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URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS

The Urban Lab of Europe !

The BRIDGE project
Journal N° 3

*Project led by the **city of Rotterdam***

JOBS & SKILLS
IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

European Union
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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

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1. Executive summary

It's been a busy six months since our last visit to Bridge. Following spring elections, a new administration in City Hall has cemented its commitment to the regeneration of Rotterdam South. This means an additional investment package of €260m and continued backing for Bridge's efforts to support young local people to make better career choices.

In this third journal we update on progress against all of the project's activities. But, we pay particular attention to monitoring and evaluation (M&E), after the team's first report. Having spent time speaking with employers across Bridge's key sectors, we also focus on their perspective, and the implementation of the Career Start Guarantees (CSGs).

The M&E research confirmed the unique nature of the Bridge package. In doing so, it underlined factors which influence the effect of the interventions. The frequency of these, as well as the intensity and quality of preparation emerged as key issues. So too, did the role of teachers as intermediaries. Complementary fieldwork also shines a spotlight on teachers, and the importance of their ability to help young people reflect on their experiences.

Although early days, the M&E team identifies positive trends in the young people in South opting for the target industry sectors. Almost 60% of them choose these disciplines at the key point in their education. In terms of retention, in both Logistics and Healthcare, the gap between Rotterdam South youngsters and their peers closed between 2007 and 2015, although this was not the case in Technology.

In relation to the links to employment, the news is also encouraging. The existing data indicates that young people from Rotterdam South with higher-level qualifications do well in the labour market – particularly in the logistics sector. The figures for lower level healthcare qualifications are less good, however.

They conclude that:

"..if young people in secondary vocational education are encouraged to specialize in technology, healthcare or logistics, one can expect this to positively influence their position in the labour market." (Bridge Monitoring and Evaluation Report, July 2018)

Despite these positive messages, maintaining the commitment of schools remains a challenge. The fieldwork indicates the uneven pattern of school participation in South, and shows that, of the 20 interventions, company visits, career dialogues with teachers and mentoring were reported to be the most informative.

The varying commitment level of schools informs ongoing discussions about the evolution of Bridge. Alongside this, the project continues to actively investigate options for financial sustainability, which include a number of pioneering innovations.

The question of sustainability is closely linked to the results of the Career Start Guarantees (CSGs), perhaps the most eye-catching of the interventions. At this relatively early stage there is no standard template for these. Half of the sectors offer a physical document linked to a specific offer, which in turn varies amongst

them. Healthcare offers a job guarantee to young people with the right qualification whilst the Food sector is still working on its package.

Rotterdam employers interviewed during our visit see the benefits of the CSG. The video capturing their headline points is here. All of them face human resource and recruitment challenges now, which will only intensify as baby-boomers retire. Each also faces negative industry perceptions amongst young people particular to the sector, despite being able to offer good future employment prospects.

A growing body of evidence suggest that Millenials apply different criteria in relation to career choices to previous generations. Work-life balance matters more, as does the quality of the offer. In a buoyant economy where jobs are abundant, this may be a gamechanger for employers, who often still seem to believe that a talent pipeline, constructed by others, will lead employees to their door.

Based on this expert visit, we set out the following five key lessons that Rotterdam can share with other cities,:

1. **Invest in improving relationships between employers and schools**. This site visit has underlined the scale and complexity of this task. Succeeding requires a deep understanding of the success factors important to both stakeholder groups.

2. **Drive the levels of buy in from employers.** The world of work is changing for young people. But it is also changing for employers. Industry 4.0 and demographic change mean that employers must assume an active co-design role in initiatives like Bridge. Mutual need is at the heart of this new evolving relationship.

3. **Invest in teachers – and the teachers of tomorrow**. Building teacher capacity in the interface between education and work has also been evident from the start. However, specific needs have emerged from recent research activity. In particular, supporting teachers to help their students reflect effectively, is a distinctive and important conclusion.

4. **Recognise the centrality of effective career guidance for future economy**. Career guidance has too often been a Cinderella service within education. This means that its importance has too often been overlooked and as a service it has been subject to underinvestment. The scale of the Next Economy transition requires a reassessment of its importance.

5. **Push funders to work to longer timescales**. At this mid-point stage, it is evident that Bridge will be unable to generate definitive evidence of its impact within the lifespan of the project. From the start this was clear, due to its focus on young children and a long-term change agenda. Although the initial evaluation report is encouraging, genuinely innovative projects require more time to demonstrate their results. Funders of innovation should take greater account of this.

