



THEMATIC SEMINAR IN COPENHAGEN, JUNE 17-18 2005

CITIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

BACKGROUND REPORT

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With delight I have accepted the invitation of being the expert in charge of the first thematic seminar. It's with delight because I do think it's a good idea, in particular the way we are urged to learn by working together in workshops instead of listening passively to a number of presentations. Whether the idea is fully realistic, it remains to be seen. However, I'm not the only one responsible for that. We are all responsible for making this seminar real, although to different extent and in different ways. Basically, this seminar is about participation, taking part, being active, sharing knowledge, arguing, criticising, agreeing. Therefore it's very important that the participants feel for it. If they lack the motivation or understanding, it won't become a good seminar.

Hopefully this background report will strengthen motivation and understanding. I will start by describing how I have worked with the preparation of the seminar. Secondly, it seems necessary to explain how I deal with my role, in particular as I am thematic expert for one of the networks involved, "Young people – from exclusion to inclusion" (YPFETI). Thirdly, the invited networks have reached very different stages in their work on young people, due, among other things, to different starting dates. That's important to know about in order to claim justified expectations. In the next three chapters, I will position the networks in terms of focus, methodologies and outcomes. On that basis, the seventh chapter will present and explain my selection of three seminar topics. In the eighth chapter, I will make some remarks about the European relevance of the three seminar topics by referring to the major existing work at the European level. Finally, the ninth chapter will specify the framework of the seminar.

1. Preparing the seminar

An URBACT thematic seminar has the objectives, in short, to "allow each network to learn about the current state of reflections in other URBACT networks", "enable each network to enrich its reflections on the theme", "develop favourable conditions for the production, at the level of the Programme as a whole, of a collective European reflection" and "formalise and disseminate products as they emerge from the exchanges of the networks".

To succeed with these objectives, it's stated that "an URBACT thematic seminar is intended to be a workshop". Learning and enriching each other by working together on the basis of each others' achievements in URBACT

networks could perhaps summarize the idea. It's opposed to sitting and listening to presentations. Thus, the idea requires quite a lot of the participants who are expected to be well prepared and active in the discussions. That requires in its turn a certain amount of preparatory work. A background report will have to be produced, fulfilling requirements pointed out in the UR-BACT Monitoring Committee (MC) document outlining this seminar:

- 1) Introducing the problems to be discussed at the seminar and linking them with major existing work on the theme at the European level
- 2) Positioning the work underway in each participating network with respect to three or four major cross-cutting issues of interest to all the networks
- 3) Proposing a framework within which these issues may be addressed at the seminar.

The background report is supposed to be produced by an expert in a role which includes being "in charge of organization, preparation, coordination and monitoring of the event as a whole". Obviously, the major part of the work concerns preparation.

To succeed, I began with what the MC document describes as to "develop a common format which the networks will use to write their syntheses and contributions to the exchanges". It turned out to become a questionnaire and it was developed in co-operation with the seminar coordinator, Didier Michal. I wanted the answering of these questions to be a part of the learning and enrichment process. It was supposed to give the networks an opportunity to learn about themselves and enable me, again in terms of the MC document specifications, to "find out about the current stage of reflections within each of the participating networks". In a way, the seminar started with the answering of the questions.

Thus, the completed questionnaires form the basis of this background report. The merits as well as shortcomings of these documents will thus be mirrored. They are the prime source for my attempts at "positioning the work underway in each participating network". That positioning, using comparisons, will lead me to propose the framework for the seminar, or in other MC document words to "develop the seminar's approach to the issues, finding questions that cut across the activities of the networks involved".

2. Dealing with my own role

It's necessary with some remarks about myself. That's because I work as a thematic expert for the YPFETI network (Malmö). Of course, there's more to say but I won't repeat what has already been written in the CV at the UR-BACT website. Those who want to know more, please have a look there.¹ However, my role as a thematic expert for the YPFETI network has to be addressed. I did not take part in writing the application for the YPFETI network. Thus, I haven't been involved in creating the idea and deciding about the original direction. I was engaged in January 2004, just before the kick-off meeting. After that I have been deeply involved.

I have been involved both as a local researcher and as a thematic expert. As a local researcher, I have been responsible for making the case studies in Malmö. As a thematic expert, also head researcher of the whole network, I have been responsible for conducting the methodological development of the network, including the questionnaire template, research guidelines and working methods at the conferences. On the basis of all the case studies, written by the local researchers in each city, I have written a first draft version of the final report. During autumn 2005, I will write the final version of the final report. This combination of being both a local researcher and a thematic expert has been very important for me in order to establish contacts and communications internally, create a genuine understanding of the network, suggest how to proceed and get support for it.²

So what could you expect from me in the work with this seminar? Will I not be biased and in favour of the YPFETI network? Perhaps! If I am, don't hesitate to criticise me for it. At least, I'm aware about this risk and I will try to deal with it. One way is to write this special chapter, acknowledge the risk and explain my attempts to deal with it.

