

TRANSFORMING YOUTH POLICY MY GENERATION TOOLBOX 2: EXPLORING THE CITYSCAPE

From Puzzlement via mediation and co-creation to self-reliance.

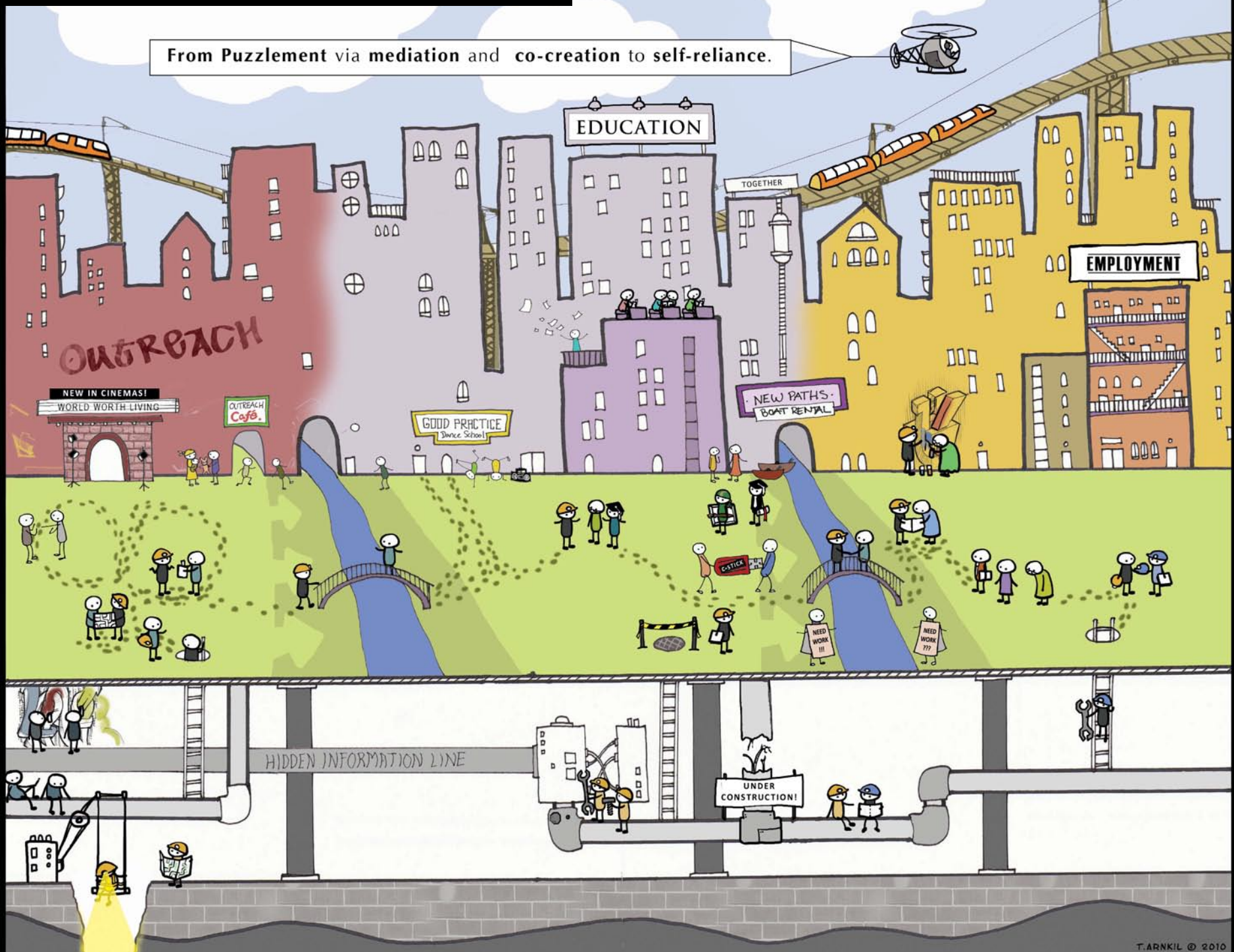
LET'S GO.
I'LL GIVE YOU
IDEAS ABOUT
YOUTH POLICY.



MY GENERATION YOUTH POLICY CITYSCAPE

From Puzzlement via mediation and co-creation to self-reliance.

