

Strengthening the role of youth work in contesting dynamics of shrinking cities



Developing mapping methodology approach and conducting researches.



**strengthening
youth work
in shrinking cities**



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Content

1.	Introduction	6
2.	Introductory definitions	7
3.	Methodology and approach to mapping	12
3.1.	Finding common ground	12
3.2.	Research design	13
3.2.1.	Defining the frames of research and research questions	13
3.2.2.	Desk research and the criteria for the selection of examples	13
4.	Germany	20
4.1.	Youth work in national context	20
4.2.	Shrinking phenomenon in national and regional context	21
4.3.	Case study of city of Saalfeld	24
4.3.1.	Shrinking phenomenon in the city context	24
4.3.2.	Organization and youth-work programs	25
4.3.3.	Background and genesis of the projects	
	Saalfeld Bauwerk- Beulwitzer Street	26
4.3.4.	Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries	28
4.3.5.	Perspective from the related stakeholders	30
4.4.	Case study of city of Altenburg	31
4.4.1.	Shrinking phenomenon in the city context	31
4.4.2.	Organization and youth-work programs	32
4.4.3.	Background and genesis of the youth-works projects	33
4.4.4.	Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries	35
4.4.5.	Perspective from the related stakeholders	36
5.	Portugal	37
5.1.	Youth work in national context	37
5.2.	Shrinking phenomenon in national and regional context	39
5.3.	Case study of city of Covilhã	42
5.3.1.	Shrinking phenomenon in the city context	42
5.3.2.	Organization and youth-work programs	43
5.3.3.	Background and genesis of the youth-works projects	44
5.3.4.	Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries	46
5.3.5.	Perspective from the related stakeholders	47
5.4.	Case study of city of São Pedro do Sul	48
5.4.1.	Shrinking phenomenon in the city context	48
5.4.2.	Organization and youth-work programs	49
5.4.3.	Background and genesis of the youth-works projects	50
5.4.4.	Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries	52
5.4.5.	Perspective from the related stakeholders	54

6.	Spain	55
6.1.	Youth work in national context	55
6.2.	Shrinking phenomenon in national and regional context	56
6.3.	Case study of city of Granada	58
6.3.1.	Shrinking phenomenon in the city context	58
6.3.2.	Organizations and youth-work programs	61
6.3.3.	Background and genesis of the Aviones de papel project	62
6.3.4.	Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries	63
6.3.5.	Perspective from the related stakeholders	64
6.4.	Case study of city of Cádiz	65
6.4.1.	Shrinking phenomenon in the city context	65
6.4.2.	Organization and youth-work programs	67
6.4.3.	Background and genesis of the youth-works projects	68
6.4.4.	Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries	70
6.4.5.	Perspective from the related stakeholders	71
7.	Croatia	72
7.1.	Youth work in national context	72
7.2.	Shrinking phenomenon in national and regional context	73
7.3.	Case study of city of Sisak	76
7.3.1.	Shrinking phenomenon in the city context	76
7.3.2.	Organization and youth-work programs	77
7.3.3.	Background and genesis of the youth-works projects	79
7.3.4.	Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries	80
7.3.5.	Perspective from the related stakeholders	81
7.4.	Case study of city of Karlovac	83
7.4.1.	Shrinking phenomenon in the city context	83
7.4.2.	Organization and youth-work programs	85
7.4.3.	Background and genesis of the youth-works projects	87
7.4.4.	Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries	89
7.4.5.	Perspective from the related stakeholders	91
8.	Lessons learned across the cases and recommendations for readers	95
8.1.	Recommendations	96
8.1.1.	Approaches to the youth work	97
8.1.2.	Youth work methods	97
8.1.3.	Cooperation of the local stakeholders	97

1. Introduction

The past few decades have marked an increased social mobility combined with the drop of population in many cities across the EU. A trend of migration from small and medium-sized cities towards major European cities have caused an urban shrinkage. Population loss along with economic decline have resulted in uneven development patterns for EU urban regions, not only in terms of the local economy, but also in relation to the development of functional social structures of the cities.

A great deal has been written about causes and impacts of shrinkage, as well as about policies and planning strategies. Nevertheless, the state of knowledge in a cross-national perspective is rather poor because studies have basically analysed large cities and empirical evidence hardly shifts attention to the contextual influence on local dynamics (Wolff, Wiechmann: 2017). And mostly with focus on one or two country or community case studies with its application mainly in the academic sphere. Given that a shrinking city is one that has experienced population loss, employment decline and social problems as symptoms of a structural crisis (Martinez-Fernandez et. al. 2012), it shows how complex the shrinkage process is and that requires more explanation of push factors. The widely perceived "lack of future" opinion reveals the crucial push-factor for people to leave their place/country. Among these factors are working opportunities, social content (cultural activities, free time, education and training), class, gender, ethnicity, and inclusion of youth in policy-making just to name a few.

This project aims to contribute to building new strategies of social inclusion and civic engagement for youth residing in Europe's "shrinking cities". The objectives of the project are: To expand knowledge on the „shrinking cities" phenomena in the selected European countries, with emphasis on successful youth work practices contesting their unfavourable social, economic and political dynamics; To create, test and disseminate quality toolbox for youth workers working in shrinking cities based on the mapping and analysis of best practices in selected countries.

Additionally, the project will provide an opportunity for youth workers, volunteers, organization's staff to learn, explore, reflect, and develop tools that will aid them directly to improve their work. It's implemented by eight partner organizations from four EU countries; Documenta and Croatian Youth Network from Croatia, EJBW and Culture Goes Europe from Germany, YouthCoop and UMAR from Portugal with Asociacion Caminos and College from Spain.

In the planning process, partners conducted a preliminary research and provided information about shrinking cities and relation to the youth in their countries. There is a unanimous conclusion that the socio-economic problems cause the cities to shrink and have enormous effects mainly on youth. On the other hand, there is a great number of youths that believe they can change things for better in their setting. Similarly, youth need access to be common accepted tools and improved practices that can be used in their own social and cultural contexts. Correspondingly, youth work should provide a bridge that strengthens young people at personal level, but also promotes public action and learning about translating key values of youth work into reality. Moreover, engagement in the wide variety of personal and social development activities, helps young people to develop the knowledge and skills that are needed in the labor market, given that 3.5 million young people are unemployed in the EU (Eurostat, 2018).

The partners embrace the idea of conducting proper mapping and research that would enable to better understand similarities and differences of problems while at the same time provide methods through the toolkit for learning on how to deal with critical socio-economic dynamics at different local setting across the EU. It is also important to investigate examples of successful youth work, identify and document innovativeness, and widely disseminate the results. To do that, there is need for data collection, gathering information and showcasing processes of different shrinking cities through mapping and addressing various drivers and impacts.

2. Introductory definitions

What is Youth Work?

Youth Work can be defined as **“actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they take part voluntarily, designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning”**.

It is worth mentioning the term “youth work” does not even exist in many languages and it is understood differently in the countries where it does exist.

Youth work offers developmental spaces and opportunities for all young people and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes and on voluntary participation.

Youth work has three essential features:

- *Young people choose to participate*
- *The work takes place where the young people are*
- *It recognizes that the young person and the youth worker are partners in a learning process*

It includes a broad range of activities (social, cultural, educational, sports-related and political) carried out with, by and for young people through non-formal and informal learning. It provides out-of-school education, as well as leisure activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders. However, not all youth initiatives are considered youth work – activities that are managed by youth but not aimed at young people may not be considered youth work. Young people should not be seen only as beneficiaries of youth work but must be seen and met as central stakeholders and co-creators in the design and implementation of youth work activities and programs – if you do not need to include young people when doing youth work, you are not doing youth work.

Youth work provides out-of-school education, as well as leisure activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders.

Its value is recognized in the Council conclusions on youth work and highlighted in a study released in 2014.

What are the aims?

Youth work helps young people to reach their full potential. It encourages personal development, autonomy, initiative and participation in society.

In other words, it aims to support young people to reach their full potential and encourage the personal development, autonomy, initiative and participation in society.

Who are the youth workers?

Youth Workers can be defined as *“People working in direct contact with young people, carrying out activities designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning. Youth workers, in turn, might be professionals or volunteers and be civil servants or work for NGOs.”*

Where does take place?

Youth work is delivered in different forms and settings (e.g. open-access, group-based, program-based, outreach, and detached) at local, regional, national, and European level. Funding programs and support systems to support actions directed at youth are also considered youth work.

These are the most common forms of Youth Work:

- Youth Centres
- Youth Projects
- Informal Youth Groups
- Youth Camps
- Youth Information
- Youth Organizations
- Youth Movements

There are other forms of youth work, depending on the country and the way Youth Work is seen or recognized, can be carried out by different entities (NGOs, schools, municipalities, etc.) and take place in other places such as youth centres, community spaces, schools, churches, libraries, etc.

Relation to other fields

Sometimes it is difficult to find a border between youth work and other activities directed at young people. There are good examples of valuable youth work in other fields, such as sports, but it is important to clearly show the differences between areas that work with the same target group. Youth Work activities have the following key aspects to differentiate from other areas: *the activities must attract young people on voluntary basis, use non-formal education methods and aimed at the personal and social development of the participants.*

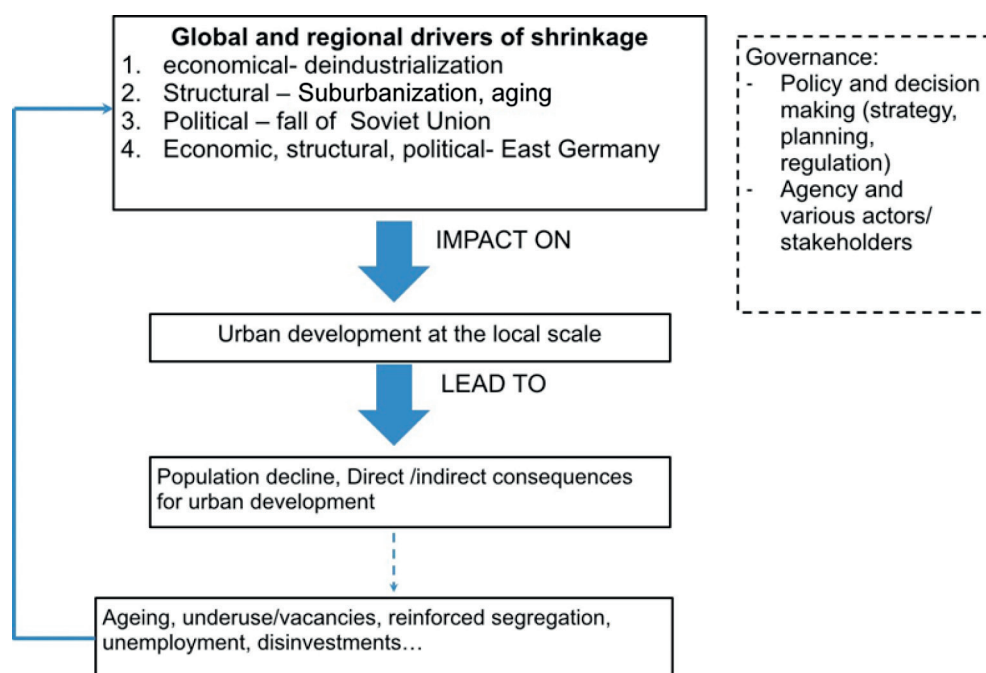
In the field of sport, “activities that are based purely on improving performance and reaching excellence in a given sport would most likely not be considered to be youth work by representatives of the sector” – the difference is the main objectives of the activities and the way of working with young people. Leisure activities in certain conditions may describe the time frame where some activities take place and not directly connected with objectives. Leisure work is referred to work at providing activities with a primary focus on the fun factor and not on the development of young people in personal, social and cultural dimensions. These types of activities can however be used as tools to foster connection with young people and connected with youth work activities.



What is a Shrinking City?

Most of the literature on the topic of shrinking city predominantly agree that **a shrinking city is a city that loses its population during a period of time either due to emigration or by natural causes thus showing little perspective for the inhabitants of the city**¹. Normally has been associated to cities that suffer several post-industrialization processes, having been cities with high employment demand because of their industrial aspect, hence a magnet for immigration and labor market. A myriad of explanatory framework was assembled around phenomena of population loss and economic decline that becoming major causes for a shrinkage. These included: **deindustrialization, spatial polarization, and suburbanization**² or even the end of growth³ - all of which can be seen as **wider effects of post-socialist transition, globalization and nonlinearization, or a combination thereof**⁴.

Broad fields of interventions have developed in the context of shrinking cities, ranging from urban and regional policies that seek to manage shrinkage or initiate growth to cultural practices of dealing with shrinkage. The global process of shrinkage has shown that for example; de-industrialization in **Manchester/Liverpool** is characterized by an extreme polarization between zones that are recovering and those that continue to decline; whereas the **Detroit** metropolitan area serves as an example of shrinkage due to suburbanization. The city of Detroit has lost around one million inhabitants—about half its total population— over the last fifty years, although the region itself has grown considerably in this period. The city is still shrinking today and represents one of the most extreme examples in the American rust belt.



1 in Genski, D.D and Ruß. A :Expanding cities, shrinking cities, sustainable cities: challenges, opportunities and examples. IAEG 2006 Paper number 82.

2 Hannemann, C., 2000. Zukunftschance Schrumpfung – Stadtentwicklung in Ostdeutschland. Hager, F., Schenkel, W. (eds.): Schrumpfungen. Chancen für ein anderes Wachstum, Berlin et al.: 99-105.

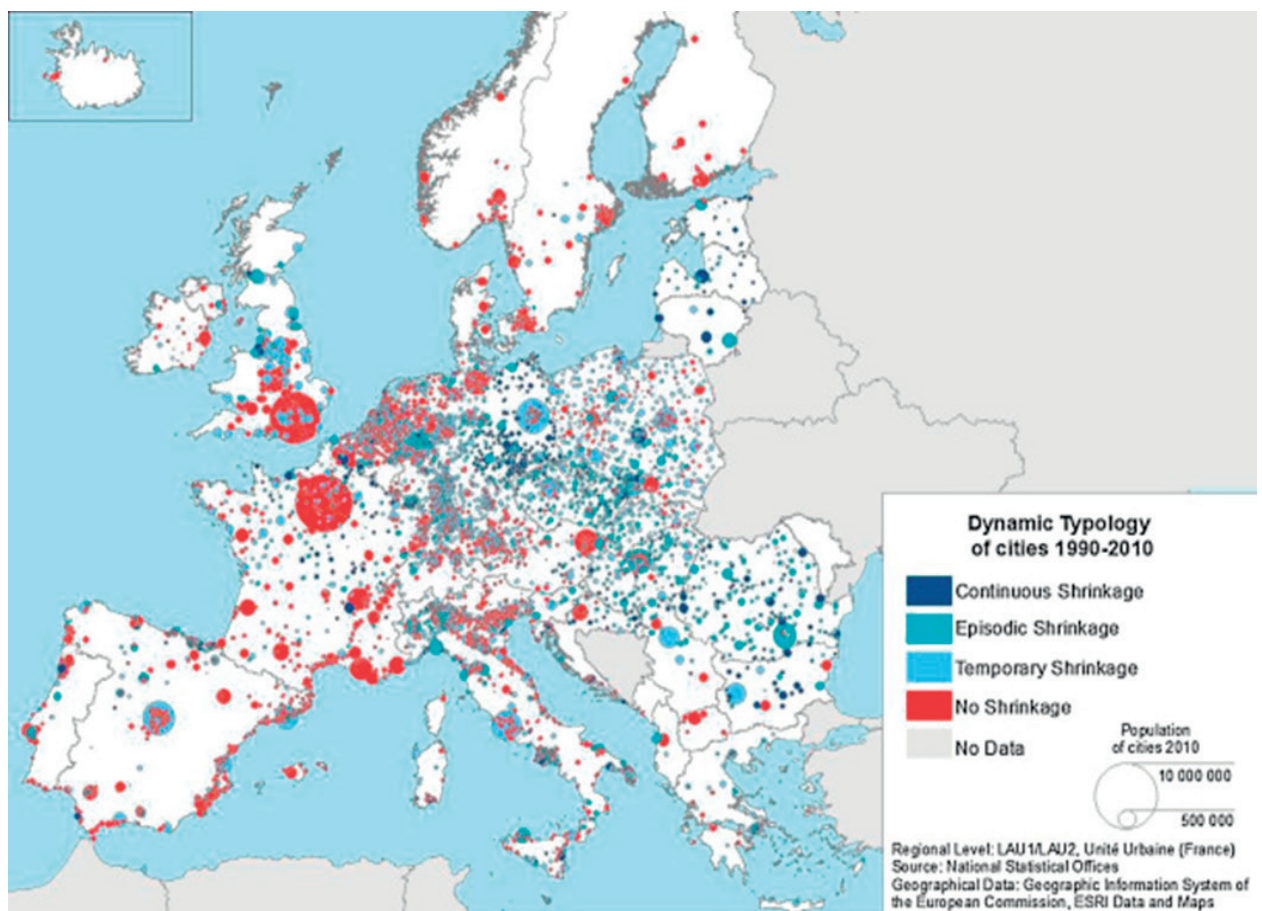
3 Kil, Wolfgang. 2003. "Schatten des Neoliberalismus - Überlegungen zum Schrumpfungsprozess ostdeutscher Städte," *Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 28.

4 Häussermann, Hartmut, and Walter Siebel. Die schrumpfende Stadt und Stadtsoziologie. Vol. Sonderheft 29/1988, in *Soziologische Stadtforschung*, by Jürgen Friedrichs, 78 - 94. Opladen: Westdeutsche Verlag, 1988

On the basis of publications by Häussermann and Siebel a shrinking city could be defined as a large city that developed intensively during industrialization era. In the second half of the 20th century it started to face strong depopulation and a high reduction of workplaces. Its economy dominated by heavy industry is in crisis and new industrial investments do not appear. The increase of jobs in service sector is not sufficiently compensating their decrease in the industrial sector. The city economic crisis is further exacerbated by outflow of better educated and more qualified inhabitants into cities whose economies offer jobs to them. It is well reflected by the real estate prices, which are falling down considerably. Thus, worsening economic conditions and a continuous outflow of inhabitants is the reason why a shrinking city is a model of urban development where crisis is persistent and irreversible. This makes it different from other models presenting urban crisis⁵.

In short, theory of "Shrinking Cities", *Schrumpfen Städte* by Häussermann and Siebel (1987, 1988) suggested that there are **four points that trigger a shrinkage**:

- *A spatial process of suburbanization and a process of deindustrialization in Western Germany since 1970s.*
- *The socialism and the post-socialist transformation of cities in Eastern Germany early 1990s.*
- *Population decrease that last for a long time and is intensive, age structure changes and thus influencing economic performance.*
- *Impact on social and spatial development.*



5 Glock, Birgit. Stadtpolitik in schrumpfenden Städten. Duisburg und Leipzig im Vergleich. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006.

Scholars have been also considered that demographic changes are not the only cause that determine the discourse of shrinking city. For example, the reason for which the discourse reappeared after 2000 was not the high population decrease in the Eastern German cities, but the publication of a report on the residential real estate market in Eastern Germany, where it was stated that over 1 million flats in this area stay unoccupied⁶. As a consequence, a great volume of housing and other real estates that are not meeting actual demand has appeared in the Eastern German cities. As a result, a high number of abandoned flats and buildings are being now gradually demolished, what leads to a perforation of the city structure.

⁶ Pfeiffer, Ulrich, Harald Simons, and Lucas Porsch. Wohnungswirtschaftlicher Strukturwandel in den neuen Bundesländern. Bericht der Kommission. Fraunhofer IRB Verlag, 2000.

3. Methodology and approach to mapping

3.1. Finding common ground

During the project team meeting in Weimar, the team defined more closely definitions and parameters of the research. As countries included in this project vary very much in size, geographical position, population size, economy and many other factors, the team had to take all of these into account while planning. Here are the definitions that team agreed upon.

- *What is youth?*

Age group between 15 and 29 years.

- *What is a youth work?*

Actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they take part voluntarily, designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning.

- *What is a city?*

City is an urban settlement with at least 10.000 inhabitants.

- *What is a shrinkage?*

Persistent shrinkage lasting through a longer period which is the result of combination of physical, social, structural and physical changes.

- *What is a shrinking city?*

A shrinking city is a densely populated urban area with minimum 10.000 population that has faced population losses at least within the last 3 years and is undergoing social transformation with some symptoms of structural crisis.

- *What do we understand under the term "contesting dynamics of shrinking cities?"*

We focus on the youth work as a medium of contesting.

- *What do we understand as a "good practice of youth work in contesting dynamics of shrinking cities?"*

1. *explicit addressing of shrinkage*

Youth-work programs that address the causes and/or consequences of shrinkage in particular community, in terms that it builds resilience against the causes and of shrinkage.

2. *implicit addressing of shrinkage*

Focus on programs that are trying to address the problems in the local situation but not originally connecting it to causes and/or consequences of shrinkage.

3.2. Research design

The methodology of mapping, as well as the research design, were also discussed and agreed upon during the second project partner meeting in Weimar.

3.2.1. Defining the frames of research and research questions

In this research, the team was mapping the examples of good practice of youth work in the shrinking cities. Having in mind resources and timeframe, the team agreed that each partner will focus on one shrinking city in its country and choose one or two empirical cases of youth work projects/programs in this city.

The team defined three research questions:

- *How did selected youth work projects/programs developed over time?*
- *How did the selected youth work programs/projects influence the young beneficiaries?*
- *What is the perception of the project by local stakeholders? What, if any, was its impact on or adaptation in youth policy?*

These research questions steered the team to the central challenges of the research. First, it was important to understand the background and genesis of the youth-works projects, so that we can assess push and pull factors and external factors that influenced the project. Then it was important to understand the impact/influence on the youth of the youth-work projects. Lastly, the aim was to understand the perception of the projects by the local stakeholders and adaptation in the youth-policy because we wanted to see was there any influence on elements such financing, changes through policy and general knowledge about projects.

3.2.2. Desk research and the criteria for the selection of examples

One of the crucial parts was also desk research, both on the shrinking cities and youth work projects because it was necessary to have enough secondary data. As the main tool in the research were semi-structured interviews, the team also agreed upon the desirable interviewees – youth workers, direct beneficiaries, representatives of local municipalities and other stakeholders.

When it comes to the selection of empirical examples, the team recognized three central selection criteria that should be taken into consideration:

- *Program or project is decisive in the selection of the cases. It should reference to the shrinkage phenomena, not necessarily in explicit way;*
- *The designed programs or projects (of the youth works) should address the needs of the young people as the main target group;*
- *The practice should be replicable.*



Interview guidelines, informed consent and interview questions – working materials

In the following period the team defined the interview guidelines and protocol which were used in all the interview conducted during the research.

It is always important to have a defined interview protocol so that it can regulate administration and implementation of the interviews. For this purpose, it is important to answer on following questions:

- *What to say to interviewees when beginning the interview, including ensuring informed consent and confidentiality of the interviewee;*
- *What to say to interviewees in concluding the interview;*
- *What to do during the interview (Example: Take notes? Audiotape? Both?); and*
- *What to do following the interview (Example: Fill in notes? Check audiotape for clarity? Summarize key information for each? Submit written findings?)*

Guidelines for individual interviews

1. *Interviewer and assistant in charge of taking notes have to participate in each interview. The interviewer must read the guidelines to the interviewee and know his/her obligations before the interview.*
2. *The interviewer contacts the person who is going to be interviewed and agrees to the place and time of implementation.*
3. *Team comes to an agreed interview site 10-15 minutes before the interview begins.*
4. *Upon arrival at the place where the interview is conducted, the interviewer first checks the technical conditions for conducting interviews: level of noise and other possible elements that can affect the focus. Here it depends who you are interviewing. If it is a youth worker or someone younger, you can conduct the interview in more informal setting. If you are conducting an interview with someone from city council or similar institution, we recommend formal setting and only team and interviewee to be present in a room. It is expected that interviewee will be more relaxed and readier to open up if he/her is not surrounded by colleagues.*
5. *After the interviewee takes his position, the interviewer presents himself/herself and the assistant.*

ADDITIONAL NOTE: even if you send consent forms in advance to your interviewees, take few forms with you so that they can sign them before the interview begins! If an interviewee has any additional questions, make them feel free to ask and answer them. The interviewer fills the table with the basic information about the interviewee and the interview (institution, name and surname of the interviewee, function in the institution, name of the interviewer, date and beginning and end interview).

6. *After the interviewer completes the table with the basic data, he/she explains basic information about organization, aims of the interview and its role in a research to the interviewee. This information is prepared, and they are here below. We recommend that the interviewer knows this information by heart and not to read them from the paper.*

7. *The interviewer then starts to ask questions and moderates the conversation. As we are conducting semi structured interviews, if there is a need to ask additional questions or expand the conversation (with the aim of finding more about topics or our interest), the interviewer is free to ask those questions. Some questions or themes can be remixed and changed in order. It is important for the interview to be subtle and logically, without interrupting thoughts and flow of conversation. To provide a more relaxed atmosphere, easier change of topic and later interpretation, it is advised if the interviewer recalls some of interviewee's earlier responses.*
8. *At the end of the interview, the interviewer expresses his/her gratitude to the interviewee and offers him/her to ask the questions about, to give comment or to encourage a shorter discussion on a topic that was not the subject of an interview.*
9. *The contents of the interview are written down by the assistant and they have to edit and send notes to the interviewer in a 48-hour period.*

INTERVIEWERS REMARKS IN THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF THE INTERVIEW:

Start of the interview: Good day! My name is _____ and I come from _____ (institutions). Please sit comfortably in order to discuss some topics related to the implementation of your project/ your program/cities policies/....

This interview is part of the research project "**Strengthening the Role of Youth York in Contesting Dynamics of Shrinking Cities**". The project is implemented by the strategic partnership led by (our partner organization) Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past. The interview will last for about an hour. During this time, I will ask you questions on which I ask you to answer as sincerely, whether your answer is positive or negative.

Interview Completion: I would like to thank you most sincerely for your participation in this interview. If you have some more questions related to this research and / or our present conversation, feel free to ask.

• GENERAL INFORMATION TABLE:

Name and surname of interviewer and assistant
Name and surname of the interviewee
Interviewees' institution/organization
Interviewees' function in institution/organization
Date
Time of beginning
Time of end

Informed consent:

Before the interview, every interviewee has to be informed about the purpose of the research and way of handling the information that he/her will be giving. For this purpose, it is good to have prepared summary of the basic project information and letter of consent that needs to be signed by participants. Here is our example of the letter of consent:

Letter of consent

We are going to use gathered information for making of the toolkit **Youth-work in/for the shrinking cities**. Because of this, the information collected through the interview will be published, including your name/name of the organization/office/etc. as well as all the relevant information will be included in the toolkit. The data will be presented as attitudes of the representatives of the organization/office/whatever.