I have tried to deal with it by not getting involved in answering the questionnaire. The network leader of YPFETI Bertil Nilsson wrote a draft version, also with the support from one of the network partners. This version was distributed to the partners at the network's Gijón conference, on May 20-22. Most of the partners gave a feedback and on that basis Bertil Nilsson com-

¹ Personal website, in Swedish but with summary in English:

<http://webzone.lut.mah.se/projects/MS1>

² A summary report of "Young people – from exclusion to inclusion" is available at <http://www.urbact.org/srt/urbacten/folder/list?id=31>

pleted the questionnaire. Hence, the questionnaire has forced the partners to reflect on the present state of the network and make assessments about the achievements so far. In this way, the preparation of the seminar has become an important opportunity to deepen and share the understanding within the network.

The YPFETI answers give me the opportunity to assess how the partners understand the network and its achievements at the current stage in the process. Thus, this background report will also become a feedback from me to the YPFETI network. Instead of portraying the YPFETI as faultless, I will try to be honest in clarifying the problems as they become apparent in the YPFETI questionnaire. Hopefully, that will make me credible enough to be able to clarify any problems of the other networks as well.

3. Networkgroups – how far have they come?

URBACT consists of 17 networks. Five of them will be represented at the Copenhagen seminar: Young people – from exclusion to inclusion (Malmö), Young citizens' project (Bristol), UDIEX (Venice), SecurCity (Rotterdam) and Citiz@move (Seville). Moreover, four Working Groups have been established within URBACT. Two of them will be represented at the Copenhagen seminar: SUDC (Liege) and EuroMediation (Turin). In sum, five networks and two Working Groups will take part in the seminar. In order to avoid misunderstandings caused by terminology, I will in this background report refer to them all as networkgroups. Thus, seven networkgroups will take part in the Copenhagen seminar.

What can we expect from the representatives of these seven networkgroups? Obviously, it depends on how far they have come in their work, in particular the work on the seminar theme. How much have the networkgroups worked with the theme on young people? It differs a lot. Thus, in order to know what we could expect from the participating representatives, we have to assess the status of the theme in each networkgroup. What have they achieved so far?

The “Young people – from exclusion to inclusion” (YPFETI) networkgroup had their kick-off in February 2004. That was also the starting point for the first round of work with good examples, going on during the whole of 2004 and resulting in 19 reports. The first round ended at the annual conference in January 2005 where the first draft of the final report, written by me as being the thematic expert, was presented and discussed. Thereafter, the second and

last round of work with good examples started. During the spring 2005, good examples were documented and evaluated at local conferences, in total 17 local reports. These formed the basis for the exchange conference, recently held in Gijón, May 20-22. During the rest of the year, I, as Thematic Expert, will continue the work with the final report, on the basis of all the new examples, received information about the cities and many comments. A new draft version will be presented to the coordinators and local researchers at a conference in Helsinki in December. Final versions of a scientific report as well as operational guidelines will then be completed. The whole result will be disseminated at a final conference in April, putting an end to the networkgroup.

The “Young citizens’ project” (YCP) hasn’t come that far yet. It had the kick-off meeting in September 2004 and the first international working seminar in April 2005. According to the timetable, networkgroup partners should have all completed one of four focus groups by April 2005. All but one partner had done so. The outcomes of this first round of focus groups were discussed at the working seminar in Evosmos, April 15-16. Thus, quite a lot remains to be done. Each partner will conduct three more focus groups. A second working seminar will be held and also a final conference. The networkgroup is planned to end in June 2006.

Thus, we have reason to expect more from YPFETI than from the YCP. When YPFETI takes part in the Copenhagen seminar, it will have passed its midterm. Indeed, all the studies of good examples have been made, that is both rounds. The YPFETI is at a quite late stage of its existence and has built up a substantial richness. Its representatives at the Copenhagen seminar ought to have a lot to say. The YPFETI and the YCP are the only two networkgroups that deal with the theme directly. The theme of Young people is at the centre of both the YPFETI and the YCP. Also, both these networkgroups have answered the questionnaire.

