

May 2018

Author:

Eddy Adams

UIA Expert



The Urban Lab of Europe !

The BRIDGE Project Journal N°2

Project led by the City of Rotterdam



**JOBS & SKILLS
IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY**



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Région
Hauts-de-France

The BRIDGE project

BRIDGE addresses the urgent urban challenge of better aligning young people's educational choices with future labour market needs. Rapid transformation of many sectors of the Rotterdam economy has already started to change the skills that are required from the workforce. The associated unprecedented new economic opportunities and challenges will drastically change labour market needs. Consequently, qualification and skill gaps are expected to grow significantly. The target area of South Rotterdam (200.000 inhabitants) has major disadvantages across key socio-economic indicators compared to the rest of Rotterdam and the country. Unemployment is at 21%, 32% of the children grow up in poverty and 39% have parents with no/low formal education. First and second-generation migrants make up 74% of the population in the focus areas of South Rotterdam. In this context, young people often make career choices that lack a realistic labour market perspective. The result is a persistent situation in which although the work is there, many of the 2.000 young people from South Rotterdam annually entering the labour market cannot realistically compete, either in the current, or in the EU vision of a green digital economy.

The proposed innovative urban action ensures that by 2020, 50% of secondary vocational training students in South Rotterdam, will have chosen a career in one of the major growth sectors. This ambitious goal will be achieved through close cooperation between employers, schools, national and local government. Pupils will follow a programme centred on the opportunities relating to the Green Digital Economy major growth sectors. Bringing together all 68 primary schools, 20 secondary schools and 3 vocational schools in South Rotterdam, all pupils and their parents will take part in the programme. This career and talent orientation programme will start in primary school (age 9) and end when students enter the labour market.

The crucial element in the programme is the Career Start Guarantee. Employers will offer 600 pupils per year a Career Start guarantee (420 for technology sectors and 180 for healthcare) at the moment they enter secondary vocational education and need to make the most crucial subject and career choices. Provided that the pupil chooses the training that the labour market needs, an employer will commit in advance to that individual with a guaranteed career start after graduation. Impact investment instruments (public subsidy based impact investing, social return on investment and social impact bonds) are an integral part of the project, supporting scaling and mainstreaming of the programme.

Partnership:

- Gemeente Rotterdam
- Metropoolregio Rotterdam Den Haag - Organised agglomeration
- SEOR B.V. - Research center
- Hogeschool Rotterdam - Rotterdam University of Applied Science
- RebelGroup Executives BV- Private Company

Table of Contents

- 1 Executive Summary..... 1**
- 2 Water under the bridge: Project Update 4**
 - 2.1 Since our last visit 4
 - 2.2 Getting the message across 5
 - 2.3 Measuring Impact..... 7
 - 2.4 Making the money last..... 9
 - 2.5 The BRIDGE interventions 11
- 3 The Next Bridge: The skills agenda for the Next Economy 13**
 - 3.1 Lifting the curtain on the skills analysis 13
 - 3.2 The messages for the Education Sector 15
- 4 Bridging the gap: Street culture vs School Culture 17**
 - 4.1 Introduction 17
 - 4.2 What’s happening on the streets? 17
 - 4.3 How is BRIDGE addressing the Street Culture challenge?..... 20
- 5 Building bridges: Emerging lessons for Europe’s cities 22**
 - 5.1 Wrapping things up 22
 - 5.2 Revisiting the goals and challenges 22
 - 5.3 Some final words on innovation and learning 24

1 Executive Summary

BRIDGE has not stood still since our last Expert visit six months ago. Since the initial Journal, progress has included:

- The mobilization of an effective and sophisticated communications campaign targeting Rotterdam South youth
- Early monitoring and evaluation messages suggesting that the BRIDGE intervention logic is correct, and that there is a link between choice and level of vocational qualifications and employment prospects in the city's growth industry sectors
- Exploration of financial innovation options designed to sustain BRIDGE activity beyond the initial UIA funding period
- Operationalisation of all 20 BRIDGE interventions, securing the participation of all Rotterdam South schools, and the emergence of key lessons around the challenges and solutions associated with the interface between education and industry

This second Journal has specifically focused on two important components of the BRIDGE's work.

The first is the metro-regional skills forecasting work, informed by the city region's [Roadmap Next Economy](#). This proposes an approach based on the following societal trends, rather than traditional industry sectors:

- Smart manufacturing
- Smart Health
- Feeding the world
- Energy and climate
- Cyber security (transversal)

Five economic sectors are linked to these trends, and a skills analysis and sectoral snapshot produced for each. This work has underlined the difficulty of specific skills forecasting in a period of fast-moving structural change. It has also highlighted the need to explain terms in clear language – and the gap between the language of the research community and that of the wider public – including educationalists, employers and young people. The team is exploring ways to communicate its work in plain language and accessible concepts.

This analysis has important implications for the education sector. It confirms a pattern of future work characterized by constant labour market transitions. This is a particular challenge for vocational education systems, especially for workers with very job specific low-level qualifications, who will be more vulnerable. The analysis suggests ways to future-proof the education system, but identifies challenges associated with this – not least the need to operate across traditional silo structures. The indications are that BRIDGE interventions can support schools to do this.

Our second point of focus in this Journal has been the tension between school culture and street culture. This is a contested term, which some important local stakeholders reject. For

them, the main need in Rotterdam South is to provide access to the extracurricular opportunities available to most young Dutch people. The NPRZ programme, working closely with BRIDGE, offers this through additional school hours for local children, in order to access cultural and sports activities, aimed at building confidence and social capital.

An alternative perspective, influenced by the important work of Ilias El Hadioui, suggests that there is an implicit tension between the values of the school and the street, which can limit the prospects of young people in neighbourhoods like Rotterdam South. El Hadioui's work has helped shape some important BRIDGE interventions, in particular the support work with teaching staff and the development of a student-mentors programme.

Operated by Hogeschool Rotterdam, the programme provides a universal offer of student mentors to Rotterdam South pupils. Drawn from across academic disciplines, the student mentors are trained (drawing upon El Hadioui's research) to provide wide-ranging support to their mentees. Young and from similar backgrounds, the mentors are credible and effective role models, who show that higher education can be a real possibility. From schools and mentors, feedback on this model is very positive. The students, whose voices can be heard [here](#), found the experience challenging but beneficial. In the words of one: "You can make miracles happen here."

