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## **SPATIAL PLANNING + REVITALISATION OF SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ZONES. SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS OR HOPE?**

The main questions formulated for the IRM Instytut Rozwoju Miast Kraków Seminar in May 2011 on 'Spatial Planning and Revitalisation of Socially Excluded Zones' were clustered around the 'social exclusion/social inclusion' issue and the value of revitalisation, especially discussing various tools and action.

The author of this article, invited to give a presentation at this seminar and to contribute to the discussion, thus refers here to lessons learnt from a whole range of projects, either in the context of European research and exchange or related to Austrian experience over many years.

The title – SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS OR HOPE? should make clear that there is not the 'one and only answer' with regard to the positive value of revitalisation. However, a 'common picture' can be distilled from a transversal view of the present findings. From a 'social inclusion' discussion, based on the EU project AURORA plus, via housing- and neighbourhood-related recommendations from activities within the EU URBACT programme (the projects SUITE, CoNet, HOPUS, the 'Prevention' Workshop) to the experience from the Vienna Urban Renewal Offices, stakeholders and experts from a whole range of European cities have defined similar challenges and are urgently appealing for concerted action in the revitalisation field.

Of course, opinions underlying policy and implementation as well as tools judged to be efficient and effective should and are being questioned and examined by research. Some assumptions, phenomena and tools of policy are currently under discussion – neighbourhood effects, social mix, gentrification and the role of the local economy and employment measures.

The essence of all these lessons shows a main point of access: a holistic view is essential in many respects (fields, issues, quality, actors/people involved, timing). 1+1+1=more than 3, thus THINK integrated from the outset. This paper concludes with a small bundle of recommendations for future sustainable success in revitalisation.

### **Contents:**

Introduction

1. AURORA plus. New Ways Out of Poverty.
2. Findings from the URBACT Programme:
  - 2.1 SUITE. The Housing Project.
  - 2.2 CoNet. Integrated Approaches in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods.  
– And the relation of SUITE and CoNet core tasks.
  - 2.3 Workshop 'Prevention is better...' at the URBACT Annual Conference Liège 2010.
  - 2.4 HOPUS. Good, Green, Safe and Affordable Housing.
3. Discussion in research.
4. A VIENNA experience – The Urban Renewal Offices.
5. Final remarks and outlook.

Some References.

## **Comments and lessons learnt, recommendations, cases from European projects and practice in revitalisation**

### **Introduction**

The revitalisation of quarters in bigger cities, especially disadvantaged areas, without driving out sitting tenants, has been an important issue for decades. Much experience has been gained from both success and failure but changing economic, demographic and lifestyle framework conditions mean that there is a continuing need to find appropriate, innovative and tailored concepts and measures.

Within the framework of long-term research on Regeneration of Polish Towns the IRM institute raised crucial basic questions and also asked researchers from other European Member States to contribute to the discussion.

The main questions formulated for the IRM Instytut Rozwoju Miast Kraków Seminar in May 2011 on 'Spatial Planning and Revitalisation of Socially Excluded Zones' were clustered around the 'social exclusion/social inclusion' issue and the value of revitalisation, especially discussing various tools and action.

The author of this article thus refers to lessons learnt from a whole range of projects, either in the context of European research and exchange or related to Austrian experience over many years. Her presentation at the seminar forms the basis of this paper.

The title – SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS OR HOPE? (Comments and lessons learnt, recommendations, cases from European projects and practice in revitalisation) should make clear that there is not the 'one and only answer' with regard to the positive value of revitalisation. Many basic conditions have to be taken into account, the transferability of good practice has to be carefully considered, and despite visible good experience, there is an ongoing discussion on the reliability of some assumptions and proofs of the usefulness of some tools.

Referring to the 'social inclusion' discussion, she will show some results from the EU funded project 'AURORA plus. New Ways out of Poverty', which was a dialogue about social inclusion and components of concern and action to advance, on an Austrian level, but also in the European context. Many questions related to urban revitalisation were raised in this project: the living situation of the disadvantaged, migrants and the homeless, the role of housing in combating poverty and social exclusion and the link to the European Social Inclusion policy.

Another European initiative – the EU programme URBACT on sustainable urban development – provides useful lessons and recommendations for the questions raised. As a Lead Expert of an URBACT II project on housing – SUITE The Housing Project – the author was directly and closely involved in the definition of the final results. She was also able to follow the URBACT II project 'CoNet. Exploring current approaches to strengthen social cohesion in neighbourhoods' and participate in the discussion. This article is an attempt to examine results from both projects and find consistency and correlations.