2. Back to the Bridge: Overview and update

2.1 Introduction

These are defining months for the Phase 1 UIA projects. After all of the initial excitement, and prior to the rush to finish, this is the tough middle section. It is often here when the fate of initiatives is sealed.

There's been a lot of activity since our last Rotterdam visit six months ago. At the strategic level, a new city administration is now in place after spring elections. Happily, this further cements City Hall's commitment to tackling the challenges Bridge addresses. This means ongoing political support, which relates to one of the UIA risk factors, discussed later in this journal. It also translates into new strategic approaches, backed by resources.

The main Bridge goal is to tackle systemic and intergenerational disadvantage in Rotterdam South, the most deprived area in the Netherlands. Bridge addresses the risk that the transition to the Next Economy will exacerbate existing inequalities between Rotterdam South and other parts of the country.

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

It aims to do this by supporting young people in Rotterdam South to make different career choices. Specifically, the project aims to nudge students towards industry growth sectors with significant labour market opportunities. It also aims to encourage young people from the area to pursue higher-level vocational qualifications. The intervention logic is that through choosing higher-level vocational qualifications in these growth sectors, they will have a better labour market experience than their parents' generation.

In this third journal, we take stock of progress in each of the project's key areas of activity. We also take a closer look at the role of employers in the project, drawing upon fresh desk research, as well as structured discussions held with a sample of employers in the city during our expert site visit.

TABLE 2: 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

But we begin with some reflections on the two most prominent risk factors facing the project – Monitoring and Evaluation and Financial Sustainability.

2.2 Assessing the impact

The Monitoring and Evaluation challenges relating to Bridge have already been set out in previous journals. Most notable amongst these are:

- The diversity of interventions
- The differing engagement levels amongst schools
- Short project timescales

Consequently, it will be difficult to measure the overall effect of the project and impossible to identify a single unit cost per beneficiary. This in turn has implications for the development of future financial innovations, as we discuss in the next section.

However, the project Monitoring and Evaluation team, based within Erasmus University, have developed a sophisticated approach to assessing the impact of the project. This draws upon a combination of existing data – including national level education statistics and figures gathered by the National Programme for the Regeneration of Rotterdam South(NPRZ) – as well as their own primary fieldwork data.

Figure 1 sets out the intervention logic tested by the team. This assumes that Bridge encourages a higher take up of interventions amongst local students and schools, that this in turn affects their education choices and that, as a consequence of this, their labour market experience is enhanced.

In July 2018 the team produced its first Monitoring and Evaluation report for the project. This focused on three aspects of the project:

- The nature and implementation of the educational interventions
- The development of educational results; and
- The development of labour market results

Bridge offers schools a menu of 20 interventions[1]. The review of these underlined the challenges implicit in working with schools. It found that although participation in some interventions had risen, in others it was static or had even fallen. In secondary schools, Bridge appears to have encouraged the uptake of some interventions, including port visits, the mentoring programme, Career Start Guarantee (CSG) information and activity with parents, but this was not universal across the entire menu of available options.

This study also contained an interesting literature review which sought to identify the results of comparable interventions. The headline message here is that these are very limited in number, and Rotterdam's approach at packaging them together is unique. Although this limits the comparability, useful messages still emerge. One is the influence of the frequency, intensity and quality of preparation relating to the intervention. Another is the duration of the effects, which can be short-lived if the interventions are superficial.

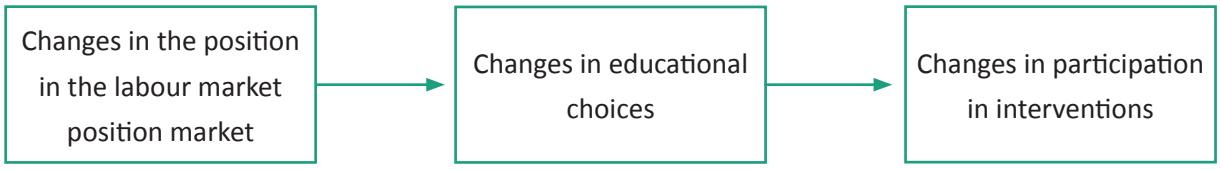

Figure 1: Source, Erasmus University BRIDGE WP4 Team

[1] The interventions are discussed further in section 1.4

A third is the pivotal role of teachers in the success of such interventions. We discuss this further in section 1.4.

