

They are available (in the original English) at: <https://projectworks.wordpress.com/publications/>  
Translations into various languages are available at: <http://urbact.eu/jobtown>

## Going Forward

A key realisation that has arisen over and over in the experiences of the URBACT JobTown network, is that the local level counts – **the local level can do something**.

The special thing about the local level is that it is the most **concrete**; specific employment outcomes and specific labour markets are all **local phenomena**. Aggregate data – used to describe employment at large regional, national or EU level – is, by definition, abstracted, an amalgam of outcomes.

Too often, **local authorities disengage from employment** policy, arguing it goes beyond their competences and resources. This misperception needs to be broken, with countervailing stories and messages about the role of local authorities and stakeholders in securing opportunity and employment for their communities and neighbours.

JobTown has its own such stories to tell, and the **OECD's Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) programme**, which has

accompanied JobTown, has plenty of stories to tell about effective local actions and partnerships for employment and opportunity. These stories need to be told, and told, and told.

Some object that such a discourse might be valid for some of the larger more powerful cities and conurbations, but surely the smaller and/or more peripheral communities have to accept that they don't have the capacity to do anything about big economic issues like employment. **JobTown** has found that, if anything, the opposite is closer to the truth.

Size is not necessarily a determining factor; JobTown's smaller towns – e.g. Avilés, Gondomar or Thurrock – have been creative and as active as any. Obviously, the larger administrations have more resources (not to mention brand recognition), but smaller administrations have comparative advantages too; they can be **nimbler** and there can be **more direct access** to the elected politicians who take the final decisions.

The **direct support of elected politicians**, and open channel of communication, can enable civil servants of smaller administrations to proceed with full *go-ahead* and vigorously implement a project.

The actions and benefits of a project can have **more impact** on a relatively small town – because it's smaller and so actions look bigger, as it were. Likewise, impact is all the more significant, when resources are improved and new tools provided (e.g. for labour market analysis), for administrations with initially quite modest resources. Conversely, as you go up the chain, the law of **diminishing returns** kicks in and

it gets harder and harder to produce significant impact.

And of course, in smaller communities, direct contact and consultation with citizens and stakeholders is easier and more likely to already be going on.

So, **all** local administrations, great and small, have their role to play.

Furthermore, not only *can* the local level do something – it **has** to.

Youth unemployment and poor employment is a long-term **structural problem**, stemming from trends and phenomena already well established before the current economic crisis, and which will continue after the crisis has formally abated. The harm caused by unemployment and bad employment is not just harm done to the young people directly affected, and to the not-so-young people they will become (through hysteresis and scarring<sup>2</sup>). It is damaging and risky **for society as a whole**, due to a long list of issues around declining dependency ratios, social cohesion, economic competitiveness, and so forth.

So, a lot needs to be done. The challenge is daunting and we need to face it **firing on all engines**; local authorities and their partners are necessary engines we can't afford not to put to good use.

JobTown documents, videos and other materials can be found on the URBACT website:  
[www.urbact.eu/jobtown](http://www.urbact.eu/jobtown)

And on the website of Ian Goldring's own organisation:  
<https://projectworks.wordpress.com/>

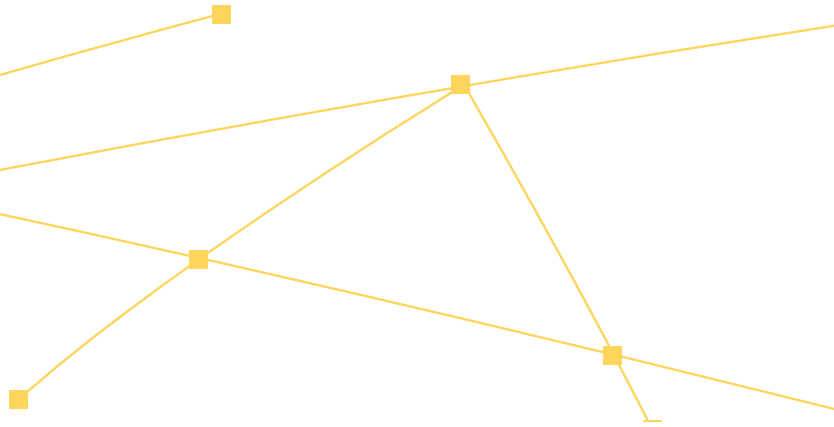
<sup>2</sup> See the 'JobTown Baseline Study': <https://projectworks.wordpress.com/publications/> or [www.urbact.eu/jobtown](http://www.urbact.eu/jobtown)



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