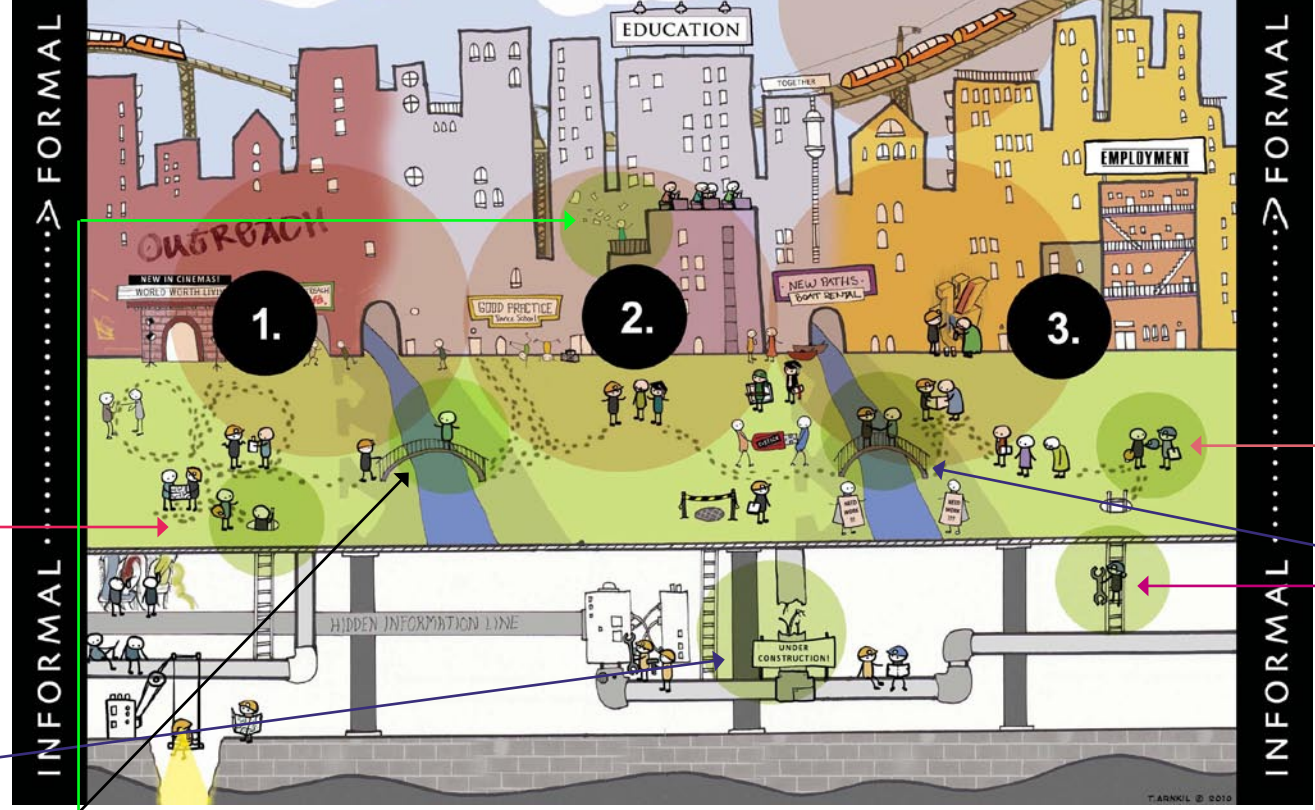
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READING THE CITYSCAPE:

From Puzzlement via mediation and co-creation to self-reliance.



Critical things you can find in the CITYSCAPE:

- Wow! There is a lot going in the “underworld” – informal learning, but are we aware of it? Could we build on it? Some pipes and connections are broken – we need to fix them!
- Who are you? Somebody is emerging from disengagement and the underworld – do we have good OUTREACH practices to engage?
- OK, we have a good connection and co-creation started with the young – but do we have bridges – mediators – leading to the next steps – various forms of education?
- Ooops! Somebody seems to be frustrated with education – are we perhaps not building on his/her informal skills and giving perspectives?
- How do the young articulate themselves, when making their way to employment? Do we have brokers? Mediators?
- Do we have new ways of connecting education and business? Could the young create career and business ideas already in school?
- Hello again! So you are returning to help your peers! Do we have role-models, coaches, ambassadors of the young as a creative resource to help the young?