The interview will be conducted by the interviewer and the associate in charge of taking the notes. All information documented during the interview will be used exclusively in research purposes. Before publishing the results of the research, the participant will have the right to review, comment and approve that part of the text in which he/she is quoted.

For all information about the project, please feel free to contact me via email: *email@email.com*

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Interviewees Statement:

I agree to participate in the survey **Youth-work in/for the shrinking cities** within the project *Strengthening the Role of Youth Work in Contesting Dynamics of Shrinking Cities* provided it is implemented in the manner described above in the text. I had the opportunity to ask questions about the above information.

First name and last name: _____

Interviewer: _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

In (place), _____ (date) _____

Interview questions

An interview guideline lists the questions or issues to be explored during the interview. For the purposes of this research, we used semi-structured interview where most of our questions were open questions which aim to explore topics in depth.

It is important to have in mind *who* you are going to interview and to ask the right questions accordingly. As we planned to interview three different type of actors – youth workers, young people who beneficiaries of the project/program and decision makers are – we developed three matching sets of questions with slightly changed questions which fitted every of above-mentioned group perspectives. These questions were based on our research questions and general needs of the research and contextualization. We divided questions into four sections – general introductory questions, background and origin, influence of the project and reflection. Here are the examples:

Questions for decision makers

General introductory questions:

- What is the description of your job? How long do you do it?
- What is your institution/office also working on in relation to youth sector?
- Do you follow work of youth and for youth organizations in your city?
- What is your understanding of the youth work?
- Did you grow up in this city? What do you think about opportunities for young people here?

First part:

- How did you find out about this project/program?
- Please describe your connection/involvement with this project.
- Do you see relation between context of community and content of this project?
- Did you think this project/program was an answer on the long-term problems or was it reaction on some specific situation?
- What are, in your opinion, the key problems that this project deals with?
- What do you think about the strategy they used for tackling this problem?

Second part:

- Do you think project was successful in tackling mentioned problems?
- What do you think about your role in this project?
- What do you think this project/program has achieved? Towards:
 - young people (which young people)?
 - community?
 - youth policy?
- Did you use these projects results to improve/make some policies or strategies?
- Do you see impact of this project on your everyday work or other institutions?



Third part:

- What is your opinion on contributions of these projects in your city? How do you see it?
- What type of support is needed to increase the quality and total number of the projects?
- Do you see a meaning in this type of work?
- What are the key-lessons you gained out of the project(s)? Do you have any advice for the people who have the motivation to change a community?
- Do you have anything to add? Do you have any suggestion for further improvement of this questionnaire?

Questions for beneficiaries

- Did you grow up in this city? What do you think about opportunities for young people here?
- What do you see as challenges for young people here?
- Was this your first experience in such project/program?

First part:

- How did you find out about this project/program?
- What was your motivation to be a part of this project/program?
- In what activities did you participate?
- Did you find them useful, and if yes, which one? Why?
- Did you develop any new skills during your participation?
- Did you have opportunity to use these skills?

Second part:

- What do you think that project/program has achieved?
Towards:
 - young people (which young people)?
 - community?
 - youth policy?
- How has your involvement improved in the community after this experience?
- Do you see community more involved in topics regarding youth? If yes, please elaborate?
- How do you see role of the city institutions in this project?

Third part:

- Would you like to participate in similar projects in the future?
- What type of support is needed to increase the quality and total number of the projects?
- What are your expectations for this project?
- What are the key-lessons you gained out of the project(s)? Do you have any advice for the people who have the motivation to change a community?
- Do you have anything to add? Do you have any suggestion for further improvement of this questionnaire?

Conclusion:

- What is youth work for you?

Questions for youth workers

- What is the description of your job? How long do you do it?
- What type of topics and project your organization also covers?
- In which way is your job related to the youth sector?
- What is youth work for you?
- Did you grow up in this city? What do you think about opportunities for young people here?

First part:

- What were the incentives for doing this project/program?
- What did you want to do, what was the aim?
- How did you develop the idea for the project/program?
- What encouraged you to do this project?
- Was this project/program reaction on some long-term problem or was it reaction on some specific situation?
- How was that idea influenced by the context of your community?
- What key problems did you detect and how were they addressed?
- What do you think of the strategy you used?

Second part:

- Do you think you were successful in tackling mentioned problems with your project/program?
- Which were the target groups of this project/program?
- What do you think that project/program has achieved?

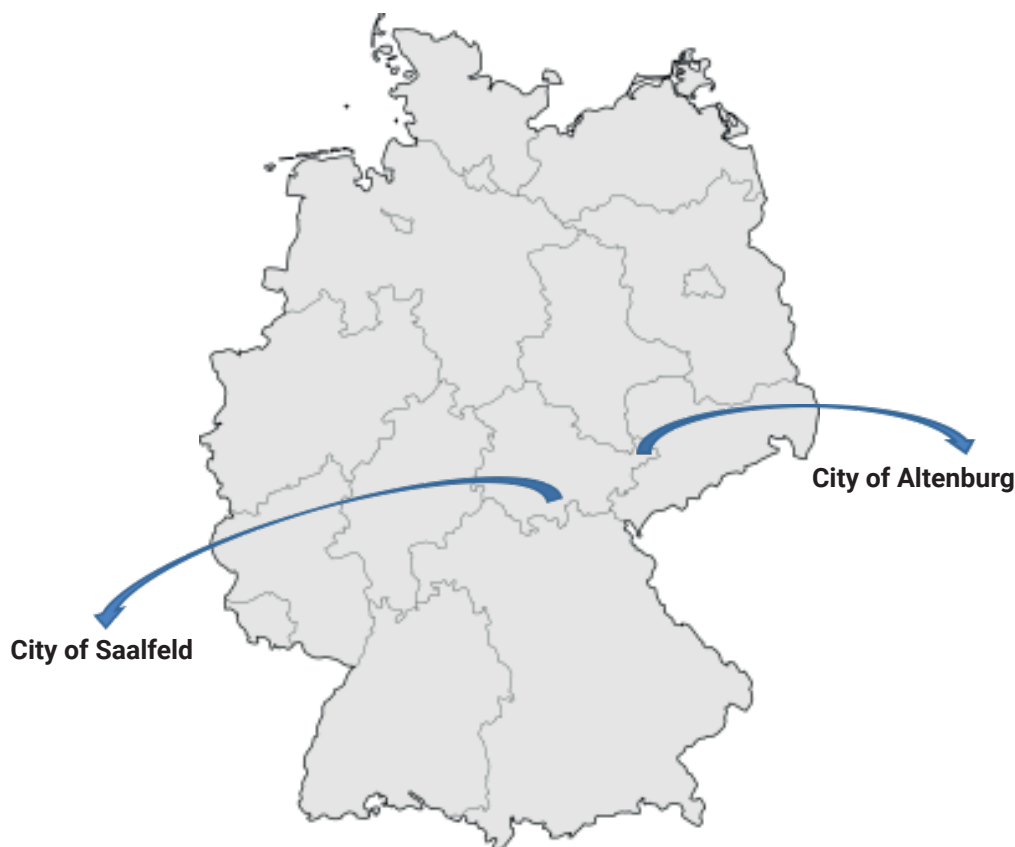
Towards:

- young people (which young people)?
- community?
- youth policy?
- In relation to the community, what did you want to be known about this project/program?

Third part:

- What is your opinion on contributions of these projects in your city?
- What type of support is needed to increase the quality and total number of the projects?
- Do you see a meaning in this type of work?
- What are the key-lessons you gained out of the project(s)? Do you have any advice for the people who have the motivation to change a community?
- Do you have anything to add? Do you have any suggestion for further improvement of this questionnaire?

GERMANY



4.1. Youth work in national context

According to the *Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) - Achtes Buch (VIII) - Kinder- und Jugendhilfe*, competency at the federal level for children and youth is within the framework of Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). The Committee on Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, which operates under the umbrella of the German Bundestag, is active in the following areas, among others: Family Policy, Children and young people, civilian service and voluntary service, immigration and integration.

Additionally, the German Federal Youth Council⁷ is a working group of 24 youth associations that are active throughout Germany, 16 regional youth councils and five affiliate associations providing advisory services. The council was founded in 1949 and spans a range of member organizations from church, environmental, recreational and social youth organizations to the scouts. For historical reasons, party political youth associations and student organizations do not participate in the DBJR. The associations that are involved in the DBJR are independent and have no direct input from the State, although they do receive funding through Germany's children and youth plans. The 16 regional youth councils operate on a federal level, while numerous further district and town youth councils operate on a local level.

7 (DBJR, <http://www.dbjr.de>)

The Kinder und Jugendplan des Bundes (KJP; Children and Youth Plan of the Federal Government) was developed from the Federal Youth Plan in 1993. This is the main instrument of youth support of the Federal Government and the essential part of children and youth policy in the Federal Republic of Germany. The Children and Youth Plan of the Federal Government stimulates and promotes efforts of children and youth welfare, including youth work, when they go beyond the duties of the federal states and municipalities. It supports a variety of activities in fulfilling the needs and necessities of independent and public welfare for children and young people that has to meet broad out- of-school educational requirements. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as the top federal authority administers the distribution of the funds from the KJP as far as measures of children and youth welfare of supra-regional importance are concerned.

The work of youth organizations is an area of social integration which stands out due to its voluntary nature, self-organization and self-determination. It is supposed to represent the interests of young people vis á vis the state and society, apart from education, offering leisure time activities, help and counselling. This means involvement with all issues and decisions that touch the interests of young people. The youth associations see themselves as a team of children, youths, and young adults and work on their own authority without governmental influence. They are supported financially by public funds. The foundation of their work is in the voluntary positions of the members. Their work is, according to their own understanding of it, mainly of an educational nature. However, this work is carried out on a voluntary basis without payment or the pressure of marks as in the schools. This is called extracurricular youth work or extracurricular youth training. Extracurricular cultural youth education is an essential part of a young person's development. For this reason, the expert organizations of extracurricular cultural youth formation aim at extensively promoting the cultural education of young people in Germany.

Importantly, this extracurricular cultural education plays an important role in the development of the personality and aims at enabling young people to participate in a society's cultural life. It enables a differentiated approach to arts and culture and encourages creative and aesthetic activities in the areas of music, dance, rhythm, acting, theatre, literature, fine arts, architecture, film, photography, video, media and computing. In addition, it promotes imagination and creativity, develops judgment, critical faculties and tolerance towards one's own and other cultures in their social coherence, offers a meaningful organization of leisure time and an active reflection on one's own situation⁸.

4.2. Shrinking phenomenon in national and regional context

At the end of the 1990s the notion of 'shrinking cities' emerged in the context of debates around the future of East Germany. An urban shrinkage is widely characterized as a multidimensional complex of demographic changes (e.g. ageing and population loss), socio- economic development (e.g. economic downturn, employment decline, and poverty concentration), and related physical effects (e.g. infrastructure, housing or industrial deterioration) in constant interaction⁹. In East Germany, however, it has been particularly triggered by the "failure to achieve a timely and smooth post-industrial shift from traditional manufacturing to [...] innovation-driven high-tech industries and modern business-oriented services [after the 1990-reunification]" (Bartholomae et al., 2016, p. 2).

Shrinkage processes unveil that we have to deal in the future with urban regions beyond growth: with cities losing inhabitants, housing stock falling vacant, residential and commercial areas remain empty and un-used and infrastructures getting under-used. It is mainly demographic change including decreasing birth rates, ageing, and postponement of marriage and childbearing that brings about such

8 For orders see website <http://www.ijab.de>.

9 Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012

developments on the one hand¹⁰. On the other hand, many young and well-trained people are forced to out-migrate because of closure of companies and unemployment. Consequently, the socio-spatial imbalances within a city corpus are rising. Deprived areas losing residents are to be found in close neighbourhood with upgrading districts.

The concept of shrinking city as “problematic term” in shrinking region in Germany has been debated. According to Phillip Oswald¹¹:

“there is also growth in the process of shrinkage: it results in excess spaces, buildings, and obsolete properties. Despite their diminished utilization, shrinking cities continue to sprawl beyond their borders and thereby undergo a twofold thinning out: less activity is spread out over a greater space...”

The urban crisis especially in Eastern Germany probably derived from the pre-1945 period after the war in comparison to the Western Germany which entered the post-industrial phase and many cities started to depopulate at that time. In the contrary to the Western German cities, Eastern German cities did not go through this phase. The intensification of job positions, coupled by development of housing estate between 1990-2000 has brought more harm than profit, since there was no demand created for it. Hence, in Eastern Germany the city crisis results from the negative consequences of long-lasting population decrease coupled with decades of growth-oriented policies. The negative consequences of these processes were intensified by so called de-economization¹² in the 1990s.

The recent development in Eastern Germany is a case in point to show an ‘advanced’ or even ‘extreme’ stage of shrinkage and its impact on urban development, housing markets and usage of infrastructures. Shrinkage is pushed by three reasons. Firstly, by a **sharp decrease in birth rates after the political change** in 1990 that brought Eastern Germany the lowest birth rates in Europe¹³. Secondly, most of Eastern German cities have been facing dramatic losses of inhabitants due **to job-driven out-migration to the western part of the country**, due to deindustrialization. And a third reason is **the wide-spread suburbanization during the 1990s**¹⁴.

These days, a downward spiral in many Eastern German cities may be observed. The long- lasting population decrease began to be coupled with other regressive processes, which tend to intensify each other. The more advanced ageing of the population the lower chances for the economic revival. The more population decreases, the more abandoned buildings, the lower the density, which hinders social exchange and increases the costs of the city maintenance.

10 Faus-Pujol, Maria Carmen. “Changes in the fertility rate and age structure of the population of Europe.” In Europe’s population Towards the next century, edited by Ray Hall and Paul White, 17 - 33. London: UCL Press, 1995.

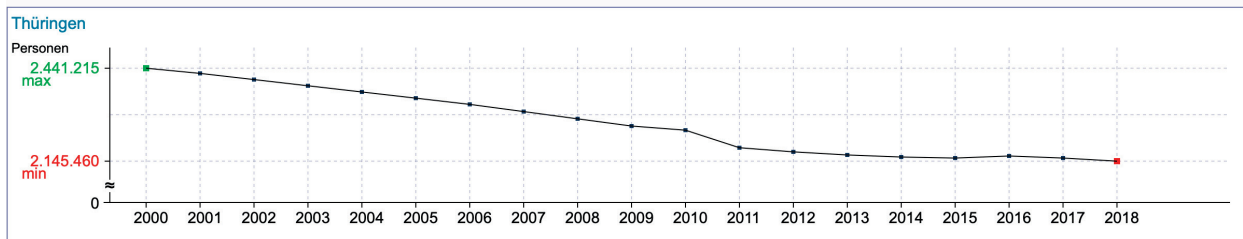
11 Philipp Oswald. „Introduction.” W Shrinking Cities, Volume 1: International Research, redakcja: Philipp Oswald, 12 -17. Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2005.

12 Hannemann, Christine. “Die Transformation der sozialistischen zur schrumpfenden Stadt.” In Die europäische Stadt, edited by Walter Siebel, 197-207. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp verlag, 2004.

13 0.77 children per woman in 1995; INKAR, 2003.

14 Haase & Nuissl, 2006; Couch et al., 2005.

Situated geographically in the centre of Germany, Thuringia belongs, with its 16172 square kilometres, to the smaller ones of the new states that joined the Republic after the reunification in 1989. It is characterized by medium to small size cities and rural spaces with a low economic profile.



Source: statistik.thuringen.de

Since the wall opened, Thuringia has lost about 330,000 people from its population until 2004, that is, about 12.2 percent. In addition, the birth rate has been declining while the average age has been increasing continuously. According to the latest prognoses, another 217,000 people will leave the Bundesland within the next 15 years, that is, another 8.1 percent of the total population. From 1989 to 2020, within 30 years, Thuringia may lose about 20% of its population. Up to 2050 it will have lost 35 percent. **These figures define the State of Thuringia as a region that is definitely shrinking.**

The population development has changed in recent years due to the migration events. The immigration surplus has led to an increase in the population since 2011. Compared to 2011, the number has increased by nearly two million people to 82.2 million in 2015. The low average age of immigrants led to an increase in employment. Despite the high level of immigration, especially among young people, the aging population has continued. Average life expectancy has increased in recent years. Currently, the average life expectancy (at birth) for men is 78.2 years and for women 83.1 years.

Causes and consequences of shrinkage

The socio-spatial context of Thuringia plays a special and partly explanatory role for the handling of federal and local governments with international migration and in particular the recent flight migration. Geographically, Thuringia lies to the west or to the south adjacent to Lower Saxony, Hesse and Bavaria, with the result that many Thuringians go to work in these western federal states or have already worked and / or lived there in the past. This means that in Thuringia comparatively many people have experience with and knowledge of migrants / inside and migration in West Germany. Despite this greater exchange of experience with multi-ethnic or ethnically diverse locations, geographically most of our communes are located in more peripheral and secluded regions of Thuringia, characterized more by migration and shrinkage than by immigration and circulating knowledge.

Except for the city chain of Jena-Weimar-Erfurt, the Free State of Thuringia is shrinking and ageing drastically, albeit at a very uneven regional level, as in most of the federal states. Since 1989, around 500,000 people have left Thuringia.

In the discussion about the shrinking East German cities, an interaction between demographic and economic factors is usually assumed. In the current debate about shrinking cities, however, demographic and economic factors are often linked in the form of a so-called "downward spiral" - *"Population decline is due to migration losses, high unemployment to high job losses, decline in employment. Population and jobs lead to loss of purchasing power and real tax, and declining private and public funds are causing declining investment in private businesses and public infrastructure, which in turn has a heightening effect on population and job shrinkage."*

CASE STUDY OF CITY OF SAALFELD



4.3.1. Shrinking phenomenon in the city context

City of Saalfeld is in the southern part of the State of Thuringia, it is the capital of the Saalfeld-Rudolstadt district, and it sits on the banks of the Saale River. By the last estimation from 2018., it has around 28 000 citizens, with approximate density of 238.8 citizens per km².

Year	1995. (estimation)	2001. (estimation)	2011. (census)	2018. (estimation)
Number of citizens	35,912	33,201	28,962	27,705

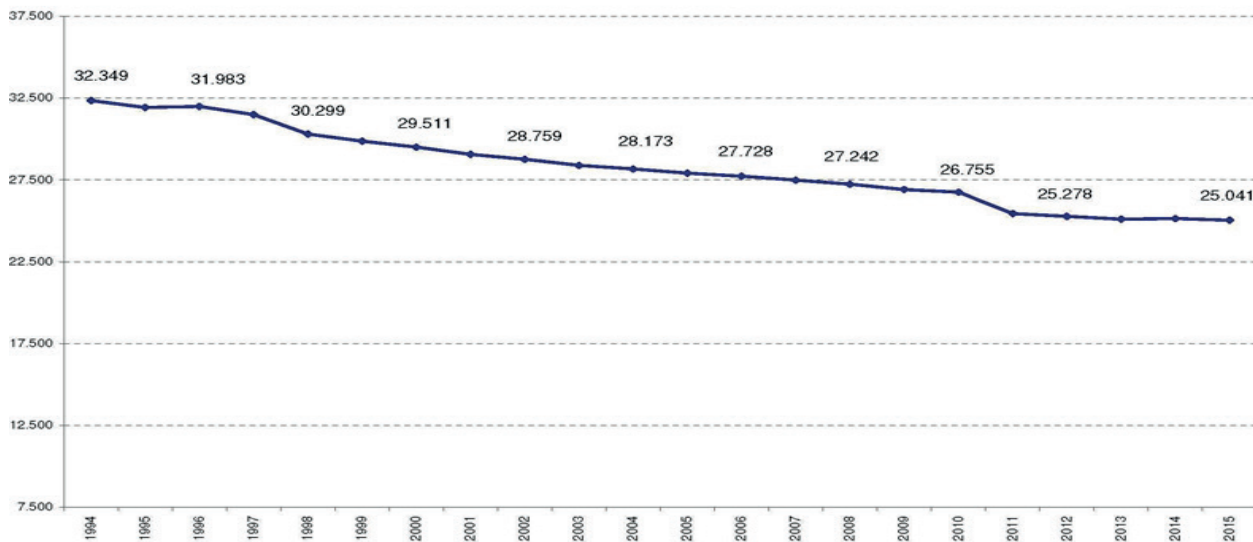
Source: <http://citypopulation.de/php/germany-thuringen.php?cityid=16073077>

The development of the population and age structure in the district of Saalfeld follows the general trend of population decline and ageing demography. In the period between 1998 and 2015, the population in the district decreased by about 19 percent, in the city of Saalfeld and the Saalfeld height by about 17 percent. By 2005, Saalfeld lost more inhabitants than the district, after that the development in the district town was more positive.

The development of inhabitants was very differentiated in the individual districts in Saalfeld. The demographic development in the villages around Saalfeld and on the Saalfelder Höhe shows a similar trend. Here, the migration losses come from the trend to move to locations close to the centre. Especially in advanced age, short distances to infrastructural facilities, shopping and care facilities are preferred. Comparing the average age shows a more positive picture of Saalfeld height. In 2015, the residents were on average 47.1 years old, while in Saalfeld they were 48.3 years old.

In 2011, the residents of the Saalfelder were on average even 2.7 years younger than in Saalfeld. In 2015, the difference decreased to 1.2 years. One of the main reasons for adjusting the average age is immigration migration gains.

Einwohnerentwicklung Saalfeld absolut
(Quelle: LA für Statistik)



4.3.2. Organization and youth-work programs

Brief introduction about the organizations in Saalfeld Municipality

The Department of Social and Youth Department is within the structure of Saalfeld city municipality. The office is called Office for Youth, Work, Sport and Social Affairs and it is a special form. In 1995 the department took over the youth work by agreement from the district of Saalfeld-Rudolstadt.

The youth social work is a benefit of the youth welfare service according to the German legal framework (SGB). The target group of youth social work is young people up to the age of 27, who are dependent on socio-educational assistance and support due to social disadvantages or individual disability. SGB is an instrument for the prevention, assistance and protection of children and adolescents, girls and boys, young women and young men. The law obliges the youth welfare offices to help and creates the framework for supporting caregivers, mothers and fathers for the benefit of their children.

The primary task in child and youth protection is to strengthen the defences and personal responsibility of young people through suitable measures and events, such as information events, project days, youth protection weeks or sports and cultural leisure activities, as well as to enable parents and other guardians to protect children and adolescents from endangerment to protect violence and abuse. In addition to these preventive measures, young people are to be prepared and supported to actively participate and influence the shaping of their living environment. We have interviewed the **Program leader for Social and Youth Department of the city Hanka Giller** and through her expertise and direct experience, she shared the key approach in the topic of Youth work in the shrinking City. Additionally, Giller is also the **project coordinator of the Werkhaus project** but positioned herself rather as "community manager" for the residential area of the Beulwitzer Street, which contains the upgrading process of the district and the integration into the urban space and belong to the Social City Program since 2017. Currently the area is rather marginalized, and she explained that there have been several factors influencing the current situation. **It is a former barracks area, has always been stigmatized** because in GDR times, among other things, the Soviet army was stationed there, a large wall was around it and no one came to this area. And after the political changes social housing was created there in the barracks area, which in turn led to a stigmatization. Then additionally, in **receiving the refugee, asylum accommodation of the district developed and located in this neighbourhood**. What's more, redevelopment measures in the inner-city area have pushed up the price level in the housing market, and some residents have not been able to pay any more, which means they are also relocating to such areas.

In a focal point district of Saalfeld locals and refugees built with simple means over several years, a **so-called factory building** in which everyone is welcome. The planning and construction of the building is done as a **participatory community process**: the best way for people to embrace a project.

4.3.3. Background and genesis of the projects Saalfeld Bauwerk- Beulwitzer Street

The **“Zwischenraum zum Ankommen”** (In between room for arrival) in Beulwitzer Street combines current dynamics and burning topics of urban development. It is about the integration of refugees, the activation of brownfield, participation, new work and the common good, neighbourhood and the question of how a place can gradually evolve from the consolidation of projects. Unlike typical urban planning, the focus is not on the plan drawn up by experts, but on the development of a long-term idea for the site from a useful practice.



Saalfeld Bauwerk in Beulwitzer Straße (IBA,2018)

The barracks were built in 1936 and used by the GSU forces after the Second World War until the turn of the century. The city has never been adequately equipped with infrastructure and since reunification has become an unattractive place of residence due to poor care. The proportion of socially disadvantaged people is above average. In the residential area “Beulwitzer Straße ” people find their place, who have fled, looking for a new home in Germany and who cannot afford to live in the centre in Saalfeld. **Of the 870 residents, 56% have a migration background** (as of 31.12.2016) **and the proportion of children and teenagers to 27 years is 51%.** This development brings challenges as well as opportunities. Thanks to the furnished refugee housing, the area became the **“most recent and colourful”** quarter of the city of Saalfeld, but also the residential area most affected by exclusion and poverty.

After the partial demolition of the existing buildings in the last years, space for new ideas was created. The quarter described by the Saalfeld-den and Beulwitz as "socially problematic" should lose its negative image in the future and become a liveable neighbourhood. The current Urban Development Concept 2010 will be revised, and a vision developed with regard to future opportunities. The potential and commitment of the people living there are taken seriously and integrated into the process of revaluation. The land use plan shows the now consolidated residential area non-as a commercial area or agricultural area. In the meantime, the residential development belongs to the Förderkulissee Social City.



"What does Beulwitz need?" (IBA,2018)

Hanka Giller added that:

"Werkhause was actually initiated by the inhabitants. They were eager to do something and had already taken part in our participatory projects. We held several workshops, where the residents told us what they really needed. We were looking for a sustainable solution for the people, where they would have the opportunity to co-create. This was after we realized that **the people want to hold onto their quarter** – but that they want changes, make it more beautiful".

According to Giller, in her perspective the influence has started with the local community: "We are talking about a stigmatized area. Since we have built our pallet-construction – which is labelled as "Sommerwerkstatt" – they encounter a polarization within the city. It is now in the open, people can talk about it. they encounter a great openness from the inhabitants, they always ask: „when will you be back, when can we continue? “.

Around 90 percent of the inhabitants receive some form of transfer/welfare payments in which they are dependent on support and the majority had no experience with any form of participation, where they are asked to do something on their own. In these cases, the children and youth are becoming a bridge to their parents.

4.3.4. Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries

Rustem Curolli is a 14 years old young man who has been involved in the process of project planning and implementation of *Werkhaus* since he was 11 years old. He has a migration background and finds Saalfeld as a city where he would like to live and go back after his Apprenticeship in Frankfurt. In summer 2017/2018, when the project first launched to the community, he was involved as a moderator for "Jungen-Moderatorausbildung", where we moderate the process of training for youth participation in the community for his peers. He was also involved in the "Freisitz" event and other activities such as "KuJA" (Children and 37 youth committee) and "Mutmacher", where young people can do several activities such as hiking, summer holiday pro- gram and healthy living.