It has been more difficult for me to assess the status of the theme in the other participating networkgroups. On behalf of the Citiz@move (Seville), the questionnaire has been answered and sent in by Osman Farah in Aarhus. The Citiz@move deals with the main theme of “The inclusion and participation of citizens”. The networkgroup is divided into three working groups working with the sub-themes “The application of IT for citizen participation”, “The application of good governance and transparency in the inclusion of citizens” and “The inclusion and participation of ethnic minorities”. Each one of

these working groups will consider the situation of young people. However, there doesn't seem to be any verified results yet.

In the UDIEX (Venice) a workshop was held in Finland, March 2004, on the theme "Children and Young People at the Margins". The output of that workshop was summarized by a Finnish independent expert, Robert Arnkil. I'm not aware about any processing and proceedings after that. Moreover, the questionnaire hasn't been answered. Thus, the current status of the theme in the UDIEX networkgroup hasn't been possible for me to assess.

SecurCity has as its key theme "Urban security and crime prevention". The networkgroup is divided into five working groups of which one is called "Youth Crime and Education". Unfortunately, the networkgroup hasn't answered the questionnaire which makes it more difficult for me to do full justice in assessing its current status. Instead, a Workshop Report as well as a Summary Analysis from the workshop held in Glasgow, March 2005, has been sent.

Regarding the two remaining networkgroups, SUDC (Liege) and EuroMediation (Turin), no results exist yet. In the questionnaire answered by Geoffrey Francois on behalf of the SUDC (Liege), the networkgroup is said to be in the beginning and no results have been achieved yet. The EuroMediation has just been approved by the Monitoring Committee and not yet really started. Still, EuroMediation has sent four questionnaire reports, three of them about individual projects in Turin and the fourth about a project in Brussels. Such individual projects were not what this seminar was supposed to be about. The seminar is supposed to deal with the networkgroup achievements. However, as the EuroMediation hasn't started yet, questions about the networkgroup achievements couldn't be answered. By sending in answers about individual projects, the EuroMediation has delivered what they could.

To conclude, many of the seminar participants can't be expected to represent any particular achievements of their networkgroups. It's too early in their respective processes. They haven't come that far yet. Mainly the participants from YPFETI and the YCP will be able to represent major URBACT achievements. I hope that these achievements will become reflected in the discussions at the seminar. On the other hand the other networks that have not yet advanced in their work in relation to young people will be able to draw on the experience of other networks, and hopefully focus more clearly

their own work as a result of the seminar. Their participants will of course contribute to the debates.

4. Focuses

As clarified in the name, “Young people – from exclusion to inclusion” (YPFETI) deals with young people in a situation of social exclusion. Thus, it has a specific focus, although still broad, and doesn’t deal with young people in general. In fact, the focus is even more demarcated than that because it deals with teenagers in schools or those supposed to be there (drop-outs). Thus, the YPFETI doesn’t focus directly on, for example, unemployed young people, but unemployment could still be important because many of the young people concerned have unemployed parents. Also, the area where they live could be characterised by a high level of unemployment. To sum up, the YPFETI focuses on young people at upper school age who live in areas characterised by social exclusion.

The “Young citizens’ project” (YCP) doesn’t make a similar demarcation. It concerns young people in general, regardless of situation, ethnicity, class, gender, age, living area etc. Yet, YCP includes a demarcation but of another kind than the YPFETI. YCP deals in the first place with the participation of young people in decision-making, not for example young people having problems with bad health, drug abuse, criminal activity, school record or poverty. It’s not because the young people are for example poor or involved in crimes that YCP pays attention to them. It’s because of their lacking participation. In that sense, the focus of YPFETI is demarcated as well.

However, the lack of participation of young people seems to be taken for granted. The meaning of it is not clearly specified. Is it young people in general that lack participation? Or is it a particular group? The answer makes a big difference. In the case of the former, the boundaries of cities and indeed the URBACT programme will be exceeded. Clearly, the focus must have something to do with cities. Otherwise, URBACT would hardly be keen on funding the networkgroup. Thus, it’s not only because they are young that young people lacks participation. It’s because they belong to the group of young people that lives in cities.

However, the characteristic of networkgroup cities indicates a more demarcated focus than that. “Partner cities, with the partial exception of Sabadell,” it’s said in the YCP Baseline Report (p 4), “share many of the same prob-

lems in terms of deprivation, with low educational achievement and frequently high levels of unemployment amongst young people.” That makes the focus look more similar to the YPFETI networkgroup, although it’s not clearly stated.

It’s even more difficult for me to find out about the demarcations of Citiz@move. In the answers to the questionnaire there is said to be a “focus on promoting and including the youth in important processes that are taking place in the society”. What important processes? Moreover, the lack of participation of young people in these processes are taken for granted, but on what grounds? **What processes that are taking place in society are important, how are young people excluded from those and why is that a problem?** Does such exclusion apply to all young people or to particular categories? In that case, which ones? In what ways is this lack of participation a particular urban problem?

