PROMISE: Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement: Opportunities and challenges for conflicted young people across Europe.

WP6: From Conflict to Innovation: Ethnographic Case Studies

Cluster Analysis:
Cluster 1: Education/justice/society

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Executive summary:

In this report the results of the meta-ethnography of Cluster 1 'Education/justice/society' are summarised. It covers data from four ethnographic case studies in four different countries: Estonia, Great Britain, Portugal, and Spain. All case studies were conducted with groups of participants who, in general, presented long paths of conflict with major normative social institutions like the family, school, employment or the law, frequently leading to stigmatization, academic failure and/or school dropout, difficulties in finding a job, or to delinquent and criminal behaviour.

The cluster analysis responded to three research questions and originated sixteen main concepts. It was possible to understand that young people tend to respond to their conflicts whether by i) remaining in conflict; ii) actively searching for support and opportunities; and iii) navigating the conflicts. Regarding to what inhibits or enables youth involvement, five main issues were identified: i) generalised negative social representations of youth; ii) amplifiers of young people's discrimination; iii) conflict generates conflict; iv) opportunities generates opportunities; and v) the power of significant relationships. Finally, concerning how do interventions with young people enhance or inhibit youth social involvement, eight main concepts emerged: i) inhibited by the label; ii) apathy and withdrawal from interventions: latent rejection; iii) when stigma can become enabling: rejecting the label- the case of the young person who fought back; iv) skill development and practical support; v) creating a safe space; vi) modelling supportive relationships and recasting authority; vii) building confidence and emotional resilience; and viii) promoting generativity: giving back.

This report should be read in conjunction with the relevant 'General Introduction' document.

Contents

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1 Introduction

This report presents the key findings of the cluster 'Education/justice/society' which includes four of the case studies conducted for PROMISE: young ex-offenders and recidivism (Estonia); risky youth and criminalised identities (Great Britain); no NEETs (Spain); and young people with paths of psychosocial risk and deviant behaviour (Portugal). The research under this cluster analysis focused particularly on young people who presented long paths of conflict with major normative social institutions like the family, school, employment, or the law, frequently leading to difficulties in being socially adapted, to academic failure and school dropout, to difficulties in finding a job, or to delinquent behaviour.

Young people became an object of study after the Second World War, when consumer society consolidated youth as a market niche to target policies and marketing campaigns. Since then, States have designed specific policies for young people, but these are often peripheral and do not have a real impact on the main problems affecting young people (education, labour market and housing) (Sánchez and Hakim, 2014). Nowadays, youngsters face several difficulties that limit their short- and long-term expectations and aspirations. Serracant (2012) identified different structural forces such as globalisation, the economic crisis and labour market flexibility as causes of this situation and highlights how this precariousness has a strong effect on youth transitions into adulthood, particularly when they belong to socially and economically vulnerable groups. In this case, especially when young people live in 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, they tend to be labelled by the authorities, and through public and media discourses, as 'troubled youth' 'at risk' of offending. This construction is driven by frequent reporting in the populist press about "out-of-control" or "antisocial" young people (Goldson and Muncie, 2015) and is often tied to concerns about a small hard-core of 'chaotic', 'dysfunctional' or 'problem' families (Crossley, 2015) and 'blaming' discourses of disengagement (Fergusson, 2016).

Since youth is globally seen as a problematic group, it is important to address stigmatisation issues. According to Tyler (2013), stigma is widely accepted to be a main factor in determining life chances. Tyler's (2013) analysis of social abjection as a discourse that is used to justify punishing the poor through neoliberal mechanisms such as the dissolution of welfare structures, is of particular relevance to young people. In Europe, services for young people are being replaced by control measures, and this replacement is explained through government and public discourses of young people that set them up as out of control young people from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds who require punishment and control. Further examples of social abjection can be seen in the demonization of specific groups of young people, for example the teenage mother (Kidger, 2005) or the young person in care (Taylor and Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Youth 'risky' label has, disproportionately, made them the target of increasingly punitive and controlling policies and practices, from policing to school discipline, and resulted in a variety of responses from young people including various forms of resistance. Thus, in the cluster analysis of these four case studies, three main questions were addressed:

Q 1. How do young people respond to conflicts they experience and with what outcomes?

Q 2. What enables and what inhibits the social involvement of young people?

Q 3. How do interventions with young people (from voluntary organisations and statutory agencies) enhance or inhibit youth social involvement?

2 Scope of the data synthesised

Table 1 provides an overview of the scope of the data synthesised by each of the four case studies: young ex-offenders and recidivism (Estonia); risky youth and criminalised identities (Great Britain); no NEETs (Spain); and young people with paths of psychosocial risk and deviant behaviour (Portugal). The number of interviews ranged from 21 to 26, corresponding to individual interviews, with exception to the case of Estonia where one interview was made to a group of 3 participants (24 interviews to 26 participants). In all case studies, there were male and female participants, with girls in a minor number ranging from 3 to 10 females. The age of participants was similar in the four case studies and ranged from 13 to 32 years old.

In the four case studies, data were collected using a semi structured interview protocol, designed to all participants, but with specific adaptations according with the participants' characteristics and contexts. Anonymisation guidelines were followed ensuring all names used were pseudonyms and any other identifying material was removed. Interviews were coded resulting in level 2 nodes (ranging from 13 to 29) and level 1 nodes (ranging from 60 to 237). Moreover, most participants attended a photo elicitation activity, receiving some training in photography techniques and then taking photos related to 'being young'. Finally, with exception to Estonia, participant observation was also a used strategy to getting involved with the participants and collecting data.

2.2 Introduction to the contexts of field work

2.2.1 Estonia

In the Estonian case study, the youngsters were not a group and didn't belong to any organization. Indeed, the main challenge for the research was to study young offenders as a group, as they did not form any coherent group. Therefore, the research team decided to recruit young ex-offenders via probation and organised them as a group in order to collect data.

To motivate potential participants, the Probation services and Prisons Department of the Ministry of Justice agreed to count the participation in an Art Course as a social programme, if the court assigned this obligation to the young person. Fifteen youngsters expressed their interest in the course and the probation officers provided their names. Only six persons appeared at the first session and five of them attended the course more or less regularly. All the other participants were recruited independently of the Art Course.

2.2.2 Great Britain

Contact with the young respondents was made primarily through links with 4 youth clubs and support groups run by third sector organisations already known to the researchers. An additional group run by a third sector organisation providing creative activities as part of the statutory youth justice provision was also accessed. A brief description of the research sites is provided below:

Youth club 1: is a voluntary sector youth club for young women, organised by a local voluntary youth organisation and running one evening per week. It is held in a large community-led space with break-out rooms and a dance studio. Between 5 and 10 young women attend. Activities range from art, multi-media and physical activities to talks about personal, financial social and health matters. Music and dance are particularly popular activities.

Youth club 2: is run by the same voluntary organisation that runs Organisation 1 and provides a similar service for boys and young men in the same area for one evening per week. It is held in a large community-led space with a separate basketball court. Between 10 and 20 boys and young men attend. The main activities are basketball and computer games.

Youth club 3: is a partner organisation to youth club 1 and 2 providing a service for young men and young women in a different area one evening per week. It is attended by 5 to 15 young people. The club is held in a very small room that limits the types of activities it can support. There are no organised activities (other than using the art materials provided). The young people talk and play on their phones.

Support group: is a voluntary sector support group set up for young people, aged 16 and over, who have left the statutory care system for 'looked-after children'. This group runs one evening per week and is attended by between 15 and 20 young people. Activities range from talks about personal, financial social and health matters to art projects and physical activities. The young people are provided with a meal cooked on site by the voluntary sector staff.

Mandatory art course: was commissioned by the statutory Youth Justice agency (YOT) and provided by a local art-based outreach group with experience in delivering creative courses to the penal sector. The course ran every day for 3 weeks over the summer of 2017 and the young people were mandated to attend all sessions as part of their court order. Activities involved drama, drawing, multi-media, photography and music workshops delivered by a team of 5 arts-based practitioners.

2.2.3 Spain

Contact with the young respondents was made primarily through links with 4 organisations, all of them based in Barcelona. A brief description of the research sites is provided below:

Organisation 1: Its purpose is to enable people without work permits to take a course to become waiters or cooks. The organisation also allows them to do an internship where some of them end up being employed. Access to the organisation, and to five young people involved in it, was gained through a member of the NPPN.

Organisation 2: Its purpose is to help young people in a vulnerable situation. They have different programmes, but the focus was on the youth centre and the supported housing for young people. Nine interviews were made to young people involved in this organisation (seven from the youth centre and two from the supported housing for young people). The access to the organisation was achieved through a researcher.

Organisation 3: This is a consolidated self-managed youth club where young people decide on the youth workers they employ, the activities they do for the young people, and the activities they do to engage with the neighbourhood. Access to the organisation was obtained by searching online for self-managed youth clubs in Barcelona and contacted them. Three young people associated with this organisation were interviewed.

Organisation 4: This is an emerging self-managed youth club. They are completing all the bureaucratic paperwork to consolidate themselves as a youth organisation with some help from the Council. had access to the organisation through a worker at the Youth Services department at the Barcelona Council who is working with self-managed youth organisations. Interviews were made to four young people from this organisation.

2.2.4 Portugal

Contact with the young respondents was made primarily through 2 contexts. Initially, collaboration was fostered with a Youth Justice Team of the Ministry of Justice. This team was asked to present the project to all young people serving non-custodial youth justice measures and invite them to voluntarily participate in individual interviews. From all youth that were invited to participate, only six accepted and when contacted by the research team, all of them agree to do the interview.

As an additional approach to accessing respondents with the expected profile, two different second chance education (SCE) projects in the north of Portugal (one with about 30 students and the other with about 50 students), were invited to collaborate with the PROMISE project. Both projects were private civil society initiatives (although working in close collaboration with the public education system, including being placed in public facilities and having teachers from public schools) which offered a lower secondary education qualification to young people who have had problematic and/or unsuccessful school paths and that have dropped out regular school or vocational training. Some of these students were enrolled in these projects as part of a wider youth protection or youth justice measure, but others had joined the projects voluntarily.

Table 1 – Overview of data by case study

Case study	Country	Conflict	Sample [number of participants (males)]	Data collection period	Data collection (no of memos)	Data collection (no of node memos)		Data collection strategies and settings
						Level 1 nodes	Level 2 nodes	
Ex-OFF	Estonia (EE)	Young ex-offenders and recidivism	24 (21)	December 2017 to January 2018	13	60	13	Semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation with young ex-offenders in probation.
CYI	Great Britain (GB)	Criminalised youth	21 (11)	April 2017 to April 2018	26	151	26	Participant observation, semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation with criminalised young people enrolled in youth clubs and support groups.
NoNEET	Spain (ES)	NoNEETS	21 (15)	June to December 2017	21	195	21	Participant observation, semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation with young people involved in organisations to support youth in vulnerable situations.
RISK	Portugal (PT)	Young people with risk and deviant paths	26 (17)	April to November 2017	29	237	29	Participant observation, semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation with young people enrolled in two second chance education projects and with youngsters serving non-custodial youth justice measures.

3 Key findings

The presentation of the key findings is organised into three main questions: Q 1. How do young people respond to conflicts they experience and with what outcomes; Q 2. What enables and what inhibits the social involvement of young people; and Q 3. How do interventions with young people (from voluntary organisations and statutory agencies) enhance or inhibit youth social involvement.

The following table summarises the key concepts that emerged from the cluster analysis for each question.

Table 2 – Key concepts per research question

Questions	Key concepts
Q1. How do young people respond to conflicts they experience and with what outcomes?	o Remaining in conflict o Actively searching for support and opportunities o Navigating the conflicts
Q2. What enables and what inhibits the social involvement of young people?	o Generalised negative social representations of youth o Amplifiers of young people's discrimination o Conflict generates conflict o Opportunities generates opportunities o The power of significant relationships
Q3. How do interventions with young people (from voluntary organisations and statutory agencies) enhance or inhibit youth social involvement?	o Inhibited by the label o Apathy and withdrawal from interventions: latent rejection o When stigma can become enabling: rejecting the label- the case of the young person who fought back o Skill development and practical support o Creating a safe space o Modelling supportive relationships and recasting authority o Building confidence and emotional resilience o Promoting generativity: giving back.

3.1 How do young people respond to conflicts they experience and with what outcomes?

In this question we address young people's responses to the conflicts they face and the outcomes of those responses.

The PROMISE project focuses on young people 'in conflict' with authority and, therefore, in conflict with social norms and older generations. It explores areas of conflict for young people and various mechanisms to control them. In PROMISE we also analyse young people's collective and individual responses to the conflicts they experience and, in so doing, explore various forms of collective and individual agency. In its broadest sense we conceptualise agency as young people's capacity to act in a way that would alter their (or other's) situation(s) within a wider context of obstacles and unequal structures that constrain/support it (Evans, 2007). By addressing agency, we are exploring young people's perspectives on how they have attempted to change – or to maintain – their situation, what they feel they are able to change, and, what they could or aspire to do differently in the future.