He wished to have more space that are addressing the need of young people after school-hours and would like to continue his participation in events/activities related to the *Werkhaus* project and community. According to him, *"In some cities, I have experienced it, foreigners or Germans, whatever, are put in one place and here in Saalfeld it is not like that. I like it best that our city is active, politically, projects..."*. This refers to the integration process and cultural moderation that has been put into focus by the municipality to support their citizen.



Another perspective was pointed out by **Leysen Gizatullina**, project beneficiary from AWO (Family and Social centrum) Saalfeld, **Integration Office for refugees**. The integration office has existed since 2016, and the refugee movement has created two jobs to take care of the needs and concerns of people with a migrant background. While their focus is on refugees, there are also EU migrants, late repatriates, and second-generation people coming to their office. At the beginning it was intended as a consultation and accompaniment, but now they also create various activities to bring together locals and refugees offering various activities such as language courses to homework help or creative offers. The integration Office works together with Bauwerk Beulwitz Street, so they can connect projects and network in order to promote integration. So different people also come together with the local, for example, they can also learn German (in addition to the usual language courses). According to Gizatullina, the neighbourhood is a bit deprived and there is not much to experience for the inhabitants:

*"There are also people who may not like to travel far to experience something. They stay there and among themselves. You see the need for something to change. There are more and more refugees and socially weak families. We wanted to create a good connection with refugees and integrate them. In reality, **we often reach people through the children. They are very interested in our offers and then they report it at home, and you get into conversation with your parents.** Only through these discussions, the ideas for offers are formed. So, we know where interests are at all."*

However, she also pointed out that the current projects such as city festivals however interesting, **is not enough to sustain the integration process**, since it is often used as consumption. The approach should start by involving people and work with them and delegating responsibility to give the group a sense of ownership. But she further claimed that *"it takes time and a lot of effort in regards with the human resources investment, we need to create a core group instead of working alone to build supportive networks... Also, one should get away from the idea that the Germans have to take the first steps and the migrants then join in. There are creative minds here who can also make a difference."*

Within their work in cooperation with Beulwitz Street, they often provide some programs for young people to participate in their cultural offers and exchange ideas and are happy about the employment. It gives them the feeling that they are welcome. Based on this outreach, they can reach the parents again and see more opportunities in future. Although there are also programs for the immigrant population (all residents), but in reality, the children and young people accept the offers.

One of the biggest challenges in this work and cooperation with Bauwerk is that the uncertain political situation (populist right wing party) that demanded certain budgeting for integration funding should be eliminated. With the limited funding and unclear prospect in the continuation of the project, certain interruptions and distractions occurred and hinders the long-term project goals.

4.3.5. Perspective from the related stakeholders

Christian Uthe is the project associate, working on the mobile youthwork, whereas **Martin Spitzer** is person responsible for neighbourhood management in Beulwitz.

Ute is responsible for mobile youth work at Saalfeld's centre of education where he is working 2003, also in the field of mobile youth work. The quarter Beulwitzer Straße is a focus of his work since the beginning, because it is a specific area dealing with social disadvantages. He is one of the network-partners involved in **Werkhaus**, role that he describes as "kind of a go-between for the inhabitants of the quarter".

Spitzer is also working for Saalfeld's centre of education, and he is the neighbourhood manager for the residential area since spring of 2018. He is responsible for the entire city centre and Beulwitz as part of the visiting youth work, which means that he is a contact person for young people, children and also young adults.

*"We are trying to revive places in the city that are linked to shrinkage. We do that with "artistic intervention", "cultural squatting" and we use the luxury of vacancy to demonstrate **a positive attitude where shrinkage is visible and therefore provide children and young people with open spaces** – which is more difficult in a small city than in a big urban area."*

According to Ute, compared with other similar cities, Saalfeld has a lot to offer. They have places for the youth, mobile youth work, and relatively solid financial funds for that. Saalfeld is located in the city triangle (Saalfeld-Rudolstadt-Bad Blankenburg) and young people frequently emphasize the attractiveness of Saalfeld and the beauty of the surrounding landscape. He claims that an identification with the city exists that can be built upon.

*"Despite poverty and problems, there is a lot of commitment and willingness to do things. Starting with the program "Zukunftsstadt" we analysed this more closely, did interviews together with students. The result was that people said we have too much space and we would like to have a space for opportunities. That is when the idea of a **Werkhaus** came up for the first time."*

Spitzer agreed with this and pointed out the central point that **"many would say this city district is shaped by poverty and social disadvantages, segregation and so on, but our approach has been for long to recognize its potential and resources – like young people, space, ideas"**.



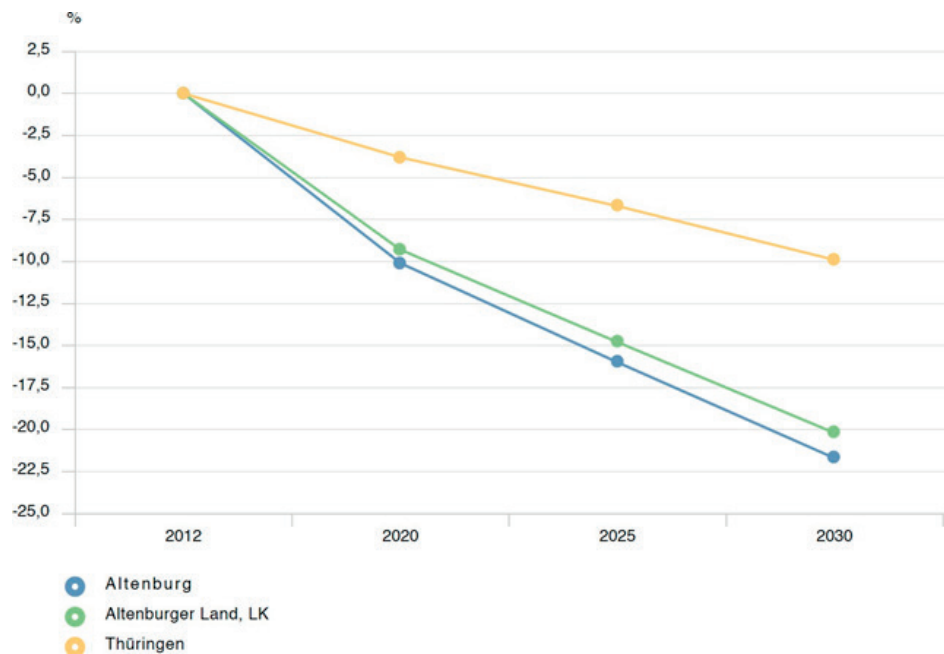
CASE STUDY OF CITY OF ALTENBURG



4.4.1. Shrinking phenomenon in the city context

The city of Altenburg is today, with almost 33,000 inhabitants, the tenth largest city in Thuringia. Due to its convenient location on the “Via Imperii” and the beginning of industrialization in the mid-19th century, the city grew rapidly - as the third city in Thuringia in 1800 already reached the 10,000-inhabitant mark, by 1870 there were already more than 20,000 inhabitants. The population had its peak in 1981 with scarce 56,000 inhabitants, especially through targeted housing for the working-class families of the Uranbergbau of the SDAG bismuth in the nearby Ronneburg, the lignite industry and the chemical industry in the south of Leipzig.

Altenburg experienced a massive population decline in the 25 years from 1989 to 2013 from over 51,000 to almost 33,000 inhabitants. The official population of the city of Altenburg as of 31 December 2015 is 32,910 inhabitants. After the 13th population projection, the Thuringian State Statistics Office in September 2015 published in the year 2030 in Altenburg only about 27,130 Inhabitants.



Population lost in Altenburg 2012-2030

According to the Statistical Office Thuringia in year of 1900-2010, 1364 new inhabitants returned to the city, while in the same time 1292 inhabitants left the city. Within this period, the Immigration by refugees still does not play a significant role, however this has changed in 2015. The population is known to be authoritative for the key assignments of the Free State to the cities and Municipalities and thus has an influence on future financial resources the municipalities.

4.4.2. Organization and youth-work programs

Brief introduction about the organizations Farbküche GmbH

Farbküche is a community organization in Altenburg that provides spaces for creating opportunity for young people and to make city more liveable. **Susann Seifert**, as the managing director of the organization was working in Farbküche since 2005 while was fully employed in the city administrative Altenburg.

Seifert explains that for many years Farbküche has been designing facades, interiors and canvases with the tool “aerosol can” and that it inspired hundreds of people every year with creative projects and workshops. For her, after many years of secondary employment, this passion has become not just a job, but also a company. For one and a half years, they have also been operating the colour kitchen on the Altenburger Markt: 130 m² conceptual mix of open studio, open workshop and shop.

Farbküche see themselves as a community organization in an open, cheerful and lively house in the centre of Altenburg with studios, gallery, café, shop, workshops and offices where people develop their creative potential, try out ideas, work together, share resources and knowledge and their ideas to implement entrepreneurially. At the same time, as creative people, they open their spaces for the city society and offer them attractive opportunities to participate, stay and participate.

The project of “Stadtmensch” was a further development of the concern to the issue of shrinking city, developed by Farbküche in cooperation with the Schloss- und Kulturbetrieb Residenzschloss Altenburg, the W³ Wandel-Werte-Wege gUG and the Förderverein Zukunftswerkstatt Paul-Gustavus-Haus eV. Through the competition “New Model of Neighbourhood Development”, the project received a 600.000 euro of funding support from the Thüringen Federal Ministry of the Interior over the next three years. During the process of initial development, the project was also supported by the mentoring of Plattform e.V and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

Background and genesis of the projects Altenburg Stadtmensch

The project STADTMENSCH takes on the challenges of a shrinking city and makes urban society the central actor of change. Citizens are called upon to intervene in the city centre of Altenburg in places of their choice and to make this experience a new dynamic experience. Public space, as a common room, should be explicitly explored, thought through and structured against the background of a variety of current social, technological and media changes.

As a former royal residence, Altenburg has not only a rich historical salon culture, but also a high level of identification of citizens with their city, which continues to this day. The historically exceptionally rich buildings, whose lack of use and decay are at the same time an expression of a structural problem, are the places in which public space - as well as in historical salons - is renegotiated.



4.4.3. Background and genesis of the youth-works projects

According to the Susann Seifert, the Managing director of Farbküche, *"After 18 o'clock the market is empty and then young people come here, because they do not know where else to go, because everything is closed by 18/19 o'clock (also youth clubs). Then they start vandalizing. Also, they are sceptical of others from other big cities. You notice that offer is also missing for mental and personality development. The youth here is disadvantaged in relation to today's zeitgeist. That is why we are pleased that we have many young people in our project and that we can promote their opportunities. We are active in the artistic field, i.e. we try to give them exhibitions or to sell their art. The money is then spent again on other technology that they can continue to photograph or share their knowledge through self-organized workshops. These things or the Youth Café are looking for a place in the city centre where they can organize a self-governing Youth Café. Here the challenge is to find accommodation that is not protected by monument protection or too high rents that does not respect income reality. Furthermore, the administration is not accommodating.*

Another challenge is the different social classes. Of course, there are also many well-off families here, but there are also many families where the parents are not good role models and the children repeat the biography of their parents. The funding is missing, and the potential is not used. For example, the drug problem. Now the first children of the Crystal Meth addicts enter puberty and they often have behavioural problems and emotional disorders, which of course are also on the way here. Especially there, it is a challenge to achieve these and to inspire them for something, since there is already a great indifference. They do not know what to do with them."

Citizens, associations, diaconal institutions, cultural and creative professionals and institutions have joined forces in the bottom-up neighbourhood initiative STADTMENSCH in order to shape Altenburg together and make a substantial contribution to solving the local challenges and questions with their ideas and commitment. The actors of the initiative strengthen together with the contribution of their time, their expertise, their network, their infrastructure and their intrinsic motivation.

They form the STADTMENSCH network and are drivers of district development. The establishment of a lively network of all relevant actors in the city of Altenburg is the focus of this project pillar. Out of the network, a recognized advocacy group is to grow, which as a mouthpiece outwardly improves the visibility of the city and the interests of the actors towards politics, administration and other Decision-makers and framework donors. Internally, it should work towards a cooperative solidarity with one another and find ways and resources to support each other in the best possible way.

With the help of regular meetings, discussion groups and future workshops for the development of new joint projects, the identification basis for all is developed. Involved. The network also organizes the STADTMENSCH festival, which makes commitment visible and provides a platform for exchange, activities and new ideas. In the context of this Festivals give visitors the opportunity to experience the variety of engagement across the city and to see their city through different eyes. In addition, the network commits to cultivating the culture of appreciation of the city honours award, with which the commitment to the welfare of the community in Altenburg should be strengthened and the dialogue should be promoted. In the foreground is not necessarily an outstanding result of this commitment, but above all the process of engagement should be extraordinary: for example, by small impulses surprising innovations by acting autonomously beyond the usual institutional structures or by acting in a particularly courageous and risk-averse manner. Since consideration of the process nature of the commitment is in the foreground, the award ceremony itself will follow a dynamic approach. The actors of the initiative will be engaged with the winner of the award in the dialogue, how they can best support his concerns from the network.

Urban development thrives on new ideas that must be aligned with the current and future challenges of our cities and communities. In order for as many citizens as possible to become city designers, democratic and well-publicized urban development must develop participatory structures in which new models of a co-production city and a new distribution of roles in the neighbourhood development can be tested. In the pilot quarters, a dense network of co-production sites with concrete opportunities for citizens to participate should be created. In the light of these challenges, for some years now attention has increasingly focused on civil society actors who network and create added value for the community through their projects in various fields of urban development.

The pilot quarter proposes an innovative approach in the sense of taking up the high societal significance of a welfare-oriented urban development. The testing of new instruments promises important contributions to the current discussion. The pilot quarter should show the many positive effects of co-productive activities. Civil society, business and urban policy / administration. This affects u.a. the district-wide infrastructure offer (e.g. by the creation of innovative educational offers, new neighbourliness aids or the conversion of green areas), the city production for people from all social groups, innovative models of well-oriented building land and real estate development or the strengthening of the building culture in the quarter by innovative and lasting design and new one's town planning accents.

Anja Fehre, as the **project coordinator** of Stadtmensch since April 2018, worked in the city administration before she got involved to the project after the first networking event. She also mentioned that Altenburg has a large history of various buildings that are over a thousand years old in the smallest space. It is residential city of architecture and is unique in central Germany. This is something what identifies Altenburg. We also have a historical tradition, such as salon culture, which we also use in the Stadtmensch project. With the start-up laboratory as a think tank, we want to offer a kind of modern salon. Otherwise, of course, we are an East German town and that the mentality is very own. Perhaps more often pessimistic. Nevertheless, there is a lot of potential. The potential to support and break down these barriers, or at least to repress them and discourage those who really want to be creative.

The city development initiative has four historically significant anchor points in the district (district anchors), which are to be expanded and (re) used in the project. With different event formats and (socio) cultural offerings at everyday places of the city society as well as in the quarter anchors first occasions for meeting and exchange are to be created and the city society activated to own commitment.

A significant financial share of the district funding is available for **the realization of projects by citizens** - not only the project partners themselves - be developed. The town council itself will vote on these projects (voting in the context of public battles / pitches, online voting, etc.), so that the district initiative itself already incorporates new models of public dialogue and authorization structures in its voting structure. The project is supported by a network of local (social) enterprises, associations, cultural and creative workers and diaconal/religious institutions. exchange with other actors in urban society. The circle of actors continues to drive the development of the network, which remains open and participative over the long term.



4.4.4. Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries

Mandy Schwarz is an English schoolteacher who got a call from Susann from Farbküche in March 2018. She described that they were searching for a school which will join their Haircuts project for kids leads by Canadian artist company to do their own haircut shop on the weekend and earn money. About the opportunity for young people in Altenburg: It is difficult because it is very different. It mostly depends on the family the pupils come from and the perspective they have. Especially the students from our school, they all suffer from special educational needs and they also come from not so good social background. For them future doesn't look that bright as for the students from a grammar school for example. We are keen on helping them and doing projects to give them hints where they can go in their future, but it depends on how strong they are themselves. It is complicated for children from our region.

Within Altenburg you can have lots of opportunities to spend your free time or to do thing which make sense. We have a lot of things to do, like sports classes, dance classes, we've got Farbküche, we've got Altenburge Schloss, we've got the theatre and youth theatre. Challenge for young people is that a sport class or to a music school are quite expensive. There is an opportunity to get some money from the government, but it is not enough to cover the whole year of studies. In the city we have a lot of thing to do and a lot of creative projects, but I think our kind of students are not that self-confident that they are brave enough to go there and say, "I would like to join your group or your club". They more and more identify that they are huge part of the Staatmensch project, and they can develop it and spread it around. It makes something with them and even if they are not aware of their role in this moment, but I think when they are getting older, they will understand that they were a big part of starting such a thing in such an area. It does something with their self-esteem and their self-confidence, definitely. Some of our students are very shy, but they start paint at home, and they become more creative and confident. Hopefully when they become older, they will be more open-minded, and they will know what they strength are. Also, when doing this project, we invited all the pupils to participate, but most of them refused when they've just heard the idea. But when we started implementing it, the students were so upset that they've missed the chance to try it. For them it was a good lesson, that they shouldn't say no from the very beginning, but they should go and try new things. Staatmensch project is for everybody but especially for young people. They tell their parents and peers what's going on. The "fever" of Staatmensch is spreading around. The young people are bringing their parents and friends to different events. A lot of our students are going to Farbkuche in their free time and do creative work. The good thing about Staatmensch that they are quite spread around the town. You can find their hints or actions everywhere and it is for every generation.

However, the suggestion that advertising is too weak. They could do a lot more, especially in schools, so the students can be more aware of what is going on in the city. Also, if the govern- mental part of our town would be more aware of the project, it could spread outside as well, so people from other parts of the region will join us and ask how they can implement such a thing in their city. Hopefully more and more young people will identify themselves with their hometown and be happy to live here and proud to be from here. They should take care about their home- town and be responsible for things which are going to happen in the future.

Being spontaneous is very important. And being open-minded is much more important. And concern- ing the people who are managing Staatmensch burning for something like this project is massive and without such people it wouldn't be possible. And all those people have to be team players and have a good sense of humour. Enjoy and love what you do and be proud of being part of it, because it spreads around. Go through the town with open eyes, go to people and ask them what they want and join in. Do not wait when someone else will come and invite you.

School Students (six students) Interview with Lena, Maria, Arsenio, Leon, Pascal und Selina (students/ participants) in Altenburg. They mentioned that several things in the city are not necessarily fitting the needs of the young people, with emphasize in the lack of outdoor activity and unfriendly atmosphere.

“The city is boring and there are no offers for teens. You cannot do anything in summer, or you already know it inside out.”

“Even the people living here do not convey a good impression among the young people (many old people, drunks and unfriendly people)”

“There are not many new things for us to do’

“5/6 could not imagine staying in Altenburg, 1/5 remains because of the family’ ” you would rather go to Leipzig or Berlin”.

4.4.5. Perspective from the related stakeholders

Dr. Christian Horn, Christian Landrock (Partner: Schloss- und Kulturbetrieb der Stadt Altenburg) “The SKB and I personally were among the initiators of the network and project, I wrote the first draft of the funding application for Stadtmensch that was then finished and handed in by Susann Seifert. Since then we have stepped back and become one partner among many in the project. The SKB is doing a wide range of especially cultural activities, from concerts to tours of our premises to exhibitions and more inter-disciplinarily focused events like the history workshop and our participation in the Stadtmensch project.

Very early on in my tenure here we realized that, in order to reach those who do not usually engage with and visit an institution like ours, we need to give up control over our activities and let our guests and participants guide us in creating at least part of our portfolio. Especially those interdisciplinary projects we use as platforms that people can use to engage with a variety of topics, from questions of culture to those related to the refugee crisis.”

Valentin Rühlmann (Project partner: Jugendforum)

The Youth Forum Altenburg advocates the networking of young people and the strengthening of youthful engagement in Altenburger Land and promotes projects by and for young people. The recognition of democratic basic structures, tolerance and openness are our principles.

Oberbürgermeister André Neumann (Decision Maker)

“I would like to develop our city into a liveable and endearing place for all generations and to establish it as an attractive residential city in the middle of the economic region of Leipzig, Chemnitz, Zwickau and Gera. To do this, I tackle the crucial issues. I will create attractive building land and work for the development of such living space. I will support the local economy as well as fight for new settlements, promote tourism and our cultural treasures, revitalize the city centre of Altenburg and transform it into an attractive and enjoyable city centre. I will commit myself to more opportunities for meaningful leisure time activities for our youth, and I will involve the citizens of our city in these processes in a new quality.



PORTUGAL



5.1. Youth work in national context

At the national level, there is a **State Secretariat for Youth and Sports**, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, with a **responsibility to promote public policies for youth**. There is currently the National Youth Plan (PNJ)¹⁵, which recognizes that “young people, on their condition, face extraordinary challenges in accessing and realizing their rights - for example, in access to employment and housing - promotes the need for public policies of youth, valuing the difference - in this case, the age factor - to ensure equality [...] of public policies [...] (education, health, environment, sports, agriculture, among others). The coordination of the PNJ is the responsibility of the Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth, I.P. (IPDJ, I.P.), which can be assisted by a working group with ministerial /sectoral representatives.”¹⁶

In practical terms, the IPDJ promotes the leisure time of young people through educational and volunteer programs, which may be of short or long duration. In 2017, an official training course (equivalent to a post-secondary professional certification) of “**youth technician**” was made available as **an option in the national education system for young people aged between 16 and 24, with emphasis on the importance and non-formal education methodology**. All organizations composed of a minimum of 80% of young people below 30 can request from the IPDJ the recognition as members of RNAJ

15 Diário da República, First series - N.º 170 - September 4, 2018 - Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 114-A / 2018 <https://dre.pt/application/conteudo/116330692>

16 Available at <https://dre.pt/application/conteudo/116330692>.

(National Register of Youth Associations¹⁷). This membership allows them to apply for particular lines of funding and automatically obtain a place and vote in the Municipal Councils of Youth¹⁸. Another proposal of the IPDJ is the Young Participatory Budget¹⁹. This budget allows the destination of a determined amount of the national budget to be decided by young people between 14 and 30 years old, allowing them to submit proposals (since 2017).

At the non-governmental level, **two structures represent young people and the organizations working for and with them:**

- **FNAJ**²⁰ (National Federation of Youth Associations), which aggregates and represents youth associations at the national level, promoting structured dialogue and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, supporting their members (who must be youth associations) with information, training and technical and legal support.
- **CNJ**²¹ (National Youth Council), which acts as a platform for representation of youth organizations at national level in various fields - cultural, environmental, associative, political, student, trade union and religious-, promoting dialogue between governmental organizations and youth councils, listening to young people at the national level, contributing to the development of youth organizations and working with the government to conduct youth studies.

Over the last ten years, Portugal has made great efforts to implement the recommendations of the Council of Europe, developing youth policies that include strategies, plans, campaigns and information programs aimed at young people at the national level. There is now more support and training opportunities for young people and youth organizations in Portugal.

In the Portuguese legal framework, there are also some of the programs that support youth work in different ways:

- **Programa de Apoio Juvenil - PAJ** (Youth Support Program) aims to financially support the development of the activities of youth associations, respective federations, organizations²²
- **Programa Formar +** (Training + Program), which provides and promotes formative support for young people, the associative movement and youth professionals, through four support measures (Youth and Professional Youth Technicians; Step by Step; Formative Support to the Associativism and Youth in Formation).²³
- **Programa IDA** (IDA Program - Associative Development Incentive Program) - includes the financial support intended for the sharing of expenses inherent to the internship project, at the cost of the association, provided other organizations or programs do not share them.

17 Available at - <https://associativismojovem.ipdj.pt>

18 Legal Regime of the Municipal Councils of Youth, obligatory by law. (Regime Jurídico dos Conselhos Municipais de Juventude) <https://data.dre.pt/eli/lei/8/2009/02/18/p/dre/pt/html>

19 Orçamento Participativo Jovem <https://opjovem.gov.pt/>

20 FNAJ- <https://www.fnaj.pt/>

21 CNJ <https://www.cnj.pt/>

22 This support happens through three types of financial support: one-off, biennial / annual support. The deadlines for payment of support to youth associations have been scrupulously fulfilled since the beginning of 2017, even in advance in many cases, contrary to what happened in the past, giving greater predictability and stability to these entities.

23 The current version has been reinforced, with the objective of "providing training for young people, entities and professionals involved in the youth field, giving priority to non-formal education and providing knowledge, resources, and tools that promote competencies, for a better quantitative and qualitative performance in the individual performance."



Regarding specific support for declining cities, current Secretary of State for Youth and Sport, João Paulo Rebelo said:

“Specifically, in our area, this is not foreseen, but can be found in the Countryside valorisation Program (Programa de Revalorização do Interior). As an example of this program, we may talk about the Housing Mobility Program for Territorial Cohesion. This program aims to promote mechanisms of housing mobility for households currently residing in areas of intense pressure in the urban housing market who want to establish in low-density territories - favouring both attraction and fixation of population, particularly young families, in the countryside cities, and also the provision of housing for rent at affordable costs in the areas of highest demand pressure.²⁴

5.2. Shrinking phenomenon in national and regional context

In late 1960, Portugal was, on the one hand, marked by agriculture and somewhere traditional economic activities, and on the other, a country with a movement of progress thanks to the expanding industrial sectors. It was modernity versus tradition, development versus backwardness, a duality not only geographical or territorial but also of a social nature, with profound and visible inequalities and asymmetries in the living conditions of the Portuguese population²⁵. Portugal suffered profound changes between the early 1960 and today, particularly with the colonial war, which took place in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. This war had many human and material costs that almost led to the collapse of the country.

Other significant changes were:

1. The massive surge of emigration until 1973, with people fleeing from hunger and poverty, but also the political persecutions of the dictatorship;
2. The change of political regime in 1974;
3. The process of decolonization and nationalization of several sectors of the economy, in 1975;
4. The adherence to the European Economic Community in 1986;
5. The re-privatization of some areas of the economy, in the years 1980 and 1990;
6. The entry into service of a new currency (in 2002) and the participation in the world economic and financial globalization, in the last decade.

Interestingly, the number of residents has hardly changed since then²⁶. After the revolution of 1974, the extreme situations of socio-cultural backwardness were experienced in the inland regions, mainly in the centre and north of the country. However, more than fifty years later, Portugal remains an asymmetric country, where the coastline offers more opportunities in terms of employment, access to health and education, leisure, and even better soil and climate conditions which attract and invite to the settlement of populations. In the last forty-five years, Portugal has had to fight against considerable backwardness regarding other countries in terms of education, and consequently skilled labour,

²⁴ Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 57/2018

²⁵ Cardoso, 2013

²⁶ Valente Rosa and Chitas, 2010.

low labour productivity rates, and weak economic competitiveness. A high inequality regarding income distribution also affects the country. Portugal was, in 2013, one of the EU 27 countries with the highest Gini index (an indicator of income inequality) and in 2017 remained one of the countries with the highest rate of poverty and social exclusion.