CO-CREATING TOMORROW'S CITIES WITH TODAY'S YOUTH

MY GENERATION has been about promoting the positive potential of the young generations in cities – Co-creating tomorrow’s cities with today’s youth!

The cities of Rotterdam as project coordinator, and as partners Antwerp, Birmingham, Glasgow, Gdansk, Gothenburg, Patras, Riga, Valencia, Warsaw and Tirgu-Mures have engaged in a MY GENERATION learning journey 2008- 2011.

MY GENERATION has explored good practices in youth engagement in four themes, four “CITYSCAPE AREAS”:

- 1. OUTREACH:** Transforming City activities in Outreach – good practices in engaging with youth in danger of exclusion and disengagement, building on informal skills, starting to co-create a new future and transforming the situation to positive aspirations and activities, and connecting these activities to local communities, education and employment
- 2. EDUCATION AND**
- 3. EMPLOYMENT:** Transforming City activities in connecting Education to Employment – good practice in connecting education better to the needs and the informal skills of young people, as well as to the needs of workplaces and the business community, encouraging entrepreneurial and self-employment attitudes and skills
- 4. COORDINATION:** Transforming Coordination of City youth policies and activities – good practice in establishing co-creation with the young, providing guidance, brokers and intermediaries, promoting co-operation between the actors and developing practical local action plans

FROM TARGET-GROUP
THINKING...



FROM "TARGET GROUP" THINKING TO CO-CREATION VIA TRANSFORMING THE ECOLOGY OF ENGAGEMENT

Lead expert Robert Arnkil together with MY GENERATION coordinator Cleo Pouw and thematic experts Eddy Adams and Ulf Hägglund – on the basis of the creative experience with the MY GENERATION people:

What has this transformation meant in MY GENERATION?

THE YOUNG MUST BE GENUINE CO-CREATORS:

MY GENERATION has been more than a traditional project, where the young end up as a “target group” with no real say, engagement and contribution. At every stage and in all activities we have asked: How are the young themselves engaging in our project? How could this be improved? And we have insisted that every city has young aboard at every stage.

MULTI-ACTOR APPROACH FOR BETTER CONTACTS:

Nobody can solve complex societal challenges alone. The whole idea of MY GENERATION has been about establishing better contacts in the cities between the actors in the “youth cause”, particularly the local communities, various forms of education and the business community. At every stage and in all activities we have asked: Where do we need better contacts? How can MY GENERATION act as a catalyst of better contacts? What about the decision makers? Where do you want to make a new breakthrough?

TRANSFORMING THE ECOLOGY OF ENGAGEMENT:

We have transformed the way our workshops have been run, away from “death by powerpoint”, to using all modalities of communication, engagement and creation: dialogue, movement, dance, music, pictures, videos... we have emphasised real life stories, ambassadors, mediators, champions...

TRANSFORMING THE CONCEPT OF PROJECT PRODUCTS:

Projects often end up with (sorry: *booring!*) written reports that sit on passive websites and bookshelves. Besides written reports MY GENERATION has produced videos, snippets, examples, pictures and cartoons – and will continue to do so in the final reporting, to reach different audiences. Just take a look at:

<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/active-inclusion/my-generation/homepage/>

LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER:

The biggest learning lesson for everybody was taking the co-creation with the young more seriously – and positively! This has been nothing less than a cultural change! Another big learning lesson was to build on the informal skills and empowerment of the young – and doing that transforming our ecology of engagement. The third lesson has been to enrich each one’s strengths and fill in the “gaps” of the CITY-SCAPE – and work towards a more comprehensive Youth Policy and action plans in the city.



**MY GENERATION Thematic expert
Eddy Adams sharing some thoughts on:**

OUTREACH

The My Generation CITYSCAPE illustrates the journey many young people make. This transformative experience sees them move from puzzlement, disaffection and exclusion to the fulfilment of their potential and active contribution as citizens. However, it is rarely a linear process and one of the biggest challenges is making and sustaining that front end connection.

But why should youth engage? In many ways, since My Generation started the overall position of Europe's young people has deteriorated. Unemployment is at record levels; competition for educational places is high; budgets and services are being slashed. In many of our cities young people feel disconnected and disillusioned. Demonstrations across the continent – and beyond! - testify to their feelings of frustration.