Furthermore, URBACT permanently takes the initiative to disseminate and promote URBACT outputs, to capitalise this value and to include as many European cities and other interested fields in the discourse as possible. One of these initiatives is the organisation

of 'Annual Conferences' with a broad attendance. Workshops at the last conference in 2010 included one on 'Living conditions in traditional inner-city workers' areas: Prevention'. The author, as the organiser and moderator of this workshop, presents the main results from this broad group discussion and gives a brief overview of the key findings.

'HOPUS' is another URBACT project, whose core issue closely refers to the questions raised at the IRM seminar. Especially their lessons on aspects of design and of quality of places can be inspiring for the Polish colleagues.

However, as already mentioned, the long-term usefulness of some measures is currently under discussion at European housing research level. This research mainly concentrates on the basic assumptions underlying urban policies, e.g. regarding neighbourhood effects, the effects of 'social mix', the 'gentrification' phenomenon and the role of the local economy. These issues will be briefly mentioned.

Despite doubts and open questions, there is positive long-term experience in urban renewal, which the author knows from her long-term involvement with the Vienna example of 'urban renewal offices' and quarter revitalisation. She reports on some lessons and recommendations from an ongoing process in a Vienna quarter and some key information about the Vienna service system.

In her final remarks and outlook she sketches her view of the most promising and urgent steps to be taken.

## **1. AURORA plus. New Ways Out of Poverty**

'Does spatial and urban planning influence counteracting social exclusion? If so, in what way?' was the basic question posed for discussion. Certainly, this also refers to the question: what is a sound definition of social exclusion and inclusion? A deeper discussion of this is beyond the bounds of this article, and the Polish colleagues have already carried out broad research on the latter question. However, as a first step into discussion, a look at the fields and issues covered in the European discourse on Social Inclusion already shows what currently defines this social inclusion policy.

The recent initiative AURORA plus<sup>1</sup> took these European principles as a starting point for discussing 'new ways out of poverty'. The chosen 'key fields' already set the framework and the results confirmed their importance for the main goal.

In an increasingly globalised world, EU Member States are confronted with similar, or even closely related challenges – in the fields of employment, demographic change, migration and education – to name just a few – as well as the widening gap between rich and poor.

There is consensus among Member States that European economic growth should be closely connected to a high level of social inclusion and that Member States should communicate and cooperate in realising this objective (see the Lisbon Agenda).

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<sup>1</sup> The mainly EU-funded (EU DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) and nationally co-funded initiative was a project on Austrian national level coordinated by Volkshilfe Oesterreich, an important social NGO, and SRZ urban+regional research, Vienna, Heidrun Feigelfeld; 2009-10. See also 'References'.

This takes into account the wider framework of welfare policy and research on social issues as well as urban and housing policy, which could and should play a key role in fighting poverty. The importance of urban development and housing as it relates to social, economic and environmental sustainability is increasingly acknowledged at EU policy – and funding – level and is currently under further discussion in the discourse on a future European Cohesion Policy (integrating ERDF and ESF funding).

Housing and urban issues (can) play a role in the fight against poverty and social exclusion but there is still much to be done to promote this goal – mainly at national and city levels.

The AURORA plus results, referring to its main fields: 'securing basic needs and 'active inclusion' in the labour market, housing and homelessness, women and poverty and migrants and poverty' contained among others the agreed postulation of more coordinated policy action: 'poverty policy is not possible without an appropriate housing policy'. As among stakeholders and specialists, the housing STOCK is seen as the essential field within the housing sector, the importance of revitalisation for social inclusion is obvious.

The recent '2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion' already provided a forum for promoting the strong role of urban issues and housing on EU to national levels.

After the still poor results in the social field after the Lisbon Agenda period, with the additional factor of Europe hit by crisis, 'Europe 2020 – a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' is currently opening new doors. It is setting the framework in which all policies will be developed and has defined long-term objectives: further action will have to be tested to see if it fits into the new European framework, also action in revitalisation.

New initiatives from 'Europe 2020' include a 'European Platform against Poverty', which promotes concrete and novel steps. The 'four pillars' of action (the Social OMC, Social Experimentation, Mainstreaming and a Stakeholder Forum) include the promotion of effective partnerships with the inclusion of all relevant groups (NGOs, social partners, people with experience of poverty, national and local institutions) and is a key objective. This transversal, horizontal concept, explicitly including people 'on the ground', such as neighbourhood residents, confirms the main principles of urban revitalisation action.