In conclusion, we have found that BRIDGE is making good headway and it continues to discover lessons which are highly valuable for cities across Europe and beyond. The initial risks remain, but progress is being made, and these are a component part of any innovation adventure. Important messages emerging from this particular journal are as follows:

Root labour market forecasting in the real world:

Stakeholders on all sides are struggling to make sense of what the Next Economy really means. Clearly, cities need the best analysis and foresighting. However, beyond the hyperbole, we must find plain language and accessible narratives to describe what this will mean for jobs and skills in the future.

Actively bridge the employer/education gap

The BRIDGE experience is clearly exposing the extent to which education and employment are two separate worlds. On both sides of this divide, stakeholders continue to struggle. The interventions developed through this project have huge potential for encouraging collaboration and mutual learning. At the heart of this is the City Authority (specifically the Interventions team) role in brokering relationships and managing respective expectations.

Mobilise youth to build trust and social capital

A central question in this project is: who do young people trust? There is no single answer, but it is evident that mobilizing other young people as mentors is a vital component in building the relationships and social capital which help young people to make better decisions.

Adopt smart user-led messaging campaigns

In the sphere of communications, young people are also likely to pay close attention to messages from peers and role models. Authenticity is key. BRIDGE has developed a sophisticated, humorous and carefully targeted mass media campaign which takes its lead from the perceptions of its target audience. Co-designed with a young branding agency, it sets a great example for other cities looking for ways to reach a young audience.

Embrace financial innovation

There is no innovation without risk. In Work Package 7, BRIDGE is exploring new and innovative ways to generate future revenue. Here the city does not start from scratch, but it is encouraging to see the project identifying the potential solutions of this work relating to the scope to improve efficiencies elsewhere in the system – for example in relation to SROI.

2 Water under the bridge: Project Update

2.1 Since our last visit



BRIDGE is all about transforming Rotterdam South through improving the prospects of its residents. Specifically, it focuses on the way in which the city's future economy can provide opportunities for the area's next generation – and how young people can be ready for that.

It's an ambitious task, and Rotterdam has not stood still since our last visit to the BRIDGE. In the six months since September 2017, intensive work has continued on all aspects of the project. In this

Journal, we will pay particular attention to two of them. The first is future skills analysis and forecasting, the subject of our next chapter. Following that, we explore the interventions designed to address a challenge affecting young people in many European cities - the tension between street and school culture.

Before this, and at the centre of this chapter, we will briefly explore progress and key messages coming from the other project work packages.

2.2 Getting the message across

Ultimately, the success of BRIDGE rests on its ability to shift the mindsets of young people in Rotterdam South. The choices they make will determine whether BRIDGE’s goals have been achieved or not. If many continue to make the

same choices – not completing school, choosing pathways with limited work opportunities, electing for lower-level qualifications – then their lives will mirror those of their parents.

Table 1: Comparative indicators for NPRZ focus areas

	Netherlands	Rotterdam	South	7 focus areas
Residents	16.829.289	618.109	195.157	76.678
% youth (< 23)	26,6	26,6	27,8	30,5
% poorly educated parents	11	25	32	39
Average disposable income (€)	23.900	21.700	21.700	17.500
% Unemployment	8	15	19	22
% Fragile housing	-	24	36	51
Value of average property	211.000	149.000	113.772	92.000

Source: NPRZ uitvoeringsplan 2014-2018.

In policy terms, this would mean South Rotterdam failing to close the inequality gap with other areas. Although BRIDGE is mobilising an ambitious range of tools to drive change, this is unlikely to happen unless perceptions change amongst the local youth population.

To support its wide repertoire of interventions, BRIDGE has launched a sophisticated and targeted communications campaign aimed primarily at young people resident in South Rotterdam. Extensive research with the target group has shaped – and continues to influence – the campaign. Some of the key messages emerging from this research are corroborated by

other findings coming from the project. One example, is young people’s lack of clarity about what many jobs actually involve. Given that many young people in the target area grow up in households with parents who are unemployed or in low-skill professions, this is understandable. Another message is the significance of positive role models who young people can identify with. The importance of trust has also come through as a strong theme. The research work also identified important factors which have not arisen elsewhere. One of these relates to the basic question of money. Like many places, in the Netherlands it is considered impolite to enquire about people’s salary levels.

Consequently, young people can find it difficult to know how much they might earn in particular jobs and sectors. In households where money is tight, this is a big factor. In an area with many opportunities to drop out of education and earn cash in the informal economy, accurate information on future income levels is important in helping young people make informed choices.

The specific issue around earnings is being addressed in a highly visible ad campaign throughout the city where young people in the target sectors share their pay cheque details. Using diverse images of real young people – not models – they convey the message that ‘this could be me.’



Up for it? Boxing gloves in the BRIDGE Communication Team’s offices.

The posters form part of a well-structured strategic campaign which mobilises multi-media platforms to reach the target audience. In addition to all of the usual social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat etc) there is a website with engaging material designed to encourage young people to think about how their talents link to future job opportunities.

An important centrepiece of the entire campaign is a self-assessment quiz fronted by Edson da Graça, a well-known young stand-up comedian, who happens to be a former teacher. Under the slogan, “Aan de Bak”, this uses humour effectively, asking young people if they are ‘on the job’ or ‘on the couch’?

The campaign team is able to monitor the engagement rate across the different channels, and can specifically track participation rates in Rotterdam South. They can also filter and target particular user sets within BRIDGE’s target community.

The approach recognises that the target audience is, itself, sophisticated and averse to standard sales pitches and traditional public sector campaigns which tend to be quite static. Given the discussions about street culture versus school culture, rather ironically it adopts a streetwise approach to promoting the benefits of getting on in education. The use of humour, a strong sense of the local and the mobilisation of positive role models are all important components of the approach.

2.3 Measuring Impact

In the first journal, we identified Monitoring and Evaluation as one of the seven UIA challenges posing the biggest risks to BRIDGE. Several factors shaped this observation. First, the investment in BRIDGE is primarily in people rather than in physical assets. Consequently, there is no guarantee that the target population's behaviour will change, despite the project's interventions. Secondly, the business of attributing changed behaviours to BRIDGE's interventions is complicated, with many variables in play. Thirdly, as the project's primary focus is young children, inevitably the results will not fully unfold during the lifespan of the project. A specialist team from Erasmus University's

School of Economics has the happy task of conducting this analysis. Their initial monitoring and assessment report coincided with our September visit, and it contains important messages, albeit at an early stage.

Their approach focuses on the intervention logic within BRIDGE, set out as three pillars in the Figure 1 below. Framed as questions, the logic is as follows: Do we find that participating in BRIDGE interventions leads to changes in pupils' educational choices? Consequently, does opting for one of the promoted educational options (technology, Port-related or healthcare) improve a pupil's labour market opportunities?