So what can we learn from the My Generation experience about outreaching to young people? It seems to me that a key lesson has been to shift our mindset away from an 'us and them' approach to one where we are collaborating – on an equal footing – to find and introduce solutions. Instead of seeing young people as an external target group our cities have sought ways to meaningfully involve them in everything we do. Rather than being part of the problem, young people become part of the solution.



"DAVE TELLS BELLA ABOUT HIS
FUTURE PLANS"

Rotterdam's example – building on its experience as European Youth capital – has been inspiring, both in the calibre of the young people who have come forward but also through the innovative ways of ensuring that the youth voice is heard. The concept of the Youth Council for example, has emerged as a key structure for attracting young people and providing them with influence in their city. Other MG cities – Riga and Warsaw amongst them – have gone down this route and others may follow in future.

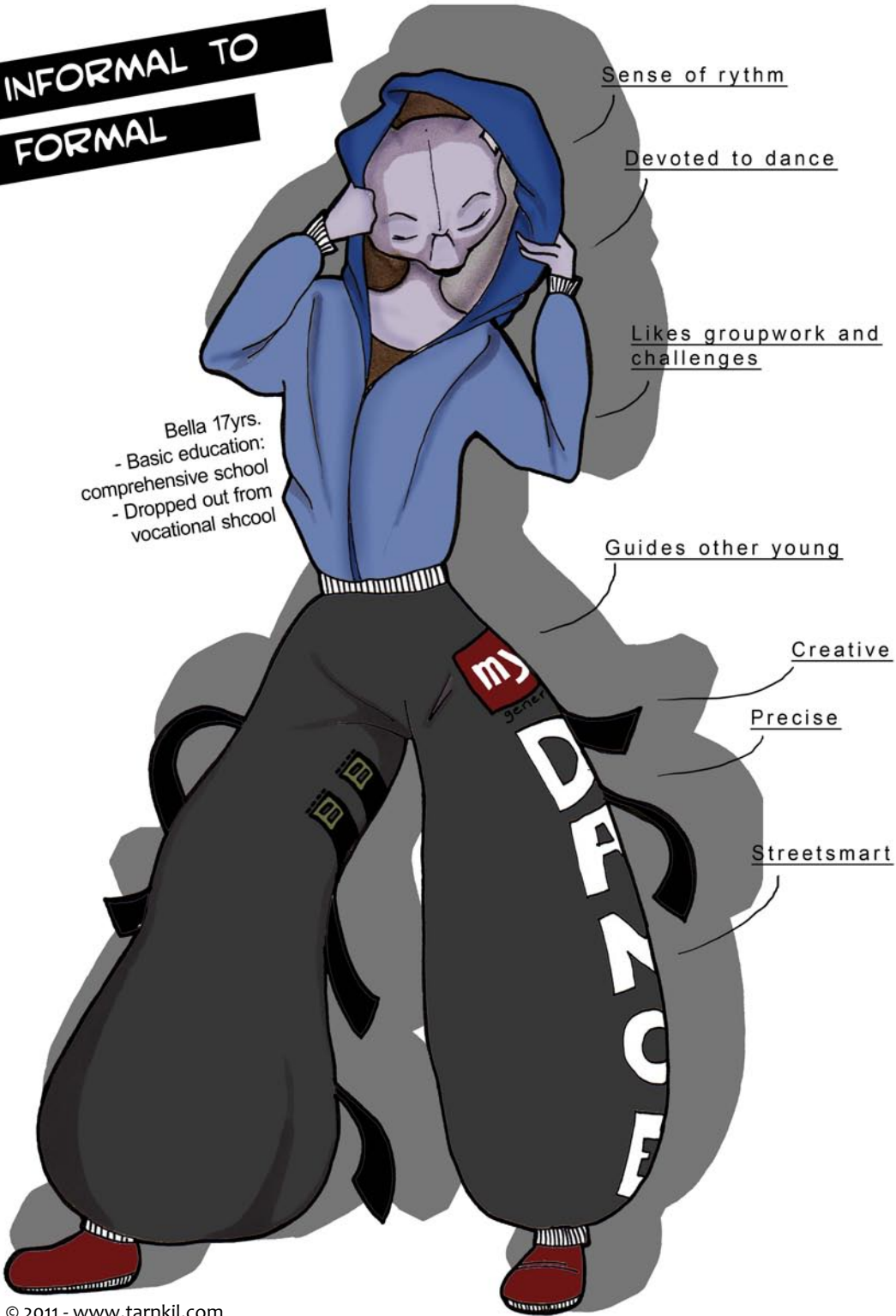
Trust is at the heart of altering relationships, and another way of building this is to embed services within young people's communities. Using resources to recognise young people's skills – informal and formal – and to create valued pathways into professions is another effective model we have seen.

