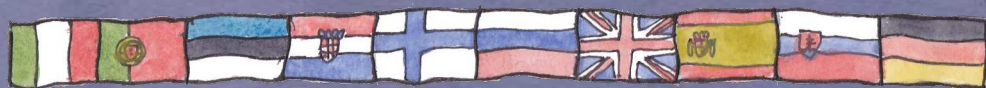


PROMISE

A story about researchers,
young people and the shaping
of society



PROMOTING YOUTH
INVOLVEMENT AND
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT



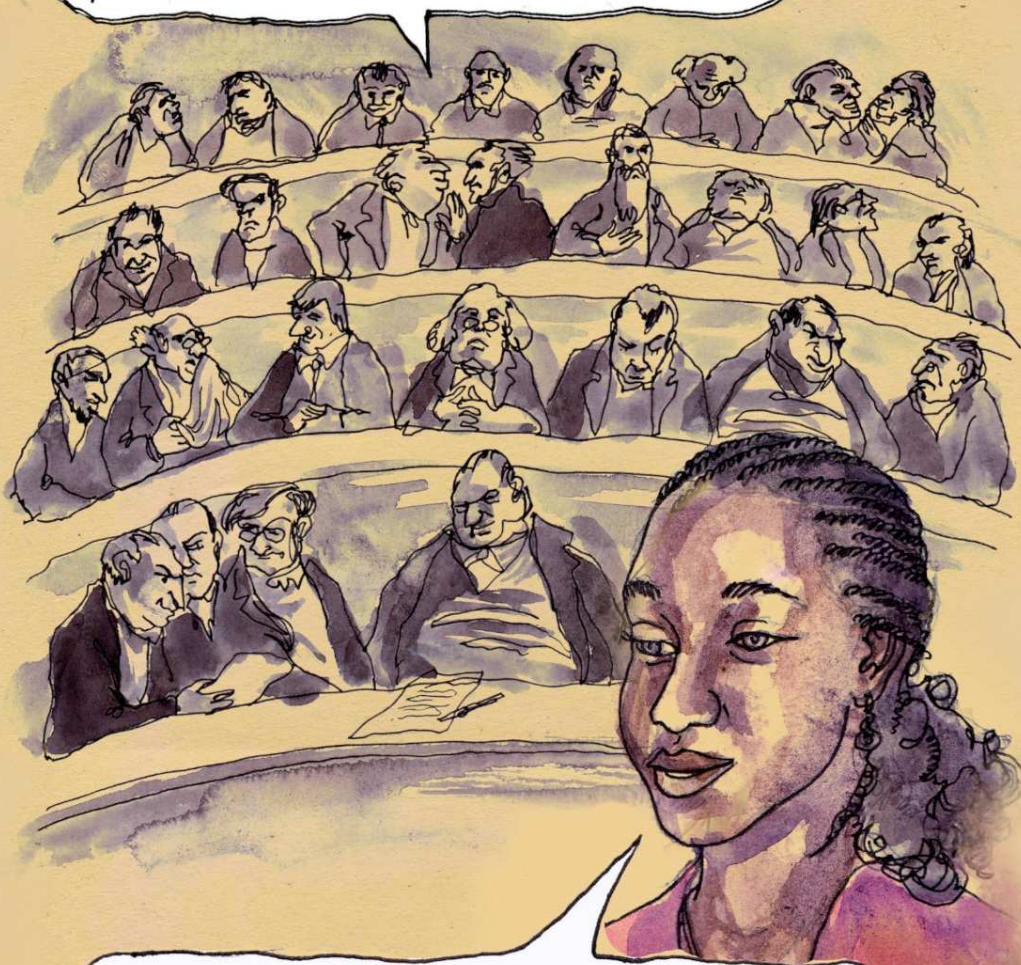
PROMISE: An Introduction

This book tells the story of PROMISE (Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement), a major EU-funded research project, which ran from May 2016 to April 2019. Its aim was to explore young people's role in shaping society: past, present, and future.

The project brought together twelve collaborating centres in Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, the Russian Federation, and the UK.



YOUNG PEOPLE AREN'T DOING MUCH. THEY CAUSE TROUBLE, AREN'T INTERESTED IN THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE AND ARE LAZY!