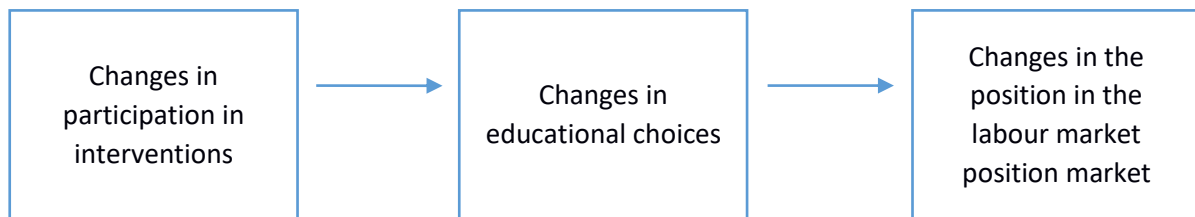


Figure 1: Source, Erasmus University BRIDGE WP4 Team.

Although early days, this work is helped by the fact that some BRIDGE interventions predate the UIA-funded activity. As part of the NPRZ Programme, this narrower suite of interventions provides a limited baseline measurement.

What does the initial examination of these data tell us? It confirms that there are good prospects in the three target sectors (technology, Port-

related or healthcare). However, it also underlines the need for higher-level vocational qualifications to optimize these – particularly relating to healthcare.

The table below shows that in all sectors, an MBO qualification increases the likelihood of employment, with the exception of MBO2 in healthcare.

Table 2: Effect on fraction of time in a job (adjusted for part-time employment)

sector	level	Rotterdam South	Rotterdam North	G3	Netherlands
Technology/ Engineering	<i>Mbo2</i>	11.0	9.1	8.1	11.7
	<i>Mbo3</i>	18.1	19.3	15.2	16.6
	<i>Mbo4</i>	6.7	6.6	2.6	7.3
Healthcare	<i>Mbo2</i>	-5.4	-7.9	-7.1	-9.8
	<i>Mbo3</i>	12.6	13.2	11.5	9.8
	<i>Mbo4</i>	11.1	10.7	10.2	8.6
Logistics	<i>Mbo2</i>	11.6	7.7	11.6	15.0
	<i>Mbo3</i>	17.6	15.7	8.5	11.9
	<i>Mbo4</i>	8.2	9.3	10.0	11.2

Source: Source, Erasmus University BRIDGE WP4 Team.

The analysis also shows that the percentage of South Rotterdam pre-vocational students specializing in technology is increasing – closing the gap with the rest of the country. Figure 2 illustrates the trends at different spatial levels. However, this initial feedback notes that there is scope to widen the reach of BRIDGE’s interventions with schools. It also underlines the basic importance of addressing drop-out, and

keeping young people in the education system. Overall, the initial findings are encouraging: “In conclusion, we can say that BRIDGE is on the right track by encouraging young people in secondary vocational education to choose courses in technology, healthcare or logistics. Completing a course in one of these specialisations improves a person’s chances in the labour market significantly.”

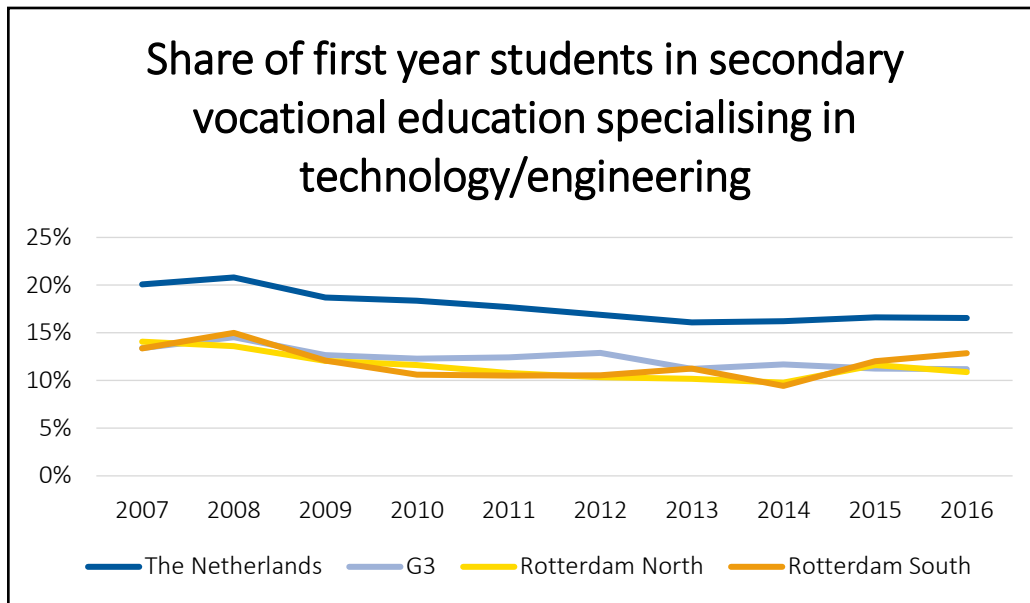


Figure 2: Source, Erasmus University BRIDGE WP4 Team.

2.4 Making the money last


The second of the UIA challenges that appeared as High Risk in our initial assessment was financial sustainability. This risk level was also shaped by the project's revenue funding model, as well as by the challenges determining impact and the costs of achieving it. Although there is no diminution of risk-level, BRIDGE is actively exploring a range of innovative options relating to financial sustainability.

An important first step in this relates to determining impact and the cost of achieving that result. The identification of basic unit costs is the starting point for further exchange and discussion. Whether the eventual mechanism is social auction activity or the development of

Social Impact Bonds (SIBS), a verified unit cost is a pre-requisite. As we have noted, at the individual level there are challenges to doing this. One of these is the diversity and range of the BRIDGE interventions, as well as to the challenge of attribution; how to demonstrate that result X was shaped by intervention Y. While the Monitoring and Evaluation team address these issues, colleagues are exploring the potential options to investigate once the data is clearer.

At this stage, numerous possibilities are under consideration. One of these is the social auction, pioneered by Oxfam and others, whereby donors can purchase interventions at the individual level.

Shop > Charity gifts > Fill Classrooms > Educate a child



EDUCATE A CHILD

£19.00


ADD TO BASKET

Quantity

A decent education makes a huge difference to any child's future. And your gift can help Oxfam work with governments to improve schooling for some of the world's poorest children. With your support, we can convince more politicians to prioritise access to education – so more children will get the chance to go to – and stay in – school.