According to the National Statistics Institute (INE) estimates, in 2017 the resident population in Portugal was 10,291,027 inhabitants, a decline of 0.18% over the previous year. This result shows a slow-down in the population decrease when compared to the last six years, but maintains the negative trend registered in Portugal since 2010. According to TIPAU (Typology of Urban Areas for Statistical Purposes), the reduction of population in the country, with an average value of -0.18% at the national level, was especially intense in predominantly rural areas (-1.01%); this was also the case in averagely urban areas (-0.57%), in contrast to a positive average growth of predominantly urban areas (0.04%). The age structure of the population was divided in 21.5% for people aged 65 and over, 64.7% for people between 15 and 64 years of age, and only 13.8% for those aged up to 14 years. The average age of the country's population is 44.2 years. As for migration, in that year Portugal received 36,639 immigrants and saw 31,753 emigrants, with a positive migratory balance of 4886.

Portugal has 308 municipalities and 158 cities, of which 146 are in the Mainland and the remaining in the autonomous regions of Madeira and the Azores.

The cities in Portugal are very disparate in terms of inhabitants, varying according to the INE (estimated data of 2018), among 663 thousand inhabitants of Lisbon, and Sabugal, with 1900 inhabitants²⁷. Portugal is experiencing the same process of urbanization that is occurring throughout Europe, but official estimates of people living in cities do not include towns that, not having city status, are urban occupation, as some have more than 65,000 inhabitants (Barreira et al., 2015), while many cities do not reach 3000. Portugal, like the rest of Europe, has several causes for population loss, with suburbanization, de-industrialization, satellite effects, and challenging climatic conditions being the most studied.

The growing number of cities with declining populations is the manifestation of a global process²⁸ which concentrates in some cities all financial and information and communication networks, attracting private investment and qualified human resources²⁹. According to some authors³⁰, the leading cause of urban decline is the economic transformation, mainly in cities whose development depended on mono-activities; **This is the case of Covilhã, which for many decades was considered “the Portuguese Manchester” due to its enormous textile production.**

27 The system of creation and extinction of local authorities and description and determination of the category of settlements is governed by the law 11/82 from June 2nd. This law indicates that a village can be upgraded to the category of city in case it meets the minimum threshold of 8000 voters and owns at least half of some specific collective equipment: a) hospital facilities with on call service; b) Pharmacies; c) fire-fighter Corporation; d) Entertainment and Cultural Center; e) Museum and library; f) hospitality facilities; g) preparatory and secondary education institution; h) pre-primary education and kindergartens; i) urban and suburban public transport; j) parks or public gardens (articles 12 and 13); However, important historical, cultural and architectural reasons may justify a different weighting of the requirements listed in articles 12 and 13 (article 14).

28 Martinez Fernandez et al., 2013, cit. By Barreira, A., Panagopoulos, T. and Guimarães, MH, 2015.

29 Lang, 2005.

30 Friedrich 1993, Oswalt, 2005, cit. By Barreira, A., Panagopoulos, T., and Guimarães, M.H., 2015.



In Portugal, the non-attractiveness of the activities related to the primary sector, predominantly located in the interior of the country, associated to lower quality and quantity of public services and goods has created a migration from the cities of the countryside to the coast. Only the elderly return or remain in the more impoverished peripheral regions³¹. The awareness of the loss of inhabitants in Portugal is recent, and most political approaches trivialize or try to reverse the process³². Although the decline is part of the historical evolution of the places, the literature on urban planning is oriented to solve problems related to growth, from which comes the challenge of geographical dispersion. The advent of globalization has widened this dynamic as international competition has slashed national boundaries, making smaller regions with no competitive advantage suffer from a persistent decline in economic activities and consequently their population. The peripheral regions are especially vulnerable because they are not part of the decision-making centres and are remain unlinked to the main international networks³³. The central policy of the municipalities to overcome this problem has been the granting of subsidies to stimulate the birth rate and social benefits for the allocation of families in the municipalities that are losing their inhabitants. There are also cases in which municipalities charge lower tax rates to fix inhabitants. In general, these policies do not have significant results in the fight against the phenomenon. The question of the inversion of the age pyramid is also crucial. With less population and consequently fewer taxpayers, municipalities also have fewer sources of income, which prevents them from having more and better infrastructures, making them even less attractive to the population. Maintaining schools is a good example³⁴, even as the young population is declining. Disinvestment in schools accentuates the decline process because families with schoolchildren tend to look for other nearby municipalities with better schools.

31 Castro et al., 2012, cit. By Barreira, A., Panagopoulos, T., and Guimarães, M.H., 2015.

32 Panagopoulos and Barreira, 2012.

33 Kiely, R, cit by Panagopoulos and Barreira, s/d.

34 Panagoulos and Barreira, op.cit

CASE STUDY OF CITY OF COVILHÃ



5.3.1. Shrinking phenomenon in the city context

Why it happened

In this region, as in all regions of the interior of the country, it is from the 1950s onwards that there has been a continual decrease in population as a result of several economic, political and social factors. Of these, the traditional productive structure, the low incomes of the agricultural sector, the low expectations of employment in industry and services, the poor accessibility and the lack of an integrated management and development model can be highlighted. The loss of population due to emigration and rural exodus has resulted in a process of aging and depopulation, the most visible consequences of which is the loss of demographic vitality, increased social burdens, functional dependence on urban areas and social and productive disarticulation³⁵.



Figure 1 - Photo of the city of Covilhã - by Roger Amaral Scheridon de Moraes (CC-BY-3.0)

³⁵ Lopes, 2005.



As far as industrial activity is concerned, until 1980 Covilhã was the city with the largest business and industrial tradition in the wool sector. Formerly known as the “Portuguese Manchester”, it employed thousands of workers. Often whole families worked in the same company. Children easily entered the world of work and most of them, soon elementary school or even earlier. In December 1972, in the city that was the main industrial wool centre in the country, 99 wool companies were registered, employing 6760 workers, according to the report of the Covilhã Wool Industry Association. Covilhã had more than two hundred companies.

The energy crisis of the early 1970s and the change of the protectionist political regime that “had weakened the vigour of the first decades of the XX century hastened the closure of a significant number of industrial companies. The loss of colonial markets, in which many companies had bet on exclusivity, aggravated by rising wages, precipitated a long-announced outcome” (...) (Pinheiro, 2016). After Portugal’s entry into the European Economic Community, the lack of industrial competitiveness resulted, between 1989 and 1993, in the closure or stoppage in Covilhã of 25 wool companies, including some of the largest, which left 1324 people jobless. Today the number of wool companies is less than 15.

The few industrial companies that were able to resist bet on technological modernization and large-scale production, especially for international luxury brands. According to the deputy mayor of Covilhã, “Today textile continues to be Covilhã’s primary source of development and income. It is still in the textile and wool sector that there are more employees, more jobs created, the higher wealth produced, higher tax revenue, higher export volume” (in Vicente, 2017: 91).

What are the impacts and potential impacts?

In an area where the industrial focus has always been on a single type of product such as textiles, the closure of the companies meant that factory workers couldn’t find jobs. Most of these had to immigrate, eventually taking entire families, who settled in other cities of the country and other countries. The new generations return to the area for vacations, not thinking about returning. The city also has hard orographic and climatic characteristics which contribute to the city’s lack of attractiveness. Despite its increasingly prestigious university and all the incentives to young people, the city cannot retain young people when they finish their studies. According to Vicente (2017), less than 30% of UBI students consider staying in the city after completing their studies³⁶.

5.3.2. Organization and youth-work programs

Brief introduction about the organizations

CooLabora is a social intervention cooperative created in 2008. **Its mission is to contribute to the development of people, organizations, and territory through innovative strategies to promote equal opportunities, civic participation, education and training, and social inclusion.** Its vision is to be a sustainable organization, with a recognized ability to encourage social innovation, with interventions marked by quality and ethical principles. CooLabora guides its activities according to ethical and socially responsible principles, namely: in the promotion of social cohesion; in defence of equal opportunities; in democracy and participation; in collaborative learning.³⁷ Gender equality is CooLabora’s central area of intervention. **Graça Rojão** considers gender discrimination the most transversal of all prejudices; it permeates age, social class, and ethnicity. In the field of gender equality, they work with victims of domestic and gender violence, assuming that this violence is one of the forms of inequality.

³⁶ <https://www.ointerior.pt/?s=CooLabora>
<http://www.urbi.ubi.pt/pag/10971>

³⁷ http://www.CooLabora.ie/en/pag/about_n__s/



Figure 3. - University of Beira Interior in Covilhã

5.3.3. Background and genesis of the youth-works projects

Marco Ferreira, trainer in the Creative laboratory, explained the IDEARIA project like this:

***“IDEARIA** is a joint process of discovery, reinvention, and dialogue that allows us to risk making decisions without fear, creating innovative and surprising situations. (...) In these laboratories, **the theatre was a pretext for individual and collective experimentation**, not as strange, out of our sight, mysterious and inaccessible, but as a natural, creative and transformative language. IDEARIA is part of the verb act, to become the real protagonists of our lives. IDEARIA is a highly collaborative, discovering, socially conscious combination where all the risks are taken together without fear of failure³⁸.“*

IDEARIA wanted to promote social change and innovation, trying to find appropriate answers to the difficulties of young people at the beginning of their professional career. **The project aimed to work skills that are important for youth employability, but also relevant to their fulfilment: communication, teamwork, self-knowledge.** It wanted to be a space where all voices were heard and that privileged the diversity of perspectives and languages.

IDEARIA was a project that promoted young people’s access to work and employment, focusing:

- on the development of transversal skills - the so-called *soft skills*;
- in training directed to the creation of self-employment;
- in the creation of networks of local organizations and;
- in the animation of communication spaces between young people and organizations/institutions.



It was composed of **independent but articulated laboratories** in which participants could participate: **Creative Lab**, **Entrepreneurial Lab**, and **Experimentation Lab**. IDEARIA also invested in the promotion of the Youth Assembly and the creation of the Territorial Network for Youth Employment. The project was developed by a partnership formed by four very distinct organizations contributing with complementary skills and resources: CooLabora - Social Intervention (promoter), Teatro das Beiras, Municipality of Covilhã and University of Beira Interior. For Graça Rojão, Idearia's strongest point was the creation of a network (Territorial Network for Youth Employment) that played a crucial role in changing preconceived negative ideas towards young people, considered very immature and only focused on the playful aspects of life. Also, because they are young people with a technological background but with a poor entrepreneurial experience, the training provided by IDEARIA has brought an interesting complement, considers.

The project allowed two itineraries with an average duration of 7 months each. Each youngster was able to choose the labs and activities that most interested them, without any obligation to participate in the whole route. Three laboratories were proposed, as well as a youth assembly.

1 - The Creative Lab had three independent workshops: theatre, photography/video, and plastic expression. In it, through artistic languages, deepened self-knowledge and stimulated the construction of a transformative civic sense. Co-creation festivals were also held in this laboratory to foster a space where young people could interactively develop ideas and cooperate and create innovative business solutions.

2 - The Entrepreneurial Laboratory³⁹ was intended primarily for young people interested in creating their job or structuring a business plan to be developed in the future. At the end of each block, each participant presented the business idea, business concept, and business plan to a jury. This lab had an action-training format, based on the proximity and interactivity between trainer and student, as well as cooperation among young people.

"In addition to the people I met, ... I met other projects that wanted to be born, others that were born, others that were not born, people who wanted to do it, and that's good."

Catarina Nobre, a beneficiary.

Professor Maria José Madeira, the coordinator of this lab, comments:

"There was also the goal that the project itself would result not only in better skills but also that the students materialized something they did - a business plan. In the specific case, we made a manual book of contents, so that they have the theoretical concepts. At the same time, they brought their ideas and collaborated with us in the book itself, making the presentation of their idea in writing, besides presenting orally and working on it. The goal was for them to have materialized products to keep for the future creation of a company."

3 - The Experimentation Laboratory has focused on creating opportunities and environments conducive to the testing of ideas and networking among young people. It included:

- a mentoring program for young people interested in pursuing the business project;
- conducting micro-stages of observation in youth-chosen companies or non-governmental organizations;
- a physical space for work and various activities that allowed them to test ideas.

This Lab was very flexible, depending on the needs of the young people and the project. There was open-access workspace, training, workshops, as well as numerous events, such as meetings, public sessions, debates, etc.

³⁹ had two editions, both with a training itinerary consisting of three blocks with a total duration of 64 hours, distributed as follows:

1) From Idea to Business Proposal (18h);

2) Market Research, Value Proposition and Business Concept (18h);

3) Financing, Support and Incentive System, Legal Aspects, and Business Plan (28h).

4 - Youth Assembly - With these assemblies, IDEARIA created a space for brainstorming on issues related to employment, work, and entrepreneurship, with a view to self-training and awareness of young people. The Assemblies also created a closer link between young people and the team, which facilitated a more significant adjustment between IDEARIA responses and young people's needs and expectations.

Finally, there was also **the creation of the Territorial Network for Youth Employment**. This network is a space for interinstitutional articulation, knowledge, and experience sharing and also to coordinate action strategies among entities that intervene in promoting youth employment. The Network was launched under the project and continues to work with the many partners in local community.

5.3.4. Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the project consider that the University is the best opportunity Covilhã offers. They also agree that the city does not provide opportunities within their areas of education and that the project made them understand that they can undertake alone and create their path. The young respondents say that the laboratories offered by the IDEARIA project were a very positive experience. Regarding the creative laboratory, they considered it to be "very stimulating" (Catarina Nobre), it served to learn to "reflect on ourselves and to know the capabilities we had. Getting to know ourselves." (Noélia Rodriguez). One participant pointed out that this project goes a bit against the idea that the young are inexperienced, and they cannot go to work yet, which stimulates participants, boosts their confidence and makes them realize it is possible.

Regarding the involvement of the community, employers and potential business partners, young people feel that it was essential to build networks, to make new contacts, to learn about new projects. As for the entrepreneurship laboratory, one of the interviewed beneficiaries considers that it brought him "a reality shock" (...), because *"in the business world there are those who have the wisdom to say" this will not work* ", *"Don't do that," "No, don't go that way," and we begin to realize that good sense sometimes hurts, but it's the best way."* (Pedro Alves). Everyone considers crucial the help they received to understand if their projects were viable to make financial plans and investment plans. What one of the beneficiaries found most important about this lab was the "ability to create and co-create because we weren't alone, but it was all with the group." (Noélia Rodriguez).

It is clear from the interviewed beneficiaries' point of view that one of the main strengths created was a network of partners: "In general, [the project] created networks" (Catarina), it created "a little community within the community" (Inês) in which there is cooperation instead of competition.



Figure 4 - Covilhã City Centre



5.3.5. Perspective from the related stakeholders

These are the opinions given by the members of the Territorial Network for Youth Employment, gathered in the Idearias Guide (Rojão e Silvestre, 2016) above mentioned:

ADERES - Estrela-Sul Rural Development Association

This network is essential to us because the most qualified generation must also be the most prepared. To the theoretical knowledge has to be added better operational capacity. Young people deserve everything, but they have to work to earn it. They have to value and complement the employment/work dichotomy. Coolabora and its IDEARIA project can and should be the aggregator of the different Territorial Programs and Strategies for the creation of the Youth Employment Idea Bank and Project Bank.

AECBP - Covilhã, Belmonte and Penamacor Business Association

The Territorial Network for Youth Employment is important to us as the AECBP welcomes projects aimed at developing transversal skills in young people and especially encouraging entrepreneurship and employability. In this regard, we can contribute with our experience in mediating between the interests, needs, and requirements of companies and what are the outcomes and objectives of the Network (p.80).

AFTEBI - Association for Technological and Vocational Training of Beira Interior

The Territorial Network for Employment assumes a fundamental role in building a shared strategic vision for the territory. It mobilizes and involves the various entities that deal directly or indirectly with youth employability, articulating, and following a path of high collaborative commitment. Through the competencies of each partner, this Network can become an ecosystem of excellence where young people can find innovative answers in the area of youth entrepreneurship and employability.

CMC - Covilhã City Council

The Territorial Network for Youth Employment is a crucial piece for the acquisition of new skills and empowerment of young people, intending to make them active and informed citizens. The IDEARIA Project created new opportunities for the young people involved (...). It was possible to open new horizons and contribute to their personal and professional development, where responsibility and social investment became crucially important.

CASE STUDY OF CITY OF SÃO PEDRO DEL SUL



5.4.1. Shrinking phenomenon in the city context

"Here and there, embedded in deep valleys or perched on sunny terraces, ancestral villages arise ... myths and legends of goats that kill wolves, the dead that kill alive, snakes that eat men and saints who carry embers in their hands."

<http://montanhasmagicas.pt>

São Pedro do Sul is a city in the interior of Portugal, in the region of Viseu - Dão Lafões and is a municipality created in 1836 that has 14 parishes, being crossed by the Vouga and Sul rivers and by national roads nº 16 and nº 227. Dominated by the hills of Freita, Arada and S. Macário and by the vast Vouga valley, the municipality is a destination of nature by excellence. The city has a wealth of built heritage, some dating back to the 10th century BC, but is best known for its Roman thermal baths with more than 2,000 years of existence and whose remains of the original thermal baths are still visible.

The municipality has two industrial parks, without significant weight because they are relatively small, but a large part of the population of the county works in the industrial parks of the neighbouring counties of Oliveira de Frades and Vouzela. These were profoundly affected in the fires of 2016 and 2017, leading to even more unemployment for the region, as its burned area increased from 0.9 in 2015 to 5.6 in 2017.

The inhabitants fear that the natives of São Pedro do Sul will continue to go to Viseu or other neighbouring counties in search of employment. Given the distance from the municipality to the main communication routes (A25) of the region and the lack of railway line, it is unlikely that the region could claim to be an industrial pole, having to bet on the development of tourism, around the thermal resort, but also taking advantage of all the fantastic landscapes and opportunities that the region offers. São Pedro do Sul is a bioregion, which promotes natural and typical products obtained by agroecological or biological production systems in articulation with the territory, in a perspective of sustainable development that allows reaching a level of economic, social and cultural development, based on standards of justice and solidarity.



São Pedro do Sul became a city on June 12, 2009, due to its historical importance and its touristic attractiveness. According to INE data, in 1960 São Pedro do Sul had 24,263 inhabitants, but in 2011, the date of the last census, it had only 16,851 inhabitants. Estimates indicate that in 2017, on December 31st, there were only 15,685 inhabitants in the municipality, with an area of 348.69 Km². The total population balance in 2018 was -190. The aging rate (number of older adults per 100 young people), which was, in 1960, 33.4 was already 207.4 in 2011, and the potential level of sustainability (people of working age by the elderly) was 1960, of 5.7 and in 2011 of 2, 3.

Regarding municipal support for families, the Chamber offers scholarships for university students, support for extended school hours in kindergartens, so that parents can work in extended hours, support the birth rate (offering 50 euros monthly for local purchases during the first year of the child's life). The City Hall also provides school transportation, sporting vacations up to the age of 16 and summer Free Time Activities (ATL) until 10 years old. It also sponsors the field trips of local schools. The City Hall also has a business incubator and a supporting Office for Immigrants.

Causes and consequences of shrinkage in the selected city

São Pedro do Sul is a very rural region, without significant industrial investment due to the lack of accessibility and raw materials of interest for the sector. After European Community membership, the question of quotas also disrupted agricultural production in the region, which, in the absence of financial and technical support to adapt to the new guidelines, also declined. Only recently, the region has seen its people returning to explore local tourism or to produce local products. The lack of investment in tourism and environmental heritage and in training directed to this business area, which could energize the city and its surroundings, meant that there were no opportunities for young people, who, having to leave to continue their studies did not return. This, of course, also has consequences in the demographic pyramid, as there are fewer and fewer births, and life expectancy is increasing. Recently, many people choose to "return to the land" after retirement, so the number of older people in the region tends to increase.

5.4.2. Organization and youth-work programs

Brief introduction about the organizations

The Association Fragas- Aveloso - Association for Environmental, Scientific, Community and Cultural Interaction is based in the municipality of S. Pedro do Sul and created in 2013. The association works on the themes **of Environment and Science, Culture, Economy and Ecology, Feminism and Memory and Animal Rights**. All the associates involved in the design of the project "**Acolher**" are researchers in different areas. It was their combined knowledge that resulted in the elaboration of this project, which was the first project of the association with external funding in the application to the EEA Grants, within the framework of the Active Citizenship program, promoted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

In the city of São Pedro do Sul, and in the nearest towns, there are no associations, except for the Parents' Association and Student Associations, aimed at young people. Cultural, social, and recreational associations are not targeting young people, but the whole community.

5.4.3. Background and genesis of the youth-works projects

In S. Pedro do Sul, the unemployment rate among young people aged 15/24 was 21.5% in 2011, and the unemployment rate for women was 14.3%, while that for men was 8.6%. Women are thus considered an essential target group.

The project Acolher sought to create conditions for social inclusion and new skills for innovative activities to be developed by unemployed or youths in a situation of vulnerability, valuing an inter-generational relationship with the local population, especially women who can be interlocutors in a tourist reception process, from a perspective of **Ethical and Responsible Tourism (TER) and gender equality**. The TER has as a principle the organization and participative management of its activities by the local communities, the primary beneficiaries of the initiatives. It implies the valorisation of the environment and the historical and cultural heritage, as well as stimulating practices of participatory democracy. This project aimed to promote an intergenerational dialogue between young people and women in the villages, through the learning of new acquired skills and the awareness that ecosystems can maintain their natural functions and coexist with leisure, cultural, personal and organizational development activities, with significant contributions to the local economy, enhancing the sustainable development of the region.

The project also allowed **a set of partnerships with other entities**, converging local and other regions' experiences, to foster interdisciplinarity and complementarities between different initiatives generated in different territorial scales. As a pedagogical strategy, the project was inspired by the presuppositions of Popular Education, in the perspective of Paulo Freire. This project was considered innovative as a boost to the creation of new activity "Guide-mediator of ethical and responsible tourism" for unemployed young people from the interior of the country, with the development of new skills. The project intended to work with the Carvalhais Professional School, the SPS City Council and the Employment Centre so that the construction of a new competency profile as a Tourist Guide could include professional specialization in Ethical and Responsible Tourism Mediation.

The activities proposed by the project were:

Component 1

- 1.1 - Thematic training actions - TER concepts and experiences and inherent themes (food sovereignty, fair trade, community self-management, gender balance, municipal ecological network and impacts, ecosystems close to the natural state and modified)
- 1.2 - Training actions for the development of economic activities: development of skills associated with the economic activities, creation of the course; budgeting, logistics etc.

Component 2

- 2.1 - Carrying out of a participatory rural diagnosis of the region: a survey of problems and potentialities, identification of women participants and member houses;
- 2.2 - Cycles of dialogue and training of women participants;
- 2.3 - Preparation of the TER Charter, a document that explains the values and practices of ethical and responsible tourism;

Component 3

- 3.1 - Creation of inter-village coordination networks for young mediators and host houses - budget, logistics, coordination, and follow-up of visitors;
- 3.2 - Dissemination of itineraries prepared by young people and typification of visits - the creation of a brochure, the creation of a project site, interviews, and reports in the media, and links to other national and international networks;
- 3.3 - pilot experiment to host evaluators.



Booklet Acolher © Élia Henriques

According to the coordination of the project, **this project was held to sensitize the local youth - high school students, university students and unemployed - to the importance of the environmental and cultural heritage of their region** (which invests primarily in thermal tourism) **and to help them in the search for new opportunities**. "The idea behind the project was to redirect the thousands of tourists that the city receives each year to ethical and responsible tourism through the formation of young tourism monitors who would have new and better knowledge about their territory (Luís Ribeiro, trainer, and member of the association)." In addition, the project was also intended to engage young people, women, and older people living in the region, creating networks in local communities (Luís Ribeiro).



Training © Ass. Fragas

5.4.4. Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries

For many young people, who were unemployed or without prospects for the future, the project gave them “a reason to wake up in the morning,” to have responsibilities and to provide them with skills they did not have. The organization recalls that during the project the local economy was invigorated, because, during the project, there was always a link between local production and cultural dynamics.

Concerning skills developed, the young people spoke of this having been a period of great learning and growth. In the context of non-formal education, they received training that focused on aspects related to the historical, cultural, and environmental heritage of their region, in the context of promoting ethical and responsible tourism. “I acknowledge the help and knowledge I received from Fragas and the toolbox I still use nowadays”, says Diogo, a beneficiary from the project currently studying in Armenia. Intergenerational encounters allowed everyone to learn with one another. This beneficiary also spoke of the importance of discussing ideas and concepts on how to improve the situation of the community to have developed critical thinking. All the interviewed beneficiaries referred to a greater awareness of the ecosystem and greater responsibility they felt for the planet after the end of the training.



“I didn’t know what I was capable of.”

Ana Rita, beneficiary

Many felt more involved in the community and realized that they had a new purpose in life and an offer to do things in the area. “It gave them encouragement not to flee, ‘cos they had a working chance there” (Ana Rita). In addition, about the skills they developed in this project, they learned to look for information, to talk to the media, to present the cooperative, to organize themselves.

One of the members of the association, a trainer on the project (Carolina Leão), acknowledges that she was afraid that they would not be able to recruit and retain the young people needed to carry out the project, but she considers that this was possible because the young people took ownership of the training process. For this association, the project showed that it is possible to involve young people by offering them different options and involving them in participatory management of the process. For this trainer, the youth work nowadays is for a wider audience, because the limits for “being young” are more blurred, and in some cases, they reach the age of 35.

As for what the project achieved after its terminus, all of the trainers spoke about the creation of the **Cooperative of Tourist Animation “AcolheRural,”** with a project of guided tours by the newly formed tourism mediators, which was an **unexpected result**. The purpose of the cooperative was to: “create



forms of sustainability for TER mediators, who would welcome the visitors in the villages and to create future jobs in the cooperative for its management and organization, through the activities of dissemination of diversified village tourism programs "(Nunes, 2016, p.14). Regarding the impact on the lives of young people: "(...) it was very significant, and the confidence gained in this innovative activity gave rise to the formation of the AcolheRural Cooperative for Tourist Animation of the Villages" (Nunes, 2016, p.6).

The organizations spoke of the good relations built with the public institutions (City Council, Parish Councils, Schools), which from the outset understood the importance of this project for the region. They also spoke about networking with other local organizations which became instrumental in the process of transmitting knowledge by demonstrating to the trainees the entire flax cycle and the people in neighbouring villages who worked hard in showing young people how life was in the villages when they had more population.

The organization also considers that the project drove the attention of the local authorities to the need for youth and intergeneration policies, also respecting the gender issue. It also believes that the relationship with the City Council and the Parish Councils was excellent and is still maintained and that very productive dialogue with the schools has begun.