HANG ON, BY LABELLING US AS LAZY YOU'RE MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

In countries across Europe young people are seen as disengaged from society. They are frequently labelled as problematic (especially when gathering in public spaces), as lazy and selfish (preferring to pursue selfish interests over more useful pursuits), or as disinterested and apathetic (failing to engage in politics or contribute to society in a worthwhile way). Many of them are seen to do very little to benefit society.

The concept of PROMISE emerged in response to the zeitgeist.

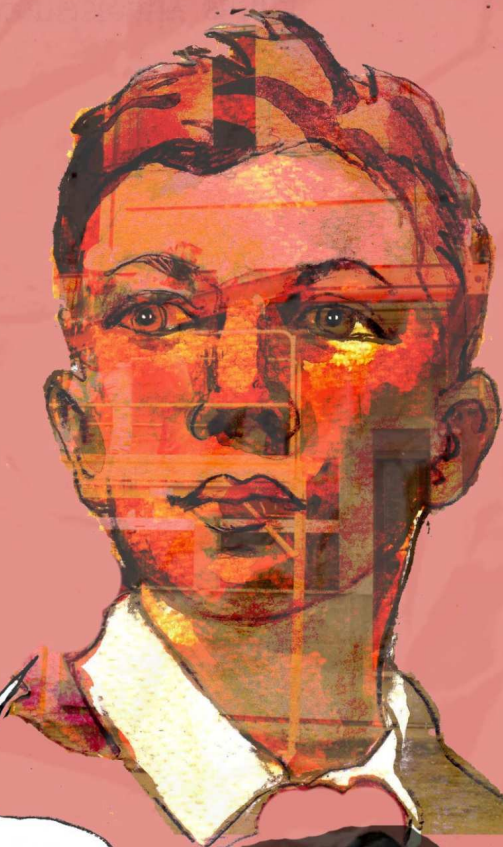
The negative effects of these labels reduce opportunities for young people to engage positively in social action, and, as a result, much of the creativity, innovation and energy within these groups is directed away from positive social change

Young people are instigators of social change, driven, in part, by the challenging circumstances that prevent their social progress: lack of opportunities, resources and respect.

The research explored young people's responses to these challenges, focusing particularly on youth who encounter conflict with authorities. These groups of young people are often seen as the most problematic in terms of positive social engagement, frequently triggering negative and punitive responses from society and authority, which, in turn, gives rise to further marginalisation and stigmatisation.

Young people are

OFTEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF SOCIAL,
CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE, DRIVEN
BY THEIR ENERGY AND CREATIVITY...



BUT ALSO BY OUR
FRUSTRATION AT
THE CHALLENGES
WE FACE



An international team wanted to find out about the challenges young people face. They heard the stories of their positive actions and experiences, even when times are tough.



The PROMISE team, drawn from 12 organisations across 10 countries, set out to explore the challenges faced by young people ‘in conflict’ with authority, and, importantly, young people’s responses to those challenges. Young people ‘in conflict’ present significant opportunities for change and yet their voices are seldom heard.

Through a better understanding of the experiences, values and attitudes of those young people least heard by decision-makers, PROMISE aimed to get to the heart of the barriers to, and opportunities for, social engagement and stronger societies.

PROMISE researchers engaged young people across Europe providing a space for them to set the agenda, document their situations and articulate their needs.

Young people were at the heart of this research project. They shared their stories and their spaces with researchers, guiding the research and disseminating the findings. By employing a participatory approach including ethnographic, arts-based methods, young people were always at the centre of the research.

DOUBLE
ne
SCORE

DOUBLE
WORD
SCORE

The researchers crunched the
the numbers and did the maths



and found that young people
are active in lots of different ways

Researchers gathered quantitative data from recent years, to explore youth attitudes and behaviour across Europe, and found that there was some variation in the ways young people take part in society.

Engagement extended from the 'everyday' (donating money to charity, boycotting products), to the 'political' (demonstrations, signing petitions). There were also examples of 'standby' engagement: monitoring social developments from a distance, ready to intervene if needs be.