The focus on young people in life situations characterised by social exclusion applies to the SecurCity networkgroup as well, although more demarcated than the other networkgroups as it seems. SecurCity focuses on young people involved in criminal activity. “Youth crime may be considered as one of the most important indicators of social exclusion”, as SecurCity states in its “Summary analysis” from March 2005. That sounds as an unimpeachable statement, but in my view it has to be based on a definition of youth crime. Unfortunately, I haven’t seen any definition of youth crime in the SecurCity documents. Does it include only reported offenders or also for example truants at schools? The “Summary analysis” hints at a wider focus, for example in describing the main problems as “Preventing and stopping criminal careers” and “Dissolving criminal or nuisance causing youth groups”. Where does the focus on such careers start? What does SecurCity mean by nuisance?

The breadth of focus raises the issue of how young people are perceived. It’s easy to blame young people for destroying property or robbery, but what about for example truancy? **Should truancy always be regarded as bad behaviour?** Or could truancy sometimes also be regarded as a justified and perhaps also quite healthy reaction to a defective educational system? Obviously, answers to such questions depend on the perception of young people. What do we believe that they are capable to do? **Could young people really be capable of revealing shortcomings of educational systems?** Or do those that start with truancy and continue with crime have evil souls? Are

they predestined to a useless life because of the conditions they growing up in?

Perception of young people is an issue with concerns all the networkgroups. For example, it has a bearing on the YCP demarcations of what kind of decision-making young people are able to take part in and on what conditions. Also, the networkgroups seem to have a common ground in focussing on life situations characterised by social exclusion, but I'm not sure about to what extent. It remains unclear to me how the young people dealt with in the YCP, Citiz@move and SecurCity networkgroups are demarcated.

In this comparison, the YPFETI turn out to have a more clearly defined focus. It has to be stated that it didn't have that clarity in the beginning. It was clarified gradually, demanding a great deal of listening, discussions, work and suggestions. The YPFETI is also an example of how such clarity could easily be blurred. Among the examples of good practice accepted by the networkgroup, there are some that don't include schools or educational institutions. Such examples could put pressure on the boundaries of the focus and lead to a widening, without the partners being aware of it. There are answers in the questionnaire that could be interpreted as an indication of such a widening. When the focus is described in the first place, nothing is said about schools. Instead, sentences that stem from the original application appear further down in the questionnaire. Does this mean that schools have disappeared from the central position they had in the original application? Has the focus changed without the position of schools keeping up?

"In the beginning we had more focus on the age-group 10 – 16 but during the work we have decided to extend the age to be able also to involve good examples from the upper secondary school and other kind of example where also young people in the age 17-20 are involved." What does "other kind of examples" mean? Does this phrase indicate a permanent widening of the focus in the minds of partners, an inevitable consequence of being benevolent in accepting examples without schools? It's worth thinking of. These answers as well as the comparisons with the other networkgroups make me aware about the need to reconsider the position of schools in the focus of YPFETI. **The issue is not only about working out a focus, but also taking care of it.**

5. Methodologies

There are several methodological similarities between YPFETI and YCP:

1. In both networkgroups, practices are selected and data collected according to a predetermined case study format.
2. These case studies are discussed, evaluated and further elaborated at local workshops.
3. The case studies are presented and discussed at international conferences, exchange conferences as they are called by YPFETI and working seminar by YCP.

That's it about the similarities. The rest is different.

A main difference concerns the methodological preparations. YCP seems to have been much more sophisticated than YPFETI in its preparations of methods. Guidance documents were issued by the lead partner at an early stage, including guidance on both how to deal with the practices and the evaluations (first and second above). YPFETI took off with nothing similar of that kind. Instead, YPFETI used the "Guide to Capitalisation", issued by the URBACT leadership, as a basis for the kick-off meeting in February 2004. On that basis, the YPFETI networkgroup has developed its own methodology gradually, a process actively driven by me as being the thematic expert, and achieved a level of sophistication comparable to the YCP.

There are certainly advantages and disadvantages with both these models. The predetermination of methodology in YCP probably enabled the networkgroup to build up speed at an early stage. The YPFETI model has been more of a slow-starter due to the time needed for the gradual development. However, having reached its level of sophistication, the YPFETI model is benefit from the networkgroup partners participation. The networkgroup partners have participated in the gradual development, felt a part and acquired an understanding. That could pave the way for a successful ending. Perhaps the advantages and disadvantages of the YPFETI and the YCP networkgroups mirror each other. If the YCP loses its early pace and needs to do some reorientation, there could be some difficulties in getting support from partners who haven't been part of the original thinking.