Out of the cluster analysis, three main concepts emerged regarding the ways young people respond to conflicts and regarding the outcomes of those responses: i) Remaining in conflict; ii) Actively searching for support and opportunities; and iii) Navigating the conflicts. The first concept refers to young people who respond to conflict by remaining in the same conflicts, whether that is criminal activity, unemployment, or school indiscipline and failure, where they seem to feel safe. The second concept relates to strategies used by young people to seek new opportunities or to get involved in the opportunities they encounter. Finally, the third concept refers to individual strategies used by young people to manipulate the context and the factors that they identify as the origin of their problems, in order to reduce the conflicts or avoid them. Altogether, the three concepts reveal an interesting perspective on young people's strategies to deal with their problems and on the possible outcomes of it, bringing relevant insights into the concept of agency in marginalised and often criminalised young people.

3.1.1 Remaining in conflict

Remaining in conflict was a response to stigmatisation or conflict found across all groups and it refers to young people remaining in the conflicts they experience. This type of response may assume different forms depending on the conflicts experienced by the respondents and on their social circumstances and contexts.

In the case of young migrants without work permit in Spain, this means engaging in illegal businesses, like street vending or selling drugs, to get money:

> I have a colleague, I get along very well with him, and the other day, he confessed to be an illegal street vendor. In his country he was a French teacher, a language teacher! And I say how could it be that he came here, and he is doing that? He has degrees, he can find a way! And he says, 'it is very hard when you arrive without permits, without knowing how things work. There are many people and I do not speak Spanish well,' he said… so what should he have done? When you are in this situation you just do what your friends do, because you need money to survive! Otherwise, what do you do? (Monica, NoNEETS, ES)

Other respondents from Spain say young people persist in drug use due to traumatic experiences in the past, to social isolation or to discrimination due to sexual orientation:

> Yes, like, 'what do you want? Let's do it!' You know? It's a bit like: I can do anything, you know? I see a lot of people hooked because of that. If I dig a bit in these people's lives, all of them have lots of family problems, identity problems… even people who dress normally and have a permanent job are people with lots of emotional deprivation from their families! [...] I believe that one of the main problems is that people do not love themselves enough and turn to this substance in order to escape from reality, and then younger people see them using it and behaving in a phony manner and then they want the same shit, you know? (Marc, NoNEETS, ES)

Among some Estonian young ex-offenders, returning to "the old" scenarios seem to be a safe way to go as well. In the face of a lack of economic opportunities in the country, the legal restrictions to geographical mobility, the economic sanctions imposed on ex-offenders, and a generalised stigmatisation, returning to criminality becomes a reasonable response towards a way of life "that works":

> Well... how much do you hear of people who are going to stay in Estonia or to get rich by working here? The more you get familiar with Estonian laws, entrepreneurship, taxes and everything. It even makes me nervous, how it is possible to be so mean that you try to charge taxes on everything and get more and more strict here in Estonia. Nobody wants to live here soon. And it's understandable that if you have to start doing your thing, the Estonian state will make it so difficult that I imagine that everybody would rather sell drugs if possible. That's why they are committing crime. In principle, they made it impossible to better yourself [legally]. (Raul, Ex-OFF, EE)

> They're making me pay fines, and then I'll become unemployed and I don't get this amount of money from anywhere. It may happen that you will be unemployed for a few years. But I have to pay fines, I am going to take a loan for this. Basically, a guy could go and rob a bag from an old lady to get his money and well, that's what makes a man more of a crook. (Indrek, Ex-OFF, EE)

Remaining in conflict by continuing deviant behaviour seems to be a strategy to stay safe, in one's comfort zone, which links to the literature on desistance from crime (McNeill et al, 2012). According to Nugent and Schinkel (2016), desisting from crime means overcoming a difficult three-step process (act, identity and relational desistance) and thus, for some young people, remaining in crime may be a way of avoiding the 'pains of desistance', which in turn may be seen as new forms of conflict.

For some participants from the British case study, the response to their conflicts with authorities is the persistence in anti-social behaviour and criminality, mostly gang related. Gang engagement is expressed as one of the few ways marginalised young people can respond to stigmatisation and to the lack of respect from authority figures, gaining the respect of others by being sufficiently tough. That could be demonstrated through verbal and visible cues, like speaking the right way (using particular words and phrases), wearing expensive clothes and trainers, and bragging about engaging in criminal activity. On the other hand, belonging to the gang reinforces the maintenance of deviant behaviour as young people feel they belong to a family where they can make emotional connections and share concerns, while desisting from crime means often feeling the 'pain of isolation' (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016).

Most respondents from the Portuguese case study point to school as the context where they experience most conflicts, such as school failure, indiscipline behaviour, drugs' use, and interpersonal violence between peers and with teachers. For many, these unsuccessful and/or conflicting episodes favour a progressive path of disengagement from school and education that, ultimately, lead to moments of rupture with regular school:

> 'I didn't want to go inside the school, I didn't like school' (Óscar, RISK, PT); 'I left school at 13, 14; it was a decision of mine' (Martim, RISK, PT); 'I wanted to do a vocational course and get out of regular school' (Elsa, RISK, PT); 'I went back to study in a course, I went through the same problems in school and I gave up again, I went back to work' (Lourenço, RISK, PT).

All the above examples support the concept of *Remaining in conflict* linking it with the contextual constraints faced by young people, but also revealing the individual processes that enact these responses in face of such constraints. According to young people across the four case studies of this cluster, remaining in conflict means persisting in what they already know, in their comfort zone and safety, even if that means continuing to engage in deviant or risky behaviours that increase their social vulnerability and marginalisation. However, data from all case studies also shows that this persistence is not only a free choice, but often a consequence of the lack of more positive alternatives and the lack of adequate support from others (see 3.2.3 – *Conflict generates conflict*).

3.1.2 Actively searching for support and opportunities

Remaining in conflict emerged as a significant response to problems and conflicts across the four case studies, despite some young people actively seeking support and new opportunities towards positive change. This often meant engaging in organisations where they can acquire new skills, perform tasks and find people with similar problems and thus who they identify with. The overall idea of the concept *Actively searching for support and opportunities* is that young people are active in responding to the problems or conflicts they face and are seeking for change in the course of their lives, either by coping with distress and/or by looking for, and engaging in opportunities for the future.

Respondents from all groups express the will to change something in their lives in order to reverse the stigmatisation they face, whether relying on hopes and dreams, which recalls Bryant and Ellard's (2015) argument of hope as a form of agency: 'And I search for things a lot, I have many dreams. She [his girlfriend] says I dream too high and then I'll disappoint myself. But I say that dreaming is my strength. That's what I tell her, for me, to dream is to try' (Francisco, RISK, PT); or through more or less well-defined intentions or initiatives, such as returning to or finishing school, finding a job, moving to another city or country, joining a youth organisation or a volunteering programme). This seems a way for young people to express the aspiration of having a 'normal' or conventional life that differs from their previous paths (Bryant and Ellard, 2015).

Despite their negative experiences in education, many participants, mostly from the Portuguese and the British case studies, attempted to carve out opportunities and compensate for low attainment by attending college or second chance schools, for example, focusing on their own positive aspects and strongest areas, and seeking specific skills training such as cooking or mechanic's courses. For some, having success in school against all social expectations becomes a source of pride and a way to please parents. Commitment to education because they wanted to, and not because they were told to, becomes a way to be in control of their own destiny, and also to tackle problems and avoid crime.

On the other hand, it may also be a way of rebuilding new prosocial identities and looking for the recognition of their change by others, in what Nugent and Schinkel (2016) call the identity and relational desistance that follows the act of desistance.

> And then I done my college, my first year, which was my maths and English. And then I went, and, my catering and I got a B Tech in my catering. And then I went on to my second year, doing my employability and everything. And obviously, I got the offer to do my mechanics on the side as well. So, I did that and I've passed, I've passed it and I've passed my maths and English and everything. (Aiden, CYI, GB)

> What motivated me was my conscience, my conscience. Maturity increased, did it not? It got to a point that I had to say, "I have to go back to school and improve myself." The social worker got me this [the SCE project] and I came. I grabbed it, to make people happy and that was it... (Edgar, RISK, PT)

On the other hand, deciding to drop out of school to avoid bullying and/or persistent failure and dedicating to work can likewise be a proactive way to respond to problems and seek change. In fact, respondents often see getting a job as a way to be someone, to be independent, as well as an opportunity to move away from anti-social behaviours.

> Then I decided: well, I need to take care of my stuff; let's ask my parents, no more studies, just work. I devoted myself to the life of work… I got to a point and I thought, if I'm not doing anything there [in school], I'm going to waste my time there for what? If, in the future, I want to have something to get a house, to get a car, to get the driver's license, man, look, it's like the old ones did, if you don't want to study, you go to work. That's how I did it. (Lourenço, RISK, PT)

This exemplifies what Bryant and Ellard (2015) called the "employment imperative", i.e. finding a paid job, regardless of its characteristics, is prioritised by young people in order to have a 'normal' future.

Another way to respond to problems is to gain physical distance from them. This was found among respondents from the Estonian and Portuguese case studies, namely through moving away from conflict prone territories, such as 'deprived' neighbourhoods, or going abroad in search for better job opportunities.

> I myself also say to them that I want to change myself and I would like the chances of getting somewhere. I've said a few times when I get rid of my [electronic monitoring device], I want to go to Finland, I have a wife there. If he doesn't let me, I'll start… I know what's here. I'm not going to go to work for this little pay. (Jako, Ex-OFF, EE)

This can be seen as a way of young people actively seeking to change the context and, consequently, the course of their lives. However, it can also refer to when young people desisted from crime but not from their identities, being this physical distance, a form of 'diachronic self-control', which is seen as adaptive but also as leading to a "restricted and impoverished existence" when excessive (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016, p. 569).

Joining collective initiatives or youth-oriented organisations and seeking help from others are among the most common responses found in the cluster's case studies, particularly the Spanish, British and Portuguese ones.

We were in a play centre. Since we were under 16 years old, we were in a play centre that belongs to the town hall but is managed by a private company. It's a public facility but… what happens? Once you turn 16, you cannot do activities anywhere. (…) There is nothing in [name of the neighbourhood]. So... we did not have anything in the neighbourhood and we said 'okay, we are going to set up an association! (Miguel, NoNEETS, ES)

Although not all participants have autonomously approached these organisations, as for some it was linked to the social or youth justice services, their progressive engagement was, for most, a result of their own free will and personal commitment.

I wanted to get a job, but it's like I wasn't motivated to get a job. And it's like coming here and (Youth worker) started speaking to me about jobs, and he made me like get off my... he made me get up and think about it, and it's like, 'I want to do that.' So, then it's like then I started looking for jobs and I found one I liked, an apprenticeship, and just give it and […] like the respect that they gave me and I'm giving other people now, it's like that. And then it's like I wouldn't have got a job, I wouldn't have got nothing like. Thanks to [local youth organisation 1] that's (…) extremely good (…). (Jacob, CYI, GB)

Through attending particular programmes and organisations, young people were able to get support from others and to take responsibility for their own change. For many, these became positive turning points in their lives. For some, it also made them want to give something back to others (see 3.2.4 – *Opportunities generate opportunities*).

3.1.3 Navigating the conflicts

The concept *Navigating the conflicts* concerns strategies that young people use to respond to their conflicts, other than remaining in the same conflicts or, on the contrary, actively seeking to change the course of their lives. In this case, young people engage in different strategies trying to change the surrounding context or the way they interact in it or make sense of it in order to reduce or avoid conflicts and/or the associated stigma.

Young immigrants in Spain carry out one of these strategies, reproducing dominant discourses about multiculturalism as an integration strategy that hides the social inequalities and vulnerabilities that affect them. This is especially used by those who have higher responsibilities in youth organisations.

My African mind most likely thinks as any other European mind, right? The only thing that has to be done is to live together and find the balance between us all. There are things we have in common among what we eat, right? We have the rice in common, for instance. In other words, the way paella is cooked here is similar to the way the rice is cooked in Senegal; there are a few things that change but the results are often almost the same. All these things are what we have to keep enjoying, right? (Mamadou, NoNEETS, ES)

Participants from the Estonian case study present survival strategies that are also relevant for avoiding conflict or taking advantage of it. For example, hiding their criminal conviction or disclosing only after some time is a common strategy among ex-offenders to resist stigma and maximise their already reduced opportunities to find or to keep a job. On the other hand, by accepting and displaying their new 'ex-offender label' among peers, young people may earn some benefits: peers with similar backgrounds may respect them, while "enemies" will be afraid: 'Some people, I'm sure, but if everyone was scared, I wouldn't like it. I still want to get along with people. Those who are my hate enemies, I will be happy if they fear me (laughs)' (Jako, Ex-OFF, EE). Some of these youngsters

also show a strategic approach to social rehabilitation programmes. Although they hardly find them useful, they attend them voluntarily as a way to show good behaviour to probation officer or the court and, thus, earn some benefits during the probation period.

> Interviewer: What did you have to do in probation?
>
> Aare: To show up. When I was on probation for the second time, then there was a program too. I do not remember; some social program was there.
>
> Interviewer: Did it help you somehow?
>
> Aare: I didn't notice it has.
>
> Interviewer: Would you attend if it was voluntary?
>
> Aare: Mm... maybe that's why, yes, to earn a few points to show to the probation officer.
>
> Interviewer: The content didn't matter?
>
> Aare: That's a kinda no matter. (Aare, Ex-OFF, EE)

Among young people from the British and the Estonian case studies, narratives of traumatic experiences in a 'matter-of-fact' way, seem to display a strategy of normalisation of experiences which demonstrates a 'hidden resilience' (Munford and Sanders, 2015) to negotiate and to take the best out of traumatic circumstances. In fact, these experiences are almost always presented with a sense of moving forward, either as a learning experience that helped them to be better, or as a turning point during which the young person learnt to rely on themselves.