The direct beneficiaries reflected "critically on the complexity of putting into practice a community-based project such as Ethical and Responsible Tourism and values that guide it." They stated in the evaluation sheets that the training sessions offered theoretical knowledge consistent with the proposed program. The group work to evaluate the cycle of sessions on Ethical and Responsible Tourism culminated in a collective elaboration about the profile and competence of the mediators. Thus, the role of the mediator of Ethical and Responsible Tourism was: "to have an active role, to know the territory and the community well, to be a protector of the environment" (p.5).

Young people feel that the lack of work and opportunities in a region with limited accessibility and without collective means of transport makes it unbearable to stay in an area that many of them love. As for advice to change seekers, they feel the changes have to start in the community, as politicians do not like to take risks on projects that may not work. They also find that young people find it difficult to fight for themselves, hoping that older people will decide and provide everything, perhaps as a result of traditional education and training. They consider it essential to listen to the external ideas of experts, but especially the thoughts of those who live in these cities. Also, "communication between young people needs to be improved to foster ideas and initiatives" (Diogo, age 20). They also spoke of "empowering the people, letting them be part of the process, and giving them some decision-making power, informing them of what is wanted" (Daniela, 22). "Projects must also be innovative, calling on young people to participate and should not have an overly theoretical component, because it drives young people away, as they want more practical things" (Ana Rita, 22).

Decision-makers and community actors, on the other hand, consider projects should have a longer duration or have more editions, to integrate more young people.

The difficulties mentioned by the Fragas Association refer to the extreme bureaucracy demanded by the financier, who had no idea of the characteristics of working in an inland region. The truth is that in a country as small as Portugal, it is still common that the people who approve the projects do not know the realities of the territories and the difficulties faced by development workers in these regions. Another of the questions raised by the interviewees is the lack of support offices to give information on national and international programs and lines of support and funding for young people's projects.

5.4.5. Perspective from the related stakeholders

For the parish priest Lindoval, there is a neglect of the State regarding the inland regions, and it is essential to value the young people, to give them spaces and to involve them in the process, considering them as peers. **“Working with young people is a process of conquest”** (Father Lindoval). Still according to his assessment, the project should have been longer in time: “to continue exploring new areas and trying to fix young people who could embrace new projects of local tourism and local accommodation, reconciling the mountains, the thermal baths, the river, and the heritage and offering services that are still non-existent”.

The inhabitants of the community, who contributed to the training with histories on their experiences, also considered that **“the project was very positive, as it brought life to the community** and the young learned with the memories of the aged ones and there was much interaction” (Dorinda, inhabitant of the community).

For the different actors, this project was successful, as the young people got to know their community better and were integrated to develop a project in which they learned and taught, and that raise awareness of the histories and traditions of the region (Pedro Maurício, Chairman of the Parish Council of Sul). As Father Lindoval said, **“No one loves what does not know.”** He also considers that the project **“awakened the consciences of young people.”**

The decision-makers found this project an excellent “tool for pressure” for the formation of youth policies. **“On paper, there is a Municipal Council, but in reality, it does not work”** (Pedro Maurício, Chairman of the Parish Council of Sul). According to the São Pedro do Sul councillor for Culture and Social Action, Teresa Sobrinho, the Municipal Youth Council, whose constitution is mandatory by Law, does not work, as each time the executive changes, the institutions that are legally part of it must find new representatives of their political confidence.

For the councillor for Culture and Social Action who, at the time of the project also had the Youth portfolio, the way the Municipal Youth Councils are designed, they do not represent young people. For her, a teacher by trade, schools should teach students notions of citizenship, how politics works, how they can participate, how to be interventional, and how to fight for what they believe. “After this, of course, when young people have more capacity, projects will emerge, because they become more creative, more critical, they will present solutions and then it is up to the municipalities to support projects as long as they are implementable.” The Councillor regrets that there are no more projects presented.

The Councillor believes that Youth Work should aim at young people according to their expectations and their ambitions. The City Council tries to meet the expectations young people have in various areas: sports, education, and culture. The Councillor recalls that for the last 30 years the region is losing people. She considers that there may be opportunities, but usually, those who went to study abroad did not return. Later they want to return, but they do not have the chance anymore. From the outset, the City Council found the idea of the project brilliant because it focused on young people and women and sought to energize the villages in the region in connection with the younger generation and the older people living in these communities. The City Council was very involved in the project; they attended almost all the initiatives and supported it logistically and financially. They also gave ideas to leverage the project further, as they consider it met the expectations of decision makers and villagers. According to the Councillor, this project has empowered young people to realize that many opportunities in the county are not of the usual kind, so they have to think outside the box.

“It is important that decision-makers prepare the ground for those who come next. Governments have to stop changing everything when they come to power. They have to build on what already exists. They should all join together and discuss what they intended for the country in the long run”, stresses the Councillor.



Spain



6.1. Youth work in national context

“Youth work” is quite the broad term that is hard to define in Spanish language, as no specific concept can provide such definition. However, while no official definition exists, we can differentiate between “formal” youth work, as carried out by the public administration on a national, regional or local level and “non-formal” youth work, as carried out by organisations of the tertiary sector: NGOs, organisations of volunteer youth workers, mostly financed either through public or private funding by the public administration or international organisations. In Spain the autonomous communities hold exclusive authority on the matters of youth affairs and every community has its own definition of youth work, thus preventing also a common nation-wide definition.

In Spain the occupation of “youth worker” is mainly filled by social workers, intercultural mediators, educators and trainers, cultural workers, community workers, youth leaders, volunteers, activists in young organizations or young movements and socio-cultural instructors.

The Spanish Constitution (Spanish Constitution of 1978) states that “public authorities will promote conditions for the free and effective participation of youth in the political, social, economic and cultural development” in its article 48, therefore, public authorities must develop youth policies as it has been done for the last forty years. However, the Constitution does not include a section stating youth policies and so, in order to address this lack of specific assignment, the different Autonomous Regions assumed exclusive responsibility in their own Statutes”. In Andalusia, examples of best practices of “youth work” can be found, for example the work that is being carried out by the Asociación Cardijn, in Cádiz, created with the aim of integrating the most disadvantaged sectors, especially young people from working and immigrant neighbourhoods. Some of the aims of the entity are raising awareness, spreading information, and providing orientation and promotion of youth, especially

for those coming from working class neighbourhoods and population centres. The association carries out follow-ups for its clients to verify the degree of effectiveness of its programs.

Although they do a commendable job, in many cases the projects cannot be carried out due to lack of funding. In Granada, they developed the Comprehensive Program for Qualification and Youth Employment (PICE), with the aim of improving the training of young people through training itineraries, both in person and online training. They carry out internships in companies where they can apply everything they have learned and is intended for people under 30 years of age. This program aims at improving the employability of its users and their capabilities. In general, Spanish youth policies and programs are mainly aimed at improving the training and employability of young people. According to Eurostat data for Spain, youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in Europe, with a rate of 34.3% in 2018, second only to Greece 39.9%. This data is related to the rate of school dropouts (from 18 to 24 years old), being the second highest at 18.3%, second only to Malta with 18.6%.

As previously mentioned, policies or actions regarding youth in Spain are carried out mainly by the Autonomous Communities and local entities. The entity responsible for promoting actions for the benefit of young people at the national level is the Instituto de la Juventud (INJUVE), a public body attached to the Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare, in coordination with the Autonomous Communities and local administrations, which develops and implements youth work policies and programs.

6.2. Shrinking phenomenon in national and regional context

Although urban growth is still common in Europe, there have been certain periods and regions in which a decline in urban life has been observed in demographic, economic, social and environmental terms. In Spain, the cities affected by shrinking (see table below), are mostly in the north of the country and mainly industrial cities such as Avilés (Asturias), Sestao (Vizcaya), Basauri (Vizcaya), Portugalete (Vizcaya), Langreo (Asturias), Bilbao (Vizcaya). However, in other cases, the decrease is related to suburbanization processes towards centres around the main city. This is caused mainly by the rising cost of housing and results in a move of the young population to neighbouring municipalities. The cities that are suffering from this process are: Salamanca, Cádiz, Sevilla, Granada⁴⁰. In Spain 90% of the territory is rural and the administration has been developing projects in these municipalities for over 30 years. They are aware of the risk of depopulation in these areas where they develop policies to improve the living conditions of young people. However, it can be noted that at the national level there seems to be no theoretical or practical reflection on the problem of “urban shrinkage” and as a result the administration does not adopt measures addressing this issue in its entirety. Faced with the loss of population (often wrongly considered to be temporary), they choose to continue promoting urban growth with the hope of recovering economic and demographic development. Consequently, social, economic, population and cultural decline is often promoted even. (Griñó, 2014). Most of the measures adopted by public administrations in cities aimed at combating youth unemployment, social exclusion and marginality, seek to tackle these problems in a concrete way but not holistically (by not considering all the aspects that entail “urban shrinkage”), and therefore, cannot be considered effective responses. After analysing the data of the National Institute of Statistics (see table below) and comparing the censuses of 1996 and 2017, 18 cities have been identified that have lost more



population in the last 20 years, the greatest absolute loss being observed in the city of **Cádiz**: 27,547. It has an aging population, housing is very expensive, it has no land to build and the inhabitants choose to move their residence to nearby towns such as San Fernando or Puerto Real.

Granada as a city has lost 12,870 inhabitants in the last 20 years. This decrease is due to the economic difficulties it experienced, the aging population, the stagnating birth rate, foreigners who settled in Granada and who now leave in search of new opportunities, and young Spaniards who move to nearby towns where housing is cheaper. **Seville** has lost 8,053 inhabitants compared to 1996. It is a city with a booming periphery, as people move to dormitory towns where the price of housing is more affordable.

In Andalusia these 3 cities (Cádiz, Granada and Seville) are those suffering most from declining population, which usually is related to processes of suburbanization towards centres around the main city.

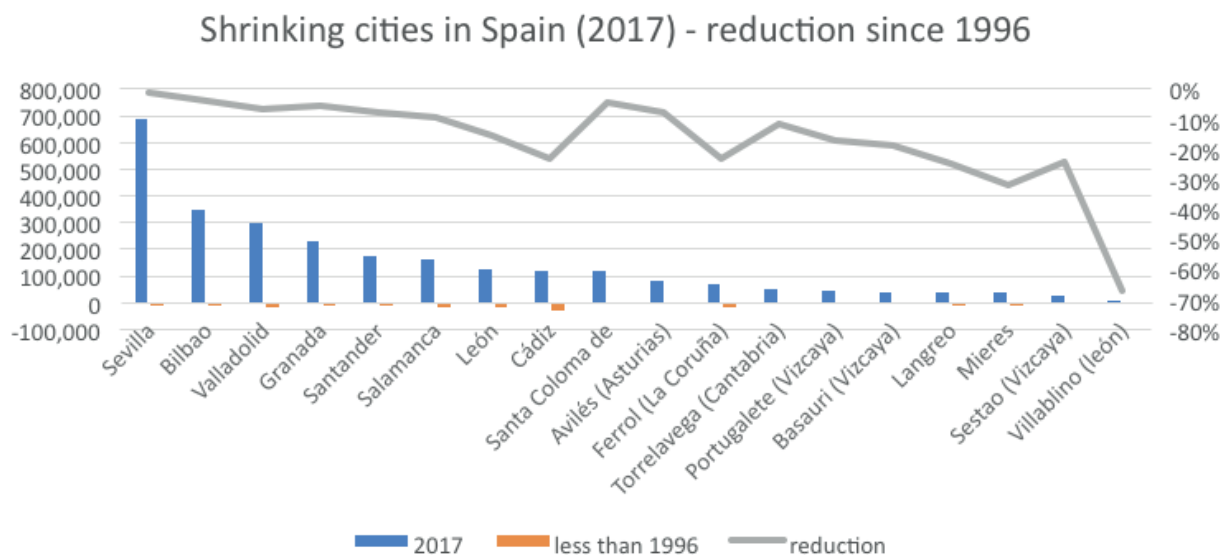


Table: Reduction in number of inhabitants from 1996 to 2017

Source: Own elaboration using INE data (National Institute of Statistics)

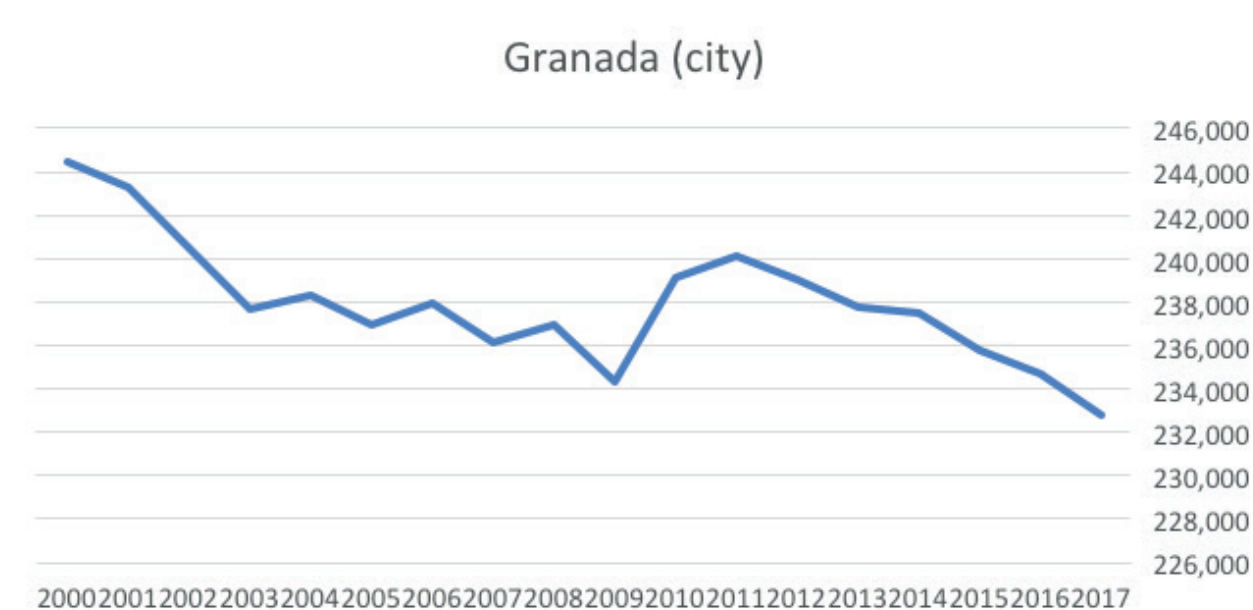
CASE STUDY OF CITY OF GRANADA



6.3.1. Shrinking phenomenon in the city context

The city of Granada, in the eastern part of Andalusia, has a population of 232,208 according to the official figures of the municipal register published by the INE in 2018, which represents 25.46% of this province and 2.77% of the Andalusian population.

The following graph shows how much population the city has had over the years. According to INE data of 2018, Granada had 562 inhabitants less than in 2017.



Graph. Evolution of population in Granada (2000-2018). Source: INE.



The municipality of Granada is composed of eight districts: Norte, Zaidín, Ronda, Centro, Genil, Chana, Albaicín and Beiro. Between the years 2010 and 2018, the evolution of the young population by age in the different districts shows that there is a decrease in the young population, especially in the Norte district, where there is a total loss of 8,135 inhabitants, very significant in ages between 18-25 years. Overall, this district experiences a bigger decrease than the rest of the districts across all age ranges.

The city has several sources of income, including the university, as it attracts a large number of students from all provinces of Andalusia, Spain and foreign countries (mainly Erasmus students). This is very beneficial for local businesses. Likewise, there is a large real estate market related to renting out accommodation for university students during the academic period. Other income sources in the city are tourism and the Granada's great historical heritage, and its culture, leisure options and sports, like skiing in Sierra Nevada. (Duque, 2010).

Causes and consequences of shrinkage in the selected city.

Why did it happen?

There is no single cause for the 'shrinkage', rather, we could speak of a multi-causal process. One of the possible causes has its origin in the high unemployment rate that the Andalusian community, and especially the provinces of Granada and Cádiz, suffer.

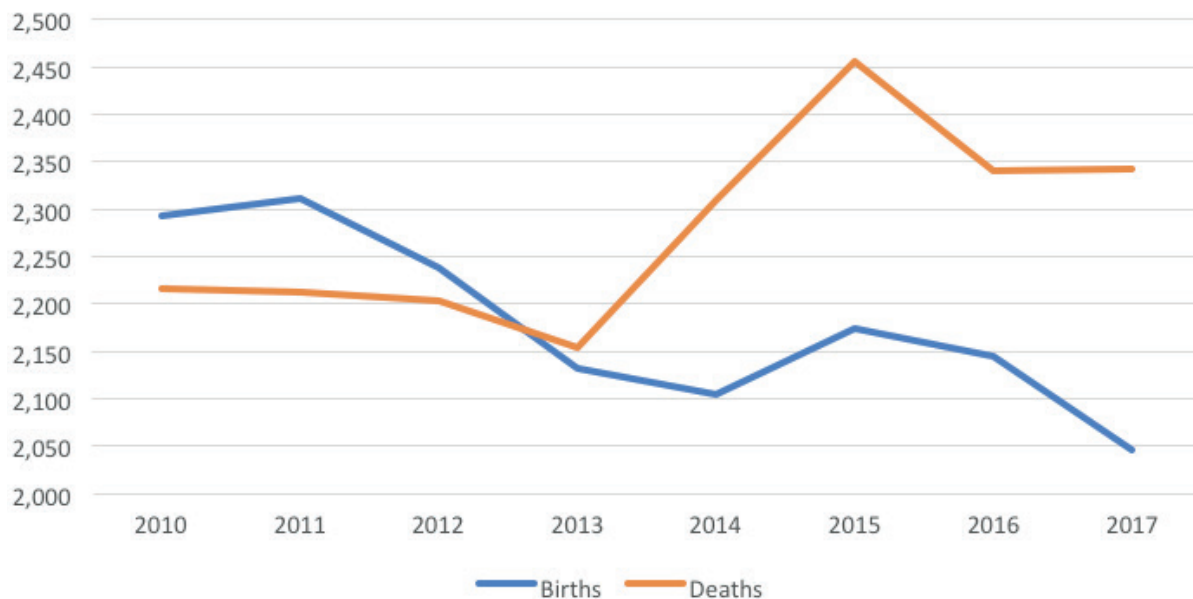
While during the first quarter of 2019 the unemployment rate was 14.70% in Spain, Andalusia reached 21.08%. This number was surpassed in the provinces of Granada and Cádiz with 21.67% and 26.80% respectively, notably high among the young population. In the case of Granada, the unemployment rate for the population between the ages of 16 and 19 years is 54.24%, while it is 36.87% in young people between the ages of 20 and 24.

On the other hand, this decrease in population in the city of Granada seems to be in line with the increase of inhabitants in its metropolitan area. Over the course of the last few years, a considerable number of people that used to live in the city have established themselves in the area of La Vega de Granada. The increase in housing prices has forced many people to consider changing their residence to towns that surround the capital. Granada has a good public transport system and young people prefer to live outside of the city and travel daily to work. Likewise, some parts of the population prefer to live in small towns near the city where it is more affordable to buy a larger house with a garden or a cottage with the possibility of enjoying a cleaner environment (Montosa, 2003). Some of the municipalities that people are choosing to move to are Churriana de la Vega, Armilla, Huétor Vega or Monachil.

As previously mentioned, natural growth in the city of Granada is negative (see table below). The number of deaths is higher than the number of births, and it has been negative since 2012 due to several factors: a lower presence of foreign population, delayed motherhood, lack of working stability, and job insecurity.



Births and Deaths. Granada



Graph: Births and Deaths. Granada (Capital). Source: INE.

What are the effects and potential impacts?

Nowadays, the mortality rate in Granada has increased, as the residents who choose to stay in the city usually belong to older age groups, which leads to an aging population and a higher number of deaths.

Meanwhile, young people who move outside of the city take their family with them and new births are registered in the municipality where they move to, contributing to the birth rate decline. In addition, the departure of migrant families that tend to be bigger affects the depopulation, as they prefer to live in nearby municipalities where housing is more affordable. (Ramiro, 2012).

In the municipalities surrounding the capital there have been social changes due to population influx from the city, often resulting in a higher social status (the majority being middle class) than the existing one in the native population. As a result, the invasion and appropriation of higher quality environmental and aesthetically pleasing spaces is a risk (Montosa, 2003).

According to Joaquín Recaño, in Spain “the general trend in the demographic structure is negative. The only factor that could help would be immigration. However, on a global scale, we can see that these are not good times for mobility”. From the CSIC (Higher Council for Scientific Research), Diego Ramiro Fariñas predicts a worrying situation: “There will be a competition between cities to attract more people”.



6.3.2. Organizations and youth-work programs

In Andalusia, there are examples of good practice in the field of youth work. In the following pages, we will present the work of two different organisations of Granada, a city that meets the requirements to be called shrinking city.

The first one is ALFA, an organisation that works with young people in Albayzín, a deprived neighbourhood in the city of Granada. The second one, Crossover, an association that focuses on promoting the cultural world of manga through specialised events. None of them would ultimately solve the main problem that our project is about, shrinking cities, but we think they represent a good example of good practice. They prove that the small efforts of each individual in one group can change the life in a city at risk of depopulation.

Brief introduction about the ALFA

Almanjáyár en Familia (ALFA) is an organization in the city of Granada that intends to promote social and cultural education in Almanjáyár. This neighbourhood has traditionally been considered a marginal area in the city.

The organization was created as a response to the work carried out by the priest Jesús Otero. He had started a social education and intervention project with socially vulnerable minors in 2004. His goal was to improve the residents' quality of life by empowering them through the development of their own personal skills. They aim for a peaceful and cooperative coexistence so that they can live in a steadier and more productive environment while they acquire the necessary tools and skills to move forward. Juan Carlos Carrión González, president of this organization, stresses that it is necessary to pay attention to social reality, respond to it, and offer young people what they cannot have: space with computers, living in the parish, accompaniment, etc. In short, "Paper planes" seeks to develop the critical thought capabilities of these kids, prepare them for adult life, improve their self-esteem, promote their social skills and train them in decision-making.

In this way, they also expect to restore the neighbourhood's reputation which has always been associated to marginalization and delinquency and thus returning its dignity and going back to Granada's urban activity.

The methodology in ALFA is based on everyone's compromise: employees, volunteers, and users. The first lesson that they teach to young people is giving and receiving, as opposed to only requesting. They achieve getting young people involved in healthy activities using their own motivation. This is their way of offering their users activities that are different from the ones that they usually get in their neighbourhood. The workshops that they organise are requested by young people, a simple way to guarantee their attendance and interest. Without them, there's no project. Their goal is to make them understand that they are the protagonists of their lives and their community.

ALFA users are usually youngsters with a high school drop-out rate. Independent problem solving is at the centre of ALFA's attention, so they can develop skills as a result of their own needs. They need to go from an "I can't" mentality to "I need to learn how to do it", as they do in workshops for their development in digital competences.

One of their initiatives with the most impact is their female football team. Through such a healthy activity, they have faced gender stereotypes, promoting teamwork, conflict resolution, or the need for commitment in order to achieve social progress. However, studies come first, and the coaches who support the team do not hesitate to dedicate training time to catch up with homework or to solve questions if they notice that users are struggling with their grades.

This organisation also qualifies their own trainers, mainly citizens in the neighbourhood that want to be actively involved in the activities. Because they belong there, their presence helps promoting their project and contacting new users, thus involving the community even more. **This initiative is called *Aviones de papel* (Paper Planes).**

6.3.3. Background and genesis of the *Aviones de papel* project

This a project aimed at children between 14 and 18 years old that aims to empower young people, trying to enable them to make their own decisions on issues that have an impact on their lives. In return, there has to be a commitment, such as helping at home or doing well in school. According to Elisa Castillo Moreno and Carmen Espigares González, educators who work in the project, the culture of effort and learning to achieve the goals they set for themselves in life is promoted. In short, *Aviones de papel* seeks to develop children's critical thinking, prepare them for adult life, improve their self-esteem, promote their social skills, and train their decision-making skills.



The project currently has no funding, educators have been working voluntarily since January 2019. **Elisa** is from the neighbourhood and has been with ALFA since she was 12 years old (with some interruptions), she is an instructor in her free time and currently she is studying to become a teacher. She is a positive role model for the children of the association, as she is from the neighbourhood and she is doing higher studies.

She says that the project began a few years ago, but “was aborted for a time due to lack of commitment of some young people”, she also stated that it has been an important step for them to realize that “without commitment there is no project” and “there is no failure; every problem that occurs is an opportunity to grow”. What ALFA users value the most is the fact that this organization offers them a space for them to communicate and where they can express themselves freely and everyone helps each other. This can lead to cooperation in other aspects in their lives, reducing confrontation, increasing dialogue, and improving living conditions locally. This type of project gives them the opportunity to do things they feel confident in, means to achieve their dreams (studies, a place to have a



good time where they feel safe, friendship). This way, they also distance themselves from the dangers in their environment: drugs, violence, weapons, etc.

6.3.4. Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries

The group of children that make up the program “Paper Planes” hold a meeting every Friday and every three weeks they have a workshop. Cristian, Alpha and Aimara (they are 15 years old), as participants of the program feel that they are listened to and their opinions are considered. They even are the ones who make requests for the workshops they want to carry out. They emphasize that in ALFA everything is voluntary, and they offer them the training that young people request. They have the feeling that everyone collaborates, and everyone can go at their own pace without feeling pressure of any kind. They are in charge of writing emails, writing the program of activities, etc.

This type of project gives them the opportunity to do things they are proud of, and it is a means to achieve their dreams (studies, a place to have a good time, friends). In this way, they are moving away from the risks of their environment: drugs, violence, weapons, etc.

Brief introduction about the Asociación Crossover

Crossover is an organization from Granada dedicated to planning and promoting themed events related to ‘nerd’ culture, such as comics, videogames, cinema, Asian culture, manga, anime... Activities that attract the public’s interest increasingly. It was created in 2008 from a union of several organization that existed previously.

In the beginning, this organization was developed by teenage volunteers who got involved along with the members in planning events. According to them, one of Granada’s main strengths is its intense culture, so these spaces help the creation and developing of new artistic and/or business projects. Through promotion of nerd culture, Crossover offers the possibility to connect with the young population, who usually cannot identify themselves with the local folklore. This creates new possibilities for social gathering through leisure.

In the last few years, their event “FICZONE” has become a meeting point for artists, illustrators, designers, cultural and entertainment entrepreneurs, cartoonists, publishers, board games creators... They are experts in a complex social and business environment, very hard to carry out in the city. This way, they can join efforts and develop possible projects in Granada that would have been impossible otherwise. Moreover, FICZONE produces an increase in rental accommodation, as both participants and attendees stay in the city for the duration of the event. This has a positive impact in the Granadan economy.