Indeed, it ought to be possible for the YPFETI and the YCP networkgroups to learn from each other. The YPFETI has tried to derive guiding principles from the achievements of the steps in the gradual methodological develop-

ment. Thus, the guidance documents have been in a constant process of refinement. To learn from the YCP Guidance documents will become an important input in this process. Perhaps the YCP, in its turn, could learn from how the YPFETI has mobilised and maintained support from the partners.

Another difference between the YPFETI and the YCP networkgroups concerns the evaluations of the case studies. In the YCP, they are purposefully made by young people. This is described as the main element of the networkgroup. “The work of our network is structured around focus groups (‘laboratories’) conducted in each partner city. Over the course of the network each partner is to run four focus groups in which young people will act as researchers on, or evaluators of, a practice in which young people play a role in decision-making.” The guidance documents include explanations and instructions of these focus groups, as well as hints on how to facilitate them.

In contrast, the YPFETI has organised local workshops in each partner city with representatives for the good practices as participants. Before these local workshops, case studies have been written by a local researcher appointed in each city. At the local workshop, the good practice representatives discuss each case study and evaluate in that way each others’ good practices. However, no guidance document was issued in the beginning about the set up of these workshops. The consequent heterogeneity caused a certain mess during the first round, which was subsequently avoided by clearer guidelines in the second round.

In the questionnaire, the YPFETI claims that young people play a role in the networkgroup. It’s true concerning a few of the partners, but not for the networkgroup as a whole. The Gothenburg partner has taken the initiative to invite young people to both rounds of local workshops, the first in May 2004 and the second in March 2005. Copenhagen has also taken an initiative to engage young people in the process. That’s what I’m aware of. The networkgroup claims in the questionnaire that young people are supposed to play a role. That’s not true. The original application doesn’t say a word about that, although it was discussed at the annual conference in Gera, January 2005. The answer to this question should be regarded as wishful thinking, in my view, because of the strong wish to engage young people that certainly exist in the networkgroup. However, the answers also disguise one of the main weaknesses of the networkgroup. It’s a fact that the original application didn’t think of young people to play a role in the networkgroup, but the networkgroup as a whole hasn’t yet managed to do something about this. Will it also end without young people getting involved?

6. Outcomes and conclusions

As expected due to the current status of work, mostly the YPFETI and the YCP networkgroups have something to say about outcomes and conclusions. The YCP “is developing a set of crucial fields that all attempts to involve young people in decision-making processes have to be aware of”. The list consists of seven fields, all of them just briefly mentioned and not explained in particular. The list is said to still being refined. It includes “Different Understandings of Participation”, “Diversity of Young People”, “Credibility”, “Sustainability”, “Communication”, “Motivation” and “Resources”.

It will be interesting to see how the YCP in the forthcoming work will elaborate the definitions of these seven fields. In order to be fully credible, they also need to explain the choice of these seven. What makes these seven fields particularly interesting? Moreover, I’m expecting the YCP to explain the validity of the fields. **Are they valid and in the same way in all the cities and countries?**

In the “Baseline Report”, the YCP explain their intention as “not to attempt to identify a single model that can be generalised to all European cities, but to identify a number of models placed firmly within their specific cultural, social, economic and political contexts which other European cities will be able to draw on to inform their own approaches to young people’s participation in decision-making.” What does this mean regarding the seven fields mentioned above? Will the seven fields be part of a model? If the YCP want to reject the existence of general models, I have to ask which of the local ones does the seven fields apply to?

The quotation from the YCP “Baseline Report” high-lights the issue of local contexts, but at the expense of general application. That’s unfortunate, I think, and to maintain such a position will it not be quite devastating for the whole URBACT programme? **What’s the use of a general programme if solutions in general don’t exist?** However, I don’t adhere to the opposite view either, taking the general validity for granted. The issue of local contexts has to be high-lighted. **Local contexts have a great impact, but in what ways and to what extent?**

In order to find out about this, the YCP has put together a Baseline Questionnaire with the results published in the “Baseline Report”. It’s important to pay attention to such outcomes of the URBACT work as well. In the work within URBACT, needs emerge of getting to know about local context and

even national contexts. Knowledge worked out on the basis of such need could be of interest to other networkgroups as well. Thus, **it would be desirable that URBACT established some kind of exchange arena for knowledge about contexts, worked out by networkgroups.** Of course, such an arena would need an expert support.