The resistance towards, and resilience despite, negative stereotypes associated with their places of residence can be seen as another type of "survival strategy" found among the British case study participants. Although they are aware of the negative impacts of anti-social behaviour and criminality in these areas, some respondents are resistant to misrepresentations of local areas perpetuated by the media, and state that they enjoy their localities:

> 'Cause like, obviously you get on the news it's like, "[local area 1] this, [local area 1] that" and then you've got a youth centre in the middle of [local area 1] where it's a load of kids that are probably outside smoking drugs and doing this, you know, fighting and, and then all you're thinking is, all that. Then it's just a centre of full of those kids, but that's not what this is. (Becki, CYI, GB)

Finally, some respondents, mostly from the Portuguese case study, referred to self-reliant ways of coping with problems, based on their own behavioural and attitudinal changes. They described strategies such as, for instance: individual perseverance and responsibility, avoiding stressful people and negative thoughts, focusing on one's goals, being proud of oneself, focusing on the future and not on the past, not caring about what other people say, or minding one's own life without messing with anybody.

> I am the first to say: I want to change. It's not because of others want me to change that I'm going to change, it's me who wants to change. It's one thing to have your own attitude and another thing to follow others' attitudes. Because if it was like that, I would already be stealing everything, I would be beating everyone, but I'm not. When a person wants to change, it must be ones' attitude, not of others. (Nelson, RISK, PT)

We therefore conclude that across the four cases, in addition to staying in conflict or seeking for new opportunities to overcome them, young people respond to conflicts in a reflexive way, using individual strategies that allow them to gain psychological and/or social distance form these same

conflicts and "work around" them to maximize personal benefits (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Woodman, 2010). Although they may not be able to control or change all the factors that originate or enhance conflicts, through such reflexive strategies, young people seem to be able to identify some of those factors and to manage them in order to reduce its consequences or avoid new conflicts.

3.2 What enables and what inhibits the social involvement of young people?

In the second question, we sought to synthesise findings of the four ethnographic case studies that are related to what enables or inhibits young people's social involvement. The concept of 'youth social involvement' is central in the PROMISE project. We build upon, and expand, previous definitions of social and political participation or engagement, by extending it to include a broader and more nuanced set of activities undertaken by young people as ways of participation in social life. In this extension of the concept, we most closely align to Ekman and Amna's understanding of 'social involvement' (2012). Our definition recognises 'outlying' activities, especially those practiced by marginalised young people, that would not normally be considered 'involvement', such as attending school. These activities may not have an immediate political or social significance, or indeed have any obvious collective relevance, but may be seen as the foundation for future engagement.

Out of the cluster analysis, six main concepts emerged regarding the inhibitors and enablers of youth social involvement: i) Generalised negative social representations of youth; ii) Amplifiers of young people's discrimination; iii) Conflict generates conflict; iv) Opportunity generates opportunity; v) The power of significant relationships; and vi) The mediating role of self-concept. The first two concepts are more general and descriptive of young people's ideas about youth representations and what amplifies their discrimination by society in general and/or with particular groups of people. The second two concepts are more focused on the circularity of conflicts and opportunities experienced by young people and the impact it may have on their own lives and on their social involvement. Finally, the last two concepts have more explanatory power regarding youth social involvement, namely by highlighting the importance of relationships in maintaining conflicts or contributing to overcome them, as well as the importance of all experiences in constructing their self-image and its impact in their life choices and actions.

3.2.1 Generalised negative social representation of youth

The concept *Generalised negative social representation of youth* refers to the idea that the society, namely older generations and the media, have and disseminate negative representations of young people. According to participants from the four case studies, this leads to an internalised group identity, rooted in the idea that most young people have deviant or even criminal behaviours.

> Well, to be honest, there is a lot of negative stuff going around about young people nowadays, 'cause people say that it's all the young people causing all the trouble, but it's not always the young people. (Aiden, CYI, GB)

Indeed, young people tend to be portrayed as troublemakers, disruptive, and not respectful of others (Becker, 1963), and our participants have shown to be aware of this and to be concerned about it.

Participants from the four groups mentioned that the negative labels targeting young people are rooted in aspects such as being part of a minority, being an immigrant, having a different life style, or

having left school. By saying this, they seem to criticise the fact that others value more the place, the life conditions and the life choices, instead of the young people themselves and their paths. Additionally, the Estonian participants felt that the labels applied to them, are usually extended to their families as well – 'It can start to disrupt life. I can't imagine, for example, when my grandmother's friends knew I was in prison. They would never socialise with my grandmother.' (Juhan, Ex-OFF, EE).

Overall, young people feel that the stigma tends to be instigated and perpetuated by society in general, and particularly by older generations, especially from their neighbourhoods – 'They are afraid even to communicate with me. That's the preconception that I'm a prisoner, so I'm going to kill you or something. There is quite a lot of such attitude. That's what the older people are feeling.' (Juhan, Ex-OFF, EE). Prejudice literature is very clear when stating that there are some social groups, namely youth, who are more targeted by society, and that the stereotypes about them tend to have pernicious short- and long-term consequences for young people and to their relatives (North and Fiske, 2012).

Besides the contribution of older generations to youth stereotyping, some participants, mostly from Great Britain, emphasised the role of the media in reinforcing the stereotypes regarding young people.

> Yeah, because if people listen to the media and like the television, then they get their information from that, then they assume that, because one person's done one bad thing and has got into media because of it, that everybody else is going to do that. 'Cause it's like that stigma again behind teenagers, and that one representative versus everybody else. (Keira, CYI, GB)

In fact, it is not surprising that the media plays an important role in the dissemination of the negative representations of youth. Analyses of media depictions of youth, published worldwide, reveal that young people are frequently the target of negative categorisations and labelling, and youth conflicts tend to be highly mediatised in a distorted manner, contributing to stereotyping young people and reinforcing their conflicts (Bernier, 2011; Devlin, 2005).

As claimed by Peeters and d'Haenens (2005), through the repeated diffusion of the (stereotypical) portrayals of various groups, youth included, coupled by the presentation of the current norms and values and the image of life in a society, media seem to actively participate in the establishment and maintenance of positive and negative images about some groups. Overall, in the case of media, their relevance in sharing stereotypes about young people is quite relevant and they have a significant contribution to the generalisation of negative ideas concerning this specific group in society, whether directly, for example, by disseminating specific patterns of inter-group behaviour, or indirectly, by propagating specific group stereotypes (Lepianka, 2015).

Participants from the four groups, but especially from Great Britain, consider that older people see 'typical teenage behaviours' as a source of trouble, labelling, as anti-social, those behaviours that young people consider harmful and linked to having fun.

> If it's a gang of guys all stood outside, then somebody might instantly think, 'Oh, they're up to no good.' But even with a group of girls stood outside, it can be even like, 'They're up to no good.' Because it's in numbers, I think. (Keira, CYI, GB)

According to the participants, the negative representations and attitudes of older generations towards young people are exacerbated when they see youth groups, especially from ethnic minorities, in public spaces.

> So, this is where it messes up. So, because you chill with the wrong people, it looks like you're a gang banger... that means, 'cause you dress like one, dress like him, that means you're both associated with it. So that's where it always goes wrong. Because of how they look, the way people dress. Which is still wrong, because not all the time people who dress like that are like really ready to do anything. (Jo, CYI, GB)

Finally, considering that youth tend to be seen both as problematic and as an object of public concern (Devlin, 2005; Wayne et al., 2008), it is important to highlight the way participants, particularly from Portugal, deal with the prejudices about youths. Some include themselves in the youth group by referring to the negative impacts of stereotypes - 'Nowadays I think they see us as, most young people, I think they see us as delinquents or the like.' (Xavier, RISK, PT); however, others endorse these prejudices about youth, by distancing themselves from 'problematic youth' and, sometimes, from "youth" itself, a category they tend to attribute to younger and more irresponsible or irrational people then themselves - 'Being young nowadays is tricky. They only cause problems. I think that in my time, when I was younger it was nothing like this.' (Elsa, RISK, PT). This shows that even young people themselves can be agents of social stigma towards youth, because sometimes they may end up reinforcing prejudices about "problematic youth" as a way to gain (and show) individual distance from it.

3.2.2 Amplifiers of young people´s discrimination

The concept *Amplifiers of young people's discrimination*, addresses ideas that participants from the four case studies brought about young people's characteristics that may enhance their discrimination by society. Each of these characteristics appears to have a unique impact and to contribute significantly to the negative stereotyping of youth, and thus limiting their life options. For instance, as reported by Marco (RISK, PT) being without a job can lead to discrimination – 'Maybe a lot of people looked down on me because they knew that I wasn't doing anything with my life, because I wasn't working, they thought that maybe I was going back to what I was before [engaged in drug dealing], that I wasn't going anywhere'.

Nevertheless, the British participants in particular, revealed that having several specific intersectional identity features (e.g., ethnic, cultural, sexual, gender) can make it harder for young people, given that there are explicit expectations about young people with specific combinations of identity features. For instance, Brian (CYI, GB) mentioned he faced difficulties on the streets of his home town because he is a young black man.

Thus, based on the participants experiences, when two or more social identity features which are the object of negative social representations are present in the same person, this may lead to a greater oppression, discrimination, or feeling of being dominated by a majority. This links to the concept of intersectionality, which is useful when applying to discrimination research, given that it allows a focus on the intersection of multiple social identities (Garnett et al, 2014), in order to better understand the unique patterns of oppression that might stem from the various intersections of claimed and perceived identities (Bowleg 2012; Crenshaw 1994; Reyes, 2017). Throughout the ethnographic case studies, the characteristics most mentioned by young participants as main

contributors to discrimination were: being part of a minority, being poor and/or living in a deprived neighbourhood, and gender and sexuality.

In general, participants agree that life is harder for young people from ethnic minorities and with a different cultural background. Indeed, as stated by Wong and colleagues (2003), ethnicity influences not only psychological development, but also operates through ethnic social situations and psychological processes, such as stereotypes, experiences of ethnic discrimination, ethnic identity, and ethnic socialisation. This idea is shared by some participants, especially from Spain, and, as they state, it applies not only to young immigrants, especially to those without work permits, but also to people who were born in the country where they live but are from an ethnicity that is not the majority.

> I have a colleague, I get along very well with him, and the other day, he confessed to being an illegal street vendor. In his country he was a French teacher, a language teacher! And I say how could it be that he came here, and he is doing that! He has degrees, he can find a way! And he says, 'it is very hard when you arrive without permits, without knowing how things work. (Monica, NoNEET, ES)

> And sometimes, when there is a fight between [uses diminutive of his nationality of origin] and someone else, they say, 'get out of here, what are you doing here, if you do not like it here then go to your country! (Aisha, NoNEET, ES)

Spanish participants argued that coming from a different country, having a different skin colour, having difficulties in speaking the language of the country or having a different accent makes things harder for young people. Overall, studies that focus on ethnic discrimination have shown that ethnicity can have a significant impact on young people's life paths by increasing the odds of having negative outcomes such as less opportunities related to occupation or housing (Phelan, Yu, and Davidson, 1994).

Living in a 'deprived' neighbourhood is another major factor that participants, especially from Portugal, Spain and Great Britain, refer to as an amplifier of young people's discrimination. In fact, many respondents who lived in a 'deprived' neighbourhood stressed how they often feel stigmatised as a consequence of the place where they live or had lived in the past.

> Where I live or my local area, that also gives me negative feedback. (Becki, CYI, GB)

> I was at class and the tutor said: "not far ago someone told me that people from [name of a district] have some health issues and there are dodgy people. Is there anyone from [name of the district]?". I raised my hand and said: "I live in [name of a district]". And he said: "sorry, sorry about that!". And I: "do not worry, that's what people always say". (Edu, NoNEET, ES)

In the participants' perspectives, living in poor neighbourhoods makes life unjustly harder because of the social stereotypes about those who live there: 'Many people discriminate against us because we are from the neighbourhood. What's the problem of being from the neighbourhood? We are like other people; many people discriminate against this…' (Manuel, RISK, PT).

Alongside social discrimination, some participants also showed how the experience of living in 'deprived' neighbourhoods poses other more objective challenges to young people. According to the participants' accounts, living in a deprived neighbourhood is associated with poverty and social disadvantage, as they feel they don't have the same opportunities as young people from other areas

(in terms of schooling, work, leisure, and safety) which, in turn, makes them become more prone to engage in anti-social behaviour. For instance, Portuguese participants tended to refer to the neighbourhood as a context where conflicts are inevitable, and from which youngsters can't escape - 'Getting out of the neighbourhood life and becoming a normal person, the neighbourhood problems follow behind. A person can never remain normal' (Lourenço, RISK, PT). This is often linked to the negative influence of peers from the neighbourhood, who can be described as agents of conflict, and even deviant/criminal behaviour:

> I came from a troubled neighbourhood and have had many friends that are currently in prison. I have maybe only 2 or 3 of my circle of friends who are normal.… It's difficult because, I'm not saying that if you are from a neighbourhood you have to go to jail, but it's difficult when we have friends who are ready to go do this and that. One is younger and always follows behind and goes ... influenced and then ... we also have that sense of feeling safe and being surrounded by 20, 30 friends. (Edgar, RISK, PT)

The participants' accounts go along with the main arguments found in the academic literature on poor neighbourhoods and deviance, namely that structural poverty and social stigma favour social (dis)organisation patterns defined by low collective efficacy (low social trust and low shared willingness of residents to intervene in social control) (Morenoff et al., 2001). This lack of collective efficacy, in turn, facilitates the emergence of conflictive behaviours, such as stealing, skipping classes, getting into fights, drug or alcohol abuse, and school dropout (Sampson and Groves, 1989). Hence, social organisation seems to be an important tool for transmitting the effects of neighbourhood poverty to adolescents' developmental outcomes (Sampson, 2008).