For the first time in EU social policies, Strategy 2020 sets quantitative goals (both on an overall EU level, and also the Member States declared national goals). 'Reducing the number of people in poverty' is the goal which is the most relevant in the context of the questions raised in this article. Housing-related indicators (affordability, quality of housing etc.) represent an important part of the enlarged EU poverty indicators. Thus it could be a great success to prove that housing-related measures, including revitalisation, contribute to achieving these goals.

To conclude, these comments also refer to the more detailed question raised for the IRM seminar, I quote: "Is revitalisation an effective tool for counteracting social exclusion in diverse contexts, as there are cohesive, concurrent actions in the form of capital investments (housing), social investments (education, welfare and culture) and the changes associated with co-operation of local actors (residents, public authorities, and private and public investors)?"

The last part of the question: if the context of ownership transformation also contributes to counteracting social exclusion, will be discussed in later parts of this paper (see 'the prevention workshop', chapter 2.3).

As a starter, pilot projects can also be financed in the urban revitalisation field within the Territorial Cohesion policy and funding (ERDF European Regional Development Fund) and with the Social and Employment funding strand ESF European Social Fund and grounded in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

## **2. Findings from the EU-URBACT Programme**

'URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development URBACT on 'sustainable urban development' – this is how the programme is defined. Further description notes that they enable 'cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes', 'help cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions' and 'enable cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe.'<sup>2</sup>

As the author is involved in URBACT activities in various roles, she sees that several networks and activities provide useful learning and recommendations for the questions raised at the Kraków seminar. Four sources should therefore be mentioned as a basis for conclusions on socially inclusive revitalisation – the projects SUITE, CoNet and HOPUS, and a workshop at the Liège Annual Conference 2010.

### **2.1. SUITE. The Housing Project. Social and Urban Inclusion through Housing**

'The SUITE project posed itself an ambitious question: how to integrate the three pillars of sustainability in the field of housing. ... Sustainable housing should be, at the same time, environmentally sound, economically viable and socially inclusive.'<sup>3</sup>

As the Lead Expert of this project and network<sup>4</sup>, the author was the main person responsible for the analysis of the outcomes of the exchange and of the Local Action Plans<sup>5</sup>. Thus, she has now identified various lessons and recommendations which are relevant for the IRM research questions.

The results referred to here are a bundle of lessons, a 'short cut' key message, the eleven recommendations to cities and regions and further recommendations to the national and the EU levels, to future Cohesion Policy and to ERDF Funding.

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<sup>2</sup> Some more details: 'URBACT is 300 cities, 29 countries and 5,000 active participants. It is jointly financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund) and the Member States and is part of Europe's cohesion policy: its goal is to help implement the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy, which prioritises competitiveness, growth and employment.' Polish cities are participating in several projects.

<sup>3</sup> Quote from the project report, see References. Many of the following text is close to or directly from the report. The author of this article is a co-author of the report.

<sup>4</sup> The Role of an URBACT Lead Expert is to provide expertise directly to the project as well as in the context of capitalisation activities at Programme level. She was assisted by a Thematic Expert, Darinka Czischke, Brussels in various fields.

<sup>5</sup> The network joined 9 cities in 7 European Member States, including the City of Kraków. Lead Partner: Santiago de Compostela City Council. As part of the project activities each partner had to develop a Local Action Plan, in cooperation with a Local Support Group.

The essential message, which, of course, is based on the key question (see above), is to 'Integrate the 3 pillars – 1+1+1=more than 3'. This should express that the target has to be integrated into each plan and project to be environmentally sound, economically viable and socially inclusive and that this would create an added value. Local Action Plans had shown that this can be realised in the one or other way, and that the effort is worthwhile.

There is a strong reference to the urban dimension and to revitalisation within the main lessons learnt and recommendations to cities and regions, for example:

- Integrating policy and actions across territorial scales,
- Housing should be embedded in holistic urban planning, and
- New planning cultures: multi-dimensional, cross-sector thinking!

'Project partners emphasised that sustainable housing cannot be seen in isolation from its wider territorial and administrative context. Sustainability is about networks, grids, and interdependencies between all these territorial/administrative levels. These interdependencies stretch across the three dimensions, economic, environmental and social.