In Antwerp the Youth Competence Centres lie within communities where many young people have been switched off by formal education. Using credible role models, and drawing youth in through media and sport Antwerp – and cities like Birmingham and Glasgow – are making those initial connections to build upon.

Young people want to be taken seriously. They have an important contribution to make and have insights into the current crisis – and its potential solutions – that we ignore at our peril. The My Generation cities have tried new ways to get alongside young people so that they can have greater influence in future. As the project draws to a close we all have a responsibility to keep this change process going.



**INFORMAL TO
FORMAL**



MY GENERATION Thematic expert
Ulf Hägglund sharing some thoughts on:

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

It is high time for us to seriously start regarding young people as assets, not as problems. It is also high time for all of us who are leading schools, municipalities and companies today, to take our responsibility to ensure that young people get a good transition from education to work. It is not only a matter of justice or moral responsibility. It is a prerequisite in order to maintain and continue the development of welfare, of companies, as well as of creative ability in cities, regions and countries in the EU.

Among other things, our challenge lies in the fact that until 2020, we will have a large number of retirements at the same time as the young successors become fewer and fewer. We cannot afford a situation where employers cannot find employees – and at the same time having an unemployment rate among Europe’s young people that is unprecedented.

I have the privilege of being joint owner of an upper secondary school in Sweden that aims at developing the students’ entrepreneurial skills. Not necessarily in order for them to become business owners; but because I believe that the role of the school is about developing the young people’s driving force, abilities and talents in order for them to find their place in working and adult life in the best way. To me, it is natural to let the students get in touch with the other parts of society, with employers and role models during their education. It is part of the pedagogy of the school to let the students put themselves on display – and to better understand how society and working life works.

For natural reasons, the participating cities of MY GENERATION have had a great interest in developing and sharing methods, tools, outlooks, and good examples that support young people's transition from school to work. In Tirgu Mures and Valencia there are educations that aim at enterprise and at meeting the demands from the labour market. In Antwerp and Gothenburg there are both theoretical and practical examples of the importance of bringing forward the young people's informal and non-formal competences.

There is no "quick fix"; no simple formula to accomplish this matching of supply and demand. We also need to create new jobs, find the possibilities in the development now seen within a number of areas, not only the technical. We need a generation of young people who are allowed to develop their talents, who are allowed to exceed boundaries, who are allowed to build new business models, creative as well as social and commercial, who are allowed to succeed – and to fail.

In MY GENERATION we have seen many good examples of how creativity and entrepreneurial spirits among the young have been nurtured; the Rotterdam examples Hi5 and Chamber of Commerce projects, the Birmingham example of World Worth Living In, the Incubator in Gothenburg and many more.

To some extent, this is about changing attitudes and outlooks. About seeing people instead of sorting the world into groups of young, women, men, impaired, immigrants, long-time sick listed, long-time unemployed. There is a need to sort the world only if we are afraid and insecure, if we continue regarding each other as strangers, if we do not have a plan for how to let everyone contribute developing our cities and societies. We are the only ones who can change that attitude.

IN MY GENERATION we have turned attitudes upside down. The young have become the experts and the original experts have become students of reality. It has been a mutual learning process beyond usual processes.



"BELLA & DAVE DANCE SCHOOL OPENING"