Gender also emerged as a relevant identity feature of youth discrimination. Overall, the participants agreed that girls tend to face more obstacles, and consequently increased difficulties, than boys.

> My mother told me many times "be careful on the street ". Why I have to be careful on the street? She also asked me to dress differently, to not show my bottom... Many, many times! There are other mums who do not say it, but you learn it from how they behave, usually very carefully.… But my brother could go anywhere he wanted! And that makes me angry! Once I asked my mum why I should be careful and my brother did not have to, and she replied that the reason was because I was a girl! I do understand why she did, you know? I do not blame her, because it can happen, they could... But the boys should be careful, not me! Tell them not to rape girls, not to say names to me...! (Lucia, NoNEET, ES)

Interestingly, several participants, both boys and girls, showed how they adhere to gender stereotypes when they mentioned that girls have intrinsic factors such as the 'natural' vulnerability and emotional character of women, which makes them in need of greater protection - A girl is weaker, more delicate. It makes sense, my mother doesn't let my sister go out at night without me. (...) Doesn't let her go out because she's a girl, it is more difficult, [she is] weaker.' (Óscar, RISK, PT). This extends to external factors like greater exposure to sexual harassment or sexual abuse by males, or being exposed to a harsher moral judgement - 'I speak for myself ... how can I tell you? It's like this, if a boy gets a chick ... he's the king, but she's a whore' (Andreia, RISK, PT).

In the Portuguese case study, however, some divergent opinions regarding gender emerged. In fact, some participants mentioned that boys can have more difficulties than girls, since they take longer to mature and, for that reason, they tend to face more difficulties in concentrating at school;

moreover, they tend not to listen to other people's advice, and to have a more negative image in society.

> Ahh, for example, as I shall explain, in the boys' part, they probably think they only want nights, they do not listen to anyone, or they do not want to listen to advice. (...) It is harder, of course, because they are viewed negatively, not positively. (Rita, RISK, PT)

Other Portuguese youth consider that being a boy or a girl is the same in terms of conflicts - '[Boys and girls] are alike; you only need to have maturity in your head' (Sérgio, RISK, PT).

In the case studies from Estonia and Great Britain several perspectives stood out: the idea that girls are punished more when they don't comply with the social norms; and they tend to be more severely punished by society. For Estonian participants, when girls are engaged in crime or suspicious behaviours they are seen as bad mothers and as more promiscuous. This links with the literature on gender and crime, which has evidenced how women who commit crimes tend to be judged, first of all, because they are women (Matos, 2018).

> They can tell you to shut the F up, if they want to. Like with no cares in the world. But if you were to tell them to shut the F up, that's one charge on your name. Or I don't think they should manhandle you like they do as well, especially girls. Because I've seen a police officer manhandle... a girl, like push her down on the floor like a man. I'm like, 'That's gonna hurt her boobs. You've got to be careful.' Like he pushed her down on the floor and held her there. She wasn't even, she wasn't even struggling. He was just panicking. I think he was panicking. He didn't know what he was doing. (Jo, CYI, GB)

Focusing on deviant behaviour, or even crime, regardless of gender, participants suggested that being involved in crime or having a delinquent path makes it harder for young people to gain legitimate work; or, when they do, they are usually seen as someone who cannot be trusted, and when something happens, they are the first ones to be blamed.

> You see that you've committed theft, you did. People don't take you to work... Let's say we all are working in the construction industry. And when something's missing, [ex-offenders] are the first to be blamed and to be questioned and bothered. Well, it's rather unpleasant experience' (Indrek, Ex-OFF, EE)

Going back to gender as an amplifier of youth discrimination, some British participants mentioned that young mothers are labelled as irresponsible and as raising a new generation of troublemakers.

Finally, sexual orientation was also reported by the British participants as a characteristic that can contribute to youth discrimination. For instance, being gay or lesbian may contribute to rejection by family, this being more problematic when culture and sexuality intersects.

> I am gay but coming out was a big thing. Both my parents are from Jamaica; homosexuality is just not allowed in that country. Luckily enough, my mum has adapted and got used to like the more modern times. Whereas my dad's still in this cultural wave. (Becki, CYI, GB).

3.2.3 Conflict generates conflict

The concept Conflict generates conflict expresses a core idea in many respondents' accounts of their experiences of conflict, namely that young people's engagement, past or present, in non-normative,

deviant, or conflict behaviours or ways of living tends to reinforce or facilitate the development of future deviant or conflict-heavy behaviours or pathways.

School failure and problematic behaviour at school are among the most frequent conflict-heavy experiences reported by the case studies' respondents, particularly the ones form the Portuguese and British case studies. These often refer to having experienced learning difficulties, and to having been engaged in disruptive behaviour in the classroom, school absence, or episodes of violence with teachers, school staff or among school peers: 'At my old school, I beat the record of disciplinary offences, really, ... there wasn't a single class where I wasn't sent to the student's office with a disciplinary offence, because I was always getting into trouble' (Andreia, RISK, PT).

These conflict experiences at school, however, tend not to be isolated episodes. Most respondents refer to them as a behavioural pattern that repeats or escalates over time, as they feel that teachers have a stronger focus on their past misbehaviour than on their future possibilities. As such, school teachers are seen as expecting them to fail and not to thrive, to be irresponsible and to misbehave continuously. These negative expectations end up having a great impact on young people's educational paths, as many youngsters internalise them and enter a process of progressive disengagement from school which, eventually leads to early drop out (Meo and Parker, 2004; Van Houtte, 2011; Tarabini et al., 2017):

> Felt so degraded that I just felt useless and it was like, it's not even the way like, it was the way he was saying it as well, very direct like, "You're gonna fail," like. There wasn't like, "If you don't do this [Becki (pseudonym)], you're gonna fail." It was, "You're gonna fail," like and after that he didn't even seem like he cared. He was like, he made his judgement, "You're gonna fail," is there even a point in teaching her anymore? […] After that, my grades were a lot worse than they were before. I was skipping maths, wasn't coming in and I had to think to myself, 'Is it all because that teacher told me I was gonna fail?' I really thought I was gonna fail and really got my mind to the point where I was gonna fail. (Becki, CYI, GB)

References to criminal behaviour are also common throughout most case studies (PT, GB, EE) and tend to follow a similar pattern. Past delinquent behaviours or criminal offenses, such as stealing, assault, property damage, and drug dealing, are felt by most respondents as reinforcing general stigmatisation in the workplace or when applying for a job, at school, or in public spaces, as well as facilitating the application of harder measures of surveillance, harassment or punishment by authority figures like teachers, social services, or the police (McAra and McVie, 2005). Young people with criminal backgrounds also feels they are treated as suspects and are more harshly judged by social services, probation officers and court judges (Smith, 2012). These imposed stricter sanctions that often limit new opportunities, such as getting a job, attending to youth programs or training courses, moving to another city or country, and being able to afford house rent:

> For example, judges don't think as if we were their children. Okay, we screwed up, we did, but everyone has a second chance, everyone can regret it or they might not. They have to think about the "if" and they are not like that. They want, they can, and they rule. But they also have to bear in mind that we too are human, we also have things we like to do. (Francisco, RISK, PT)

> Not allowed and denied to go anywhere from Estonia. Although I have two minor children. I have to provide for them, and then a probation officer just won't let go. What

am I going to do, like shoplift for food or something? And then I will get punish for it. The probation officer simply does not authorise the work out of Estonia. (Jaan, Ex-OFF, EE)

These kinds of punitive and controlling attitudes and procedures imposed by authority figures and institutions are felt by young ex-offenders as limiting and pose serious obstacles to young people's desistance from crime, as they reduce their opportunities to relate to new people and access places and opportunities (hobbies, jobs, training) that could make it possible to build a new life (Healy, 2010; Weaver, 2013; Nugent and Schinkel, 2016).

In other cases, conflict experiences that bring about new conflict experiences may also be related to aspects not directly dependent on young people's individual behaviour, such as their family background or their formal status (e.g. being an illegal immigrant: '…many young people arrive here [in Spain] and they have no other way to make money but to resort to ... quick means, sell drugs or do other things, you know?' (José, NoNEET, ES)). Family history of deviant or harmful behaviours such as alcohol or drug addiction, criminal offenses, child abuse or neglect, or domestic violence, are frequently referred to by respondents as sources of stigma and moral judgement, and legitimate social services sever interventions, often leading to placing in foster care or residential care facilities (Taylor and Fitzpatrick, 2006). Being placed in care, in turn, becomes a new conflict-laden experience that could generate new vulnerabilities, including deviant behaviours, and restrict young people's personal development and social engagement:

> People were just taking the mick out of me, 'cause you don't have a mum, you don't have a dad who look after you. And so got really angry. And I will hit the teachers, and the police will come and talk to me and stuff…. 'Cause people just taking the mick out of me for being in care, so thought, 'Fuck it.' I just left" (Samantha, CYI, GB).

Taken together, the data from all case studies shows that engaging or having contact with deviant, conflict-laden or non-normative behaviours or trajectories tends to reinforce negative representations and low expectations about young people which, in turn, fosters the establishment of non-supportive, stigmatizing, or even punitive relationships with authority figures and institutions (Deakin and Kupchik, 2018; Goldson and Muncie, 2015):

> I mean, if I'm already convicted once, they're trying to make me really, like, doing something wrong. And then they're watching me twice as much as [they usually do], actually. (Ken, Ex-OFF, EE)

> The police, I could never... if I, say for example, if I was arguing with Scott [boyfriend] and there was a big domestic or whatever like, I would not ring the police, like no matter how frightened I was. Because I feel like they are definitely against me, definitely like. (Amelia, CYI, GB)

> School thinks we are not capable, doesn't insist [on working with us]. You don't come, you don't get. It's finished. Give up, go away. You're expelled' (Elsa, RISK, PT)

These reactions end up strengthening young people's personal and social vulnerability and limiting their self-confidence, their life choices, and their opportunities to move forward in life (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016). As a consequence, it may be easier to continue their deviant path, and sometimes even strengthen their marginal or criminal identities, due to the lack of prosocial options, as well as to the absence of supportive figures who could value other aspects of their biographies and help them to reflect and to make choices towards more adaptive life paths. The result is a vicious circle of deviance and conflict that inhibits young people's social involvement.

3.2.4 Opportunity generates opportunities

Opportunity generates opportunities is a concept that captures the dynamics of young people's social involvement triggered by engaging in new institutional or organisational settings, activities or pathways. Respondents in all case studies show, through diverse ways, how this access to new opportunities of social involvement becomes decisive in changing the course of young people's lives, breaking the vicious circle of 'conflict generates conflict' and brings them greater opportunities for the future.

According to the data from the cluster's case studies, returning or finishing an educational path is one of the most important ways for marginalised young people to rebuild a positive sense of self, broaden their horizons and aspirations, and enhance their opportunities for social involvement through work or other forms of social participation. For many respondents, particularly from the British and Portuguese case studies, to stay or return to school, or get an educational or training degree, is a way to regain stability, to obtain social validation from significant others, like parents and peers, to develop self-pride, and to broaden life aspirations, thus moving away from anti-social behaviour and rebuild a positive meaning to life:

> I want to do my maths and English so I can look for a proper job and, you know, get out to work, and hopefully I will (…) if you got a good GCSE, you've shown the school, your mum, everyone, that you just achieved like, I don't know, a GCSE. So really, your parents are thinking, 'Well, going to school, you've paid off then. Not going to school, you've fucking come back doing nothing.' So, it's what it is really. (Liam, CYI, GB)

Having a job, or aiming to get one, is something that most respondents envision as an outcome of getting educational qualifications, and it is another powerful source of meaning, motivation and commitment towards more positive life paths. In fact, (re)engaging in education and/or work are often felt by marginalised young people as a way to restore personal dignity and become "someone in life":

> I even told my parents, at the time, that it was the twelfth grade that I wanted to get, and that I would continue, and in order to get it, I have to fight. I'm not saying I'm going to try, I'm saying I'm going to achieve it, for me to be someone in life, to have a job and all that. (Rita, RISK, PT)

In all the case studies of this cluster, respondents also show that having contact (or being put in contact) with, and engaging in new institutional settings, such youth organisations or socio-educational or cultural projects or activities directed at young people can also be experienced as strong incentives towards change. For example, young people form the Spanish case study feel they are empowered by the NGOs they engage with, as these organisations can help them to find a place to stay, provide food, and help to find a job: 'We are doing a lot of things to help people without work permits, people living on the street that come here and we give them food' (Adama, NoNEET, ES). Young people from the Portuguese second chance education projects say their enrolment in these projects will bring them better job opportunities in the future: 'Yes [the project will bring something to my future], mainly to find work, which is what I want the most' (Miguel, RISK, PT).