Consideration of infrastructure and service provision at urban and regional levels needs to be embedded in order to be sustainable at local level (housing project, neighbourhood). Socially sustainable communities require social infrastructure such as schools, health centres and social care services that are accessible not only by car but also by public transport. Location of housing needs to be connected to current and potential job sources for residents. Road networks, public transport systems, waste collection provision – all these and more elements of urban and territorial planning require holistic planning.<sup>6</sup>

Some more:

- Work closely with Local Support Groups and develop Local Action Plans.
- Consider maintenance of physical stock as greatly contributing to sustainability in some cases.
- Integrate 'soft measures' (services, empowerment) in physically driven projects.
- Time – give priority to the longer-term (but include visible short-term action – builds trust and acceptance).

As can be seen the majority of the lessons integrate components of good governance (also regarding time, evidence, mix and transfer).

There are some new strands for funding for housing-related measures within the current ERDF European Regional Development Fund (revitalisation, energy efficiency in refurbishment, disadvantaged groups). These cannot be explained in more detail in this article<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, recommendations from SUITE also refer to this issue. They are addressed to the national and EU levels, to future Cohesion Policy and to ERDF Funding. Some of them directly support further revitalisation activities:

- National level: promote and support the integration of housing-related projects into your Operational Programmes ERDF, secure national co-funding.

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<sup>6</sup> Citation SUITE Local Action Plans Report, see References.

<sup>7</sup> For more details see the mentioned SUITE report, chapter 'Local Action Plans SUITE – an Overview by the Lead Expert'. See References for download.

- EU level: maintain funding for housing-related measures in the next funding period, link with ESF – develop a sound common framework (currently split up).

For more information on cases of good practice in revitalisation documented by the SUITE network see: Malakoff Regeneration Nantes, France; Riverside Deen Regeneration, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; Weltstadt Hamburg Wilhelmsburg, Germany or Operation Kennedy Rennes, France<sup>8</sup>.

## **2.2. URBACT II CoNet Integrated Approaches in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods – and the relation of SUITE and CoNet core tasks**

Another URBACT project is still more closely connected to the main issue of the IRM seminar: CoNet. Exploring current approaches to strengthen social cohesion in neighbourhoods. The Lead Partner is the City of Berlin and the network consists of 11 partners (including the Polish city Zabrze)<sup>9</sup>.

The network agreed on seven core tasks (see below) which are underpinned with comprehensive comments and cases of good practice in the project's final report 'ConNet's Guide to Social Cohesion. Integrated Approaches in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods'.

- '1. Improve inclusion in all important fields of life! Proceed as comprehensively as possible!
2. Include and motivate everybody able to contribute and give citizens an active role, especially also young people!
3. Strengthen inhabitants' local networks and their feeling of 'being at home' in the neighbourhood!
4. Open up and adapt amenities and services to the inhabitants' needs, so that disadvantaged people also find access!
5. Youth and children first — draw on their potential and strengthen inter-generational understanding!
6. Reduce segregation — develop the inhabitants' quality of life and make efforts to overcome prejudices!
7. Improve the neighbourhood's connections to the whole city and boost the city's solidarity with the neighbourhood!<sup>10</sup>.

### *Grouping the core tasks / CoNet relation to SUITE*

As it is one of the main intentions of this article to analyse whether there is a 'mainstream' of current policy recommendations regarding revitalisation in Europe or if there are contradictory tendencies, a comparison of the SUITE and the CoNet findings, developed independently without close exchange between the projects, should provide insight.

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<sup>8</sup> Presentations and papers on these cases as well as the three Thematic Reports which refer to these cases can be found in the 'our outputs' section of the URBACT SUITE website. Most of these cases are also quoted in the URBACT Tribune Article by Heidrun Feigelfeld 'A New Social Deal for Stable Living'. all: see References.

<sup>9</sup> See References regarding CoNet activities and outputs. The author was involved in the Final Conference as a panel and workshop moderator. Thanks to the CoNet Lead Partner for kindly agreeing to the integration of CoNet findings into this article.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from the CoNet report 'ConNet's Guide to Social Cohesion. Integrated Approaches in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods', 2011.

### CoNet Integrated Approaches in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods

*Main aims* – Promotes inclusion, acts against segregation, integrates the broader urban context

*Targeting* – The young (inter-generational)

*Provision* – Accessible services

*Tools, instruments* – Participation, local networks

### SUITE The Housing Project

*Main aims* – Promotes integrated sustainability (with social inclusion/mix), promotes the broader urban context

*Targeting* – Low income, people living in the housing stock

*Provision* – Soft measures, services

*Tools, instruments* – Bundle of 'good governance' tools including participation (Local Action Plans, Local Support Groups, cross-sector planning, integrated urban policies)

This comparison clearly shows that there is a basic consensus, that the lessons and recommendations concentrate on very similar issues and that housing and neighbourhood activities are broadly interconnected (it also gives a broad picture of European tendencies: both projects together include the experience of planners and practitioners from 20 cities or unitary authorities).