But, despite all of this action, many young people don't feel heard and this can lead to a loss of trust in democracy, to illegal activism or a withdrawal from society.

promoting your
involvement
social
engagement

and LGBT Rights in St. Pete

WE
SHOW
PEOPLE
WE
EXIST

build it for ourselves!

CASE
STUDY

WORKING
TOGETHER
TO
CREATE SPACE
AND SKILLS

MORE
COLLECTIVE
WAYS OF
WORKING

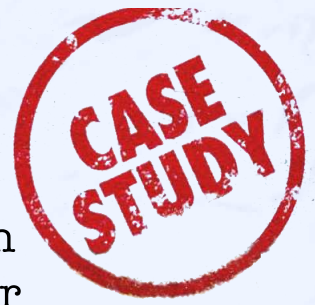
CASE
STUDY

Once in trouble,
always in trouble?

FACE OF DIFFICULT ECONOMIC
CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU
HAVE TAKEN MATTERS IN
YOUR OWN HANDS

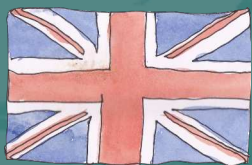


Twenty-two case studies were conducted across ten countries with groups of young people identified as facing conflict with authorities, older generations or social norms, in their particular cultural context. The case studies used ethnographic and participatory methods (art, photography, peer-research, immersive observation) to explore youth engagement and innovation.



The coproduced knowledge revealed a wide range of responses including demonstrations of youth agency through resistance, rejection, adaptation and even apathy. Moving beyond normatively approved and formally organised youth engagement, the case studies showed examples of political, social, civic and community involvement, engagement and activism, creative activities and other forms of innovation.

Four examples of case studies from the UK, Spain, Russia and Estonia are presented on the following pages.



This case study explored the stigmatisation associated with being a young Muslim in the UK.

Rising anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments together with the securitisation of society, have contributed to the construction of Muslim populations as 'suspect communities'.

The research suggests widespread negative associations with Islam and Muslims, result in a sense among young Muslims that they are constantly surveilled, scrutinised and silenced.

This shapes their propensity to engagement and the types of activism in which they participate; it mobilises them to defend the right to express their British Muslim identities. Thus, while social exclusion in general acts to inhibit social involvement, some young Muslims feel their own marginality can enable civic and political engagement.

Resisting

ENGLISH
JOURNALS

CASE
STUDY

Labels

J.B.
PRIESTLEY

YOU TRY
TO LABEL
US

WE PROVE YOU
WRONG BY RAISING
MONEY FOR
CHARITY

WE DEFEND OUR RIGHTS
TO EXPRESS OUR BRITISH
MUSLIM IDENTITIES

Young muslims are

constantly surveilled,
scrutinised and silenced

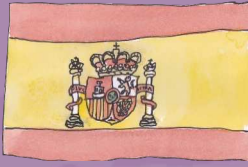


We build it for ourselves!

**CASE
STUDY**



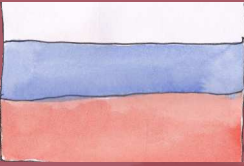
IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULT ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, YOUNG
PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN MATTERS INTO
THEIR OWN HANDS.



This case study explored the innovative ways young people in Spain

have rewritten the rules on accommodation and living arrangements to become directly involved in providing for their own futures.

Moving towards collective and non-hierarchical ways of working, they have learnt key skills in order to alter their living environment: offering maintenance work instead of rent, living communally, and even building their own homes. By upskilling and sharing their knowledge they have been able to empower themselves, and others, to rethink their 'spaces for living'. Their efforts have seen tangible results in the short, medium and longer term.



Set in St Petersburg, this case study explored the views of LGBTQ people resisting gender-based discrimination.

As the aggressive promotion of conservative ideology in Russia has increased dramatically in recent years, LGBTQ people have found their voices silenced in the public sphere. But for some young people the pressure on non-heterosexual individuals has become an incentive for the development of activists' associations and initiatives.

In St Petersburg, LGBTQ people have mobilised against gender-based discrimination by organising protests, educational projects and other activities. They represent a decentralised, informal social movement, interacting in a flexible communication network. Their movement raises issues of central importance for the community, such as the status of sexuality, public actions, power and hierarchy, as well as new sexual and gender identities.