However, through these kinds of institutional contact and engagement, vulnerable young people are able, not only to get the practical or technical help they need. This also gives them the opportunity to broaden horizons, to have contact with different people and to make new friends. This is referred to by participants as particularly helpful to vulnerable or marginalised young people, who become

able to expand their social networks and social capital and, in turn, become more prone to adopt prosocial behaviours and set new, more positive, life goals life (Healy, 2010; Weaver, 2013; Nugent and Schinkel, 2016): 'how am I going to explain? Now I dream bigger than I dreamed before' (Raquel, RISK, PT). This process was shown to be particularly significant among ex-offenders from the Estonian and the British case studies, to whom the involvement in sports or leisure activities, international youth exchange programs, and other kinds of group memberships or activities are experienced as something that helps them to prevent or avoid offending:

> Yes, it would certainly be something that would help young people till a certain age. I mean, if you're like, when you get out of jail and you go there for a youth exchange, you come from a place where there are wolves, and you go where the milksops are, that it might be like complicated for people out there. But to me it had such a positive effect. Raised empathy, etc. (Juhan, Ex-OFF, EE).

Another relevant aspect emerging from young people's engagement in youth-oriented organisations or group activities is the possibility to acquire new skills (technical, personal, social) through practice and through interpersonal interaction and team work (Nicholson et al., 2004; Saito and Sullivan, 2011). According to respondents in all the case studies, these new organisational settings and group memberships become opportunities for personal and professional development, because young people end up discovering new talents and interests, feel more capable and motivated to do things on their own, become more self-confident and confident on others, and develop a feeling of being part of something bigger:

> It helped me to be here, in this environment of young people meeting up, having fun, playing… it is something that moves you and makes you get more involved with people around you and makes you think differently too: to lose fear, to have confidence with people, to relate to others… And this learning will be useful later on in your professional career. (José, NoNEET, ES)

Therefore, through engagement in new organisations, group memberships or volunteering projects, young people's capacities for autonomy, responsibility or commitment are strengthened and they become more willing to get involved in other social projects or to take on new responsibilities or initiatives in other dimensions of their lives, such as family, school or work (Nicholson et al., 2004; Kress, 2006; Saito and Sullivan, 2011). Benefits regarding work were particularly referred to by the respondents in the Portuguese, British and Spanish case studies, namely as ways to gain valuable experience for professional development and access new job opportunities:

> Yeah, 'cause the qualifications are going on to the CV. So, if I get a, when I get a job interview in the future and that, they can have a look at the CV and see how much work I've put into like the [local college 3] and like getting a job and everything, so… (Kade, CYI, GB)

All these new opportunities, however, don't simply emerge out of young people's engagement in new organisational settings. Participants in all the case studies were very eloquent about the conditions that can make it possible:

> Not here [in the second chance school], here you have that help, even if you are having a bad day you always have that call from the other side, like, good mood, you know it's the best for you and we need you, like, no other school does that. It's like that. (Marco, RISK, PT).

To foster positive change, these kinds of organisational settings or group activities must be adjusted to young people's preferences and needs and must offer places and moments where young people feel welcome and respected, stable and secure, where they are listened to and not judged, and, especially, where they have fun and feel good at (see Nicholson et al., 2004). This will be discussed in further depth in the section 3.3.

3.2.5 The power of significant relationships

The power of significant relationships emerges from the analysis of all the case studies as an overall explanatory concept that captures the decisive role of the relationships established by young people with significant others (or with others that become significant) in the development of their personal identities and social trajectories, whether as inhibitors or as enablers of social involvement. Although the notion that social relationships are central to emotional and behavioural development, identity development, well-being (Halle and Darling-Churchill, 2016), and to social reproduction and social mobility (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) is widely accepted among psychological and sociological literature, the present case studies show, in a very explicit way, how these can be critical in the making of the life paths of vulnerable and marginalised young people.

The effects of relationships with significant others are particularly striking when considering the relationships young people establish with close family members or peers. Within the literature on youth deviance and/or school disengagement, it is common to point to negative or conflict-heavy relationships with family and peers as precipitant factors for deviant behaviour and/or school failure and dropout (Harris-McKoy, 2016; Cefai, Downes and Cavioni, 2016; Dale, 2010; Brunelle, Cousineau and Brochu, 2002). This is also a key finding throughout all the cases studies of this cluster, with participants frequently referring to family conflicts, family breakdown or traumatic events (such as parent's death, divorce, parents' drug or alcohol abuse, neglect or abandonment, or being placed in care) as having negative and even disruptive impacts on their lives, choices and identity, often leading to educational and social disengagement and/or to deviant behaviour:

> When you talk to them you realise they have a lot of traumas. The father has left his mother; the father beat his mother... [...] And they end up looking for problems. When you talk to them you realise and there's always something ... sometimes they are absent-minded, they end up crazy due to their mental dislocation. (Diego, NoNEET, ES)

> The things that rather had effect on my life…When I was a small child, then my family influenced my life that way that I just had to have problems with police whether I want it or not. (Ken, Ex-OFF, EE)

Similar negative effects are likewise associated, by respondents, with their relationships with peers. Peer pressure and "hanging around with the wrong crowd" are presented as major negative influences leading to deviant or conflict-heavy behaviour, such as drug or alcohol abuse, school indiscipline and school absence, interpersonal violence and criminal offenses:

> I got a police warning for being around with the wrong crowd, that people were doing stuff that I was never involved in, but I was getting cautioned for being in association with them people. So, every time they'd done something, they'd try and put the blame on me. (Chris, CYI, GB)

However, unlike most common arguments in the youth deviance literature, relationships with family and peers are also widely referred to by all the case studies participants as major sources of support

in overcoming life difficulties and avoiding anti-social behaviour. Many family members and friends are pointed to by respondents as the people they can trust on and as positive role models whom they try to follow or whose expectations they try to meet: 'My family and work, I have to be someone. If I were alone I wouldn't mind being a bandit, all my friends are in jail. But no, I have a sister, I have a mother, I have a grandmother' (Marco, RISK, PT).

These relationships can also be important sources of social, emotional or material support through difficult times in different ways: just by being present when needed and willing to help and to protect; by accepting them as a person despite whatever offenses they may have committed and whatever moral or legal judgment they may have been subjected to; by helping them to believe in themselves and pushing them to do/be their best; by sharing information and advice on how to think in a different way and how to take advantage of new opportunities: 'I think it's important that one has a person to ask for advice. To make one feel his parents are right beside him. It's like the most important thing' (MG, Ex-OFF, EE); 'To establish a friendship with colleagues helps you a lot to overcome the problem, more than anything' (Andrés, NoNEET, ES).

For some participants in the British, Estonian and the Portuguese case studies, becoming a parent is also experienced as major push toward greater responsibility and positive life changes, as their own children become a mobilising force and a source of happiness and support:

> At first I was not afraid of going to prison. But when I became a mother, then I was. … That period I had no one [besides me]. Then I thought about committing crimes, too, but I also knew that my child had only me [to rely on]. (Susanna, Ex-OFF, EE)

> Like they've made me, they've made my life. […] They've just made me like realise what life's like about. Like you can do good in life. Because obviously I've got them, so I've done good with them, do you know what I mean? So, they've made me feel like I am worth something. (Sophie, CYI, GB)

The data collected in all the case studies calls attention to the different and often contradictory roles relationships with family members and peers can play in shaping the lives of marginalised young people. These relationships can not only trigger, enhance or sustain antisocial behaviour and conflict-heavy pathways, but also support young people in developing a better self-concept and self-confidence, establishing stronger commitment to change, embracing new opportunities and challenges, and developing new life goals. Hence, whatever roles family and communal relationships may play, they will always be central in young people's lives and no change will take place without acknowledging their influence or mediation (McNeill, Batchelor, Burnett, and Knox, 2005).

Many of the positive effects of family or peers' relationships are likewise mentioned by the participants of all the case studies when referring to the relationships they establish with specific adults they interact with throughout the institutional settings they engage in (schools, youth support organisations or activities, foster care families, residential care facilities, youth justice teams). These adults, often teachers, youth workers, psychologists and other professionals, can be seen by vulnerable and marginalised young people as important sources of support (this will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.). Hence, these adults can become significant others through time, and are repeatedly referred to by respondents as being 'like family':

> They help us a lot. If I have to talk, if I have to vent, you can go to them. They give advice; it's like a second mother and a second father, basically. I feel good, it's different. The warmth, the cosiness, the trust, is completely different. (Júlia, RISK, PT)

However, for these relationships to be effectively supportive and foster positive changes in young people's lives, they must have some specific qualities that are clear from all the case studies. First of all, these relationships must be welcoming and respectful of young people: adults must listen to young people without judging them and must know how to talk to them in an accessible way: 'Basically good [referring to the relationship with the probation officer]. Very good, actually... She was supportive. She talked, advised' (Aarek, Ex-OFF, EE); 'Everyone that works here [referring to youth organisation], I love them. Because they like show me the respect that... like I don't usually get treated with respect, so like it's a new thing' (Jacob, CYI, GB). In all the case studies, the most impactful relationships with adults were pictured as "human-like", warm, equal, and trustful. Respondents particularly valued when adults accepted and respected them as they were, suggested solutions to their problems without imposing them, gave value and encouraged them to achieve new goals, and when they felt adults were committed to them and wouldn't give up on them. Thus, it can be assumed that there are three main principles that make the difference in the interaction with young people: empathy, trust, and respect (see section 3.3 for a more detailed discussion).

> [name of the youth worker] is not going to judge you. She gives you her opinion, but she never puts her opinion above yours. In other words, if you have to make a mistake, she will let you make mistakes. She will warn you that you might be wrong with it, but she won't… she won't scorn your previous idea, she would make you think about it and make you finally say, 'oh, okay, well, this will be good for me or not'. Her way of guiding suits me really well. (Paco, NoNEET, ES)

> So, I consider the [name of the second chance education project] a good place to be. Teachers strive to help us, in whatever they can. They do not just teach us stuff here, do they? They help us with many other problems. Personal problems, just like anyone has. (Santiago, RISK, PT)

The findings regarding the positive effects of the supportive relationships established with adults in institutional settings are among the most consistent throughout the cluster's case studies. This consistency highlights the crucial role the relationships with adults of reference can play in shaping the pathways of vulnerable and conflicted young people (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, and McNeely, 2008; Johnstonbaugh, 2018; Case and Haines, 2015; McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler, and Maruna, 2012). If adapted to young people's needs and traits, these relationships can be experience as sources of structure, boundaries, routines, and authority as safety, and not limitation (Mottern, 2012). In many cases, these relationships can be felt as actual turning points in young people's lives (for more detail see 3.3.7 - *Building confidence and emotional resilience*).

The mediating role of self-concept

Drawing from the 'power of significant relationships' and from the other concepts of this section, we conclude that *self-concept* is a key dimension to understand what enables and what inhibits youth social involvement. Self-concept refers to a person's self-perceptions which are formed through experience with, and interpretations of, one's environment. These self-perceptions are influenced especially by evaluations of significant others, reinforcements, and attributions for one's own behaviour (Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton, 1976; Shavelson and Bolus, 1982), as shown in the young people's discourses analysed in this cluster: young people's self-image is deeply influenced by the positive or negative images and judgments others make about them, which, in turn, may determine the ways young people get involved in society.

On the one hand, when young people develop a lower self-esteem, self-efficacy, or self-confidence, their ability to make better choices, establish positive relationships and be socially involved is compromised. On the other hand, when young people develop a positive sense of self, they tend to adopt more positive views about life and about others, are more open to new relationships and opportunities and more prone to prosocial attitudes, behaviours, and choices.

Data from all the case studies shows that self-worth and pride in oneself, obtained through social validation by significant others, seem to be strong enablers of social involvement, especially among vulnerable and stigmatised young people. According to what young people from Estonia, Portugal, Spain and UK say, there is a generalised negative social representation of youth arising from other people's evaluation (specifically the older generation and media), which is then internalised by young people and as already mentioned, mediates the way they behave. This evaluation from society contributes to the definition of constructed social identities (e.g., being of an ethnic identity, being from a poor neighbourhood, being of a certain gender) which in turn, defines the presence or absence of discrimination by society. The social validation of vulnerable and stigmatised young people is a strong enabler for their inclusion in society, since social validation can shape young people's behaviour, and their behaviour can give them access to more opportunities and therefore, there is the possibility of changing their life pathways.

3.3 To help or to hinder? How do interventions (from voluntary organisations and statutory agencies) enhance or inhibit youth social involvement?

This question addresses the range of 'interventions' that are designed to support and manage young people labelled as 'troubled' or 'at risk of criminal behaviour'. Following on from discussions in question 2 about the enablers and inhibitors of social involvement, this question focuses specifically on the role of interventions in youth social involvement. Our intention is to unpack the elements of the varied interventions that enhance or inhibit social involvement through a consideration of young people's responses to them. What is it about interventions that young people find help or hinder their opportunities, motivation and ability to become involved? Young people's experiences and narratives are central to the analysis. The discussion is situated within the context of debates about the value, purpose and ethics of interventions with young people.