### **2.3. URBACT Programme Annual Conference 2010**

#### ***Workshop 'Living conditions in traditional inner-city workers' areas' Prevention is better than the Urban Regeneration Cure'***

The conference, which was attended by hundreds of stakeholders, experts and practitioners from all over Europe, organised workshops to promote exchange and to profit from the input of this interested community.

One of these workshops, which were fed by experience from URBACT project partners and experts, plus from external experts, posed the question of the role of prevention of degradation in cities.

This workshop was based on the challenges and experiences associated with maintaining quality living conditions in traditional inner city (19<sup>th</sup> century) working-class neighbourhoods.

'The main issue considered was: how can cities adopt a proactive stance when faced with the opposing challenges of degradation and gentrification? What options are open to policy makers and practitioners to ensure that degeneration does not occur in the first place – rather than waiting to initiate regeneration programmes once problems in such characteristic and valuable areas of the city have become firmly established.' (Quote from the workshop report.<sup>11</sup>)

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<sup>11</sup> The workshop report was predominantly formulated by the workshop rapporteur Darinka Czischke, Thematic Expert of the SUITE (Housing) Project. See References for a download from the URBACT website. The following information is also based on this report and on the personal contribution of the author of this paper. Heidrun Feigelfeld prepared and moderated the workshop.



The key questions formulated for the workshop:

- How can cities move from a curative approach towards a preventive one?
- Which aspects should be primarily considered to prevent the need for regeneration?
- How can regeneration experiences be useful in the design of preventive policies?
- In the case of a curative approach what are the links/hooks/learned lessons for subsequent preventive interventions?
- Should gentrification be seen as an opportunity or a threat?

There was a main conclusion based on presentations and discussion:

Regeneration versus prevention policies at neighbourhood level:

both approaches have something to contribute to improving neighbourhoods in distress and should be complemented.

Four key issues crystallised at the workshop:

1. The role of data and indicators
2. Limitations of area-based approaches
3. Dilemmas of gentrification
4. Physical and social aspects of regeneration.

The discussion of those key issues closed with a collection of findings and recommendations (brief summary of the report)<sup>12</sup>:

*1. On the role of data and indicators –*

Evidence is crucial for better policy making.

Data on the area and its residents provides potentially effective tools to prevent social and physical decay.

Challenges: availability of data, small scale level. Missing link to higher levels (up to regional level).

Propositions: innovative data collection (e.g. neighbourhood antennas).

*2. On the limitations of area-based approaches –*

Relative effectiveness of spatial approaches to solve social problems called into question.

Risk of phenomena such as 'moving vulnerable households around' ('water bed' effect).

Proposition: Re-evaluate the collected information at city-level to provide a broader view.

*3. On dilemmas of gentrification –*

Inextricably linked to regeneration processes. Discussion of pros and cons.

For instance: displacing low-income residents /versus/ cash for homes and move.

Free choice is crucial against glass ceilings in mobility.

The need for protection of existing neighbourhoods depends on the nature of the local situation ('real communities' or more hybrid forms).

The role of local housing markets – proportions of public/private rental housing – is relevant.

*4. On physical and social aspects of regeneration –*

Consider pros and cons of both types of improvement.

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<sup>12</sup> Cases presented in the workshop: Belfast, Northern Ireland, set of indicators for the evaluation of implemented regeneration; set of check lists for the assessment of proposals. Health gain criteria. URBACT BHC; Berlin, Germany. Soziale Stadt/Socially Integrative City Programme. 'Neighbourhood Management Scheme. Monitoring.' URBACT CoNet; Platformkanal Brussels.

Regeneration policies benefit the state and value of the PLACE, thereby improving quality of life for all.

For SOCIAL cohesion, support residents with special needs, encourage local bottom-up citizen-led initiatives, but also platforms linking various neighbourhoods

#### *Grouping the core tasks / 'Prevention'*

To proceed in the analysis of current main ideas, comments and recommendations regarding revitalisation, the authors also distilled the key words from the Liège Workshop results.