6.3.5. Perspective from the related stakeholders

José Antonio Gutiérrez, deputy director of the Department of Youth, has worked 30 years as a youth technician in the City of Granada, before becoming deputy director of the youth area 3 years ago. After making a summary of the interviews and information collected from the different associations, he says that he knows ALFA because the facilitators of the North area usually request workshops and he knows CROSSOVER as they finance the first prize for the comics contest. He is not sure whether these associations can contribute to the problem of depopulation.

When asked why the Department is not involved in these projects, he replies that “many associations do not ask for help and prefer to develop their activities without interference from the administration”. He was also asked whether the City Council works in a top-down manner, that is, the ideas arise from the Department and the collaborators carry them out, he answers that it is the opposite, the proposals come from associations or from young people. He states that several associations claimed the creation of the Youth Council, which is an agency responsible for representing young people in the municipality, taking the needs and suggestions to public entities.

Regarding the phenomenon of urban depopulation “Shrinking Cities”, he thinks that the impact of the projects of ALFA, XOVER and others similar associations is minimal, he thinks that the main problems of young people (and those that cause them to leave the city) are unemployment and housing.



CASE STUDY OF CITY OF CÁDIZ



6.4.1. Shrinking phenomenon in the city context

Cádiz population is 27,547, it is an aging population, where housing is very expensive, it has no land to build and the inhabitants choose to move their residence to nearby towns such as San Fernando or Puerto Real. In 1996 the city of Cádiz had a total population of 145,595 inhabitants, a figure that had fallen to 116,027 inhabitants by 2019 according to INE data.

Causes and consequences of shrinkage in the selected city

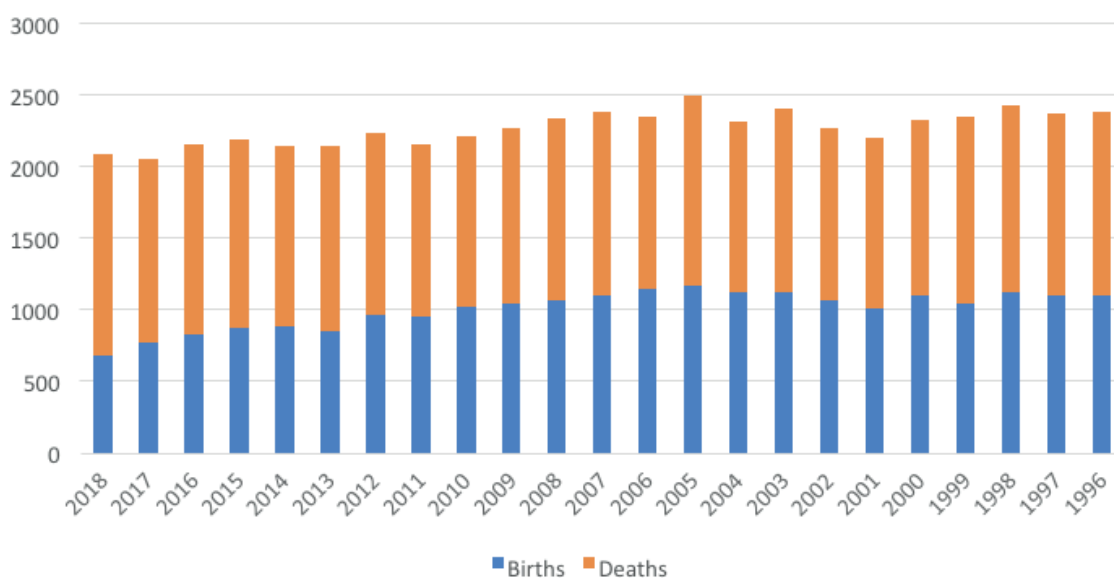
There are many factors that have contributed to the fall in demographics, including the industrial decline in the city, which led to the closure of stores and shops. However, in the 1960s and early 1970s, there was rapid increase in every type of store in Cádiz thanks mainly to three mainstays: the shipyard, the tobacco factory and aviation construction which boosted the Cádiz economy. These companies provided employment for approximately 9,000 workers. For years industry led to the creation of many direct and indirect jobs through auxiliary companies that sprung up to complement to this activity. However, the collapse of industry as a creator of employment and wealth has resulted in a crisis situation in both labour and economic terms. The Aviation Construction left the city at the start of the twenty-first century and CAMPSA and the tobacco factory also closed, while the naval factory remained but experienced difficulties. Today everything has disappeared and only the Naval Repairs Dock in Cádiz City remains with a staff of a mere 125 employees.

Cádiz is the province with the highest unemployment rate in Spain. According to INE data for the third quarter of 2019, employment by production sectors had the following distribution: the services sector dominates, since it employs 67.6% of the working population. It is followed by industry, with 9.5%, and construction with 6.2% and agriculture comes last with 3.4% of those employed.

According to data from the INE (National Statistics Institute), the number of deaths has been increasing, and now exceeds the number of births. As a result, the city of Cádiz now has an ageing population.



EVOLUTION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS FROM 1996 TO 2018 IN CÁDIZ (CAPITAL)



Source: Own elaboration using INE data (National Institute of Statistics)

The Migratory Balance

According to data from the Andalusian Institute of Statistics and Cartography, the migratory balance of Cádiz capital has been negative during the last 30 years. From 1988 to 2018 the capital suffered a decrease in population, with more people emigrating than immigrating.

According to Manuel Arcila, Professor of Regional Geographic Analysis at the University of Cádiz, the loss in population is mainly the result of lack of space in Cádiz and a shortage in housing. This forces those who reside in Cádiz to move to other locations in the Bay, such as San Fernando or Puerto Real. The lack of opportunity practically forces the natives of Cádiz to emigrate in search of better working and living conditions.

According to Manuel Arcila, the sectors of the population that mainly emigrate are the young aged between 15 and 39 who are better trained and qualified, and immigrants who arrived in search of better work opportunities but are forced to leave because of the lack of jobs.

6.4.2. Organization and youth-work programs

Brief introduction about the organizations

CARDIJN ASSOCIATION

The association was set up in 1993 with the aim of working for the most disadvantaged, especially with young people from lower class backgrounds and immigrants. The aims of the entity are: attention, information, guidance, training and promotion, especially for those in a vulnerable situation and to collaborate with public or private administrations that share these aims. As coordinator of the youth area, Antonio Guerrero Delgado emphasizes the importance of cultural and family roots: *"we try to prevent young people from leaving the city and for this we carry out youth activities aimed at favouring the permanence of the children in the city of Cádiz"*.

ASOCIACIÓN ALENDY

It is a non-profit association that develops its activities with a clear intention to promote educational opportunities to all those groups that for one reason or another, experience situations of social exclusion or find difficulties of adaptation to traditional educational structures.

The non-profit Alendoy association came into being in 1999 with the aim of bringing about transformational change through social participation, developing projects to achieve equality and social justice. The association has developed its activities with the clear intention of promoting educational opportunities among all the most vulnerable groups in society such as: children, the young, women and the disabled.

This association is located in Cádiz capital in the La Paz neighbourhood, a place with a lot of unemployment, crime and drugs, and few leisure opportunities for young people. For that reason, the association began by creating a toy library for children and young people. Later, it saw that there were other needs such as unemployment, the need for young people to acquire social skills, and the need for social inclusion. The association has tried to ensure that the young people manage their own leisure supported by an educator.

The Asociación Alendoy follows an educational and relationship model that is based on creating a closer emotional bond between people.



Esther Benítez is one of the founders of the Asociación Alendoy and also the coordinator of several of its programs offered such as: The Youth Sign-Up Program, the Women's Program and a Program for Immigrants.

María de la Paz Flores, another of the association's founders, has been working at Alendoy for 20 years. She teaches young people who have completed ESO (compulsory secondary school education) and who need a timeline: courses, job searches, work on their needs, etc. Both coordinate the **Youth Sign-Up Program** where they work with the young, young immigrants and native Spaniards who have been in protection centres but have had to leave upon turning 18. In many cases, they lack sufficient maturity to deal with their problems. The association helps them as much as possible and has set up emergency funds to find these young people a place to sleep as well as providing other assistance.

The association helps foreigners arrange the paperwork needed to legalise their situation in Spain. They also serve as mentors or educators and accompany them to doctors, canteens, and shelters. They also act as intermediaries contacting businessmen in the area, keeping them informed and helping these young people take up internships in their companies. In some cases, this leads to a job offer.

One of the main problems encountered by María de la Paz, Esther and other members of the association is that children who come from troubled families often lack social skills which jeopardizes their chances of employment. Considering that the programs developed by the association have an internship at companies for which many young people lack social skills, association aims to develop these skills prior to their taking on internships, thus improving their employment opportunities. The youngsters also learn about values such as: solidarity, friendship, respect, empathy, honesty, willpower etc. The association tries to ensure that they continue their formation and have a reference to go when they need it, they have a follow-up by the association and thus ensures that they have more opportunities in the city of Cádiz and are thus able to remain there.

In addition to this Program (Youth Sign-Up), Esther and María de la Paz listed the following activities and programs offered by the association:

6.4.3. Background and genesis of the youth-works projects

Asociación Alendoy

Currently the association is developing the "Incorpora" program of social integration that promotes the employment of people facing or at risk of social exclusion. It is a social work program by "La Caixa" which is aimed at young people between 18 to 30 years.

María de la Paz Flores has been a technician and educator in the association for 20 years. In the interview, she states that the program is about raising awareness among employers so that they can give young people job opportunities. "One of the difficulties they have detected is that children with family problems do not have social skills and, considering that the programs they develop have a practical part in companies, the association is considering training them to develop those skills in advance of the completion of the practices so that they have some possibility of being hired."

In 2017 Alendoy initiated the Youth Sign-up Program in the CAIXA Social Works Program after identifying a series of training needs in the professional resumes and educational backgrounds of young people under 30 in their work area. Thus, different training schemes were offered to fill the gaps in professional resumes once a market study had been carried out, and in accordance with the needs of companies in the area. The purpose of these training schemes is to lead to more young people joining the labour force in the future.



The training schemes consist of three parts:

- i. Work on personal and professional skills
- ii. Technical training undertaken by professionals from different work areas.
- iii. Work experience.

During 2018 priority was given to young people who were part of the child protection scheme, although the basis for the program remained unchanged.

Cardijn Association

The association carries out the following activities: leisure activities, pre-employment training workshop for young people at risk of social exclusion, training orientation service for people between 16 and 25 years old, preparation of Compulsory Secondary Education for free, "Sports Training School and Practice", actions of emancipation, ... Additionally, they are transversally dynamizing actions aimed at new information and communication technologies.

The Cardijn association owes its name to Joseph Cardijn (1882-1967), a Belgian priest who worked for social commitment on behalf of Catholic Church in the early twentieth century. He founded the Christian Working Youth in 1925, a movement that spread throughout more than sixty countries in the world.

The Cardijn Association, with headquarters in Trille St. (Cádiz), is a non-profit organization established on December 20, 1993. It is national in scope and since its creation has worked with young people from popular neighbourhoods. In 1994 it introduced the migratory flow into the scope of its work.

Antonio Guerrero is responsible for the youth program in the Cardijn Association where he has worked for 12 years co-ordinating and managing programs related to young people. The association works in three sectors or areas: immigration, employment and youth.

As Antonio states, they begin with youth leisure activities and leisure work experience, this is the starting point to make contact with young people from broken families and, in some cases, young people under legal orders. He states: **"Once we know their needs, and have assessed their potential, we work to help them join the workforce throughout socio-labor tasks."**

They are inspired by solidarity, their aim is to help people with problems and difficulties and those abandoned by society. The Cardijn is a religious entity, part of the Secretariat of Migration and the Church. Their mission is to help people as Jesus of Nazareth did. They help those who are highly vulnerable: migrants, the unemployed, young people from broken families, from difficult neighbourhoods and workers. The focus is mostly on the following Cádiz neighbourhoods: Cerro del Moro, Guillén Moreno, La Paz, Loreto and Puntales.

Antonio says that they try to gain the youngsters' confidence through structured leisure activities such as: sports, culture, carnival, painting, tournaments, indoor soccer tournaments, theatrical activities, urban culture: rap, break, field trips and fishing contests. Young people talk to us about their problems and worries and we are able to base our intervention on this information.

The Programs offered include:

- i. Socio-labour intervention with young people from neighbourhoods which need transformation
- ii. Complete support for workforce integration and the employment prospects of young people at risk of social exclusion
- iii. Social Action with young people and the Youth Information Centre

6.4.4. Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries

Romaissa, Jonathan and David are three young people who have benefited from the programs and activities organized by the Cardijn association in Cádiz. The three of them point out that their passage through the association marks a BEFORE and AFTER in their lives. Romaissa is from Melilla and has been living in Cádiz for three years. She took a Sociocultural Course in Presentation and has said that thanks to this course she lost her fear of public speaking while also having the opportunity to meet people from different cultures. The skills acquired have allowed her to find employment.

David has attended the association for more than 10 years and has participated in sports and recreational activities there. He has benefited from foundation training, which helped him to find his way in the workplace, eventually enabling him to set up his own leisure and free time company. According to David, "They gave me an education, taught me values, teamwork, etc."

According to Jonathan, the Cardijn association "believes in people." It's a place where "one learns leadership skills, teamwork, respect for the environment, towards others, towards oneself and how to grow as a person." The association also allows young people to make use of the facilities so that they have somewhere to meet. Furthermore, "at Cardijn, the aim is to have the youngsters take on the central role as they are guided to where they really want to go." He points out that working with problematic boys, youngsters and immigrants promotes integration and teaches them teamwork. Thanks to this undertaking, he sees an improvement in the community's acceptance of immigrants. And he points out that "the association being in the neighbourhood of La Paz has led to more opportunity for work, study, everything..."

The main aim of Alendoy association has been to teach values through leisure activities since it began its work in the Cádiz neighbourhood of La Paz in 1999.

At the start of her journey, Nazareth Casado Otero attended its classes and workshops when she was a girl. The young volunteer now aged 22, has said that she arrived "at Alendoy because it was a new association here. I went through the different groups and left as a teenager". But her time at the association did not end there. She points out that "at the time I took a course and wanted to do an internship, I turned to Alendoy and I liked it so much that I've been here five years now." The young woman states that among the vital lessons you learn in Alendoy is diversity something that "is not dealt with so much in schools" because "all children are equal and have rights, here you learn values".

For the young Cádiz volunteer, this association leaves its mark because you come across cases with young children "that give you goosebumps" and it is an experience that "is worthwhile". Furthermore, Nazareth adds that at first "You say, it's like a school but that's not the case, it's the values that are taught through activities as are the rights of people and children. You think the activities are just a means of having fun, but they have a serious intent. And these are the things that have left their mark because they have helped me be who I am. They help you acquire lifelong values."



6.4.5. Perspective from the related stakeholders

Juan José Gómez Ruiz is a Child and Youth Worker in Cádiz city (Town hall). On asking whether he is aware of the projects and programs offered by associations such as Alendoy and Cardijn, he replies that the Town Hall usually collaborates a great deal with these groups founded by professionals and shares the many concerns, the initiatives and interest in the situation of the youth in general. Juan José affirms that the youth unemployment rate in Cádiz is one of the highest in Spain. Furthermore, Cádiz city has an aging population with fewer young people and fewer leisure options during the weekends, especially for those who are non-drinkers.

He states that **“These associations always have a positive impact** as they provide young people with **more opportunities to join the workforce”**

According to Juan José, “Through the Town Hall we launch projects that have either been requested by the young people themselves or are proposals that we make based on the information provided by young people through social networks.” He also states that “On other occasions we help organise activities projects proposed to us by the associations. We try to respond to the requests for leisure made by young people and also try to involve them in the organizing the activities.”

Associations such as the Cardijn that sometimes hold Co-existence and Inclusion Days, offer the community the opportunity to learn more about people from different cultures who view life differently. People who are learning our language want to become integrated in society, and those who need help have much to offer.

Croatia



7.1. Youth work in national context

Youth work in Croatia has a long tradition. During the Yugoslav times, many young people participated in youth organizations and movements which had a vast and diverse program. This continued during the second half of the nineties and early '00, when many new youth and for youth organizations were founded.

However, youth work is not recognized and there is no strategic approach to its systematic support and development. There is still no legal framework and no professional recognition of the youth worker occupations and systematization. At the national level, youth work and youth policy in Croatia is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for demography, family, youth and social policy, which is currently conducting few projects directed towards the systematization of the youth work as a profession. There are also the naming issues, and the official term is “youth work in narrow sense”.

Youth work is in practice carried out most often through youth associations and associations for youth, and it is done by people who are specifically prepared for youth workers on a voluntary or paid basis. In Croatia, youth work has a long tradition through the work of numerous youth organizations and youth and through the involvement of social workers and professionals from related professions. This also leads to the lack of professional identity and the common understanding of the profession of youth worker because youth workers often perform more functions.

Another element that highly influences the work of youth workers in Croatia is lack of structural funding. Work of many youths and for youth organizations is project based and it has an “expiration date”. Lack of the stabilized financing can also sometimes lead to the fact that only burning issues in the community are covered by the project activities as there is not enough human or financial capacities for more. Last element which is crucial for youth work in Croatia is infrastructure. There are fantastic examples of youth work infrastructure, but good infrastructure is mainly situated in bigger towns and cities which are sometimes not well connected to the smaller towns and villages with public transport. Access to infrastructure also can depend on the willingness of the local government to rent or give out for a lease many empty spaces which are local, regional or national property.

7.2. Shrinking phenomenon in national and regional context

Depopulation and shrinking of cities are not exclusively a modern phenomenon in Croatia. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century, some coastal areas, especially islands, faced depopulation and emigration due to the economic crisis (1895-1918), and changes in state borders after World War I (1918-1923). The most significant example of a shrinking city in Croatia, in the first half of the 20th century is the city called Pula. After the First World War, Pula lost about a third of its population, which indirectly caused the permanent abolition of tram transport in the city in 1934, where the number of inhabitants from 1910 was not reached until 1981. The period of socialist modernization in Croatia from 1945 to 1990 was marked by a continuous decrease in natural population growth and strong migration of the population from villages to cities, and from Croatia to Western European countries, primarily to FR Germany. The demographic transition in Croatia was completed during the 1970s, where the largest number of inhabitants in Croatia was recorded in the 1991 census, when 4.78 million inhabitants were registered in Croatia, after which the number began to decline significantly.

One of the main causes of depopulation in Croatia and shrinking of a large number of cities is the already mentioned end of the demographic transition. Similar to other post-communist countries in Central and South-eastern Europe, the annual number of deaths in Croatia exceeded the annual number of live births at the end of the 20th century. In line with the decades-long trend of declining number of live births (95.560 in 1950; 50.182 live births in 1995), natural population growth in Croatia became negative in the mid-1990s, and the negative trend has only intensified over the last 25 years. According to the Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2018, only 36.945 children were born in Croatia, where the number of deaths is significantly higher; 52.706. Natural population growth rate was -3.9, and vital index was 70.1⁴¹. Due to the decrease in birth rates, the median age of the population in Croatia has increased significantly over the last 50 years. The median age of the population in 1971 was 34 years, and in 2018 it was as high as 43.4 years⁴².

Another cause shrinking in a large number of cities in Croatia is migration mobility. Due to the depopulation of rural areas, the dosing of the rural population to smaller cities has been slowed down, which would compensate for the departure of residents of smaller cities to the regional centre, i.e. abroad. There are no differences in natural population growth, but in the context of migration there are significant spatial differences in Croatia. While some cities (especially the two largest cities in Croatia, Zagreb and Split) continued to attract immigrants and thus maintain or even increase their population, many small and medium-sized cities were doomed to great loss of population.

41 Croatian Bureau of Statistics: Natural Change in the Population in the Republic of Croatia, 2018 https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2019/07-01-01_01_2019.htm (Last visit 2nd June 2020).

42 Croatian Bureau of Statistics: Natural Change in the Population in the Republic of Croatia, 2018 https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2019/07-01-01_01_2019.htm (Last visit 2nd June 2020).

Apart from the existing regional differences, the pattern of migration, and consequently the pattern of urban shifts in Croatia after 1990, is difficult to sketch due to significant social and political changes over the last three decades. From the aspect of the influence of political and socio-economic factors on migration and urbanization in Croatia, in the mentioned period from 1990 to 2020, at least three significantly different periods of Croatian post-communist transition should be distinguished: (1) The period of political crisis and war conflicts from 1990 to 1995; (2) The period of post-war reconstruction from 1996 to 2012 and (3) The period after Croatia's accession to the European Union from 2013 to 2020. Although demographic experts have warned of the long-term consequences of demographic trends, at the beginning of the 21st century, shrinking cities in Croatia has not yet been recognized as an important social challenge. The attention of the media and the general public was focused primarily on the depopulation of villages in war-ravaged regions, while cities were generally considered to be much less exposed to the risk of depopulation and shrinking. But the return of the population to the war-torn areas was only partial. The majority of returnees were middle-aged and elderly, while young people more often decided to stay in new areas, to live in larger urban centres, and to emigrate abroad. The war had a significant impact on the depopulation and shrinking of cities in the occupied areas from 1991 to 1995. It should be noted that some of the regions from which the population was exiled in 1991 and 1995, even before the war, faced negative demographic and socio-economic processes, which probably influenced the decision of part of the exiled population not to return. In addition to cities in war-torn areas or communities far from economic centres, a decline in population was also recorded in once strong industrial centres such as the city of Karlovac. On the other hand, the strong growth of tourism on the Croatian coast during the first decade of the 21st century has resulted in a sharp increase in the value of real estate within the historic cores of some coastal cities, primarily in Dubrovnik and Split. The transformation of former residential areas into tourist and catering facilities has resulted in the strengthening of the process of emigration from urban cores and suburbanization in coastal cities, especially in Split, whose suburban residential communities have developed uncontrollably in previous decades.

According to the 2011 census, the strongest population growth was recorded in satellite cities around Split (Solín +34%) and Zagreb (Sesvete +17%). The largest absolute decline in population was recorded in Rijeka, the third largest city in Croatia, whose population decreased by 11,359 or 8.1% in ten years, partly due to the decline in industrial activity in the city and partly due to the relocation of the population to surrounding areas. The highest relative decrease in the number of inhabitants was recorded in Vukovar (-12.1% of the population) and several other smaller towns in Eastern Slavonia (Đakovo -10.3%, Slavonski Brod -8.7%).

Demographic trends recorded in the 2011 census intensified in the period after Croatia's accession to the European Union in July 2013. The results of the 2021 census are likely to confirm the dramatic demographic trends that are visible in the currently available data from the Central Bureau of Statistics for the period from 2008 to 2018. Due to the negative natural increase and the negative migration balance, the total population of Croatia in 10 years decreased by 233,000, or more than 5%. Some cities and regions (the Republic of Croatia is administratively divided into 21 counties) recorded an even more dramatic decline in population. Among cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, the largest decline in population was registered in Rijeka (-10.9%), and among cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants, the largest loss was recorded in Vukovar (-20.6%). In the mentioned ten-year period, as many as ten urban settlements in continental Croatia lost more than 20% of their population, with the infamous record of the city of Glina, which lost as much as 33% of its population in ten years.

Population data point to two conclusions that are important for understanding the process of shrinking cities in Croatia today. First, urban settlements that have the most significant population loss are mainly located in continental Croatia. Although in many cities on the coast there is a decline in population, depopulation is more pronounced in the cities of continental Croatia, especially when considering that the loss of population in coastal cities is partly due to relocation to surrounding communities in the wider metropolitan area. Another important conclusion that emerges from demographic data is that in Croatia there are currently not only cities that are shrinking but also entire regions that are affected by strong depopulation and consequent shrinking. The estimate of the Central Bureau of Statistics that the city of Sisak lost 12.6% of its population between 2008 and 2018 becomes even more dramatic in light of the estimate that Sisak-Moslavina County lost as much as 17.3% of its population in the same period. Projections of future population trends indicate the probable possibility of further population decline in Croatia. According to current projections, Croatia will lose 8% of its population in the period from 2020 to 2030, with pronounced regional differences. While Zagreb expects a slight increase in population (3%), Sisak-Moslavina County will lose as much as 21.7%⁴³ of its population in the next ten years, according to demographic experts.

43 https://mgipu.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Prostorno/StrategijaPR/Demografski_scenariji_i_migracije.pdf

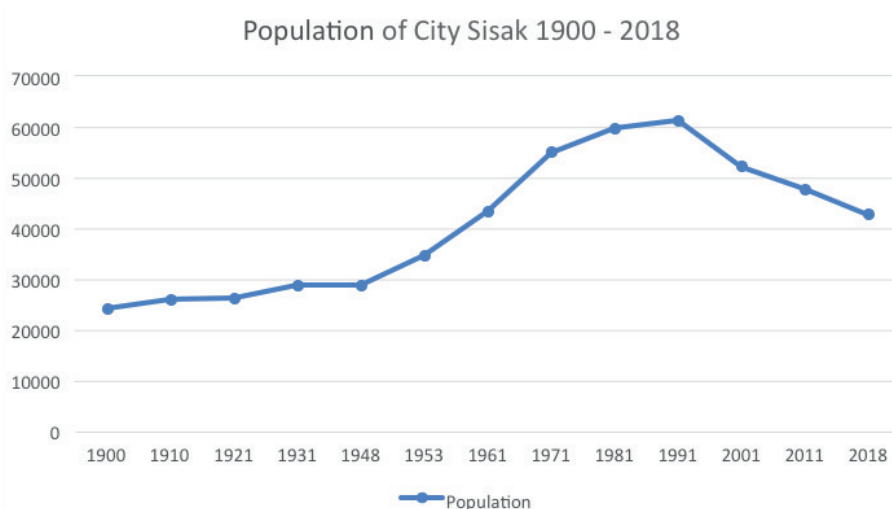
CASE STUDY OF CITY OF SISAK



7.3.1. Shrinking phenomenon in the city context

Causes and consequences of shrinkage in the selected city

City of Sisak is located in central-south part of Croatia, and it is administrative centre of Sisak-Moslavina County. This 422,75 km² big city had 47.768 citizens by the last census made in 2011. In some estimations from 2017., the city lost approximately 2,9% of citizens between 2014 and 2017⁴⁴. As visibly from the following chart, this downward trend started in 1990's and continues till this day.



City of Sisak has a long history as the first settlements in this area are around 2000 years old. In the 4th century BC, the Celts invaded the area of present-day Sisak. The Illyrian-Celtic settlement of Segestika was repeatedly attacked by Roman army which finally succeeded in 35 BC. Roman Siscia ascended to the status of a city with strong military, transport and administrative functions, developed trade and crafts. It was by this name that Siscia became known and remained so for many centuries, to this day, when many industries, shops, sport clubs and bars hold this name.