Contextual knowledge has been worked out in the YPFETI as well. The need for such knowledge is anchored in the title of the networkgroup “Young people – from exclusion to inclusion.” The networkgroup deals with how to change the situation for young people from exclusion to inclusion. In order to be counted as good, practices have to accomplish such changes. Then, a need emerges about understanding exclusion and inclusion. For that reason, knowledge has been acquired about both local and national contexts. In the final report, comparisons will be made on the basis of this knowledge concerning cities and nations.

Thus, just as the YCP, the YPFETI places the good practices firmly within their specific contexts. Such knowledge makes the differences between the cities very clear. For example, from a Nordic perspective it may seem that changing the situation from exclusion to inclusion equals to issues about language and ethnic differences. Comparisons with for example Gijon in Spain or Lomza in Poland broadens the perspective and highlights other aspects, like ‘working poor’. The need of such conceptual knowledge couldn’t be emphasised enough. When the YPFETI, in the questionnaire, explains the problems taken into considerations in the networkgroup, only issues related to ethnic differences are mentioned. That makes social exclusion in for example the Spanish city of Gijon impossible to explain. In Gijon, just a tiny minority have an immigrant background. Yet, social exclusion definitely exists, although with other characteristics like unemployment, poverty and “working poor”. Thus, **there is a need to dig deep in the contextual particularities, acquire the appropriate knowledge and then also maintain it.** Otherwise, it’s easy to get caught in, for example, a Nordic perspective.

However, digging deep into contextual particularities haven’t prevented the YPFETI from tackling the challenge of identifying general solutions. Based on the findings of the case studies, the YPFETI partners have agreed about five success criteria, with a general and European validity:

1. **Empowerment:** In order to be regarded as good, examples have to strengthen the ability of young people to act by themselves, think inde-

pendently, make choices, be responsible and stand up for their rights. Top-down solutions, treating young people as objects, have to be rejected.

2. **Strengthened social relations:** Confidence and trust have to be strengthened in the relations between schoolteachers and young people, but also between schoolteachers and parents. This has to be recognised as a necessary precondition for real learning.
3. **Structural changes of schools:** Examples of how to change the situation for young people from exclusion to inclusion cannot be hived off to a space of their own, leaving the structures of school intact. School structures are part of the problems and have to be changed as well.
4. **Co-operation with the local community:** Schools have to be opened to the local community and get involved in co-operation with citizens, groups, associations (NGOs), companies and institutions. This openness needs to embrace an open mind towards local culture (youth, ethnicity etc) as well, treating it as an asset.
5. **A changed approach to knowledge:** The obsolete approach that takes knowledge for granted and only deals with a passive digestion of pre-determined facts, has to be replaced by one that put the emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, ability to take stands, knowledge creation etc. Young people has to be engaged in discussions about approaches to knowledge, what to learn, how to learn it, the needs of knowledge, definitions of knowledge etc.

The identification of these five success criteria as well as the agreement about it is regarded by the YPFETI as “the most important result so far” for the evaluation of local practices. In order to be regarded as good, practices have to comply with some of these criteria, preferably all of them. Inversely, practices that run counter to one or more of the criteria will not be regarded as good.

These five success criteria convey the message that a change from exclusion to inclusion doesn't only put demands on young people, but also on the content and preconditions of social inclusion. In the YPFETI networkgroup, inclusion means society. Thus, society has to change as well. **The change of situation from social exclusion to social inclusion shouldn't mean the adaptation of young people to a pre-determined and unchangeable**

society. That is made particularly clear in the last three criteria. The change from exclusion to inclusion has to involve the change of society as well.

How do the other networkgroups deal with its corresponding issues of change? What is participation supposed to lead to? What are the young people to take part in? Has every institution or process in society the same significance in solving the problem with young people lacking participation? And are the problems of for example crime possible to solve if the institutions and processes remain unchanged? Are the solutions to the problems of social exclusion and lack of participation only a matter of young people having to adapt? **If networkgroups don't claim changes of society, but only of young people, is it not a risk that they contribute to maintaining the causes to social exclusion and in that way run counter to their own objectives?**

7. Identifying the seminar topics

It's included in my task to identify the key topics of the seminar. A way of doing that is to start by specifying the criteria that these topics have to fulfil:

- **Validity:** The themes have to be a concern for all the represented networkgroups.
- **Input:** It must be possible for the representatives of the networkgroups to take part in discussions on the basis of these themes.
- **Output:** Discussions and reflections on the basis of these themes should be useful for the representatives to bring back to their networkgroups.

I have identified three topics with regards to the three chapters about networkgroup contents above. The idea behind the division of these three chapters on focus, methodologies and outcomes is to answer three questions:

- **Focus:** What do the networkgroups deal with?
- **Methodologies:** How do they deal with it?
- **Outcomes:** What have they achieved by dealing with this?