This gift supports our **Investing in the Future (IN)** projects.

THIS GIFT IN ACTION



In Pakistan, thousands of children miss out on education. But, people like you are helping girls like 13 year-old Anum to do something about it. Anum realised that many parents couldn't afford school fees. And young girls often had to work as domestic servants to help make ends meet. But, with support from Oxfam, Anum started an inspiring door-to-door campaign. She convinced local schools to reduce fees for poorer families, and she persuaded the parents of 42 children to put their sons and daughters into school.

Share this product with your friends and family!

[f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [p](#) [e](#)

Source: Oxfam.

Auctions can provide an income stream that might complement other funding sources to generate a systemic financial approach. Such a model might include public funding, as well as contributions from the city's Social Return on Investment (SROI) Fund and from philanthropic foundations.

The team is also investigating options for a Social Impact Bond (SIB) although this is a challenge when the diversity of unit costs is likely to be high. Focusing on a specific intervention – such as the Career Start Guarantee (CSG) may provide the best basis for the return on investment agreement that forms the basis of most SIBs.

The team is also exploring the potential of blockchain technology as a way of encouraging social impact investment. Their activity coincides with rising interest in the potential of so called 'Tech for Good'.

In late 2017 the European Commission launched a [challenge](#) relating to this. Within Rotterdam, there may be scope to establish a more sophisticated and efficient way to channel business contributions through the city's existing SROI mechanism, utilizing such tools. The creation of a *social coin* utilizing blockchain to assign and track resources more effectively, is one of the options under consideration.

2.5 The BRIDGE interventions

In September 2017, during the initial Expert visit, the last remaining intervention of the 20 were being finalized. All are now fully operational. Important learning points have emerged from that procurement process. In some cases, it is only now that the interventions are in place that the delivery requirements are completely clear. In others, there is a feeling that it would have been easier to have gone out to the market with a challenge, instead of with a pre-described service. Some of the attitudinal behaviours the city would like to see from service providers – creativity, flexibility and enthusiasm – are not always there, but this can't be specified in the contract. Limitations in the procurement process make the scope for service co-production difficult, which relates to UIA Challenge number 2, identified as a medium-risk in our initial Journal.

What has also become evident is that the team responsible for the Interventions assumes an important brokerage role amongst the central project stakeholders – in particular with schools and employers. The good news is that all South Rotterdam schools have embraced the message about careers guidance. The Interventions Lead reported that School Board heads are no longer asking why this matters, which is an important breakthrough. However, managing school relationships remains an intensive exercise, with no evident short cuts or simple keys to success.

In some cases the interventions promote themselves – such as the simple one-day visit to the port. Others present a harder sell, although all local schools are expected to have undertaken all interventions by 2019. Keeping schools informed is challenging, although the [website](#) and growing bank of resources helps. However, despite increased buy in, schools don't always

react. For example, during Care and Welfare week in March, employers wanted to visit schools to share their agenda, but only one of the 20 local schools responded. How to raise and maintain schools' enthusiasm levels remains an issue.

The Care and Welfare week also illustrates the task the Interventions team faces in relation to employers. Specific industry sector bodies have approached them with their expectations of connecting with large numbers of enthusiastic, highly-motivated young people. Each sector hopes to be able to pick the cream of the crop. The reality may be somewhat different. For an upcoming Food Sector event, only 10 young people have signed up – none of them from Rotterdam South. These experiences underline the work that must be done to address negative perceptions of careers in some of the growth sectors like Healthcare and Food.

These findings, and the implications for BRIDGE, represent an important but steep learning curve. Addressing the consequences will require creativity and collaboration. As we discuss in Chapter 2, creating a clearer picture of available jobs and what they comprise will be an important part of this, linking the triangle between employers, schools and young people.

Another is exposing employers to young people so that they have a better understanding of them and what they can bring to the workplace. In this respect, several of the interventions, such as the employer taster days and work preparatory sessions, are important. In this complex and fluid set of key relationships, the city authority team – in particular those delivering the Work Package 6 on Interventions - plays a key role in building and sustaining trust.

Road to a job!

Career and talent orientation programme

Jobs for the future



images: Jinc & Techniekbank.nl

- Discovering and Experiencing
- Reflecting and Choosing
- Preparation for the job market
- Professionalisation

For a comprehensive description of all activities and instruments, see gaanvooreenbaan.nl



pupils at the age of 10



Career Start Guarantee

Within the Career and Talent orientation programme, courses with a Career Start Guarantee will be given special attention. A number of businesses or associations of businesses gives an Career Start Guarantee guarantee to pupils living in South Rotterdam when they start certain intermediate vocational courses at level 2, 3, or 4. This offers students the assurance that, after obtaining their diploma and under clear conditions, they can start their career with one of the affiliated businesses or institutions. For each sector, employers may determine additional conditions and specific admission requirements. They may also offer additional facilities, such as a mentorship during the education or a study costs allowance for the student.

Currently, 472 students per year can obtain an Career Start guarantee via courses in technology, food technology, healthcare and construction. The number of Career Start Guarantees will be increased in the future. The complete overview with links to comprehensive information about the courses can be found at aandebak.nl.

The following employers currently offer Career Start guarantees:

- DeLijn** (association of employers in the Port of Rotterdam) - 100 places
Process college
Maintenance college
- Food Innovation Academy** - 30 places
Skilled food and technology employee
- De Rotterdamse Zorg** (association of healthcare employers) - 100 places
Nurse
Carer
- RET (public transport)** - 10 places
Rail Vehicle Service Technician
Bus Driver
- Ministry of Defence** - 100 places
Several technical courses
- City Maintenance department** - 22 places
Several courses
- Construction and infra sector** - 50 places
Several courses



Get started at: gaanvooreenbaan.nl

3 The Next Bridge: The skills agenda for the Next Economy

3.1 Lifting the curtain on the skills analysis

Informed by the city region's [Roadmap Next Economy](#), shaped by Jeremy Rifkin, the metro region's foresight work on skills is already well developed. As we underlined in our initial journal, this adopts an approach based on societal trends, rather than via static industry sectors.