PREVENTION workshop Liège

*Main aims* – Promotes inclusion, takes into account the dilemma of gentrification, sees the broader urban context

*Targeting* – Low income / those with special needs; all (level: places)

*Provision* – Physical AND social action

*Tools, instruments* – Data and indicators, local networks, initiatives

Again, an open debate among interested stakeholders, city representatives and experts on the basis of about four URBACT projects' findings (around three dozen cities) provided results which are integrating well into the framework of suggestions discussed before. The picture is becoming more and more complete and it also does not fail to mention challenges, controversial issues and ambiguities and represents a useful knowledge transfer.

For both prevention and regeneration, especially broad access in terms of fields – integrating social services, and environmental aspects – and in terms of groups involved – empowering the local communities has proved crucial.

## **2.4. URBACT II HOPUS. Good, Green, Safe and Affordable Housing**

The last URBACT II project to mention, which provides interesting conclusions and recommendations on housing, urban development / revitalisation and public space, is HOPUS, a working group with the Rome Sapienza University as Lead Partner<sup>13</sup>.

The final report contains a broad variety of articles. In view of this abundance and the limitations of this article for the IRM publication I will confine my remarks to a few pointers which may arouse interest to investigate the themes in more detail.

The main issue of the project is 'Design and sustainability in housing and its regulation through public sector guidance and control'. This framework covers a broad range of topics from architecture, urban planning and environmental or technical dimensions to design. Under this umbrella the project developed a comprehensive system for DESIGN CODING for an urban project development process, integrating coding teams (representing land interests, design interests, development interests and public interests). Seven fundamentals for coding resulted from a pilot project which cannot be discussed here but, as earlier sources in this article showed, they also include the 'multi-disciplinary approach' and 'partnerships of interest'.

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<sup>13</sup> HOPUS Housing Praxis for Urban Sustainability. See References.

Furthermore, the project also formulated 'URBAN DESIGN: Nine simple rules' (concrete 'rules' concerning streets, buildings, street level, setbacks, landscapes etc.) which can also be used for revitalisation issues.

To conclude, we have seen that within the URBACT Programme on Sustainable Urban Development, a whole range of cities in Europe – up to 30 – chose focuses for several projects which directly refer to the main questions of urban regeneration. From different starting points (projects' focus, national and local conditions of the cities and work programmes) they arrived at lessons learnt, solutions and recommendations, which are congruent and provide a sound common picture. These can certainly be used as a point of orientation for future revitalisation policy. These cities are currently testing their ambitions in the Local Action Plan, which is part of each city's participation in an URBACT project.

### 3. Research discussion

Of course, opinions underlying policy and implementation as well as tools judged to be efficient and effective should and are being questioned and examined by research. Currently, some 'mantras' of policy are under discussion, such as the existence of 'neighbourhood effects' and the effectiveness of 'social mix'. Furthermore, there is an ongoing controversy on the effects of 'gentrification' for inner-city neighbourhoods. And there is still a lack of experience and research on whether sustainable integration of economic interests, SME, employment and neighbourhood revitalisation can be achieved. These discourses can only be briefly touched upon here but should in no case be neglected.

#### + *Are there 'neighbourhood effects'?*

'There is a strong belief that living in deprived neighbourhoods has a negative effect over and above the effect of individual characteristics on residents' health, labour market outcomes, and social values; so-called neighbourhood effects. This belief has a major impact on urban, neighbourhood and housing policies designed to tackle poverty and to improve the lives of residents in deprived neighbourhoods.'

'Despite the current consensus that neighbourhood effects exist, there is a small but growing amount of critical literature offering an alternative view. The critical literature identifies that there is surprisingly little convincing evidence. ... To further our understanding of neighbourhood effects it is necessary to take a dynamic view of neighbourhoods, focusing on a neighbourhood as a transitory area in constant flux as an alternative to a neighbourhood as a static object.'

These are quotes from a website on these effects<sup>14</sup>. This discussion is currently being carried forward in a working group within the ENHR European Network for Housing Research. It was initiated by a group of researchers around Ian McLennan from the University of St Andrews, who also provide feedback on the website mentioned above.

We should therefore pay careful attention to this discourse to avoid superficial assumptions and traps leading to ineffective plans and implementation.

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<sup>14</sup> Weblink for 'neighbourhood effects' [www.neighbourhoodeffects.org](http://www.neighbourhoodeffects.org), Seminar Series background paper. Centre for housing research CHR St Andrews, see also References.

+ *Can positive effects of social mix be proven? Is it the 'one and only' concept?*

Again with regard to this question, there is an ongoing research discussion on whether evidence of a significant positive impact can be found. While 'neighbourhood effects' is a hypothesis on a challenge which reinforces downward spirals in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, 'social mix' is commonly understood as a remedy, a tool for creating balanced, stable and peaceful neighbourhoods in well-maintained housing.