These questions have been answered in the chapters, but given these answers, what could be of common interest in each one of the chapters? What topics could fulfil the criteria above?

In the **first** chapter, the one on focus, I have identified perception of young people. It's definitely a crucial concern to all. Every focus is based on perceptions of young people. It includes assumptions about the abilities of the young people, who they are, what they are able to do, why they are as they are, if they should be blamed for anything, in that case what etc. All of us have perceptions of young people. They could be contradictory or more uniform. They could be made aware and elaborated. Or they may operate more unconsciously. Preconceived notions make us think and act in certain directions rather than in other. Our perception of young people has a bearing on how we relate to them, talk to them and what we expect from them. Hence, digging up the assumptions and discuss them will be the objective of this first workshop.

The **second** topic is derived from the chapter above on networkgroup methodologies. Is there a single methodological topic that could be a concern for all the represented networkgroups? Yes, I do think that. All the networkgroups seem to underline the need of participation, however accomplished in different ways. Also, the networkgroups have collected a rich variety of examples at the level of individual cities. Even more than that, the YCP has created examples as a part of its internal work by engaging young people in focus groups. Thus, the networkgroups could have a lot to learn from each other by discussing participation.

The **third** topic stems from the chapter on outcomes. What society are the young people supposed to participate and be included in? Do including young people in decision-making process mean to take society for granted? If the problem is the lack of young people in decision-making, does the solution imply to include young people in society as it is? What changes of society are required in order to solve to the problems with social exclusion of young people and their lack of participation in decision-making? Moreover, at what levels do changes have to be carried out (local, regional, national, EU)?

8. The European relevance of the topics

Besides identifying the topics to be discussed at the seminar, I'm supposed to "linking them with major existing work on the theme at the European level". According to my knowledge, that applies to the work on the **European Youth Pact**, proposed in October 2004 by Jacques Chirac, Gerhard

Schröder, José Luís Zapatero and Göran Persson. At the Spring European Council of 22-23 March the pact was adopted by the EU Heads of State and Government as one of the instruments contributing to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives. The strategy of the European Youth Pact addresses a range of issues and policy areas that are of high concern for young people, aiming “to improve the education, training, mobility, vocational integration and social inclusion of young Europeans, and to facilitate the reconciliation of working life and family life.”³

The strategy was identified as such in the Commission's White Paper *A new impetus for European youth* and the subsequent Council resolution of 27 June 2002, which set the framework for youth policy in Europe. This is not the place for an analysis or even a summary of the framework for youth policy. Instead, I will limit myself to look for its support of the three seminar topics selected above. Indeed, I do find the three seminar topics in harmony with the framework for youth policy.

Firstly, the whole framework for youth policy breathes a new belief in young people. “It is time now to regard youth as a positive force in the construction of Europe rather than as a problem”, the White Paper states (p 5). In this quotation, the Commission clearly expresses and takes stand for a particular perception of young people. The emphasis is no longer on what young people need to get or on disciplinary actions. In the first place, young people have something to offer. They are not only in the making, but also a capacity in their own right.

“How does one get credit for personal experience that education systems do not formally recognise?”, the Commissioner Vivianne Reding, responsible for education, culture and youth asked in a booklet about the new youth policy, published by DG for Education and Culture in 2002. Obviously, such a question rests on the belief that young people have personal experiences of a value, acquired a part from what they get to learn at school.

Secondly, participation is classified by the White Paper as the “first and foremost” priority theme. “Participation should be developed primarily in the local community, including schools, which provide an ideal opportunity for participation. It must also be extended to include young people who do not belong to associations.” The White Paper doesn’t rule out any level in promoting participation. Pilot projects to promote participation of young

³ http://europa.eu.int/youth/news/index_1970_en.html [accessed 30 May 2005]

people will be proposed at every level of government. Thus, URBACT networkgroups able to disseminate knowledge on good examples of participation will be fully in tune with the priorities of youth policy in Europe.

Thirdly, the framework for youth policy raises claims on changing institutions and processes of society. For example, the demand for a boost of complementarity between formal and non-formal education would imply profound changes. So would “developing a labour market which favours the inclusion of young people” (p 20). However, the demand for profound societal changes was stated more explicitly by the small group of youth research experts⁴ from different parts of Europe, asked by the European Commission to take part in the White Paper consultation process.⁵

The researchers have a great belief in the forces of young people.⁶ The perception of contemporary young people as passive, evidenced in the decline in the political participation of young people, is rejected, as “all evidence suggests that young people put a growing emphasis on shaping their lives. They do it as individuals, as couples, as participants in changing social constellations.” (p 8) Contemporary young people learn to live another life than expected by the older generations. To understand and bolster these new patterns, the researchers call for a far more holistic youth policy based on the fact that “young people’s lifeworlds no longer make sharp divisions between learning, working, loving, playing and living.” (p 3) It’s described as a “quality of interconnectivity that is becoming characteristic of the ways young Europeans live and experience their lives today.” (p 4)

As a consequence, new forms of participation have to be developed: “The present challenge of participation is to make the social and collective moments and implications of individual life projects more visible, building bridges where individuality can be realised in a social context.” (p 8) The researchers highlight the need for explorative and innovative research on such developments.