Based on this analysis, the emerging growth clusters are:

- Smart manufacturing
- Smart health
- Feeding the world
- Energy and climate
- Cyber security (transversal theme)

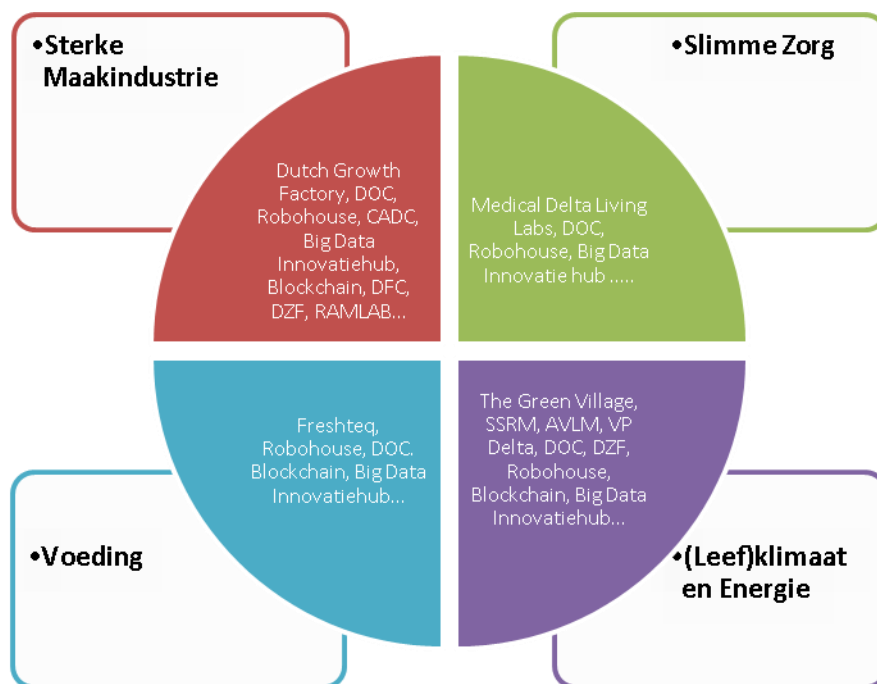


Figure 3: Source, BRIDGE Work Package 5 Team

Five economic sectors have been linked with these societal trends: Port/Maritime; Healthcare; Technology; Food/Greenport; and ICT/ Cyber/ Energy. For each, a skills analysis has been undertaken, comprising a desk-based review and a snapshot per sector of promising issues. Sectoral representatives are currently assessing these snapshots. A number of issues are arising from this analysis.

One is that although the core competencies that emerge are evident, creating a detailed picture of the specific sectoral skills requirements is more challenging. Also, the further into the future we go, the harder it is for sectors to specify with confidence the kind of jobs there will be and the required skills associated with them. Figure 4 illustrates this issue.

Een skillsagenda

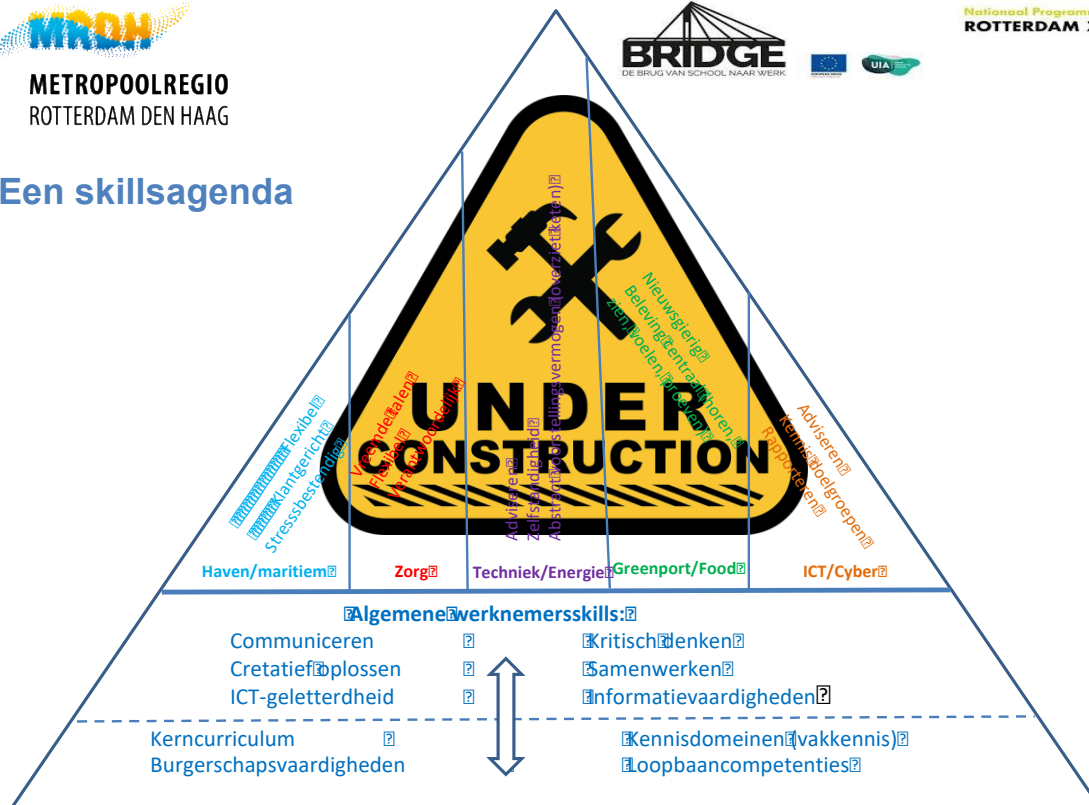


Figure 4: Source, BRIDGE Work Package 5 Team.

The regional skills analysis is the foundation of this work. Building on this, BRIDGE will create a Skills Agenda combined with a Call to Action. The difficulty in articulating the precise skills requirements in each sector is one of the challenges here. Another is translating the concepts, and the language, into terms that can be used with children, teachers and parents.

The terminology issue applies even to the question of generic competencies. To address this, the team has developed a plain language set of 'top ten' skills needed for the future.

Top 10 Skills

1. Taking responsibility for your own actions
2. Curious and eager to learn
3. Can come up with creative solutions
4. Can show initiative and entrepreneurial spirit
5. Want to work together and can deal with people
6. Showing perseverance and motivation
7. Able to make independent decisions
8. Can deal with stressful situations
9. Trust yourself and dare to take (responsible) risks
10. Can clearly explain make (and explain) what you want and don't want

Source: BRIDGE Work Package 5 Team.

3.2 The messages for the Education Sector



Staff, pupils and Mentors in Rotterdam South.

The list of Top 10 skills hints at some of the challenges facing schools preparing young people for the future labour market. There is much we still don't know. But there *are* important things that are becoming clear.

One of these is that future workers must be prepared for a lifetime of labour market transitions. This means constant reskilling and relearning. Another is that people are less likely to need preparing for very specific jobs, as those will constantly evolve and change. This is an important points for those vocational education systems, such as the Dutch model, where students are trained for quite specific industry roles.