The research team concludes that *"the literature study reveals that the effectiveness is highly influenced by a range of preconditions."* This confirms the challenges in attributing the effect of individual Bridge interventions with confidence. However, they also conclude that the Bridge interventions *'form a consistent whole that is more than the sum of its parts."*

This initial report also considers the extent to which Bridge influences the educational choices of young people in Rotterdam South. Three key questions are central here. The first relates to whether Bridge is encouraging more young people from the area to choose vocational educational routes linked to the target industry[2] sectors. As Figure 2, shows, the trend is positive, with almost 60% of the target group opting for these disciplines at the key decision point of their education. The shift may also have been influenced by changes to the vocational curriculum structure in 2016, but there will be another opportunity to examine the patterns before Bridge ends.

The second education issue relates to retention: is Bridge encouraging young people in Rotterdam South to stay in the education system? One of the issues here is that the available data pre-dates Bridge, and therefore is only influenced by the related interventions supported through the NPRZ programme. From the start of Bridge, as we have seen, the repertoire of interventions has been augmented and delivered across all local schools in a more coherent way. However, we will have to wait until this plays through to assess any effects.

The data between 2007 and 2015 indicates that in the Logistics and Healthcare sectors, the gap

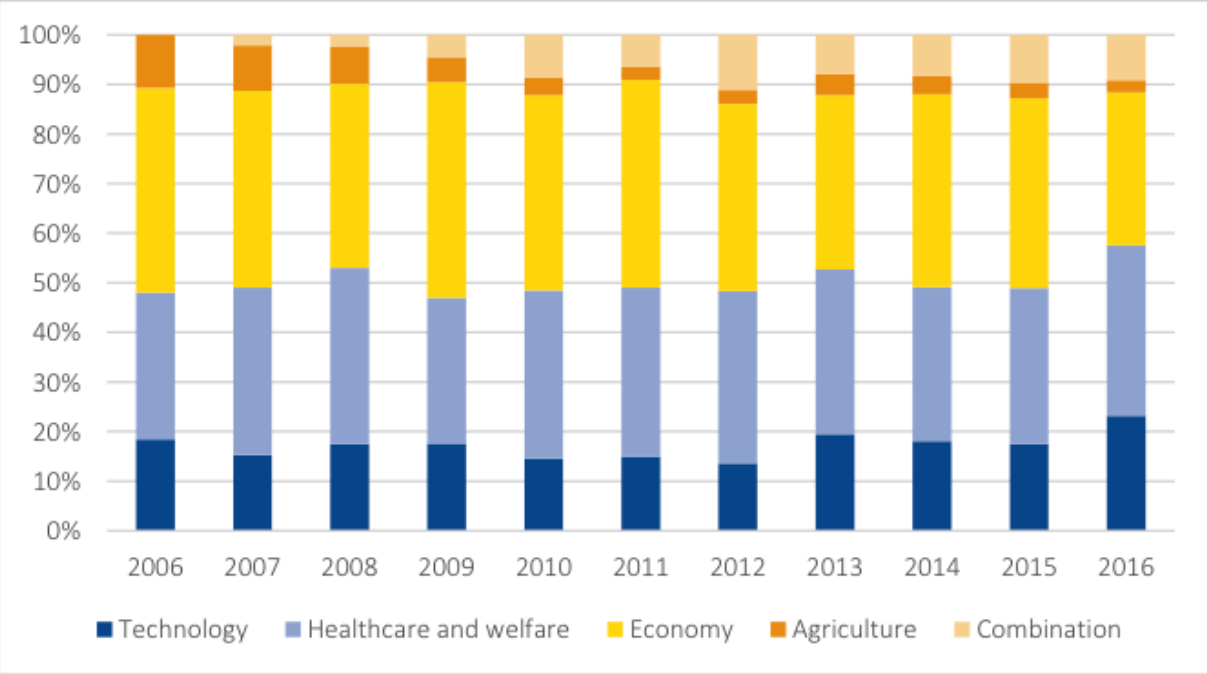

Figure 2: Source, First Bridge Monitoring and Evaluation Report

[2] Technology/Logistics and Health/Care

in the retention rate between Rotterdam South and available comparators (North Rotterdam, G3 City and national rate) was closing. However, in Technology over the same period, the gap widened, with a growing proportion of national level students still following the same specialisation one year later. The second Monitoring and Evaluation report will give an opportunity to examine any further change since the introduction of Bridge.