Cross case analysis within this cluster has generated 8 concepts that explore and synthesise the findings from the 4 case studies to address the enabling and inhibiting elements of the interventions young people experience. The results do not divide neatly into intervention type, or indeed into those that are either enabling or inhibiting. Instead what emerges from across the case studies is a picture of diverse interventions encompassing a complex mix of elements that, within the context of multiple disadvantage, produce varied responses from young people. A general trend, however, reveals that those interventions that focus on support and development (most commonly found in the voluntary sector) are more likely to enable social involvement than interventions based on monitoring and control (most commonly found in the statutory sector).

In the discussion below, we organise the concepts around young people's responses to the interventions they encounter with a particular focus on the relationship between their responses and social involvement. Where possible, each concept includes discussions of the types of intervention (e.g. statutory or voluntary sector), as well as the elements of the intervention (e.g.

monitoring, enforcement and control processes, or emotional and practical support), that generated this sort of response.

Our discussion of intervention includes formal educational programmes and rehabilitative courses, at one end of the scale, to informal activities and street-based interactions on the other. They can happen in any setting (school, prison, youth club, street) in the statutory, voluntary or private sector. Their linking feature is that they are all designed, and implemented, to support and manage young people labelled as 'troubled', 'problematic' or 'at risk of criminal behaviour'. When referring to statutory agencies across the 4 nations we include the Criminal Justice System (from initial police intervention to sentences - prisons, probation, youth justice), education (mainstream and alternative provision), and social care (social work, care home).

The range of voluntary (also termed charitable or third sector) organisations are a more complicated mix. They include youth clubs and youth organisations (including youth-led and adult-led) as well as support and advice groups dealing with specific types of issues (e.g. young people leaving care or migrant youth). A total of 9 voluntary sector organisations are included.

A further complicating factor arises from the fact that as part of neo-liberal policies in each country, some voluntary sector organisations may deliver interventions on behalf of statutory agencies (e.g. Youth Justice or the Criminal Justice System), and some of this work is outsources to private companies. For example, in the case studies conducted in the UK, Estonia and Portugal there are examples of education projects, workshops, courses and youth sessions that are funded by the justice or education systems but led by private or voluntary sector organisations. For instance, the 'Second Chance Schools' in Portugal are voluntary sector initiatives that are supported structurally and financially by the Ministry of Education, and are offered to some young people as an optional choice while others are mandated to attend as part of a court protection or justice order. This raises debates about the boundary between formal and informal intervention and has led to criticism that the voluntary sector colludes with the state providing an extended arm of penal intervention (Tomczak, 2017).

It is important to note that this discussion is not a review or evaluation of the various interventions experienced by young people, nor is it a comparison of support across the 4 nations. Rather, it provides a series of snapshots of young people's experiences of, and responses to the interventions they experience, with a particular focus on the role of the intervention in enabling or inhibiting social involvement.

An overriding theme, present across all case studies, is the inhibiting effects of interventions that reproduce the stigma of a 'criminal' or 'risky' label (cf Bateman, 2011; McAra and Mcvie, 2007; Case, 2006). The role of labelling and the reproduction of stigma is a significant factor in young people's subsequent (lack of) social involvement and was discussed widely across all case studies. The organisations, or elements of organisations, that reproduce stigma and reduce opportunities are inevitably those that monitor, control and risk-manage using enforcement and surveillance methods. They are the ones that fail to allow young people a voice or a space to express themselves (Phoenix and Kelly, 2013), they fail to nurture supportive empowering relationships between young people and staff (Creaney, 2015), and they fail to build confidence or emotional resilience. Instead they manage young people using risk-based approaches that are grounded in stigma and serve to reproduce the label.

However, in some cases young people are able to resist the label and the stigmatising effect of certain interventions. Our analysis draws out young people's responses to interventions that label, and highlights stories along a continuum: from young people who are debilitated by the label to young people whose rejection of the label becomes an enabler of their social involvement.

3.3.1 Inhibited by the label

One of the most significant ways that interventions inhibit youth social involvement, evident across all four cases in the cluster, is through the production and re-production of the stigmatising label. This happens habitually across the range of statutory interventions within the education, criminal justice and care sectors, and can also be found, although less commonly, within elements of voluntary sector provision.

Education and early stigma

For many of the young people across the 4 case studies the experience of being labelled as 'bad' or a 'failure' began in school and became their first experience of state-led punishment. Our case studies demonstrate, as those have done before (cf Deakin and Kupchik, 2016) that interventions within schools can quickly escalate into suspension and permanent exclusion from mainstream education into alternative statutory provision. Discussions with young people in each case study focussed on the escalation of sanctions and intervention alongside a progressive disengagement from school and wider social disengagement. In each case study there were numerous examples of young people feeling 'written-off' by school, parents and society in general.

In Spain, Marc's pathway towards disengagement began with difficulties at school where he quickly became labelled as problematic:

> When I retook a year at school, then, well, the problems started to grow... They stigmatised me as something I was not!... I was asking for help but no one understood..."(Marc, ES, No-NEET)

Similarly, in the UK, Estonia and Portugal young people felt that previous disruptive behaviour during early school years meant they were labelled as a problematic student from that point onwards. The label generated prejudicial behaviour perpetuating the conflict with teachers:

> There were some teachers, man, which I could not look in the face. With some I didn't even set foot in the room. Because there were some teachers that I just put my foot in the classroom and the teacher asked "do you come to behave or to have a disciplinary fault?" And I would say "it depends, I'll see, and whatever". I would go in and already get a disciplinary fault. Like, in one period, I had 143 disciplinary faults. In one period. (Nelson, PT, RISK)

For many the cycle of disruptive behaviour and sanction was repeated until a permanent exclusion removed the child from mainstream schooling to alternative provision (Deakin and Kupchik, 2016). At this point the label is cemented bringing with it a new level of stigma. Despite the positive work that goes on in some alternative provision schooling the principle behind them centres on exclusion (from mainstream social involvement) rather than inclusion and the label that accompanies them becomes even more difficult to shake off. For the majority of the young people across the case studies who experienced school exclusion the result was stigma that they felt would inevitably limit life chances and opportunities (even when the experience of the intervention was largely positive).

Andreia, attending a 'second chance' school in Portugal after being excluded from mainstream education, discussed the label she experienced:

> They are normal teachers but they know we are different, special kids, right? … because we, to society the people here are inferior… people say that we do not do anything right and that we will not become anybody. (Andreia, PT, RISK)

Similarly, Lourenço, attending the same alternative school said: 'Some from outside, mostly friends from the past, they think this has no future, and will not get me anywhere. (Lourenço, PT, RISK). The inhibiting nature of such entrenched and widespread stigma can have a significant effect on young people's aspirations and their involvement in normative activities, as Santiago demonstrates:

> Most of those people who are like me end up doing bad things to live. In a certain way you don't have another option, you live like a poor guy or you have to do bad things to have a life. (Santiago, PT, RISK)

Criminal Justice labels

The stigmatising effect of formal (statutory) intervention (prison, probation, youth justice) with young people who have offended, or are considered to be 'at risk' of offending has been experienced by young people in three of the case studies in this cluster (GB, CYI, EE, Ex-OFF, PT, RISK). In all case studies (GB, CYI, EE, Ex-OFF, PT, RISK, ES, NoNEET) young people had experienced heavy handed encounters with, and interventions from, the police. Typically all of these interventions work on a 'risk-factor reduction' model aimed at limiting risky behaviours through processes involving surveillance, monitoring, enforcement and, in some cases, incapacitation (Smith, 2017; McAra and McVie, 2016; Case et al, 2015). By their very nature, these interventions focus on, and reproduce, the problem/criminal label, in essence re-stigmatising the young person and frequently resulting in reduced opportunities for social involvement (Deakin, 2018).

The police were often presented as problematic and the cause of much conflict in the lives of young people across all the case studies. Young people expressed an overwhelming sense of injustice when discussing their interactions with the police: they felt the police labelled them as troublemakers, and consequently didn't listen to them, didn't respect them, and mistreated them. They expressed an overwhelming lack of trust in the police.

Across the case studies, there were many examples of the police targeting young people and using increased surveillance tactics:

> They [police] saw two young men, they treated us badly: "What are you doing pimps?" Just like that. What have we done wrong, is it reason for so much? Because he is wearing a cap and glasses and because I wear a hat? (Francisco, PT, RISK)

> Lately, magically, the police have started driving by, from time to time, to check on us. (ES, No-NEET)

> They kept on like videoing us and that. And we were like, 'Why you videoing us? What we done wrong?' And they was like, 'It don't matter what you done wrong. I can do whatever I want.' Happens nearly every day. (Troy, GB, CYI)

The young people often felt they couldn't respond (or defend themselves) without causing further trouble. Scott discusses the escalation of problems, in this case from interaction with the police

through to criminal justice sanctions, describing how showing anger towards the police can escalate problems.

> I know a lot of my friends have anger and that, and escalated, you know what I mean. And when it escalates, that's when they take that as what you've done. And then a small problem becomes a bigger problem (Scott, GB, CYI)

This escalation chimed with many of the case study participants across the cluster. Many described examples of initial encounters with the police which led to a series of other problems. Jo, for example described how unjust encounters can lead to a general dislike for the police:

> one of my friends got stopped because she was in a car with someone who didn't have MOT on the car, something like that. And she was put in the van, and she was freezing. She got strip searched and everything… it does change people … they're like 'Oh, F the fed!' or stuff like that, every time they go past (Jo, GB, CYI)

While these encounters, in and of themselves, were not described as a major inhibitor of social involvement in Estonia, the UK or Portugal, they did make young people aware of their own presence on the streets and curbed social activities, particularly during the evening. In Spain, however, anxiety about being stopped by a policeman was grounded in a significant fear of being deported, since many of the young people participating in the case study were recent migrants to Spain. Rules around the right to remain in Spain have led to a precarious status for these young people, and, coupled with the doubly-stigmatising practices of the local police (fuelled by neighbour's complaints about minor disturbances), they faced a difficult task to 'stay out of trouble' in this high-stakes context.

Further stigmatisation was experienced by young people as they become more embedded within the criminal justice system (see also 3.2.3 - conflict generates conflict). Acquiring a criminal record resulted in increased stigma and closed opportunities that our participants were acutely aware of, from increased surveillance to difficulties finding a job. Young people with criminal records, in all the case studies, talked about the difficulties of moving on from a past that included criminal behaviour, and the difficulties of shaking off a 'criminal' label. Most felt they had been tarnished by the label, and that this affected them widely. In a practical sense, a criminal record inhibits social involvement by reducing training and employment opportunities: 'Prison doesn't change people… you can't do anything. The result is that no one wants you to work. What do you do then?' (Jaan, EE, Ex-OFF).

Ken, in Estonia, talked about not being believed by the police, when he reported his own experiences of child abuse, because of his criminal conviction. Being perceived as 'unreliable' adds to the sense of exclusion from society and the role of an active citizen:

> I can go talk about my problem, but nobody really believes me. Especially if you're a criminal person. If you have a bad label on you, the less you will be believed if you say anything. (Ken, EE, Ex-OFF)

Across the cluster, those young people with a criminal record felt authority was against them. Al, in Estonia, discussing his experience of attending a probation-led intervention after a period in prison, said he felt the probation officers were waiting for him to mess up so they could return him to court and then to jail. This form of labelling and stigmatisation, experienced by young people with criminal records was widespread and extremely difficult to shake off, supporting Tyler's assertion that stigma is a key factor in determining life chances (Tyler, 2013). The exclusionary nature of interventions that

ascribe the label of 'offender' serve to inhibit social inclusion long after the intervention has concluded.

3.3.2 Apathy and withdrawal from interventions: Latent rejection

A common response by young people across the four case studies to stigmatising (and formal) forms of intervention was to withdraw from participation in the intervention, and in some cases this was matched with a withdraw from other forms of social involvement (such as non-attendance at school). Responses of non-participation and apathy are, in themselves, seen as demonstrations of agency (Ekman and Amnå, 2012; Amnå and Ekman, 2015) and these (anti)responses are particularly important to record in circumstances dominated by conflict or trauma in young people's lives (Munford and Sanders, 2015). The sense of disengagement from formal interventions was evident as young people expressed feelings of not being bothered or giving up engagement in the activities offered. Apathy, or 'doing nothing', may be seen as a form of resistance (Corrigan, 1993, 103), and is, itself, a demonstration of agency and a questioning or rejection of normative processes (see also 3.1.3 - Navigating the conflicts). In the case of some vulnerable and stigmatised young people it may also be a mechanism of protection.

> Some of them (Youth Offending Team staff) are all right, but they don't fucking listen. So, I don't... It's like, when I say, when I say to someone, "I cannot be arsed," trust me, do not tell me to do something 'cause I've just told you I cannot be arsed. (Liam, GB, CYI)

For those undertaking mandatory activities as part of a criminal justice sentence, or as a requirement for benefits, an underlying apathy or withdrawal may be hidden by a veneer of 'going through the motions' to satisfy the order requirements or assessment criteria. We see this as a latent rejection of the interventions they come into contact with. It is not an outright refusal to attend or participate, but more of a reluctant or insincere engagement in the form of a partial withdrawal from the programme and its activities, a non-committal, or apathetic, attitude to activities, or simply feigning engagement in order to meet requirements for completion of the supervision or programme. As expected, this latent rejection of an intervention is more common where the intervention is a mandatory part of state intervention, so for instance, where a penalty would be issued for non-engagement. Latent rejection of interventions can be seen across all case studies as a response to a perceived injustice (I shouldn't even be here) or to the inefficacy of an intervention (this programme is pointless).