44 <https://medium.com/247bn/sm%C5%BE-negativni-trend-iseljavanja-najvi%C5%A1e-pogodio-glinu-i-novsku-9cd006597db1>



The urban systematization of the city began in 1829. The city grew up above ancient settlements, following the quadrangular subdivision system of ancient Siscia, and respecting the raster of the ancient settlement. The remains of the ancient city were dug up during many archaeological excavations and they determine the appearance of present-day Sisak. Besides that, the Kupa River was not only meaningful to Sisak in terms of strengthening trade and traffic, but also strongly influenced the spatial determination of the city⁴⁵.

Furthermore, the construction of industrial plants, intensified in the period between the two world wars, located outside the city centre, led to the creation of industrial suburbs and new housing estates. After the Second World War, which brought some devastation to Sisak, the city was rebuilt, thanks to preconditions created before, such as the metallurgical, chemical, wood and food industries⁴⁶.

These industries stood strong during the Yugoslav times. But the Homeland war which took place in the first part of 1990's left bad consequences. In the post war period and in 2000's, the city gradually deindustrialized and many of the old industries, especially metallurgical industry, closed and left many people jobless.

These factors, together with the close proximity to Zagreb, which led many, especially younger, people to find job elsewhere or to move out of Sisak. Young people mostly go to Zagreb or some other bigger city to the university, as Sisak offers only one master program – that in metallurgy.

7.3.2. Organization and youth-work programs

Sisak civil society is moderate in size, but one program stood out from the first moment we started to investigate. The youth club SKWHAT, led by the coordination of the youth organizations from all over the city seemed as the perfect example of youth work in this shrinking environment.

Related to the aims of the activities, they changed as the SKWHAT evolved through the years. As Marijan explained, new generations started organizing different kinds of workshops and educations, ranging from curricula instructions to sport workshops. "The team went deeper into the story to get more community involved. Volunteering was formalized, we had ideas for programs and other members and organizations were drawn to the club", Marijan explained.

Bogatić emphasized that there was always connection between community and program, which answered on the current needs of community. For example, different subcultures, like punk and metal, had organized smaller concerts, but also sport related organizations had tournaments in darts or ping pong. These activities also brought older members of community, even some policemen participated so that trust can be built. Volunteers from SKWHAT were recognized on the city level and they were sometimes invited to other similar projects in the city.

Marijan highlighted that the young people created the program themselves through all the existence of SKWHAT and MUF. In the beginning of 2010's the team partially shifted the focus to the project funding and more structurally organized approach. He considers this dual approach of amateurism and professionalism to be very successful. "Many youngsters never so fire juggling, punk culture and similar thing live. Even younger kids sometimes say, "when I grow up, I'll go to SKWHAT", because be moved things forward", said Marijan, while explaining that young people also consider SKWHAT to be success story.

⁴⁵ <https://sisak.hr/o-gradu/>

⁴⁶ <https://muzej-sisak.hr/povijest-siska/>

While talking about influence of the SKWHAT to young people and community, Marijan stressed few important elements. “I think that young people learned to work, learned how to develop programs, how to write projects, and how to accept the responsibility”, explained Marijan. He added that the community recognized this, and they were accepted. The team also included wider community into their programs, as they offered their services, like explaining them how to write projects or volunteering as the security personnel.

While explaining his view of how the SKWHAT and MUF helped in defining the city youth policies, he said that it had a positive influence. “We haven’t reached even 1% of the city budget, but we got the club, we have the city youth council, volunteering policies are defined, the city developed the youth program and the youth and for youth organizations have stable financing. These are great and positive steps”, explained Marijan. For the future, he thinks that city should trust the youth, give them the space and possibilities for organizing, because “they will know the best what they need”.

Marijan had less to do with SKWHAT today and he thinks that today’s needs are different and that is why the program is quite different then it was in his time. Although, he mentioned how he doesn’t see the same strength and persistence that was there before. Marijan also picked a few key lessons for us, mainly emphasizing the importance of collective. He thinks that persistence pays off and that young people should unite and work together, because “they take you more seriously”, but that you also need to stay yourself and be original. As he grew up in Sisak, so we also asked him about his perception of the city. Marijan thinks that city has troubling situation in the sense of the employment



Volunteering activities at SKWHAT



opportunities, but many people are involved in many different organizations and people are quite active during the studying. Problematic thing is that many people are turning to Zagreb and big city opportunities. Good thing is that Zagreb is quite close (55km) so many of those people are traveling by bus and train. Even though Zagreb is as close as possible, some people does not value this, and they don't think that Zagreb is close enough and that public transport is not well enough, so they tend to move to Zagreb. He considers that "we are spoiled society that does not value the close proximity to the big city and considers that everything in Zagreb is better, even though the same concert in Zagreb will be up to 10 Euros more expensive than in Sisak, they will go there because "it is better".

While talking about his opinion on why young people are leaving Sisak, Marijan mentioned problem of the lack of quality jobs, as those available are often not paid enough. But he also emphasized that many people are working in Zagreb and living in Sisak, mainly because Sisak has much cheaper prices for accommodation and everything is much closer and more related.

7.3.3. Background and genesis of the youth-works projects

Marijan was the first president of the KUMS as the president of GUMA organization, and they started the MUF festival. Some of the first meetings were held in the small basements around Sisak, but they had clear plan – to organize a music festival with cool name. First MUF was organized in 2004. with limited resources. The main reason for developing of both SKWHAT and MUF was lack of content for youth in Sisak and in 2004. During the first few years they were not officially established, but in 2007 the critical mass gathered together and decided to work together and officiate the organization. Partially this was because of the possibility for funding, and as Marijan explained, it worked, because they brought around 30.000 Euros from sponsorships and different public funding. They were also first organization in Sisak to get funding for the development of the local youth program.

The aim was to get youth club in the city. The first major step to this status came when SKWHAT got the long-term workspace arrangement with the city. They worked really hard and wanted to be taken seriously, and the city recognized it. They were given the rarely used public property, which was mainly the object of destruction for vandals, and thankfully to the city rules, the space was free of charged and all the bills were covered by the City. In this way, SKWHAT got the great place which bought young people from drinking in the city centre and gave them the safe space and different activities to engage with.

"Everything was done on volunteering base and community supported us actively. Some stores donated different materials and helped us in the beginning. We also worked on different multicultural projects and broke stereotypes which was also well accepted", said Marijan.

Current affairs

While we were conducting the research, SKWHAT and KUMS were in the transitional period, before choosing the new managing board and we talked with Ivan Marelić, who was then the VD of president. Ivan is a young man, 20, who also grew up in Sisak, and he thinks that the city offers young people opportunities, especially if they have will and invest some effort in it. He thinks that people are leaving Sisak for similar reasons as other cities in Croatia and that these migrations are normal.

He started going to SKWHAT before seven years, but he grew up in the same city quarter and was attracted to the club from primary school. Soon after, he started volunteering. "The volunteer coordinator gave me different jobs in the beginning, mostly preparation and cleaning for concerts and workshops. Then I worked in concert organizing team and PR team, and currently I'm the manager for the club", Ivan explained his path. Ivan mentioned different projects funded from diverse sources, which are mainly orientated to funding MUF festival, but also using the Erasmus funds. He highlighted the relatively new project, the SCON, which is SF convention held in Old fortress and SKWHAT.

We also asked Ivan about his opinion on usefulness of the activities he attended in SKWHAT. He considers it to be very useful because “we see different cultures during the exchanges, we exchange habits and ideas which also contributes to our development and the development of the city. The horizons of person and collective are broadened, I was impressed with that from the beginning, everyone was accepted, and everyone was opened”. He also thinks that the club left great mark for the alternative culture in Sisak and nearby places. They are trying to balance the workshops and fun, but it changes during time according to the needs of young people. Ivan is very satisfied with the cooperation between the SKWHAT and the city administration which is consistent in their support through the years. But while talking about the needs of the club, Ivan mentioned the lack of time for bigger projects that they are currently facing. “Till now, people who wrote project proposals did it on voluntary base and no one was paid for it. Even though we are taking this very seriously, sometimes it is hard to balance between school, university, obligations in SKWHAT and private life. So, I think it would be good if someone would be able to work full time here”, explained Ivan further.

7.3.4. Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries

Maybe one of the best examples of how SKWHAT works is that of Tibor Marijanović, who is one of the most active volunteers, for more than 10 years. He works on wide variety of tasks, from digital marketing, to organizing the volunteers, and to plumbing works when needed.

As Tibor emphasized, they have direct approach only to youth, unlike some other organizations which work with young people among other target groups. He explained that in the beginning they knew little about youth work as such, no one introduced them to the concept, and they had to learn through different educations and seminars in other countries where youth work gets bigger support from the institutions. His consideration of youth work is that they are “giving the youth free space to implement their ideas, which is not bar or the street”. They never wanted SKWHAT to be just “polygon for fun”, but to have fun content financed through funds for culture and youth. SKWHAT never wanted to be commercialized place, but they gave the chance to youth to express their interests through music. “We don’t want to impose anything to young people, our role here is the one of the basic control mechanisms”, Tibor clarifies further.

Tibor grew up in Sisak and he sees both good and bad sides to the city. In his opinion, primary and high school education are good, as well as the sports infrastructure. Culture related content, like libraries, cinema or museums, are there, but he thinks that there is a need for youth to self-engage in these activities. While talking about bad sides, he emphasized lack of jobs and employment opportunities, which he considers to be the main reasons for moving out of Sisak. Volunteers are one of the greatest reasons why the community is so inclined to SKWHAT. As Tibor explained us, they regularly participate in other volunteering projects in the different city quarters, as he put it “we have a wide volunteering base which is willing to work for the city”. They are not initiators, but they have their ears opened and in the last few years they were part of these family events or touristic initiatives. They also want to break the stereotypes that festivals like MUF are only there for drinking and partying and provide community with wider picture. SKWHAT also works on ERASMUS+ program, in particular youth exchanges, so between 300 and 400 young people from Europe visited Sisak and many young people from Sisak travelled outside of Croatia for similar programs. As Tibor explained us further, young people got the opportunity because “we talk with them what they want”. In the last few years, they have workshops on vegetarianism and healthy eating, they build the skate park in the new area, and they also meet new people from different cities which builds their social network and they share ideas and visions. Regarding the influence at the city policies, Tibor told us that they were part of the one KA3 Erasmus project, through which they participated in different working groups which discussed and, in the end, made the city youth program in 2016. He thinks that the organization is

situated in material sense, and that they have good financing opportunities from the City. But he also said that they lack the recognition of the youth work, because “the effort and the desire of young people needs to be recognized and they themselves need to develop program and the ideas accordingly”. He notices that previously prepared and planned workshops which are often part of Erasmus program, are not received well and they hardly can find participants.

Tibor also talked about general problem of the lack of the recognition for the youth work and youth workers. “Politics need to recognize the real need for youth workers. We don’t need social workers, we need youth workers who will organize the program for young people few times a week”, explained Tibor. This was one of the topics in the city youth program, but it wasn’t structured well enough. He also described their approach as “guerrilla approach”.

While talking about key lessons, Tibor emphasized that young people are much smarter than we give them credit for and that, in his experience, “schooling” approach doesn’t work with many young people. He added that there are many ambitious people who consider young people to be formable material which they will form in some desirable form, which rarely works because young people recognize this and ignore it in the end. “Everybody who works with young people needs to be prepared for the huge dose of cynicism which you need to learn how to outsmart”, Tibor concluded. We had a chance to talk with Vedran, who is a volunteer in SKWHAT, but he was also a performer during the MUF festival. Vedran is also local, but even though he agrees that there is a lack of employment possibilities in Sisak, still wants to live and work here. He is 25 now, but he started going to SKWHAT while he was still in primary school. “I started playing guitar there, my first jam was there, and the club meant lot to me as an alternative individual in Sisak”, Vedran explained. His involvement with the festival was organizational at first, but last year he was also a performer for the first time. He loved the atmosphere and support that his band got, but he also participated in daily activities which he commended. On the other hand, he pointed out that last year was a bit rough, as the new generation came and some “rookie” mistakes were made, but he is optimistic about next year.

These generational changes somewhat affected the SKWHAT also, in Vedran’s opinion, and he sees that they are still getting to know each other. Two new organizations were founded, and two were reactivated after the period of hibernation so everything is starting to grow step by step, Vedran explained. Vedran also told us more about current types of activities that are taking place in the SKWHAT. “For example, in the last three weeks, we organized four or five things. We had workshops on human rights, then there was a vinyl flea market, one weekend we were cooking and discussing green culture and reggae”, he named just a few, but enough to demonstrate the wide variety of topics. These activities gathered around 120 participants and Vedran estimates that 40% of those were coming from some other towns and places nearby. He also pointed out that he feels more immersed in community after his time in SKWHAT, which gave him opportunity to meet a lot of different and interesting people.

7.3.5. Perspective from the related stakeholders

We also had an opportunity to talk with Marko Krička, who has been the vice mayor of the city of Sisak since 2013 and who is mainly in charge of social sector. As part of his job, he is following work of youth and for youth organizations. Krička, who grew up in Sisak and came back after finishing university, pointed out the importance of the city’s proximity to Zagreb right in the beginning of the interview. He described the dual effect of this proximity. For him, positive side is in the fact that there are mainly daily migrations due to the many people working in Zagreb, as well as great public transport connectivity which gives people chance to visit Zagreb when they want. On the other hand, some of the typical industries in Sisak are dying out and many people are leaving for good because some other sectors are prevailing now. Vice mayor Krička was thrilled to talk about SKWHAT as his connection to the club started long time ago - he lived near the club’s location and most of his friends were involved

in the creating of the club in the early 2000's. In the past he was a regular guest at SKWHAT, especially music programs. In his opinion, SKWHAT arise from the "self-initiative of young people who missed different cultural content and place to spend their free time".

He thinks that the club's biggest success was to show to the young people and to the community that there are young people interested in alternative culture and non-formal programs, and that this later lead to them being recognized as an important factor in local youth policy development. Krička also emphasized the importance that SKWHAT had on young people, especially in terms of building the feeling for responsibility and to teach young people how to build an environment that is comfortable and reflects their needs. On the other hand, he thinks that their influence on broader community is indirect and that not many people, especially older, doesn't know for SKWHAT.

One of our interlocutors was Zrinka Hafizović, which works in the city administration as the expert associate for civil society, veterans and youth since 2013. As there is no special office or branch of administration in charge of youth, Ms. Hafizović work with civil society is somewhat related to the SKWHAT and other youth organizations.

"Our office conducts tenders for financing non-profit organizations. We don't have tender specific for youth and for youth organizations, but part of our job is related to the young people. For example, we work with both youth council and kids' city council, as the institutional support", explained Hafizović. But she is very eager to learn more about youth work, so she is participating in different educations where she is looking for new ideas which are doable in the city. Ms. Hafizović is not originally from Sisak, so it was interesting to hear her opinion on the opportunities for youth. She thinks that there are different opportunities and chances for young people, and, as she put it, "I am happy for my three children to live in Sisak". She learned about SKWHAT early on, and she commended the variety of their programs – from concerts, sport and art events to sewing classes. "Young people really can find what they are interested in, this variety of program complements the needs of community and gives youth chance to develop their common interest", explained Ms. Hafizović further. She never visited MUF festival, but she knows a lot about it as the city is one of sponsors for it. Hafizović also expressed her opinion on how SKWHAT "raised many generations" and importance of their Erasmus+ programs which are including more volunteers from community.

Regarding the city policies, she thinks that KUMS and SKWHAT are great partners. "They were included every time when the city was developing its youth program and their inputs are great", she described. Hafizović stressed out that their doors are always opened to them.



CASE STUDY OF CITY OF KARLOVAC

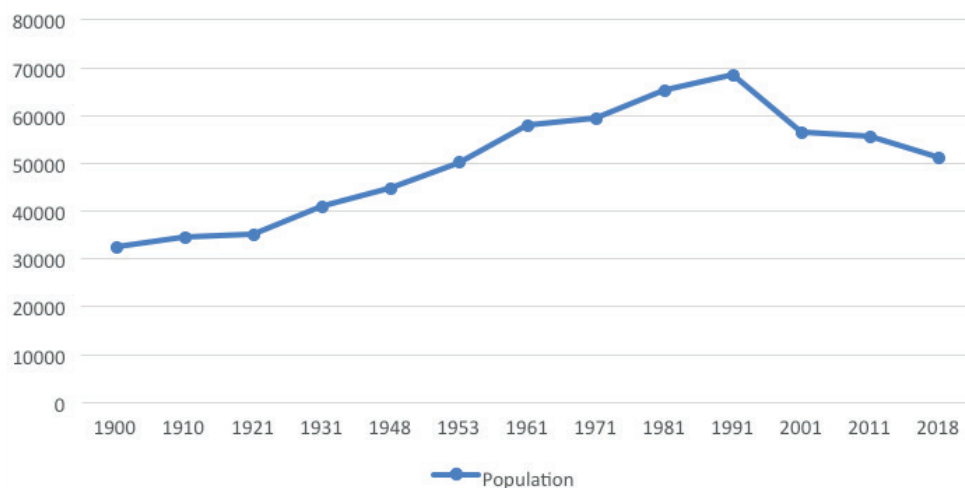


7.4.1. Shrinking phenomenon in the city context

Causes and consequences of shrinkage in the selected city

City of Karlovac is located in central part of Croatia. It represents an important road and railway hub between northern part of Croatia and the Adriatic coast. Karlovac is the administrative centre of Karlovac County. This 402 km² big city had **55.705 citizens** by the last census made in 2011. According to the estimations of Croatian National Bureau of Statistics, the city lost more than 9 % of its population in a period between 2008 and 2018⁴⁷. As visibly from the following chart, this downward trend started in 1990's and continues till this day.

Population of Karlovac 1900 - 2018



Source: National Bureau of Statistics

The history of Karlovac dates back to 16th century. The early development of the settlement was closely related to the establishment of the Austrian military fortress Karlstadt, build up in the late 16th Century. During the 18th century, Karlovac gradually lost its importance as a military stronghold on the boarder to Ottoman Empire. Thus, as a settlement build up on the shores of four rivers, Karlovac simultaneously turned into important crossroads of river trade routes. With the construction of the road network started in the second half of the 18th century and an established railway connection to the Adriatic coast in the late 19th Century, Karlovac has also become an important regional hub of freight and passenger traffic.

⁴⁷ <https://www.tportal.hr/biznis/clanak/u-deset-godina-izgubili-smo-233-000-stanovnika-iznenadit-ce-vas-koji-su-gradovi-najveci-gubitnici-foto-20191209>

During the first half of the 19th century, Karlovac developed as a strong economic and cultural centre. Public institutions are being built and green areas in the city centre are being arranged. However, after the emergence of railway connection between Karlovac and Rijeka in 1873, the importance of Karlovac relatively decreased in relation to Zagreb and Rijeka.⁴⁸ But despite the relative loss of importance, modernization processes during the 20th century significantly changed the face of Karlovac. At the beginning of the 20th century, the construction of a public water supply system and the introduction of the first telephone lines began. In 1908, the city centre was illuminated by electric lighting, and in 1920 a cinema hall was opened in Karlovac.

The twentieth century in Karlovac was marked by strong industrial development. Between the two world wars, a dozen factories were built in and around the city, including a leather factory (1920), a footwear factory (1920) and a cotton and bandage factory (1935).⁴⁹ The development of the industry was accompanied by an increase in the number of inhabitants in the 1920s and 1930s. After the Second World War, the industrialization of Karlovac continued as part of socialist modernization. A large number of factory plants were built in the city, of which the Turbine Factory (1949) and the Dairy Products Factory (1968) stand out for their size. The largest number of inhabitants was recorded in the 1991 census, when Karlovac had nearly 60,000 inhabitants.

Three decades of post-communist transition (1990-2020) were marked by a decline in the population of Karlovac municipality as well as in the city. According to the latest available data for 2018, the number of inhabitants in Karlovac was almost 25% less than in the 1991 census. The decline in population and the shifting of Karlovac after 1991 is the result of several, partly related factors.

The period of political crisis and war conflicts in the first half of the 1990s had severe consequences for Karlovac. In the second half of 1991, the city was attacked daily for months until a truce was established in early 1992. Occasional attacks on the city continued until the summer of 1995. Among the people who left Karlovac permanently, there was a high proportion of members of ethnic minorities. Almost 25% of the population in the wider city area of Karlovac in 1991 were Serbs. In ten years, the share of Serbs in the population in the same area has decreased to 8.5% of the total population of Karlovac.⁵⁰ The decline in population due to politically and / or economically motivated emigration of the population was to a lesser extent compensated by the immigration of war-affected refugees from Croatia, i.e. refugees of Croat and Bosniak ethnicity from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The 2001 census determined a decline in population of almost 20% in both the Karlovac municipality and the Karlovac urban settlement within a decade.

In addition to the war, the emigration of the population was affected by the reduction in the number of jobs in industrial production due to the closure or reduction of the volume of production in factories from the socialist period. But on the other hand, in Karlovac, some new industrial plants have been opened in the last twenty years, among which the weapons factory stands out, which today employs about 1,000 people. The lack of jobs in the Karlovac area is partially amortized by the proximity of Zagreb (50 km), to which hundreds of Karlovac citizens travel daily for work. A possession of property in Karlovac, that is, an expensive rent in Zagreb convince the commuters to stay in Karlovac and to shuttle daily between the cities.

48 <https://www.karlovac.hr/grad/zvijezda-93/povijest-2994/2994>

49 Virtualni muzej Karlovačke industrije <http://vmki.gmk.hr/Leksikon>

50 Ivo Turk: Promjene u narodnosnom sastavu stanovništva Karlovačke županije (1991.-2001.). In: Živić, Dražen; Žebec, Ivana (ur.): *Demografski kontekst i sociokulturne posljedice Hrvatskoga domovinskog rata*. 2009, S.79-94.



Figure 1 The historical centre of Karlovac is quite a picturesque venue, though the evidences of its shrinking can hardly be overseen.

After a slow decline in population in the first decade of the 21st century, negative demographic trends intensified in the period after Croatia's accession to the European Union in July 2013. Apart from the negative migration balance, one of the causes of the depopulation of Karlovac is the negative natural increase of the population in Karlovac. During 2018, 393 children were born in the Karlovac area, while 742 people died.⁵¹ At the same time, the negative natural increase of the population in the city was not compensated by emigration from rural settlements surrounding Karlovac. Due to the severe depopulation of the rural areas wherefrom individuals and families have been migrating to Karlovac during the 19th and 20th centuries, the centuries-old pattern of immigration to Karlovac from the surrounding area is no longer relevant.

7.4.2. Organization and youth-work programs

CARPE DIEM association for encouragement and development of creative and social potentials of children, youth and adults was founded in Karlovac in 2005. The focus of the organization is on the one hand on non-formal education and promotion of knowledge and skills of young people, and on the other hand on promoting active citizenship and informing young people about volunteering opportunities, exchanging experiences, participating in projects, international exchanges and the like. CARPE DIEM stands for an active and responsible society of equal opportunities. Employees and volunteers of the association follow the mission of building a sustainable society through

⁵¹ Prirodno kretanje stanovništva Republike Hrvatske u 2018. https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2019/07-01-01_01_2019.htm

non-formal through non-formal education, strengthening human resources, developing community capacity by nurturing tolerance and justice, it was pointed out on the organization's website.⁵²

The CARPE DIEM Association, in cooperation with the Karlovac Association Izvan Fokusa, manages the Grabik Youth Centre, located in the town of the same name. The Centre for Youth in Grabrik was launched at the end of 2007 by the City of Karlovac, which arranged and equipped a space of 140 square meters and left the management of the center to associations that were selected through a tender. In the last tender, the associations Carpe Diem and Izvan Fokusa were selected. In addition to these associations, the space is used by other associations from the area of Karlovac. Exhibitions, workshops, lectures, forums and film screenings are organized within the youth centre. There is also a Youth Info Centre run by the Carpe Diem Association.

We decided to focus on the CARPE DIEM Association in more detail and present its activities as an example of good practice of youth-work in Karlovac due to the sustainability and broad scope of their projects. An additional reason was recognised in the successful cooperation of this organization with public administration bodies in the design and implementation of its programs. As a particularly interesting project of the association CARPE DIEM, worthy of detailed analysis, we chose their project called "Job Club for Youth - Karlovac", implemented from 2015 to 2017 and the follow-up of this project. The follow-up project from 2018 to 2020 included four additional towns in Karlovac County, strongly affected by shrinking due to poor demographic structure of the population and the departure of young people. The teaching project entitled "Youth Employment Club of Karlovac County" included young people in the age-group from 18 to 29 from Karlovac, Ogulin, Slunj, Vojnić and Duga Resa.⁵³

For the very beginning of the interview, we asked the youth-workers from the Carpe Diem association what is it like to live in Karlovac nowadays. Branimira Penić, project-manager and the head of "Job Club for Youth - Karlovac" and "Job Club for Youth of Karlovac County" projects, says that sometimes there are so many offers in the city that she does not know where to go. "But I came from a small place where there is a church, a fire station and a football club, so it seems to me that there is a lot of things going on here," adds Branimira and continues. "There are a lot of activities for young people, but there are not many young people who participate in them. The problem is probably that most of the offers are of an educational nature, while young people are more up to the action." In her opinion, the City Administration of Karlovac is quite responsive and deserves praise for its policy towards young people. Branimira considers the proximity of Zagreb as a chance for young people, but also as a problem for Karlovac because many of them move to Zagreb and stay there after finishing secondary school.

A similar opinion is shared by Karla Cikojević, a coach at the „Job Club for Youth“. "It seems to me that young people have a lot of opportunities here, but again I don't think they use them enough," says Karla. She is aware that her perspective is strongly affected by her engagement at the „Job Club for Youth“. "There are a lot of opportunities for young people in the city of Karlovac, but we have not yet found a way to inform them about it," adds her colleague Valentina Gambiroža, also a coach at the „Job club for Youth“. "There is a big difference between the city and the surrounding area," Valentina continues. "As soon as you leave the city, the situation changes radically, there is no offer for young people there."

52 <https://carpediem.hr/o-nama/>

53 <http://www.jobclub.carpediem.hr/>

7.4.3. Background and genesis of the youth-works projects

The project “Job Club for Youth - Karlovac” as well as the project “Job Club for Youth - Karlovac county” are financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund program. The ESF represents a mayor financial instrument for supporting employment in the member states of the European Union as well as promoting of economic and social cohesion. The both projects were implemented in partnership with the City of Karlovac, the Croatian Employment Service (HZZ), the Croatian Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Crafts of Karlovac County. The project idea was developed in the accordance with the aim of reducing the number of unemployed youth. The specific goal of both projects was to develop services for unemployed youth through which young people will acquire relevant skills to increase their chances for employment.