Table 3: % of 1st year MBO[3] students following same specialisation after 1 year

		South Rotterdam	Netherlands
Logistics	2007	45	67
	2015	59	64
Healthcare	2007	57	69
	2015	71	75
Technology	2007	65	76
	2015	66	79

Source: SEOR, First Bridge Monitoring and Evaluation Report

The third education assumption relates to the level of vocational qualification undertaken in each of the target sectors, and the extent to which these impact upon the career prospects of young people in Rotterdam South. Again, the timescales limit the findings at this stage, as the students Bridge is working with are still in the education system.

However, working with existing data, the research team conclude that in the technology and healthcare specialisations, young people from Rotterdam South with higher level vocational qualifications (MBO 3 and MBO 4) do relatively well in the labour market. Those specializing in Logistics have the largest chance of finding a job on course completion, with 80% still in that job one year later. However, prospects are less good at the lower (MBO 2) level – particularly for healthcare. A clear challenge for Bridge is to steer those entering this specialisation to go for the higher-level qualification[4].

[3] MBO is the Dutch intermediate vocational level

[4] Our Expert Visit exchanges with sectoral employers indicate that they are aware of this, and that the new level 2 training expands its focus beyond health and care, opening up opportunities in other sectors including hospitality and sports.

In relation to Bridge's mission, the team notes that:

"..if young people in secondary vocational education are encouraged to specialize in technology, healthcare or logistics, one can expect this to positively influence their position in the labour market." (Bridge Monitoring and Evaluation Report, July 2018)

Other important messages emerge from this work on the links between educational qualifications and labour market prospects. This underlines other important societal factors in play, which reflect employer attitudes and wider societal prejudices.

"When we examine the difference in job prospects between South Rotterdam and (the rest of) the Netherlands, we see that the greatest share of the difference in job prospects is explained by differences in ethnic origin (whether or not there is a migration background), followed by differences in educational choices and differences in dropouts."

(Bridge Monitoring and Evaluation Report, July 2018)

There are plans to produce a second, final, Monitoring and Evaluation report, to coincide with the project's conclusion in late 2019. In the meantime, these initial research findings are complemented by the results of another piece of fieldwork discussed below.

2.3 Financing the future

An important component of Bridge's work is to identify ways to sustain this approach beyond the UIA funding period. As we have already noted, there are encouraging signs in the background. After the elections, at the national and city level, there is agreement on the continued need for investment in Rotterdam South. This is reflected in a decision to invest an additional €260m in the work of the NPRZ, covering housing, education and employment between 2019 and 2022.

Although some of these funds might support some future Bridge activities on the education side, there will still be a need to augment these resources. From the start, a hybrid financial model has seemed the most likely solution, involving a mix of public, private and other funds.

An important strand of Bridge's activity has involved exploring the scope for financial innovation, particularly in relation to impact investment. Again, the city context for this is auspicious, as Rotterdam is finalizing plans to launch an Impact Investment Bureau and an Impact Investment Fund.

However, important work is ongoing to explore specific options for Bridge. As we have already noted, this is not without challenges. For example, an agreed unit cost would normally provide the basis for an examination of social investment options. But the diversity of the project's 20 interventions, combined with differing levels of school and student participation make it impossible to identify a single unit cost for Bridge. This finding was reinforced at an exchange with the global social investment community at a Nexus Global European summit held in Rotterdam in the spring of 2018.

The team also used the Nexus event to pitch the *social coin* concept, which seeks to create a virtual social currency for the city. This would have a number of functions. One would be to enable employers who cannot fulfill their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (in terms of

employing numbers of disadvantaged people) to contribute to the city's Social Return of Investment (SROI) fund through buying social coins. Enabling the City Authority to accept SROI fund contributions in this way would be an innovation in itself, requiring regulatory change. In the final quarter of 2018, the Bridge team will further explore the feasibility of these options.

Another tool under consideration is the Social Impact Bond (SIB). It is an indication of Rotterdam's social innovation maturity, that SIBs are already a well-established operational concept there. However, it looks increasingly unlikely that this investment vehicle can be applied to Bridge. Two factors shape this. The first is the lack of clear unit costs linked to results. The second is the relatively short timescales of the project. As a private market model with clear targets, SIBs require an established result obtained for a consistent unit cost over time as the foundation for any agreement. The relatively short operational period of the UIA projects (3 years) is an evident inhibitor of this type of innovation in this respect.