Young people in (V) MBO (lower vocational education level) are usually trained for specific jobs and occupations; in other words as specialists and not generalists, who are therefore more vulnerable in a fast changing society and labour market. As it is estimated that 65% of primary school children today will do jobs not yet invented, the scale of this challenge is evident.

The curricular implications are significant. The foundations for a future-proofed education will include:

- A solid foundation of knowledge on the basis of cross-subject learning
- Deeper knowledge based on a student's own interest
- Personal training and self-awareness

Moving forward, education will also be less about equipping learners with facts and theories and more about supporting the development of good learning habits. Independence and self-efficacy, important terms in the school versus street culture debate, are also significant here.

An important message is the need to operate across silos. To do this, the vocational education system must shift away from preparing students for a lifetime of work in a specific profession. Instead, it must nurture lifelong learners with self-awareness and the capacity to navigate multiple labour market transitions.

This represents a major shift for the education system. However, much of the focus today remains on cognitive learning and reproduction whilst the curriculum does not always lend itself to cross-disciplinary approaches. Furthermore, the emphasis on nurturing independent lifelong learners is a marked departure from the old teacher-pupil relationship.

BRIDGE underlines the need for innovation and customisation in the V (MBO) system. Vocational schools need support with this, and several of the project interventions are valuable here – particularly those which bring teachers, employers and pupils together. Although direct knowledge transfer in a classroom setting remains important, it must be supplemented with other forms of learning.

Connecting what happens in schools to what is taking place in the labour market is central to the

BRIDGE mission. A principal reason for the high unemployment levels in South Rotterdam is young people making the wrong career choices.

Within the V(MBO) system, labour market prospects are only a factor in 10% of the course choices young people make, whilst more than half opt for courses on the basis that they are ‘fun’. Improving the alignment between opportunities and course selection is central to altering these choice patterns.

Another important message coming from different elements of BRIDGE is the need to explain what jobs really entail. We see this in the feedback from mentors, who speak about children aspiring to be ‘Managers’ without knowing what this means. We also see it from the focus groups with young people organised by the Communications Campaign team, who are told that young people don’t want jobs where they get dirty.

In response to this, BRIDGE is considering the development of a series of job profiles. These would explain in detail what a particular profession comprises, giving a picture of the tasks involved, skills required and, most important, the attitudes which are useful to do them well.

All of this work – the ongoing analysis, the collaboration with education stakeholders, the descriptions of occupational areas – will continue and will inform the Call for Action due to take place later in the project.

4 Bridging the gap: Street culture vs School Culture

4.1 Introduction

Our first Journal identified three specific risks facing the BRIDGE project. One of these is the pressure on young people in Rotterdam South to opt out of the education system. By this we do not only mean leaving school early, but also the risk of not fully engaging with the system, and thus failing to reach their potential. The success of BRIDGE relies upon young people in the target area making better future choices. However, they are subject to intense competing pressures which, despite the project's interventions, may still lead them down another path

The notion of choice requires having alternative options. An important tension within the area is what has been described as 'street culture',

which stands in contrast to 'school culture.' As we will describe in this chapter, the idea of 'street culture' stands in marked contrast to the values, behaviours and expectations rooted in schools.

Before exploring this in detail, it is important to state that the concept of 'street culture' is a contested one. In this chapter we set out some of the latest influential thinking on the concept. But we also address the perspective of those within the city who downplay its importance.

We then examine the interventions which specifically address this risk of young people disengaging from education, and make some observations on their effectiveness.

4.2 What's happening on the streets?

Rotterdam South has long been synonymous with deprivation and disadvantage. In the 7 NPRZ focus areas where BRIDGE operates, the figures are stark, as Table 1 shows. Unemployment rates are almost three times the national average, disposable incomes are the lowest in the country and more than half of the residents live in precarious and fragile housing.

As in many poor urban areas with ports, crime levels are high. Although Rotterdam South has only 1.2% of the Netherlands population, it is reported to account for 7.4% of the Dutch drug economy.

It was the scale of these challenges which prompted the establishment of the NPRZ, a twenty-year regeneration programme with

multi-level government support. Housing, employment and education have been identified as key strategic components of NPRZ's strategy to improve Rotterdam South and the lives of its residents.

There are two complementary components to the focus on education. One is the menu of interventions delivered through BRIDGE. The other is an agreement with national government whereby schools in the target area are funded to deliver an additional six hours of lessons per week.

This is a universal offer to all thirty schools in the seven NPRZ focus areas. These additional six hours are primarily focused on extra-curricular cultural and sports activities. The NPRZ Director

explained that these activities are designed to compensate local children for not having access to what most Dutch children receive from their parents: social networks; social capital and the chance to discover their wider talents.

In Rotterdam South, where 74% of parents are from migrant backgrounds with low education levels, the social capital passed on to most Dutch children is missing. Parents rarely have social connections to share or time to transport and pay for sport and cultural activities. Consequently, when other Dutch children are engaging in these pastimes, their peers in Rotterdam South are left to their own devices.

From this perspective, the challenge is about meaningfully occupying the pupils' time. It is, in the Director's words, about 'channeling talents and keeping them busy'.

In this analysis, 'street culture' is not the problem. The street is simply 'for getting from one place to another' and by providing useful

activities, children's time can be limited there – as it is for their peers throughout the country, whose parents are organizing their busy extra-curricular activities.

However, there is a new and growing body of research which indicates that the attraction of street culture is a more pervasive and structural challenge for the education system, and ultimately for BRIDGE.

In Rotterdam, this theoretical work is being led by Ilias El Hadioui, based at Erasmus University, and advising national and city administrations in the Netherlands. Building on earlier work around reflection, resilience and self-efficacy, El Hadioui identifies competing environments in which local young people function.

Using ladders as an analogy, he illustrates the challenge of climbing high on more than one of these at a time. IN this analysis, the culture of home, street and school are at odds with one another, as the figure below illustrates.