⁴ Lynne Chisholm, Maurice Devlin, Manuela du Bois-Reymond, Gestur Gudmundsson, Irena Guidikova, Francine Labadie, Carmen Leccardi and Howard Williamson.

⁵ http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/contrres/research_en.html [accessed 30 May 2005]

⁶ <http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/contrres/research.pdf> [accessed 30 May 2005]

9. Framework of the seminar

Three workshop sessions will be held at the seminar in Copenhagen. During these sessions, the participants at the seminar will be divided into three groups. One of the groups will discuss “Perception of young people”, the second “Participation of young people” and the third “Participation and inclusion – in what?”. The group discussions have to generate a result, a demand which the participants have to bear in mind. After the session, each group will have to present the result of the discussions, using a flip-chart. Each group will have a flip-chart at their disposal during the session in order to prepare the presentation. It’s up to each group to decide if they want the result to be presented by one of the group members or several. However, during a presentation, the whole group will have to come in front and take part in the presentation.

After the first session and its subsequent presentations by each one of the groups, the second session will start. The three topics will be the same, but the group divisions different. The participants will be divided into new groups. Those that started by discussing “Perception of young people” will continue with group works on either “Participation of young people” or “Participation and inclusion – in what?”. This second session will be able to build further on the results and presentations of session 1. Thus, the groups will have at their disposal the flip-charts from session 1. Session 2 will be presented in the same way as session 1; i.e. each group presenting the results by the use of a flip-chart.

The third session will be carried through in the same way as the first two, this time again with new group divisions. The third session is expected to be a blooming of conclusions, given the opportunity to build on the previous sessions. Moreover, as all the participants have taking part in discussions about the other topics, that will be possible to refer to in the third session. Thus, the third session will be expected to generate some kind of holistic perspectives on the basis of each one of the three topics. After the third session, comments and feedback will be given by an External Expert.

It’s important with representative groups and therefore, the group divisions will be made in advance. The change of group compositions will stimulate different group dynamics, but also give everybody the opportunity to meet each other and discuss, at least once. The discussions should be based on the experiences from the work of the networkgroups and the knowledge about their achievements, in the first place, and not from the point of view of indi-

vidual cities. All the presentations (in total nine) will be recorded, which then will become the most important input to my further work with the final report of the seminar. For this reason, it's decisive that the group discussions stick to their topics:

1. **Perception of young people:** To what extent and in what ways has perception of young people been taken into consideration by the networkgroups? What kind of impact does the perception of young people have on the focuses, work and the results of the networkgroups? Would it be possible to agree about a joint perception of young people within the networkgroups? Could the session group agree about a perception of young people? In that case, what would be the content of such a perception of young people – how should it be defined? If it's not possible to agree, where are the dividing lines? What do the differences depend on?
2. **Participation of young people:** What could we learn from good examples at the level of individual practices? What could we learn about involving young people at the level of networkgroups? To what extent is participation context dependent? Is it possible to establish success criteria of participation at the general European level? In that case, which one? Do the networkgroups have examples of such participation?
3. **Participation and inclusion – in what?** To what extent have the networkgroups found it important to discuss changes and developments of societal institutions and processes in the cities? Have the networkgroups drawn any conclusions about the need of changing institutions and processes in order to make it possible for young people to participate and become included? At what levels do such changes have to be carried out? How do the cities (local authority and administration) have to change their roles, approaches and competencies in order to facilitate the participation and inclusion of young people? What kind of changes and developments at the European level would be desirable? What should be the message from URBACT to urban development policy?

Before the sessions start, the networkgroups will get the opportunity to comment on this background report. Perhaps I have forgotten or omitted important information. Perhaps there are misunderstandings in the report. For that reason, I would like to encourage the networks to criticise and make additions, if needed, and also agree, of course, if possible. At the start of the seminar each networkgroup will get at a maximum 10 minutes of feedback to the report, which have to include short presentations of its representatives

as well. Thus, this feedback from the networkgroup will only have to deal with the most important aspects that are urgent to know about and feed in to the group work at the seminar.