As well as the social coin investigation, this aspect of Bridge's work has some important milestones approaching. The team is currently working on the development of a social business case for Bridge as a whole. This will identify who benefits and how, and will be presented to the Steering Group meeting in December 2018. The agreed business case will help identify the viable funding options, which will provide a focal point for activity in 2019.

This strand of work, as well as the monitoring and evaluation activity, has raised important questions relating to the future of Bridge. For example, with fewer resources, can it remain a universal offer for all schools in South Rotterdam? If not, how can we prioritise? In the meantime, the social impact team's priority is to buy time for the project, particularly around the Monitoring and Evaluation activity which is central to building the evidence base required for any future social investment activity.

2.4 Update on the Bridge Interventions

Earlier journals have provided details of the twenty interventions on offer to Rotterdam South schools through Bridge. As we have noted, these interventions are of differing levels of duration and intensity. They have also been running for different time frames, with some previously available whilst others have been newly introduced. The full menu of 20 interventions has only been on offer to all local schools since the start of Bridge.

These measures can be clustered into the following five categories:

- Discovering and experiencing
- Reflecting and choosing
- Labour market alignment
- Extra support
- Professionalisation

Each of these categories has a cluster of interventions. For example, under the banner of *Discovering and Experiencing*, students might have a visit to the port, technology lessons and workshops and/or events introducing different professions. Schools can select from all of the interventions, and the aim is to have all Rotterdam South schools participate in each one by the end of the UIA project.

As we have noted in earlier journals, engaging with schools – and retaining their engagement – is a labour intensive activity. The Bridge Interventions team is working hard to establish and maintain good working relationships with schools in Rotterdam South. However, school performance is ultimately measured by traditional academic results and institutional managers primarily respond to these. This work – and indeed the wider work of NPRZ – underlines the need for an integrated approach operating across policy silos like Housing, Employment and Education.

School participation in Bridge interventions is voluntary, and sometimes seen as a competing priority by education staff. At this half-way point, there is a clear pattern amongst those schools actively engaging and those who are not. In addition, turnover of key personnel in schools also means that the Bridge team is constantly having to renew these relationships.

What does this mean for the Bridge interventions? In the last Journal, we examined one of the most prominent of these, student mentoring, in some detail. Later in this journal we look more closely at another, the Career Start Guarantee (CSG) when we consider the role of employers in Bridge. The recent Monitoring and Evaluation study helps create a snapshot of the overall picture.

Despite discrepancies in the data sources[5], it is evident from the available data for 2016/17 that there is scope to widen the reach of these interventions in the second half of the Bridge programme.

[5] The SEOR team notes that that the data provided by schools and intervention providers does not concur

Table 4: Estimated degree of participation amongst VMBO students in 2016/17

Intervention	VMBO1	VMBO2	VMBO3	VMBO4
Visits to the port				
Flash visits				
Other company visits/excursions				
Skills Masters				
Visits to other events				
Civil service internships				
Study try outs				
Digital talent portfolio				
Career devpt meetings with pupils & parents				
Mentoring programme				
Job interview training				
Information about Career Start Guarantees				
Employee Skills Training				
Career Guidance training for teachers				
Empowerment programme for parents				
Total number of pupils in VMBO	1,643	1.326	1.284	1,278

Legend
0-1%
2-10%
11-25%
26-40%
41-60%
OVER 60%

Source: SEOR, First Bridge Monitoring and Evaluation Report

A recently completed piece of additional research gives further insights into the reach and potential effectiveness of the interventions. This comprised a survey – returned by 20 schools – and participation in focus groups and interviews with 8 schools. It also comprised over 1,000 questionnaires from students.

Reflecting the table above, this work indicated that visits to companies – including the port – were the most frequently undertaken activity. Career dialogues with teachers were also amongst the top activities.

There are different awareness levels within schools of what NPRZ and Bridge are. Even within schools, this varies and it is evident that teachers exert considerable influence over the interventions their students participate in. Consequently, there is an uneven level of involvement amongst schools, driven not only by teacher perception, but also by factors including intervention cost, staff workload and the amount of time required.

The SEOR literature study underlined the important role teachers occupy in the effectiveness of such interventions. In particular, their role in preparing young people for this intervention, their enthusiasm and their ability to help them make sense of it afterwards are especially important. An interesting finding from this fieldwork suggests that teachers often struggle to support students to reflect on these experiences effectively.