In Estonia young people on probation described how they meet the requirements of their order by saying what they think the probation officer wants to hear. They 'lie' about their activities, attitudes and future plans in order to satisfy the demands of the programme and progress through the order. 'Everyone who goes there [to attend probation supervision] is just lying all day. They [probation officers] listen to these lies and nod, read your words and go on.' (Koit, EE, Ex-OFF).

A prevalent narrative, seen across case studies where mandatory programmes were experienced was one of irritation at the content and structure of the intervention. Many of the young people expressed annoyance about the types of activities they are required to do, the amount of time they were expected to attend and the poor quality and irrelevance of the support on offer. In Estonia the majority of the young people on probation expressed negative opinions and many couldn't remember what program they had attended or what it was about.

> They can make their own social programs there, but it's like they say it's a dishwashing liquid that can help you clear this glass, that's far from it. It's just designed for the probation officer so he can get some kind of report somewhere to make it seem like so many have passed through this program. But you can't change a person like that on paper…. Prevention is very important. But it's close to zero in Estonia. (Edgar) (EE, Ex-OFF)

The level of frustration with the mandatory programmes was a common narrative in the UK and in Estonia, and demonstrated that young people know what would be helpful for them, and also know what is not.

> At the time of the imprisonment, I participated in an ART (aggression replacement training), which is of no use whatsoever. Then I learnt some social skills, which has absolutely no use. Then I went to smoking cessation training…… and I've smoked for seven years now. (Juhan, EE, Ex-OFF)

The negative effects of interventions and programmes that are seen as 'tick-box' are described by Edgar as he discusses the demeaning nature of interventions that don't consider the young person's strengths or needs.

> Now I see that you as a person are nobody. It's kind of the same as in prison, you're like the last rag in a corner. Your rights are being manipulated, probation attempts to achieve their goals, but people's own goals, they are thrown out of the window. (Edgar, EE, Ex-OFF)

Similarly, some young people in Spain felt that their life experiences and the multiple problems they face are not taken into account in the interventions offered. They felt angry and resisted the support on offer believing it to be ineffective and simply a form of control.

> You think that you are helping me, but you have no fucking idea of what I have in my head, you know? I am fucked up here, in deep shit and you come telling me that we can solve this on that way, or that I might solve it by doing workshops, but I do not want to do workshops!!! (José, ES, NoNEET)

The stories presented above describe state-led interventions, based on control and monitoring, experienced by young people seen as 'troubled' or 'at risk'. It is important to note that these are mandatory interventions with little or no element of choice for the young person, and indeed, many include a penalty or punishment for non-compliance.

For the majority of young people, these interventions reproduce the stigma they have experienced and are, in essence, counterproductive. The stigmatising effect of statutory provision raises questions about young people's agency and, more specifically, their capacity for social involvement. It's difficult to imagine young people demonstrating control over their lives and their futures when they are characterised by social and educational exclusion, poverty and abuse (Phoenix and Kelly, 2013). The interventions they experience, designed to manage the risk these young people may pose, serve, largely, to reduce opportunities for social involvement.

However, some refutational experiences from a small number of young people across case studies demonstrate their ability to resist the narrative and social involvement and innovative action can blossom. This is discussed in the following section 'generating resistance

3.3.3 When stigma can become enabling: Rejecting the label – the case of the young person who fought back

In a small number of cases found within each case study the anger at negative labelling and stigmatising interventions had become enabling, demonstrating how key moments of a young person's life can 'operate to expand or restrict life choices' (Munford and Sanders, 2015: 2). Some young people shared stories of fighting back and rejecting the label, resisting the lack of opportunity, finding an alternative route and making things work another way (see also 3.1.2 - Actively searching for support and opportunities).

Becki, in the UK, talked about how she resisted the stigma and lack of opportunity experienced by young people seen as 'at risk' if criminal behaviour, not only for herself but for others around her:

> And most people just sit there and take it, and I don't like it at all. And I just want everyone to like move forward and stuff like that. So right now, I'm, I am pushing as many people as I can to get off themselves, to motivate themselves and do something with their lives. If you're sat at home you've got a talent, I'll, I'll find as many things as I can do. I'll even let you join my entrepreneur group. If you're good at drawing you can come join me. This is, I'm trying to motivate as many young people as possible to do something. Because I don't want us to get pushed into a box or formed into a place that you don't have to be in, you don't have to be there (Becki, GB, CYI)

This defiance in the face of adversity typically came from a desire to prove figures of authority (and control) wrong alongside a desire to be successful and to 'achieve something'.

Examples of resistance were also related to anger at the types of intervention available for young people. When faced with unhelpful and stigmatising interventions, young people sometimes turned their anger into a pro-active form of resistance aimed at changing their situation, or even changing the situation of other young people. In the UK, for example, Helen described her problematic relationships with a range of authority figures including the police, youth justice, social workers and care workers. Her childhood in care had been characterised by conflict and she had found herself shunted between care homes and youth justice interventions. Her anger at the stigmatising nature of the interventions she experienced led her to speak out against the injustice in a public forum with the aim of raising awareness about the consequences of stigma on young people (GB, CYI).

While there are examples presented here of young people resisting the label and fighting back, these examples are infrequent within Cluster 1 case studies. Tying in with Tyler's analysis of stigma-reduced life chances (2013), for the majority of young people experiencing statutory interventions designed to reduce risk, the outlook is a bleak picture of stigma and reduced opportunities for social involvement.

The picture changes when young people talk about the support offered by voluntary or third sector interventions, and these become the primary focus of the next sections. The following sections discuss the enabling elements of interventions which, for the most part, centre on third-sector intervention. A positive experience of intervention, found across all case studies, is one that includes practical and emotional support and nurturing that in turn builds confidence and provides increased opportunities for social involvement.

Young people identified and reflected on the significant benefits of their involvement with various organisations and agencies particularly those that they have chosen to attend (rather than are

mandated to attend). In general, they experienced benefits in relation to increased opportunities for practical and emotional self-development, including building positive relationships with staff and peers, and gaining a wider sense of contributing to society through 'giving back'. On a practical level, those organisations that support innovation, enable young people to create their own opportunities by nurturing ambition and helping them to realise their potential.

3.3.4 Skill development and practical support

An obvious and largely tangible aim of many interventions is the development of practical solutions to difficult circumstances, for example encouraging education, training and skill-building, or finding solutions to housing needs. The significance of this for future social involvement is evident in many of the interventions, particularly those with specific 'development' goals. For example, in Spain the purpose of 'Organisation 1' is to provide people without work permits access to culinary training and internships to increase their chances of gaining a work permit and employment (ES, NoNEET).

> When I left [project 1] many doors opened up! I had a training here and I met people who liked the way I worked, and then they recommended me to others. For me it was key for me to get the training in order to get job opportunities, before the training no one would call me (Maria, ES, NoNEET)

A clear relationship exists between the practical support offered by interventions and the capacity and opportunity for social involvement:

> [name of an NGO] helped us a lot. They gave us grants, they gave us a room, they paid for training ... and through them I came here to [project 1], my husband got a job... thanks to them we have become a bit more integrated (Abdou, ES, NoNEET)

Similarly, in the UK, young people engaged in a range of activities designed to increase employment prospects and therefore increase opportunities for future social involvement. Young people talked about 'CV building' as any activity undertaken that could be cited on an employment application form to demonstrate engagement, professionalism or a particular skill. These included a wide variety of activities offered in the youth centres from cooking sessions, video making and dance competitions, to organising group talks with the community policing team (GB, CYI). Other, more general life-skills were also gathered from group sessions held in youth clubs such as discussions of welfare, accommodation and benefit opportunities open to young people, financial responsibilities, and on-line safety (GB, CYI). Where these sessions existed, their addition to the development of skills was valued as preparation for life and a route towards independence.

Practical support came from a variety of interventions, including from both statutory and voluntary organisations. In Estonia, for instance young people provided examples of advice and guidance on practical issues offered by probation officers as part of their probation order, and in Portugal young people talked about the opportunities for involvement and subsequent change that had been presented by various interventions within both statutory and voluntary sector provision. Edgar's story demonstrates opportunities for change presented by his social worker and provided by the alternative education programme he had opted to attend:

> It got to the point that I had to say, 'I have to go back to school and improve myself'. The social worker got me on this [the Second Chance Education project] and I came. I grabbed it, to make people happy and that was it…. (Edgar, PT, RISK)

Overall, the vast majority of practical support and opportunities for self-improvement and change was experienced as part of voluntary sector intervention, rather than statutory intervention. There could be various reasons for the lack of self-improvement opportunities within the statutory sector, and these may be related to the boundaries of professional job-roles, limited time due to high public-sector case-loads, and the demands of actuarial measures of success, but exploring these in detail is beyond the scope of this report. However, our data suggest that in all contexts young people respond more positively to the holistic approach of voluntary sector engagement where practical and emotional support are integrated. Monica, attending the organisation in Spain mentioned above, describes the holistic nature of the support on offer there:

> [organisation 1] gave me the opportunity to build up a life, to be able to find a job, they help people even if they do not know how to write or read, no matter the skin colour,... they just open the door and help you to build a better future either here or in your country, wherever you decide. I love the project, it has helped me a lot to develop something that I did not even know I had (Monica, ES, NoNEET)

The practical benefits of interventions go much deeper when they are offered in the context of a 'whole-life' approach (add REF). In the UK, advocates of a 'Positive Youth Justice: Children First, Offenders Second' have promoted a set of principles that they argue are essential for an ethical and effective system of working with young people who have offended. Elements of this approach can be mapped across to any intervention with young people. The core principles – meaningful voluntary engagement that prioritises the young person's own goals and aspirations rather than those of the organisation, enhancement of the young person's personal, social and emotional development, instilling hope and self-confidence whilst talking into account the context of their experiences, needs and perspectives (Case et al, 2015) – strongly resemble the features of the enabling interventions explored here.

3.3.5 Creating a safe space

The notion of a 'safe space' in young people's lives has been discussed widely in the literature. From youth studies to urban geography, drama, psychology and criminology, all agree that access to a 'safe space' is a central feature of young people's development. A safe space should be free of stigmatisation and surveillance (McDermott & Graham, 2005) and it should allow young people 'to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views, and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours (Holley, & Steiner (2005:50). Much of the literature discusses the notion of a safe space in schools and Universities and focuses on self-expression, self-discovery and trying on different identities. Our data provides examples of spaces, provided by interventions, that the young people felt to be safe. The key features of the safe spaces were: somewhere young people could be themselves, somewhere they could voice their opinions, and somewhere they are not going to be judged. These include physical spaces where young people can meet each other and simply be themselves and hang out with friends or, in a more abstract sense of the term 'space', we include virtual and emotional contexts (outside the physical space) that allow for the 'safe' exploration of ideas, values and identities without fear of judgement or shame.

Safe spaces are most common within the voluntary sector organisations but were also noted within some statutory provision. In three of the four case studies (GB, CYI; ES, NoNEET; PT, RISK) young people discussed the places (mainly provided by voluntary sector interventions such as youth clubs) where they feel welcome and comfortable.

[local youth centre 4] was, like, a youth centre, where young kids would go in and you get to play games and listen to music. And it, well, it was mainly based on keeping us off the streets, stopping us to getting into trouble. And it actually worked for quite a lot of years until it got shut down. (Aiden, GB, CYI)

Well they have like different activities on each week. Like they'll have badminton or like arts and crafts or like card making or stuff like that. But I don't know, I just literally... like I'll sit around and chat and stuff. (Sophie, GB, CYI)

Youth club provision, discussed in the UK and in Spain, fitted the definition of a 'safe space'. Respondents discussed their membership of these youth organisations as providing non-judgemental support, particularly on account of the commonality of experiences between members. This membership and the support it provided was described as 'like family, or feeling like home' (GB, CYI), and consistent or unwavering despite what life may be like outside of the group (GB, CYI).

Even in the mandatory intervention offered to some of the young people attending Second Chance Education in Portugal, the notion of a welcoming, non-judgemental space was evident. These positive feelings tended to be strongly associated with a sense of being respected, understood, valued and supported, especially by the adults present (teachers, staff) (PT, RISK).

What makes me come to the Project is kind of ... I do not know, it's the way people welcome us, they receive us, it's the way they teach, it's also the way they take things more joyfully, it's the way they... (Rui, PT, RISK)

The exception (EE, Ex-OFF), a probation-led supervisory programme, did not provide a space (virtual, physical or emotional) where respondents were free to express themselves. Our analysis suggests that regulatory supervision, where the key focus is to control and monitor young people, does not fit with more developmental goals that support social involvement.

The key to any safe space is the positive relationships with the people in it.

3.3.6 Modelling supportive relationships and recasting authority

Across the case studies young people discussed the transformative potential of supportive relationships with adults running interventions (see 3.2.4 - The power of significant relationships). Young people's responses to their experiences with voluntary youth organisations are overwhelmingly positive (Mason, 2015) and provide many of the much needed hooks for change (Giordano et al, 2002). Primarily these hooks were found in relationship with adults running youth clubs (GB, CYE; ES, No-NEET) and with the teachers in the second chance education projects (PT, RISK). Here, there is space for social engagement to be encouraged and for social innovation to emerge to encourage agency and support the key turning points in young people's lives (Nolas, 2013; Wood, 2016; Mason, 2015; Munford and Sanders, 2015; Bryant and Ellard, 2015; Lister, 2007; Ekman and Amnå, 2012).