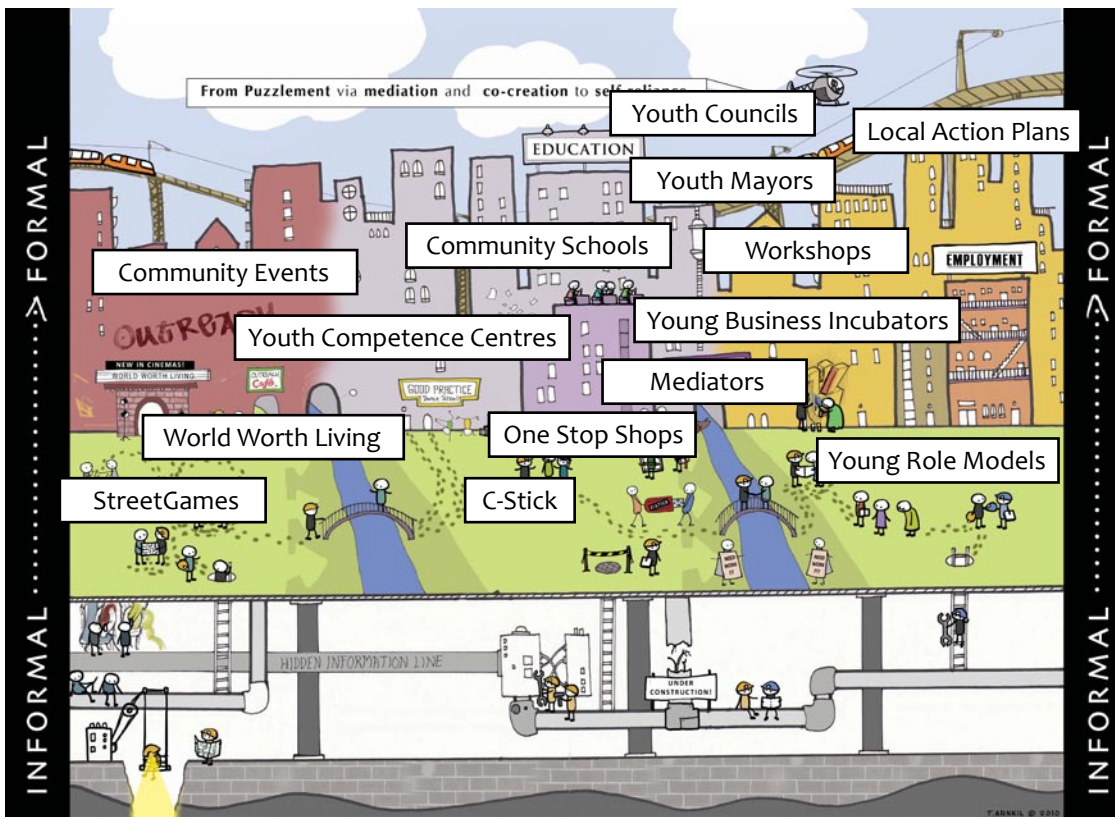


"BELLA TEACHING"

MY GENERATION lead expert Robert Arnkil
sharing some thoughts on:

COORDINATION AND LOCAL ACTION PLANS

At the end of the day, the challenge of cities is to have a good coverage of the entire CITYSCAPE in terms of good practices and youth policies. It does not help much if we lift the spirits of the young in OUTREACH for the chain to break down concerning the next steps. Then OUTREACH becomes OUTRAGE – as we have witnessed in Europe – and beyond, as Ed already said above! And what about educating the young, only to have a disconnect to employment?



As examples, what do we have? In OUTREACH and community engagement we have the experience of Birmingham, Glasgow, Riga and Gdansk, like Street Games, World Worth Living (coaching and empowering in small groups), Voluntary organisation cooperation, Skate Parks, using sport, arts and events. In transition to EDUCATION and challenging and transforming EDUCATION we have the experience of Youth Competence Centres, C-stick (making a lively CV using also informal skills) and Community Schools of Antwerp and Rotterdam, in MEDIATING and guidance to connect to education and employment we have the experience of guidance centres, one-stop-shops, Hi5 (youth company to mediate youth connections to business), and having meeting forums of Tirgu-Mures, Patras, Rotterdam, Valencia and Gothenburg. In connection to EMPLOYMENT and business we have the experience of Young Chambers of Commerce and Business Incubators of Valencia and Gothenburg. In creating COORDINATION and policies we have the experience of Youth Mayors and Youth Councils, cross actor and cross silo strategies and policies of Rotterdam, Birmingham, Glasgow and Gothenburg, Riga and Warsaw...

I am convinced that these building blocks are vital for good city policy. I'm equally convinced that there is no "one way" to establish this. In MY GENERATION some cities have a rather uniform cross-actor strategic approach, where youth policy is embedded, some have more a "multi-centred" and hybrid approaches, with initiatives popping up in a more ad-hoc manner, but nevertheless effective.

Join us in enriching the CITYSCAPE! Let's help each other to fill in the gaps!