Газета основана
5 мая 1912 года
В. И. ЛЕНИНЫМ

ПРАВДА

Орган Центрального Комитета КПСС

№ 116 (2147)

Вторник, 20 августа 1991 года

Цена 10 коп.

Gender and LGBT Rights in St. Petersburg

WE
SHOW
PEOPLE
WE
EXIST

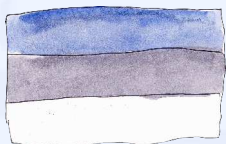
CASE
STUDY

Not only for themselves,
but for others collectively!

CASE
STUDY

Once in trouble,
always in trouble?





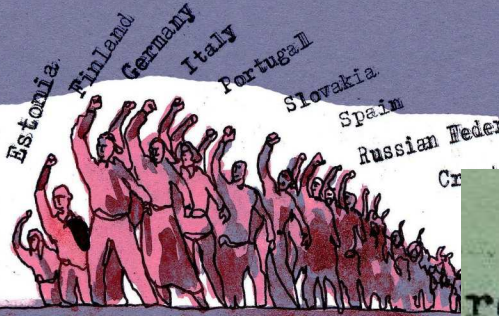
This case study explored the experiences of young people in Estonia convicted of a criminal offence and serving time in prison or on probation.

Using photographs as prompts, young people reflected on how they are stigmatised by their past, and what impact that stigma has on their lives and futures, such as feelings of alienation from the state and a lack of engagement with mainstream society.

Those young people who ‘moved on’ from crime, demonstrated a capacity to resist stigma and fight back. They found strategies to avoid the negative impact of the stigmatising label, and to access the ‘ladders’ of community-level support that helped them overcome obstacles.

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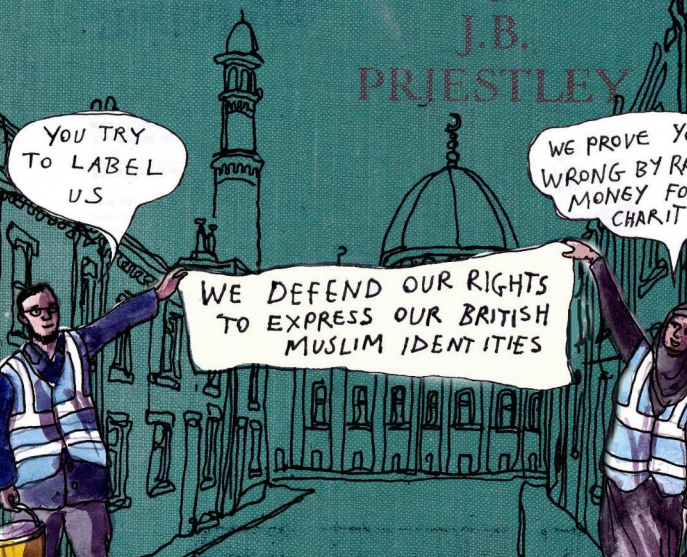


researchers were guided
by the voices of the young



Resisting
Labels

ENGLISH
JOURNALS
J.B. PRIESTLEY



promote
involve
social
engagement



promoting youth
involvement and
social
engagement

The PROMISE team continues to disseminate the project findings to a range of audiences.

For more information, please visit <http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk> where you can download case study reports, policy briefs, conference presentations and statistical analysis.



With special thanks to all the young people who so generously shared their stories and welcomed us into their spaces and their lives. We hope your stories will be told and retold to demonstrate the power of youth.

Thanks also to the numerous organisations that have supported this research and to the European Commission for investing in the futures of young people.

Finally, thanks to Paul Gent and TiPP for their creativity and dedication to the cause, and to all the PROMISE team members, without whom this project would not have been possible.

PROMISE was funded under the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, Grant Agreement no. 693221. It ran for three years from May 2016 to April 2019.



Highlighting cases of youth action and reaction, this book presents some key findings of a major EU funded project, PROMISE. Powerful images (and a few words) tell the story of the research from its initial conception, and invites the reader to explore young people's role in shaping society.

Original Art by Paul Gent

Book Design by TiPP