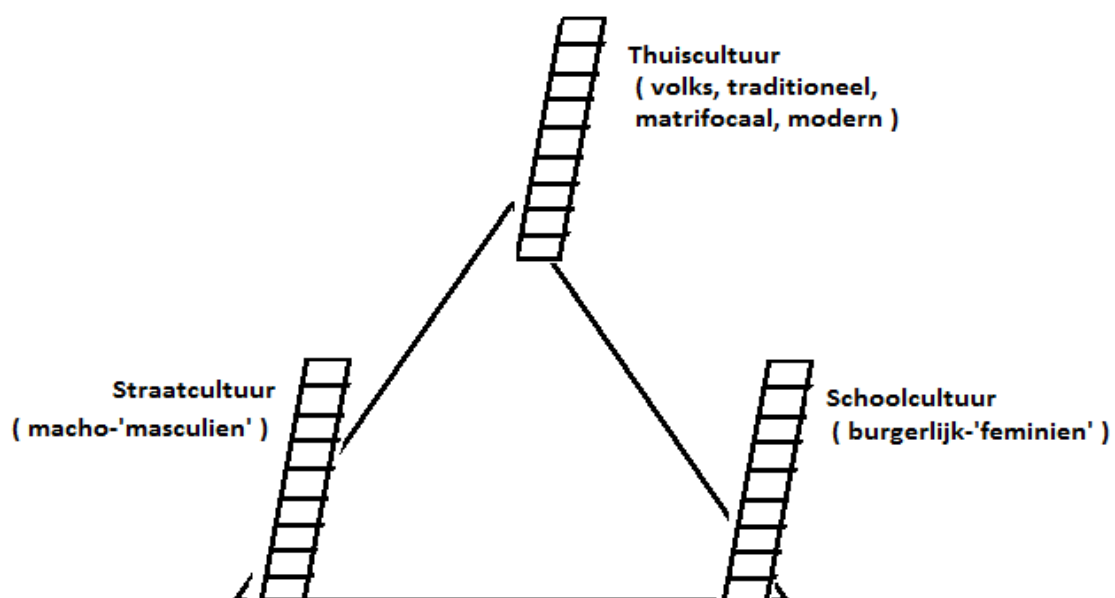


Figure 5: Source, BRIDGE Work Package based on El Hadioui research.

Young people grow up processing a wide range of messages, which are often conflicting. These include the values of the home, which can be pressured as children grow up in very different environments and with different educations from their parents. They include the values from school, around studying hard and behaving appropriately. But they also include messages from social media, rap music and other sources which are often very different.

Without oversimplifying El Hadioui’s work, he argues that one of the consequences is a competing code of behaviours between the street and school, as illustrated in Table 3.

In this analysis, it is difficult for young people in Rotterdam South to succeed in each of these separate domains; this is the choice that confronts them.

Table 3: Mismatch of Street codes and school codes		
	Street Code	School Code
Money	Short term, ‘easy come’	Long term, discipline
Time	Flexible, own schedule	Strict, external schedule
Rules	Informal, unwritten	Order, formal, procedures
Physical	Movement, mobile, playful	Sitting, concentrating, immobile
Taking action	Active, direct action, spontaneous	Thinking, planning
Emotions	Expression	Rational channeling
Needs	Giving in, hedonistic, instant gratification	Self-control, deferred gratification
Women	Sex object, a thing to be used	Self-determination, assertive
Men	Macho, dominant, vertical	Communicative, horizontal

Source: BRIDGE Work Package based on El Hadioui research.

The key messages from El Hadioui’s research are already influencing the way local schools are working to support their pupils. As we described in Journal 1, central to this is a shared triangular relationship between schools, pupils and parents. Enthusiasm and high expectations are identified as being important parts of this collaborative model.

The maintenance of effective relationships is underlined, and great emphasis is placed on the need for trust. Joint responsibility provides the framework for the cooperation and pupils are

strongly encouraged to take responsibility for their own development. The presence of rewards to recognize their effort is also an important part of the package.

This important research helpfully draws out some of the tensions in the lives of young people living in Rotterdam South, and other neighbourhoods like it. One is between easier short term and harder long term paybacks. Another is between thinking and acting, which is so important for adolescents. There is a strong gender-dimension, which is partly linked to the

perceived feminisation of the curriculum and labour market. Bluntly, here is also an authority issue, evident in the risks associated with losing face.

These concepts draw upon robust sociological research. They also chime with aspects of other

systemic approaches developed in cities facing similar challenges. One is the work undertaken in London schools, often referred to as *The London Effect*. Another is the Glasgow model developed in the early 2000s to tackle the problem of youth gang violence. However, the resulting approach developed by BRIDGE is unique and distinctive.

4.3 How is BRIDGE addressing the Street Culture challenge?

Across the programme, BRIDGE is utilizing a range of approaches and tools to promote the positive message of staying on and achieving in education. As we have seen, the project has a comprehensive and targeted media campaign aimed directly at young people. This work is informed by the views and opinions of the target audience, through established tools like focus groups. On a more advanced level, the campaign is using an App to gather intelligence and attitudinal information in more sophisticated ways. This, for example, can filter information gathered from residents in the specific BRIDGE target areas.

As we have shown, this campaign is adopting a smart, streetwise approach to communicating the project's key messages. Positive role models are a key part of this.

But it is on the ground, in schools, and through the use of mentors, that BRIDGE's use of positive role models is most tangible. The student mentor programme is one of the twenty interventions on offer to schools in the South. Led by Hogeschool Rotterdam (the University of Applied Science), it is strongly influenced by El Hadiou's research.

Through BRIDGE, access to a student mentor is a universal offer. This reinforces two messages: first, everyone benefits from having a mentor and secondly, there is no stigma in this kind of additional support. The young mentors come

from across all disciplines at the Hogeschool and they gain credits for their participation. Their commitment takes the form of one half day in school each week.

Hogeschool Rotterdam co-ordinates the student mentor programme. It prepares them for their support role through a training and induction programme, which makes clear links to El Hadioui's thinking. It also provides support throughout the mentoring period, through a mentor lead in schools and a range of other tools, including a toolkit of support materials.

Another important, and more recent tool is the development of an App which is being widely used by mentors and young people. This digital tool has numerous functions, such as keeping track of shared commitments between mentor and mentee. Another is its use in matching participants at the start of the programme. The fit between mentor and mentee is an important ingredient of success, and the App allows both sides to set out their interests and personality types to encourage effective matching.

During the March 2018 site visit, we spoke to school staff and mentors involved in the programme. The feedback from both sides was extremely positive. From the school perspective, we heard that often this was the first time that pupils had had direct contact with anyone studying in higher education. The fact that these

are young people, not much older than them, from similar backgrounds, opened their eyes to future possibilities.

The school coordinator also explained that the mentors helped widen pupils' spatial horizons. Although many of these young people are confident in their local settings, their experience beyond their immediate neighbourhood can be limited. A recent example of this was when a mentor invited her mentees to meet her at her college in the city centre. On her arrival, one of the pupils remarked that this was the first time she had been close to the Euromast, one of the city's iconic landmarks.