In any case the interrelations are generally rather complex and we have learned that applying social mix policies depends on a case-by-case assessment of whether it is necessary and feasible.

Furthermore, the component of 'time' is crucial, and more elaborated concepts on a 'life cycle approach' – taking into account changes in the life cycle of the residents' structure – must form the basis of a social mix policy. Other useful tools to implement social mix include planning and land use policies, compulsory purchase, minimum targets of social housing, etc.<sup>15</sup>.

+ *Positive / negative gentrification?*

As referred to in the Liège workshop lessons, gentrification can appear in very different guises. The decisive point in evaluating whether a gentrification process ends positively or negatively is certainly the change in the local residents' structure, the question of whether long-time residents are driven out and if so, whether this occurs without improving their circumstances. A direct relationship is thereby shown to the social mix concept very briefly mentioned above. The subject has only been touched upon to refer to the relevant literature since the current discussion cannot be adequately described in this brevity.

+ *Economy, employment and neighbourhood – 'sine qua non' or illusion?*

In most cases, revitalisation processes are only loosely connected with concepts which include the local economy and employment and basic problems and needs of the – often disadvantaged – local population are not addressed. Even if not neglected in the analyses of the situation, the lack of a sound basis for cooperation with the local economy and the employment field, and the lack of networks leads to a gap in coordinated action.

Education, training and services for first access to the labour market is a closely connected field of even greater importance taking into account high unemployment rates of young people and the problems of school leavers. Also in this field, only rare good practice can be found.

Nevertheless, there is the hope among policy makers and experts that revitalisation of quarters can provide sustainable success without including the mentioned fields. This is probably a great illusion. Although good progress has already been made in more coordinated action with the social field, this will not suffice to comply with the requirements. Solutions concentrating on the housing and social situation of people cannot provide sustainable solutions for the individual if they fail to include the employment situation.

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<sup>15</sup> A short report by Darinka Czischke on the discussion of 'social mix' can also be found in the SUITE network on the project's URBACT website, see References. 'Social mix' was the main topic of a SUITE Thematic Workshop, 2009. For more literature on 'social mix' and on 'gentrification' see 'References'.

Thus, there is a need for support for and promotion of the local economy (in disadvantaged areas this often refers to ethnic economy), creation of jobs for local people/residents in the area (permanent jobs or at least jobs / training in construction work), services for ways back into employment and education and training for the young. The author discussed these questions and practice in an URBACT article<sup>16</sup>.

However, as job markets are – if not global or national – at least city-wide, 'job mobility' is a 'mantra' and jobs nowadays often quite specialised, this can also be an illusion and a backward looking point of view. There is still a great need for pilot projects, evaluation and research in this field.

#### **4. The Vienna example – Urban Renewal Offices**

While questioning and research is legitimate it can also be seen that the arduous efforts over long years of practical implementation including the widest range of learning processes have strengthened the trust in the effectiveness of certain approaches and that municipalities therefore process in these directions in cooperation with external actors.

In conclusion some experience from Vienna should be mentioned. This is a field with which the author is particularly familiar as she has worked in and for Vienna for many years in the field of independent practice-orientated research.

This experience is illustrated on the basis of a report on a revitalisation process in the 16<sup>th</sup> district of Vienna, and with a short description of the successful model 'Vienna Urban Renewal Offices'.

##### **4.1. Good Practice in Vienna – An upgrading process in the Brunnenviertel**

The description is based on the paper 'Rising prosperity in a 19<sup>th</sup> century inner-city disadvantaged quarter – Brunnenviertel Vienna Ottakring district – Urban Development versus Prosperity', an interview with a key person involved and personal experience<sup>17</sup>.

The analysis of the upgrading process in this inner-city district with a high percentage of low-income residents and/or migrants together with mostly privately owned, old, low-standard housing stock led to twelve conclusions which are seen as the main 'factors for success'.

*Twelve conclusions from an upgrading process – factors for success:*

'Seen from today it is hardly possible to provide a simple explanation of causal correlations regarding the phenomenon 'revaluation of the Brunnenviertel'. The 'philosopher's stone' has not yet been found. And this is al-right. The starting point should probably be the hypothesis of a multi-faceted structure of impact, whose parts have different importance at different times.' (Translation of a quote from the paper.<sup>18</sup>)

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<sup>16</sup> Feigelfeld, H.: Lost job – lost home / lost home – lost job. Can secured housing help cities to mitigate effects of the crisis for their citizens? URBACT Tribune 2009. See References.