The goals of the project were presented to us by Valentina Gambiroža, one of the trainers in the „Job Club for Youth“. As main goals she highlighted the provision of knowledge and skills needed for employment, encouraging the proactivity of young people and their self-confidence in their job search. The project also aims to fill some gaps in formal education. “The emphasis is also on connecting employment with private life so that the two can be reconciled,” Valentina notes. By participating in the training, users aged 18 to 29 learned, among other things, how to write a CV and cover letter, where and how to look for job advertisements, how to contact employers and how to behave at a job interview. The training through the „Job Club for Youth“ is lasting 3 weeks. „The first two weeks of training are held in a group, and the third week is foreseen for the individual work“, adds Valentina.

“When we started to work on the project-idea in early 2015, we were faced with a great need to develop soft-skills by young people,” explains Branimira Penić, the project-manager of “Job Club for Youth - Karlovac” and „Job Club for Youth in Karlovac County“. „A successful search for employment proved to be the hardest for those with secondary education, who are around 25-26 and have never been employed before“, explains Branimira. As a special challenge she emphasises the challenge of working with people who are neither in the education or training system nor in employment, the so-called NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). “We spent a relatively large amount of money during the project to ensure public visibility of our project, but we consider this for important precondition to reach the young audience, especially the NEETs” says Branimira.

Branimira points out that the project was successful at various levels. “Young people are empowered through the participation in this project. The project also included many young participants who previously had no experience with activities in the field of youth-work and non-formal education”, continues Branimira. The training-participants were gathered in different ways. “About 85% of the participants were found through the Croatian Employment Service, about 15% are NEETs that we found mainly through social networks. We also used the methods of street youth work by approaching young people directly in cafes and parks. Many of them were surprised by such direct approach. It increased their motivation to participate in the training”, explains Branimira. However, reaching the foreseen number of participants proved to be a hard task, despite relatively high youth unemployment rates, especially during the first phase which were implemented solely in Karlovac from 2015 to 2017.

“We started the project because we wanted to empower young people in key social skills,” explains Branimira. “But the problem is that such topics, such as how to manage time efficiently, are mostly not interesting to young unemployed people and it is difficult to get them interested. I also see that young people have unrealistic expectations from life and are often disappointed when they encounter the realities of the labor market”, says Branimira about the challenges in implementation of the project. On the other hand, she points out that employers often say that it is difficult for them to find employees who meet their needs and expectations. Therefore, the Croatian Chamber of Commerce and the Karlovac County Chamber of Crafts were interested to support the follow-up project of the „Job Club for Youth“ which included four additional towns in Karlovac county.



„The administration bodies of Karlovac County have also undertaken strong measures to include young people in the education for deficit occupations, and we, on our part, are promoting enrolment in schools that offer training in deficit occupations“, Branimira notes. However, despite the great need for workers in craft industries in the labor market, there is still little interest in enrolling in the educational-programs of this kind. The problem is often not with the children, but with their parents, who discourage them from enrolling in such schools, despite the demand on the labor market and the scholarships available. „Apart from the lack of necessary qualifications to get a job, there are also unemployed persons who have the formal qualifications in the deficit occupations who don't want to find a job because in that way they would lose the social benefits for unemployed persons“, Branimira explains.

The continuation of the project with 200 targeted beneficiaries at the county level seemed like a logical step that would improve the employability of young people in Karlovac and four other towns in the Karlovac County. Thus, the results in the included towns are very different. Branimira explains that in Ogulin, for example, the project proved to be very successful, while in Vojnić, the project still doesn't work as expected. „We have 50 participants in the project so far“, told us Branimira in the spring 2019 and explained some of the problems they face. „The groups are smaller than foreseen and quite heterogeneous which makes group work difficult“, explains Branimira.

Karla Cikojević, one of the trainers in the „Job Club for Youth“, also cites the town of Ogulin as a positive example where the trainees decided to form their own WhatsApp group in which they exchange information about tenders and support each other. „Research has shown that young people have an aversion to public institutions. From the other side, the youth employment clubs are considered as more acceptable“ continues Karla, adding that the training-plan envisages two three-week cycles in each of the cities involved. Beyond the workshops for the whole local group of participants, the individual consultations with each of the participants are taking place during each visit. „We work mainly with young people with secondary education, and they often miss some basic knowledges as skills, such as what is a contract,“ says Karla and continues. „We work with young people from towns wherefrom many young people have left. We are therefore also working hard on their motivation to work on themselves. A large-scale migration affects the motivation and self-confidence of those who stay.“

In some of the towns where the project was implemented in the second phase, the trainers encountered unforeseen difficulties during the implementation. A problem in the implementation of a project that has proved successful in other circumstances is not uncommon and that is why this topic deserves special attention. We asked Branimira to present us with the problems in the implementation and present us with possible solutions. As one of the problems, she pointed out the difficulties in finding the foreseen number of training users, for which she stated several reasons. „On the one hand, the number of young unemployed people is steadily decreasing. When we were preparing the project, the problem was high rate of unemployment among youth, but in the meantime, we cannot find people to participate in the project because many have gone abroad in recent years or found work here. On the other hand, it is difficult to involve remained young people in the project. „This project helps young people, but until we become visible and recognizable, the project will end. But I still think it is good to work cross-sectoral including schools. However, I do not know how much this has been recognized. The problem is in communicating with young people. On the one hand, youth workers do not have time to go around and inform, on the other hand, young people are oversaturated with offers and information, on the other hand, young people always use some new communication platforms, so it is difficult to reach them“, Branimira explains the challenges of project-implementation in in other town, without the partnership with local institution.

As the biggest problem in the implementation of the project, Karla also points out the difficulties in involving the planned number of users. „It happened to us that we had to work in groups with three people instead of the planned eight, which makes implementation far more difficult. Therefore, we are using more time for individual activities and less for the activities in the group. However, group

activities are important for the development of participants' motivation through group dynamics ", says Karla and emphasizes that it is equally difficult to motivate young people to participate in Karlovac and in smaller towns in the county. "We use Facebook, we also organize informative workshops, but out of 18 registered participants, 10-12 come to the workshop, and in the end only three of them participate in the training," Karla tells us.

As possible solutions to the problem of insufficient number of trainees in the second cycle, Branimira sees the possibility in stronger cooperation with local institutions such as schools or in stronger use of street-youth-work methods and hiring so-called ambassadors to approach their peers in places where they gather, trying to convince them to participate in the training. "I also think that the project should become permanent. The age group should be expanded to include young people up to the age of 35", Branimira continues. She notes that young people who have remained in small shrinking towns often need psycho-social support rather than employment support. The trainers have found themselves more than once in situations that are not easy to deal with, despite academic education in pedagogy or social work and gathered experience they have.

Explaining the challenges, she faces in her work, Valentina notes that some of the course participants find it difficult to find a job due to the unfavourable conditions in which they live. Some come from extremely poor or violent family backgrounds, while some attendees have reduced intellectual ability. "It is also a difficult challenge for us as trainers because sometimes we have very heterogeneous groups where it is very difficult to create the content of group work," says Valentina and stresses out that "institutions failed in the earlier diagnostics." When we try to explain these people that they should search for a help by foreseen institutions that could help them, then those people in many cases feel betrayed because they think that we are the ones who should solve these problems", explains Valentina.

Despite the serious challenges they face in implementation of the project, the interviewees consider the project important and useful for young people in the covered cities. The interviewed trainees from Karlovac described their participation in the „Job Club for Youth - Karlovac“ also as valuable and positive. About half of one hundred participants of the training during the first project have found a job within next two years. Additional gains from the participation are changes in their private lives including the perception of their living environment. Positive changes were explicitly mentioned by many respondents who stated that today they think much less about leaving Karlovac than was the case before.

7.4.4. Influencing young people as direct beneficiaries

In the interviews we asked the former training-participants how they found out about the project "Job Club for Youth - Karlovac". "I saw an ad on Facebook and decided to apply for a training. It was my first experience with non-formal education", says 27-year-old Anamarija. An almost identical answer was offered to us by several respondents. Others point out that they found out about the training in the communication with their peers and then started looking for information on the Internet. About her personal motivation to participate, Anamarija says no one had to persuade her to take a part in the training. "Shortly before I saw the Facebook advertisement for the training I graduated my studies of entrepreneurship and tourism in Zagreb and I didn't have a job. I did not participate in the info-workshop, I applied directly to participate in the training", says Anamarija.

Ivana, another former participant for Karlovac, shared a similar experience with us. She even tried to persuade some of her friends to participate: "I promoted the program, but it does not reach everyone equally. Some sit at home and wait for a job-offer to fall into their hands, while others work hard to get a chance. I don't know how to approach those who are not interested in this kind of training-offers because they think that it won't help them to find a job anyway. Maybe it's rather a question for psychologists ", continues Ivana.

Regarding the benefits of training in the „Job Club for Youth“, Anamarija points out that her participation was an incentive to apply for tenders. „Participation encouraged me because when a person is unemployed, the self-confidence drops, and the person is dissatisfied,“ says Anamarija. „I gained some new skills and became aware of some other I already had. I didn't even know that some of the skills and competencies I had were relevant for the employment“, she explained. „I improved the techniques of writing applications and CVs, I learned how to make employers curious about me, what to pay attention to and the like. I also went to free French and Spanish language courses which were offered“, says Anamarija. In addition, she points out that the training helped her to expand her network and to connect with other people. „As for unexpected things during the training, I was surprised by creation of a video biography. We did it individually. I haven't used it yet, but maybe I will“, points out Anamarija. „Also, I realized that it's important to research a future employer to adjust your CV and a letter.“

Ivana believes that through participation she gained skills and knowledges that she could use in practice, for instance how to prepare for an interview with an employer. But like many other respondents, Ivana herself notices her own change in the perception of Karlovac as a desirable environment for life. Unlike many of her peers, Anamarija is no longer thinking about leaving Karlovac. „I had the opportunity to go outside, but after thinking about it, I decided to stay here. I'm fine here. Things are developing positively, but slowly. EU projects can change things for the better“, says Anamarija.

Most of the respondents we spoke to said that through the training in the Job club they became more socially active. After participation in the training which were a first contact with non-formal education for many of them, they took a part in other projects. Participation in non-formal initiatives has raised their overall satisfaction with the environment in which they live. Most of the respondents emphasize that the probability of their staying in Karlovac is nowadays higher than before.

The answers of interviewed training-alumni's about whether there are adequate opportunities for young people in Karlovac or not were sometimes unclear and even contradictory. „There are few opportunities for young people, we are close to Zagreb and Rijeka, therefore many people are oriented towards those cities, because there are more job opportunities there,“ says 27-year-old Anamarija, who grew up in Karlovac. However, Anamarija points out that she is happy to have returned to Karlovac after studying in Zagreb, which she says is too big and too hectic for a comfortable life. „I am satisfied with the cultural life in Karlovac. The theatre has a lot of plays, and there are a lot of events in the city,“ says Anamarija.

An interesting explanation was offered also by Marin, another former trainee from Karlovac. „The opportunities in Karlovac are quite good, but young people do not have the time or interest to use these opportunities. They want to go where they think is the best opportunity for them to make money. It is not so important to them that they change the community but primarily want to make money. „I decided to stay. I want to stay in Karlovac and try to change something“, says Marin, shortly after he told us that he is considering accepting a job in Zagreb, and even moving there in the future, because it is difficult to find a satisfactory job in Karlovac. Thus, like many respondents, Marin points out that participating in the training has opened up new perspectives for him to participate in non-formal education. „This project is my first experience with non-formal learning. I didn't want to deal with it before, I thought there is nothing for me there. But after this experience with the Job-Club, I got engaged and started looking for other opportunities to participate in non-formal activities“, explains Marin.

„I would like to stay in Karlovac. My family and friends are there. I don't have the feeling that Karlovac is a small environment that suffocates me“, says Alen, a young man from Karlovac, who attended the training after finishing his studies in gastronomy-management and tourism at the Polytechnic in Karlovac. Alen believes that the program helped also other participants to recognize their chances in Karlovac. „We had two participants in the program, who wanted to go to Germany, but through participating in the program they changed their mind“, emphasizes Alen, who believes that the project has a positive impact on the wider community. „I think things are getting better. If someone had asked me

two years ago, I would have been less optimistic, but today I look at it more positively. It is true that the city is shrinking, but the amount of good programs is growing”, explains Alen.

7.4.5. Perspective from the related stakeholders

Ms Gabrijela Crnjac and Ms Davorka Radović, presented us the perspective of the representatives of the local administration, answering the questions together. Ms. Crnjac has been working as an Advisor for the Preschool Board and School Education of the City of Karlovac since 2003. Ms. Radović, senior expert associate for work with young people, is a contact person in the city administration for young people. The description of the work she has been doing since 2013 includes regular monitoring of youth-programs. She describes her job as helping young people to realize their ideas. In addition, the Department she represents is in charge of providing useful advices to young people in solving their problems and challenges, but also to mutually break down the prejudices that often exist between young people on the one hand and institutions on the other.

Ms Crnjac and Ms Radović found out about the „Job Club for Youth“ when the representatives of Carpe Diem Association approached them with a request for a project-partnership between the NGO and the city administration of Karlovac. The invitation for partnership was accepted, and the City introduced a new measure in the own youth program, providing a financial support to the “Job Club for Youth” with 10,000HRK (around 1,300 Euro) annually. At the same time, other city departments provided funding to support the coordinators, ensuring the city’s continued support for the project. The city has also helped expand the consortium with further partners: the Croatian Employment Service (HZZ), the Croatian Chamber of Commerce (HGK) and the Karlovac County Chamber of Crafts (OKKŽ). In addition to establishing contact between trainees and employers, better media visibility of the project was ensured through the partnership with the City administration.

The both interviewed representatives of public administration emphasize the benefits of the project. In addition to the young participants gaining the skills needed to find a job, and employers had the opportunity to introduce themselves to potential employees, the Croatian Employment Service also benefited by learning about the needs of young people through the project. Furthermore, the intersectoral networking has enabled the formation of databases with a list of employers and a list of program participants that enable more successful employment of the unemployed persons in Karlovac and in the Karlovac County.

Bruno Vuljanić, Head of the Analytics and Statistics Department at the Croatian Employment Service in the Karlovac Regional Office, is well acquainted with the “Job Club for Youth” project. Since his employment on the current position in 2014, he has been analysing the labor market and coordinating the implementation of EU projects and accompanying activities related to the job market in Karlovac. About the project and its effects, he spoke primarily from the perspective of labor market analyst. Thereby Mr. Vuljanić provided us a deeper insight into the situation with youth employment in Karlovac.

Among other tasks, the Karlovac office of Croatian Employment Service is also responsible for the work of the local Centre for Career Information and Counselling, which is part of the same institution, but is dislocated from the regional office. Representatives of the Centre are regularly visiting schools to speak with young people. Nevertheless, they are also trying to reach the unemployed persons from older age groups. Regarding the cooperation with non-governmental organisations, the Regional Office cooperates with several local educational institutions and associations including the CARPE DIEM association. “If Karlovac is compared with other cities in Croatia, it offers many opportunities for young people. There are cultural facilities, there are developed sports activities that offer participation-opportunities. On the other hand, if we compare Karlovac with comparable cities in the most developed European countries, then there are certainly many things to improve”, emphasises Vuljanić.

Regarding the role of the Croatian Employment Service in the “Job club for Youth” project, Vuljanić emphasizes their primary task of contacting the target group of young unemployed persons and providing them information about the training. “I think we have done it well so far”, so Vuljanić. The labor market analyst sees the project positively. “The performance for young people is satisfactory, many have been employed. Subjectively, I believe that the project has positive effects. In the first project, they met all the indicators. Vuljanić emphasized significant changes in recent years. “When the project started, there were many unemployed young people and in the meantime the number decreased significantly. Thereby the negative selection among the unemployed is taking place”, notes Vuljanić. This follow-up project at the county level is weaker due to the large outflow of young people from this area, but we try to involve young people and implement the project successfully to the end”, says Vuljanić and emphasize the severe challenge of inclusion young persons from unfavourable environments into the training.

„The programmes of this kind are mainly attended by young people with higher education. On the other hand, about 30% of unemployed young people do not have any education”, emphasizes Vuljanić and continues. “We do not have a problem with the inclusion of individuals as long as they are registered as unemployed by the Croatian Employment Service because it is their duty to participate in the programme if they are registered. The problem is the inclusion of unregistered persons”, says Vuljanić and explains: “It is a hard task to include people who are not interested in such activities. It is quite a challenge to convince them that they could gain something through the participation in the training. Thereby I believe it is somewhat easier for the associations to convince NEETs to participate in trainings of this kind” Vuljanić continues. In addition, he points to a much more serious long-term problem in the labor market. “All this is firefighting, institutions of formal education pay too little attention to the development of the potential of young people. We should start working with young people from the 5th or 6th grade, work on recognizing of their interest or on the raising of their awareness to be able to comprehend the necessity of permanent personal and professional development, “said Vuljanić. “We already have a project, we are visiting 7th and 8th grades, we are informing people about the possibilities of enrolling in schools for deficit occupations, but it is too late to change the decision shortly before the enrolment in school. We have a problem that children enrol in certain school-programmes because of their parents and thereby acquire qualifications with which they cannot get a job later”, warns Vuljanić.

Regarding the effects of the “Job Club for Youth” project on the wider community, he says that the project certainly contributes to youth employment, but it cannot solve community problems on its own. “I agree with the conclusion that it is easier for young people to accept the offers of associations because they use informal methods,” says Vuljanić. He considers the project to be generally successful. “I think there is a transfer of information between users and potential users who gain information in this way. I also think the project has had a positive impact on the Carpe Diem association as well. Synergistic effects certainly exist. I also think that such programs contribute to the understanding of today’s young people, that is, to the anticipation of what the reality of future 25-year-olds could be “, says Vuljanić. It is important to continue with programs like this. There are fewer and fewer young people and that is why it is important to realize the potential of as many people as possible “, notes Mr Vuljanić, Head of the Analytics and Statistics Department at the Croatian Employment Service in the Karlovac Regional Office.

Interesting answers and insights were offered to us also by Ms Ivana Spudić, a participant in the training within the project “Job Club for Youth - Karlovac” in 2016. In the meantime, she got a job in the Chamber of Crafts of Karlovac County, therefore we decided to present her perspective in the subchapter dedicated to the stake-holders. Ivana grew up in the suburbs of Karlovac. She knows very well in how far the geographical dislocation affects young people’s ability to participate in organized activities. “There are a lot of activities for young people in Karlovac, but if you live outside the city, it is a great challenge to participate in them. In that cases the transportation should be organized



privately. It is hard to rely on irregular public transport, even for those living in nearby places. I always needed someone to bring me with a car to activities in Karlovac”, says Ivana. “When I went to high school, I had colleagues who lived in the centre of Karlovac, but they haven’t been interested in any of the activities” she adds.

“I think there are more options today than when I was a teenager. I think that young people nowadays are more engaged than my peers when I was young. This is an impact of social networks”, says 32-year-old Ivana. “The contemporary challenge is however, that there are fewer young people today than ten or twenty years ago. The classes are smaller, there are less children in general. Financial insecurity contributes to the fact that few people decide to have children at all. There have been problems before, but maybe we have higher demands nowadays and seek to secure financial security first. The fact is that more of my peers have decided to go abroad than to marry and to have children”, says Ivana and explains that “people leave primarily because of dissatisfaction with the political situation, while economic reasons are secondary”.

Ivana is satisfied with the training within the Job Club for Youth. She got a job at an institution that is a partner in the project. She made already a professional training by the same institution before taking part in the training, but according to her, the knowledge gained during the project helped her to get a job in the Chamber of Crafts of Karlovac County, five months after participating in the training. Ivana tried to animate several colleagues of her to participate in the training, emphasizing the friendly atmosphere and potential benefits of the participation. “I promoted the program, but it doesn’t reach everyone equally. Some people sit at home and wait for the job-offer to fall into their hands, while others work hard to get it. A bunch of free workshops are available, but the decision to participate is individual”, says Ivana and continues. “I don’t know how to approach those who consider that training will not benefit them to get a job, maybe it’s more a question for psychologists.”

Ivana speaks affirmatively about the effects of the project on the wider community. However, she warns about the growing problem of the insufficient number of young people who decide for education for craft occupations. “Speaking from the perspective of the institution I work for, we are aware that there are not many young people, that is, that they go mainly to high schools and schools of economics,” says Ivana. But the shortage of people is noticeable even in once-surplus occupations. “We recently had a competition for people of economic orientation. “Only 6 people applied to the same competition that 30 people applied for a couple of years ago,” says Ivana and continues: “I don’t know where all these girls disappeared in the meantime. Maybe they are waiting for the summer-season at the coast or they have already moved abroad”.

Despite the noticeable depopulation of Karlovac, Ivana believes that the situation for young people is getting better than before. “Young people are nowadays more respected. There is more content for young people, I see that panels, fairs and other events are organized for young people. There are more activities than before, or maybe their visibility is better”, Ivana points out. She also evaluates positively the role of city institutions in this process. “The city has a youth council. You can see the shift. The city strives to respect the opinions of young people, but there is certainly a space for the city to intensify cooperation with young people”, said Ivana. She sees one of the challenges for young people living in suburbs because of the steadily poorer transport connections caused by population decline and the frequent use of personal vehicles for transport. Ivana anticipates possible solution in strengthening of non-formal activities in suburban areas. However, she emphasizes the difference between a village and a city. “In rural communities, someone should go through existing institutions, voluntary fire brigades, for example. It is not possible to go everywhere with the same story, one needs to adapt to local conditions”, points out Ivana. On the importance of youth projects as determination factors for the decision of young individuals to emigrate or to stay in their communities, she says that the youth-programmes have a certain role, but that they do not represent a decisive factor.

As part of her work by the Karlovac County Chamber of Crafts, Ivana visits primary schools and promotes secondary education in crafts. She points out that in cities the attitude of parents towards

craft occupations is quite negative, while in smaller communities it is not so. In her work she is trying to apply impulses and experiences from non-formal learning. "The experiences of participating in the training have helped me, that is, they help me in my current work with young people. Some colleagues were sceptical about the methods from non-formal education, while some were willing to accept the new impulses. Personally, I want to convince as many young people as possible of the benefits of informal methods and encourage them to engage in the non-formal activities. "There will always be those who will just sit at home and comment on the web portals that nothing is right," says Ivana. "But vegetating in front of the TV is the worst option, so nothing will change. We need to get involved in the activities because there is something for everyone on offer".

8. Lessons learned across the cases and recommendations for readers

During this project, the team recognized some of the best examples of the youth work projects and programs in shrinking cities in four countries. This was not always an easy task, but above presented cases are excellent examples. These cases and background work led the team to these conclusions:

- For the biggest part, **analysed projects and programs responded to the consequences of shrinkage** in their respective communities. As visible from analysis, most of the reasons for the shrinkage go way back in the history, 20 and more years, so it is not possible for the projects to directly answer on these. It is also worth noting that most of these projects thoroughly and innovatively answer on current challenges that these cities face.
- Most of the actors the team interviewed **did not connect their work with notion of shrinking city, but, as stated above, one or few consequences that shrinkage produced**. In today's perspective and having in mind that these are mostly youth-led projects, this is not surprising.
- The best practices of youth work do not implicitly affect the demographic developments, but rather **build up capacities and create opportunities of and for young people, during the time of transformation**, such are high unemployment rates, aging populations, vacancies and dilapidated physical condition, etc.
- **Local context** is of utmost importance while the individuals think about projects and programs such these. As the analysis shows, there are differences between local contexts in the same country, so before making your strategy it is always important to make your needs assessments. Here are some of the steps that the team proposes:



The strategy steps contain: identifying the challenge and planning for action, knowing the setting, clarifying roles and responsibilities, collaboration and partnerships, building a sound policy basis, developing financial mechanisms and identifying right options for implementation.

The process steps include: identification of the context and situation analysis, set objectives, build consensus around the desired option, lay out actions to be take and prepare an action plan.

8.1. Recommendations

Here we present recommendations that derived directly from the participants in this research and which are based on their vast experience.

- A great advantage is to follow the needs of the local community.
- It is necessary to apply for tenders, with quality proposals and develop contact in order to create trust.
- Through involvement in the activities of such programs, we have learned what it is like to work on such things. A sense of responsibility has been created and we can learn from our mistakes.
- It should always up to the youth themselves to create the program.
- Through work on the program, the youth have shown seriousness and the community has recognized it, and positively responded.
- Persistence pays off, young people unite! Develop alliances, coordinate, gain weight when you apply to tenders. But be sure to be yours.
- Be willing to approach institutions and inform them about your work.
- Intergenerational community collaboration - without the older generation, we could do nothing.
- Be innovative and use non-formal methods. Schooling and lecturing of young people are wrong approach which young people recognize as such and often reject.
- Anyone trying to work with young people must prepare for a very high dose of cynicism that they must learn to outsmart.
- Choose partners carefully.
- Ask the youth what they want.
- Involvement of young people in the preparation and implementation of the program.
- Networking with as many actors as possible.
- It is important for organizations to support one another, not to fight for their territory.
- We need "smarter" calls for tenders as local circumstances change too quickly.
- Include street and mobile youth work methods. Community outreach is an excellent method that is too rarely used.
- It is important to involve local communities to be partners (both the civilian sector and institutions).
- It is important to involve the institutions already at the writing stage of the project as it enables the exchange of ideas and information that may be of benefit to the participants

The team also proposes you **the three sets of questions** you can discuss in your organizations, initiatives, councils, conferences etc., while planning on how face the challenges of your community and improve youth work initiatives. Categories were derived from the research and recommendations.

8.1.1. Approaches to the youth work

OBJECTIVE: To examine opinions on what approaches to the youth work are needed in order for the youth work of higher quality and better functionality. *Approach* refers to youth workers' access to program development and to youth's access to the youth programs.

- What measures and steps can we take to ensure access to quality youth work for the targeted group?
- What information should be available through youth work and by youth workers?
- How should the needs of young people be monitored and examined?
- How to involve young people in program development and implementation?
- In what ways can other stakeholders in community contribute to the development of the program? Is there room for the development and exchange of intergenerational collaborations and knowledge?
- Do you think programs and projects should respond to long-term community problems or respond to specific situations?
- How to approach partner selection?

8.1.2. Youth work methods

OBJECTIVE: To ask participants what they think which methods should be used in youth work initiatives - both in terms of motivating young people to participate and in the direct development of methods.

- How to develop a methodology that attracts and motivates young people to engage in project/program activities?
- What has been your experience in involving non-organized youth in youth work? Are there methods that are more successful?
- Are there opportunities for street youth work and community outreach in your community? Do you have the capacity and knowledge to do this?
- What opportunities should be available to young people through youth work and youth work?

8.1.3. Cooperation of the local stakeholders

OBJECTIVE: To examine how and in what way is it possible to develop and/or improve the cooperation of stakeholders in a community that is responsive to the needs of young people.

- Which actors in the community need to develop quality collaboration?
- How to develop trust between stakeholders in a community?
- What type of support do you think is needed to increase the quality and number of programs/projects for young people?
- How to develop smarter and more responsive tenders which will fit the needs of the community? How to advocate for this?

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