The school also noted the different strategies mentors use to support their students, depending on their own outlook. The case of two pupils who had forgotten their books illustrates this. Where the mentor was studying sociology, he was sympathetic and asked whether everything was ok at home, to have made the pupil forget something so important. The business student's response was different: "How are you going to use your networks to get your books here in 15 minutes?"

Feedback from a group of student mentors was equally positive and instructive. All of them agreed that this experience was likely to support their own career development. Those planning

for teaching and caring careers were especially clear about this.

They reported that the most satisfying aspect of their role was to see the progression and growth of their mentees. Most of them agreed that in this role they can make a big difference. As one mentor put it: "You can make miracles happen here." Feeling that you can help make a difference was a recurring benefit in their responses.

At the same time, they did not find the role easy. Getting to know their mentees and establishing a trusted relationship took time. It also required the mentors to understand what makes these pupils tick – discover what they are really interested in. One noted that it was frustrating 'not being able to fix everything.' Another was working with a 15 year old who did not think his prospects were good because he was black.

These highly impressive young people, whose voices can be heard [here](#), had all developed their own techniques to enable them to provide effective support. Several mentioned the importance of sharing their own mistakes, to show that this is part of the learning process. Others used the time to talk about career opportunities, the importance of following your passions, and signposting their mentees to positive role models.

5 Building bridges: Emerging lessons for Europe’s cities

5.1 Wrapping things up

It is a challenge in these few pages to convey the scale and intensity of the BRIDGE’s work over these past six months. Each Journal tries to summarise the big picture, while shining a light on specific areas of work.

Here we have focused on the skills analysis and the important question of school – or perhaps a better word is ‘learning’ – culture. At the same time, we have touched upon some of the other

important developments, for example relating to evaluation and financial sustainability.

In this final chapter we will pull together our final points. These include reference to the project’s goals and to the challenges that still lie ahead. Finally, we make some brief observations on the innovation taking place within the project and what other cities can learn from this ongoing adventure.

5.2 Revisiting the goals and challenges

The goals set out for BRIDGE are quite clear. They relate to changing the career options taken by young people in Rotterdam South. The intervention logic, as we have discussed in Chapter 2, is that by choosing careers in growth sectors, and by opting for higher-level vocational

courses, young people in the area will improve their labour market prospects.

As Table 4 shows, using a baseline of 2014/15, success will mean 50% of the target group in these key sectors by 2020.

TABLE 4: BRIDGE GOALS

	2014/15	TARGET 2020
% pupils choosing vocational study in healthcare	13	15
% pupils choosing vocational study in technical branches	24	35
Total	37	50

Source: BRIDGE.

As we have already noted, a particular challenge both in term of achieving results and measuring impact, is the fact that BRIDGE relies upon people making different choices. In the first Journal, we identified three related risks specific to the Rotterdam BRIDGE project:

1. The need for high level commitment and quality job offers from employers
2. The pressures on young people in Rotterdam to opt out of education
3. Competition within the school system

In this Journal we have examined the drop out challenge and discussed some of the BRIDGE interventions addressing this.

In the next Journal we will focus on the matter of employment, and the role of employers. In the initial Journal we also considered the eight UIA Challenges and used a traffic light system to gauge the extent to which they might present obstacles for BRIDGE. A summary table of the challenges, traffic-light code, and updated comments is included below.

Challenge	Level	Observations
1. Leadership for implementation	Low	BRIDGE continues to enjoy strong coherent leadership.
2. Public procurement	Medium	Minor procurement issues and lessons emerging.
3. Integrated cross-departmental working	Medium	This remains challenging, although BRIDGE continuing to build strong alliances across departmental silos.
4. Adopting a participative approach	Low	High levels of participation evident across stakeholder groups.
5. Monitoring and evaluation	High	Excellent progress, which suggests BRIDGE is on the right track, but M & E remains a significant challenge.
6. Financial Sustainability	High	Evident potential, but remains early days – and contingent on Monitoring and Evaluation progress.
7. Communicating with target beneficiaries	Low	Impressive communications campaign now in place.
8. Upscaling	Medium	The challenge here relates to the distinctiveness of Rotterdam South in the Netherlands.

5.3 Some final words on innovation and learning

Across Europe, other cities face the same challenges addressed by BRIDGE. What lessons can we share from the project's experience in the past six months? From our analysis, here are five key points to share:

1. Root labour market forecasting in the real world:

Stakeholders on all sides are struggling to make sense of what the Next Economy really means. Clearly, cities need the best analysis and foresighting. However, beyond the hyperbole, we must find plain language and accessible narratives to describe what this will mean for jobs and skills in the future.

2. Actively bridge the employer/education gap

The BRIDGE experience is clearly exposing the extent to which education and employment are two separate worlds. On both sides of this divide, stakeholders continue to struggle. The interventions developed through this project have huge potential for encouraging collaboration and mutual learning. At the heart of this is the City Authority (specifically the Interventions team) role in brokering relationships and managing respective expectations.

3. Mobilise youth to build trust and social capital

A central question in this project is: who do young people trust? There is no single answer, but it is evident that mobilizing other young people as mentors is a vital component in building the relationships and social capital which help young people to make better decisions.

4. Adopt smart user-led messaging campaigns

In the sphere of communications, young people are also likely to pay close attention to messages from peers and role models. Authenticity is key. BRIDGE has developed a sophisticated, humorous and carefully targeted mass media campaign which takes its lead from the perceptions of its target audience. Co-designed with a young branding agency, it sets a great example for other cities looking for ways to reach a young audience.

5. Embrace financial innovation

There is no innovation without risk. In Work Package 7, BRIDGE is exploring new and innovative ways to generate future revenue. Here the city does not start from scratch, but it is encouraging to see the project identifying the potential solutions of this work relating to the scope to improve efficiencies elsewhere in the system – for example in relation to SROI.

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.

UIA projects will produce a wealth of knowledge stemming from the implementation of the innovative solutions for sustainable urban development that are of interest for city practitioners and stakeholders across the EU. This journal is a paper written by a UIA Expert that captures and disseminates the lessons learnt from the project implementation and the good practices identified. The journals will be structured around the main challenges of implementation identified and faced at local level by UIA projects. They will be published on a regular basis on the UIA website.



Urban Innovative Actions

Les Arcuriales
45D rue de Tournai
F - 59000 Lille

+33 (0)3 61 76 59 34
info@uia-initiative.eu
www.uia-initiative.eu

Follow us on **twitter**
@UIA_Initiative
and on **Facebook**.