Key elements of supportive relationships include mutual trust, non-judgemental listening and advice, recognition of young people's achievements, allowing young people to make mistakes and offering gentle guidance.

[name of the youth worker] is not going to judge you. She gives you her opinion but she never puts her opinion above yours. In other words, if you have to make a mistake, she will let you make mistakes. She will warn you that you might be wrong with it but she

won't… she won't scorn your previous idea, she would make you think about it and make you finally say: oh, okay, well, this will be good for me or not. Her way of guiding suits really well to me (Pau, ES, NoNEET)

Many of the young people across the cluster discussed positive relationships with staff as a blueprint for functional relationships with authority figures, peers and family. And while this wasn't always evident in young people's relationships with staff working in interventions (and less so in statutory justice provision), it is something that most young people hoped for.

[the youth worker is important to me because of the] love she gives, for being there all my life, and for the advice she gives me [...] she is my model, someone who listens to me, someone who would give me advice if you have a question to ask, who gives me orientation "(Sandra, ES, NoNEET)

In Estonia there were a small number of examples of positive relationships with probation or prison officers (mainly as a conduit for practical support). However, many of the young people talked about what they would like (but didn't get) from a relationship with a prison or probation officer.

It all starts with an attitude. [If I was a probation officer] I'd have the right attitude. I would think of them as equals, rather than an offender.... it could be a mentoring or support program in which a probation officer supervises and directs. Who you get to discuss the things that you're worried about. (Juhan, EE, Ex-OFF)

Young people in all four case studies also looked to their peers as role models (see also 3.2.5 - The Power of Significant Relationships). The supportive peer-peer relationships that develop through attending the interventions are as valued as the relationships with adults:

you look at some like people that are older here, it's like you want to be like them, and it's like the same respect that they're showing other people like, you have to look up to them. (Jacob, GB, CYI)

It helped me to be here. Where different people meet up, have fun, play football… This gets and makes you get involved with people who are completely different to you. Makes you lose fear, to trust other people, to build relationships… all of this will help you later in working life. (José, ES, NoNEET)

This observation of a group discussion session in the UK demonstrates the importance of supportive relationships (with adults and peers) in these young people's lives.

The terms that the young people used to describe the group – talking of it as "home", "our family", and describing "feeling safe and secure" and "wanted" – conveyed just how important this was to them. They underscored the salience of this by describing how they enjoyed not feeling "pushed out", or feeling as though they were the "odd one out", which was perhaps a nod towards how they were currently, or had previously, been treated in other areas of their lives. (PI Photo session observations, GB, CYI)

An interesting feature of positive relationships with authority figures is their potential for transformation from conflict-based and problematic to supportive and enabling (Giordano et al, 2002). We have termed this process 'recasting authority'. This occurs where young people have formed respectful and trusting relationships with authority figures, having previously been 'in conflict' with the same, or similarly placed, authority figures. In Portugal, for example, at the second chance education project, young people talked about their changing attitudes towards teachers and

their acceptance of norms of behaviour that they had previously rejected. The most common narrative included a recasting of teachers' authority from mainstream to alternative school. The problematic relationships with teachers in mainstream schools that prompted negative responses by young people and a cycle of conflict and punishment became positive and supportive relationships with teachers in the 'second chance' school:

> Because I think here teachers are different from regular school. Regular school teachers don't want to know about students, basically. But not here, here you notice the affection that the teachers feel for us. They make us feel good, like we are at home.' (Telma, PT, RISK)

Clearly the mutually respectful nature of their relationships with teachers in the alternative provision school enabled a recasting of the teacher role.

3.3.7 Building confidence and emotional resilience

Relationships with adults play a vital role in transforming the lives of vulnerable young people (cf, Creaney, 2015; Case and Haines, 2015; McNeill et al, 2012). Within this cluster, supportive, respectful relationships developed with authority figures working within interventions played an important role in young people's emotional development. Across the 4 case studies close relationships with authority figures were described as 'supportive' and 'like family', helping to build confidence and think through problems. 'Like, they brought me out of my shell and made me, like, feel a lot happier. So I love it here. They really are supportive.' (Princess, GB, CYI)

Young people attending voluntary interventions in the UK and Spain, and those attending both second chance education projects and statutory youth justice interventions in Portugal discussed the impact of the relationships they have formed within organisations. For instance, in Spain, their participation in projects, and the support from others there, helped them overcome situations that they had found difficult (such as self-acceptance, demotivation or break-up of a toxic relationship). Many talked about their personal, social and emotional development: "I think that the most important thing I learnt here is to accept myself" (Marc, ES, NoNEET). A common narrative was the journey

In many cases these relationships provided them with the confidence to engage in social interaction and enabled them to take up further opportunities. Sophie, discussing the care-leavers support group in the UK (a voluntary sector intervention) said, 'It's made me more confident with people. Like I speak to people now, like, yeah. It's made me a bit more open-minded and stuff. Like, as in like meeting new people and that.' (Sophie, UK, CYI)

In Spain, one of the support projects was set up and run by young people themselves. For them, a common narrative was one of gaining confidence and a renewed sense of purpose from peer-support rather than support from authority figures. They talked about the impact of the project, helping them overcome difficult situations such as lack of confidence, demotivation or emotional turmoil (for instance, after the break a toxic relationship).

> I was completely demotivated, I did not want to study. I knew I had to keep studying because, fuck, I only had the baccalaureate and it was nothing [...]. Then, and this is important, a co-management group started here [...] and I filled the emptiness I felt with this project" (Paco, ES, No-NEET)

The co-managed project, and in particular the relationships that were developed within it, helped them on a personal developmental level: to cope with social interaction, to express themselves, to have the confidence to explore new professional opportunities, and to have a voice regardless of their background and previous problems:

> I found [here] a blank sheet that said "do what you want with your life, we will not judge you". Everyone has always judged the way I talk, my gestures… Then when I first got here it was like: wow, these people are cool! These people are not paying attention to the way I talk but to what I am saying! (Marc, ES, NoNEET)

The confidence gained from relationships developed within interventions, whether they are with authority figures or with peers, is an enabler of social involvement (see also, 3.2.5 - *The power of significant relationships*, and *The mediating role of self-concept*).

3.3.8 Promoting generativity: giving back

'Generativity or generative activities relate to feelings or behaviours that result from believing that one's past failings can be used to discourage future generations from experiencing the same challenges' (Barry, 2016: 104). Many of the organisations, or staff members within them, encourage and inspire young people to help others through involvement in generative activities, which, themselves can play a significant role in change (cf Maruna, 2001 and Uggen, 1999 in relation to desistance). Respondents, across all case studies, with very few exceptions, talked about their hopes and plans for the future, and many of these included supporting and helping others. In Spain, one respondent talked about the positive effect of the intervention on the treatment of those around them. 'I have learned to be calmer, to think more about the future, to think more about the others... not to hurt or insult them' (Andrei, ES, NoNEET)

In the UK, many young people discussed their general enjoyment of helping others and providing support for those facing similar challenges and these generative activities were supported by staff members (McNeill and Maruna, 2007). This ranged from helping with community issues, such as providing support for homelessness charities, to training to become a coach, mentor or youth worker

Sharing their knowledge, insight and experiences with other young people was also a critical part of attending voluntary interventions:

> Yeah. I spread the word: acceptance is key and positivity will never bring you negativity. And these are things that I'm trying, I spread all the time. It's something I definitely want to do with the group, it's to help the young people know that they're not alone. " (Becki, GB, CYI)

Helping others was presented as an imperative by some young people:

> Improving myself, I will help other people improve. Why? Because I had someone who helped me and if that person does not have someone, if it's my friend, I'll be there for him, because if I can he will as well. (Andreia, PT, RISK)

> Being able to help people, keep them company ... now I do know much more things than before, and now I would like to help even more people. (Monica, ES, NoNEET)

Sometimes, young people made the transition from youth club attendee to volunteer and eventually employment within the youth club: 'I used to come here for all the summer activities, and then … eventually started volunteering and now part time work.' (Keira, GB, CYI)

One of the older respondents in the UK case study had trained to become a youth worker, and dedicated her career to helping young people dealing with the challenges of leaving care: 'I'm working alongside the people that used to look after me. It's good. It's kind of one of those 'Look at me now' moments." (Helen) (GB, CYI)

Staff members running interventions often guided young people towards generative activities as part of a process of change. These activities provided a form of social involvement and recognition (Barry, 2016).

4 Conclusion

The cluster 'Education/justice/society' encompasses the experiences and perspectives of young people from four different European countries, who tend to be labelled by the authorities, and through public and media discourses, as 'troubled youth' 'at risk' of offending. This social construction promotes and reinforces stigmatisation and 'blaming' discourses of disengagement about youth (Fergusson, 2016). The findings from the cross-case analysis, however, show different ways for these "troubled" youngsters to respond to the conflicts they experience and to be socially involved, challenging the concept of youth agency.

Young people may vary their responses to conflicts according to their difficulties and circumstances, as well as to the opportunities and support they can get access to. Data from all case studies shows that across the four groups young people have the capacity to act – and in most cases do act – in face of conflicts in ways that can alter their situation, even if within a wider context of obstacles and unequal structures that they don't fully understand or control (Evans, 2007).

Sometimes this means that young people remain in the same conflicts, as that seems to them the most logical response, or indeed, the only response possible in face of social inequality, social stigma and/or lack of opportunities and support. However, young people can also actively seek for alternatives in education, work, youth organizations or group memberships, showing they are able to get support from others and to take responsibility for their own change. For many, these efforts become positive turning points in their lives and, for some, it also makes them want to give something back to others. Finally, in other situations or moments young people simply 'navigate' the conflicts which they cannot fully change, using individual strategies that allow them to gain psychological and/or social distance form these same conflicts and 'work around' them to maximize personal benefits.

All these cases show how 'troubled' young people are also active subjects who try to respond to the conflicts they face using the social resources they can reach. These responses may not always be seen as prosocial or normative but can become opportunities to greater social involvement. In fact, the cluster analysis showed that the responses to conflict are closely linked to the factors that may inhibit or enable youth social involvement, which are very consistent throughout the case studies.

General negative representations, labelling and stigma towards youth, whether by the media, older generations or institutions, are key aspects in reinforcing responses that perpetuate conflict. Indeed,

when young people are portrayed as troublemakers, disruptive, and not respectful of others, this favours the internalisation of a negative group identity that naturalises inequality and conflict and reduces more adaptative expectations and behaviours (from oneself and from others). Besides the label of 'troubled youth', the labelling process may be further enhanced by the co-presence of other specific identity features, such as ethnicity, social class, place of residence, gender, and sexuality. This can amplify young people's feeling of being socially judge, given that specific combinations of identity features tend to generate specific social expectations and limitations towards young people, regardless of who they 'really are' or who they can become. This links to the concept of intersectionality, which is useful to better understand the unique patterns of disadvantage, discrimination and oppression that might stem from the various intersections of claimed and perceived identities of young people (Bowleg, 2012; Crenshaw, 1994; Reyes, 2017).

Negative labels and stigma towards youth are also present and often inform many interventions directed to 'at risk' youth, which tend to be mostly controlling and punitive. In fact, the cross-case analysis showed that the interventions that inhibit youth social involvement to the greatest extent are those that stigmatise young people through systems of control, monitoring and risk-management. These interventions end up strengthening young people's personal and social vulnerability and limiting their self-confidence, their life choices, and their opportunities to move forward in life (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016).

However, there are varied and sometimes unexpected responses to the stigmatising and controlling elements of intervention, and we have noted examples of young people resisting the label and fighting back. Many of the interventions' features that are showed to foster social involvement relate to aspects like offering welcoming and safe spaces, practical support, opportunities to skill development, and supportive relationships formed with inspiring, non-judgemental and respectful staff. Indeed, the positive effects of supportive relationships established with adults, whether with family members and peers, or with intervention staff, are among the most consistent throughout the cluster's case studies. This highlights the crucial role that relationships can play in positively shaping the pathways of vulnerable and conflicted young people (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, and McNeely, 2008; Johnstonbaugh, 2018; Case and Haines, 2015; McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler, and Maruna, 2012). If based on empathy, trust and confidence, and if adapted to young people's needs and traits, these relationships can be experience as sources of structure, safety, and empowerment, and can be felt as actual turning points in young people's lives.

These traits of intervention are most often found in the less formal environments of voluntary sector organisations than in the statutory sector with its emphasis on risk management and control. There are exceptions to this, for instance the alternative provision school in Portugal (a private civil society initiative with state-led elements) was often a catalyst for positive change and youth involvement. The fact that a formal and (in some cases) mandatory intervention can be enabling demonstrates that these types of intervention (that need to provide formal sanctions) do not have to be inhibiting. A complex picture emerges of interventions that are experienced as enabling for some but at the same time are inhibiting for others.

Overall, the findings of our cluster analysis, lead us to self-concept as a key issue in promoting change or maintaining conflict, given that it is influenced by the difficulties and opportunities that youth have, contributing to a more or less empowered self-image, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Socially reinforced young people tend to see themselves as more effective and competent and this can lead to more social involvement, not only because they feel accepted but also because they feel

they contribute. Thus, self-concept is crucial in the intervention with vulnerable and stigmatised young people, being the positive relationships and validation by significant others, a trigger to change their pathways.

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