The student feedback is of particular interest. They identify the company visits, the career dialogues and the mentoring programme as the most informative activities. At the same time they point to the digital talent portfolio as the least informative – perhaps because they already feel well-skilled in this. The figure below summarises their views on the benefits:

The study sets out a series of recommendations for schools and for Bridge. Amongst the former, it suggests that schools would be wise to choose a coherent set of activities, support teachers to support student reflection more effectively, involve parents more and work more collaboratively with other schools. It recommends that Bridge further develops the close links with schools – also through co-design – and takes time to monitor and reflect, as well and encouraging schools to work together and share experiences. These are key messages as Bridge enters its final UIA phase.

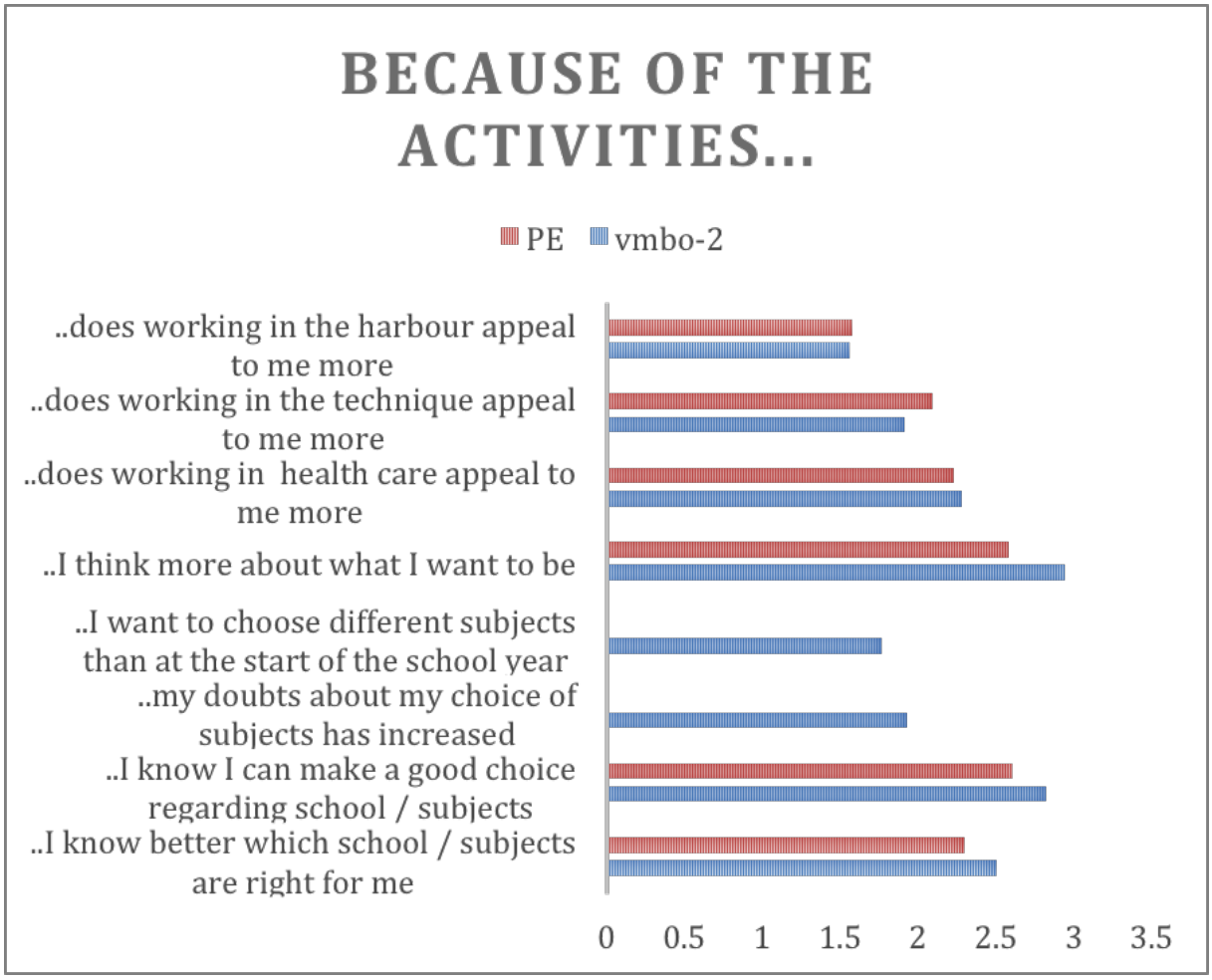

Figure 3: Source, Bridge Fieldwork Study (PE=Primary Education, VMBO = pre-vocational secondary schools)