<sup>17</sup> Article 'Urban development versus Lifestyle' for the EU project Real Corp, 2010 (in German). See References. Interview with Kurt Smetana, head of the Urban Renewal Office of the 16<sup>th</sup> district in May 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. The following 12 conclusions from the paper have been abbreviated by H. Feigelfeld.

In abbreviated form these factors can be listed as follows:

1. Factors of urban morphology have an impact (strong local identity of the urban fabric, heritage)
2. Spatial resources (interconnected free space, flexible areas, former industrial buildings, empty street-level zones...)
3. 'Social density' and 'social space' (highly mixed population as a basis for discourse on 'social space')
4. Existing potential and partners (multi-cultural market as a meeting point, improvisation, local creative enterprises, integrative arts (e.g. SOHO IN OTTAKRING))
5. Existing network that is subsequently consolidated: business people, interest groups, chambers, local players
6. Top-down and bottom-up (tenants representation to processes of citizens' participation)
7. Clear political positioning (public funding following citizens' participation, empowerment)
8. Clearly structured agenda: regular steering group meetings including all relevant actors etc., invest a lot of time
9. Strong commitment of all actors involved
10. Comprehensive and integrated action among 16 municipal services and other group representatives
11. Reduction of the speed of implementation and parallel implementation of the planned measures (enabling a PPP model, 1:5 public/private investment)
12. Good luck.

Thus, this analysis of a successful revitalisation process, starting from the potential of the area, proves the value of the criteria for success which the author has distilled from the other projects' findings (see chapters above).

A dominant role of adequate tools and instruments, with a strong focus on various models of transversal cooperation among various actors, participation of those affected and a recognition of the importance of targeted timing can be identified as a case of obviously 'good governance'.

#### **4.2. Vienna Urban Renewal Offices – a municipal service**

The basis of these successful activities are the so-called "Gebietsbetreuungen" – "GB" for short, the 'Vienna Urban Renewal Offices'<sup>19</sup>. They offer information and advice in matters regarding housing, the neighbourhood, infrastructure, urban renewal, the local community and living together in the city.

GB offices and projects are managed by private contractors on behalf of Municipal Department 25 – Urban Renewal and Assessment in Matters of Housing Construction and Promotion (MA 25). The services were developed starting in the 1970s and have thus now been running for more than 35 years. Over the years the scope of action and the fields addressed have dramatically developed towards an integrated service. At the moment there are 12 such offices for almost all parts of the 'densely built urban area' (17 districts) and also

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<sup>19</sup> The City of Vienna provides a folder in English on a website, plus a whole range of information in German. See References.

a mobile urban renewal office (contact point for people from different districts which addresses questions related to housing and refurbishment). They act in close cooperation with the district authority. Their activities also include evaluations, publications and dissemination. In one district a special model of 'quarter management' is being tested.

Twelve years ago provision for the Vienna population was extended to 'Local Urban Offices for Municipal Housing' in all districts, as the City of Vienna manages almost the biggest local stock of municipal housing in Europe (more than 200,000 flats).

This permanent service for the majority of the Vienna urban area might be costly for the municipality but on the other hand the benefits for positive urban development, the effects on social inclusion and the impetus for private investment are obviously so great that the bottom line is that it is seen very positively, sufficient funds continue to be provided and the service is not questioned on any side of the political spectrum.

## 5. Final remarks and outlook

Starting from the questions raised by IRM and in view of the different experience and materials recently collected on the issues, this article has on the one hand attempted a broad sweep over the lessons learned and the collation of all these strands into something like a 'common picture' on the other. Inevitably this remains sketchy and incomplete.

This is an attempt to describe an essence of these processes in simple words. Starting from the question 'How to 'organise' (start, run and stabilise) local (revitalisation) projects?' one point of access seems to be clear.

A holistic view is essential, in many respects –

In terms of fields, issues

In terms of quality

In terms of actors/people involved and

In terms of timing.

Some recommendations can be distilled which could be crucial for future sustainable success in revitalisation:

- Secure strong local political support + sustainable funding.
- THINK integrated from the outset (1+1+1=more than 3).
- Create 'robust' places.
- Pay attention to a well-considered 'time' strategy.
- See revitalisation as a permanent learning process, keep it open and flexible.
- Include 'further prevention'.
- Profit from your possible 'later start' compared to other EU Member States and cities – make use of transfer of experience.

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## Chapter 2:

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