3 Deciphering the Next Economy

3.1 Getting on the page

An important part of Bridge's work is to map out, as accurately as possible, the labour market trends at the metropolitan regional level. Our second journal reflected on the approach and examined some of the initial findings coming from this important work. We noted, for example, a shift away from traditional industrial sector approaches to one that reflected societal trends, translated into growth clusters:

Based on this analysis, the emerging growth clusters are:

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

We also noted the difficulty in clearly articulating the impact the Next Economy will have on the ground. The further we go into the future, the harder it is to explain this in detail. This forecasting work also echoed the findings of the World Economic Forum, when it underlined the importance of key competencies like team-working, creative problem solving and creativity. The importance of these capacities is evident in our employer consultations, reported later in this section.

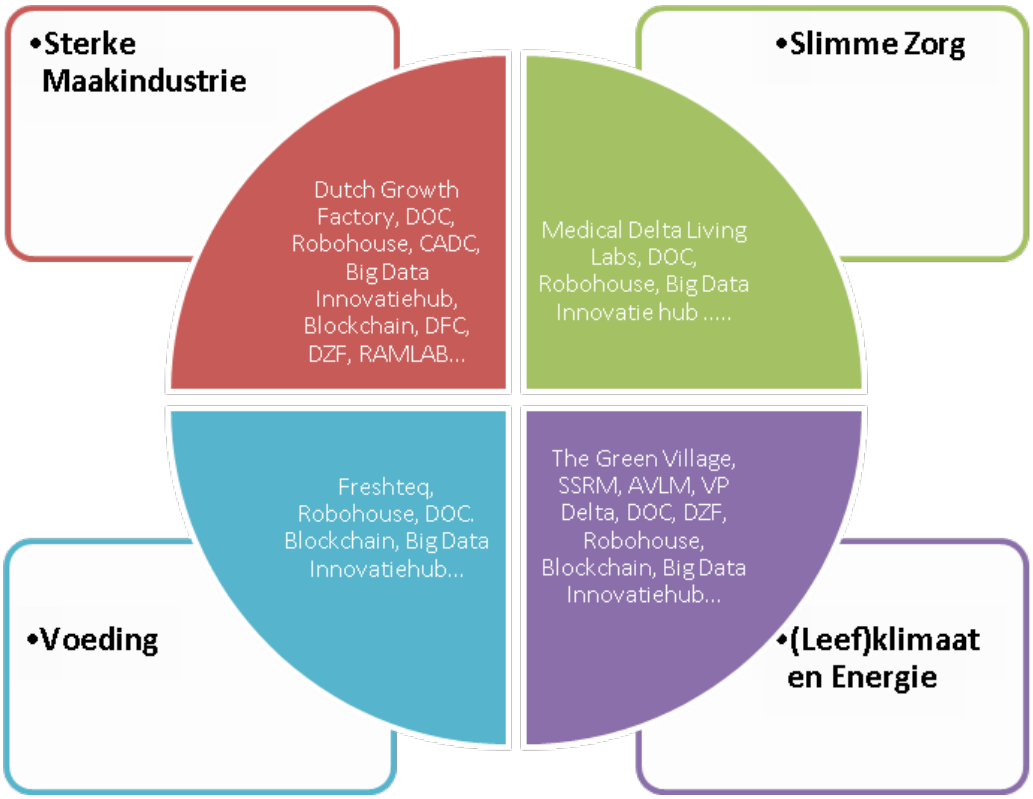

Figure 4: Source, Bridge Work Package 5 team

3.2 Getting the message across

In Journal 2 we set out details of the comprehensive communications campaign being undertaken by Bridge, primarily targeting young people in Rotterdam South. Using identifiable role models, targeted information and humour, the campaign is designed to shift attitudes amongst the target group in relation to jobs in the growth sectors. Drawing upon intelligence assembled with young people, it tries to debunk negative perceptions about these careers – including that they are dirty and low-paid.

Bridge is also supporting new additional activity in support of these objectives. One, led by a former CEO of the city schools network, is exploring how the school/employer interface can be improved. This recognises that schools are busy places with their own priorities, as noted above. It also acknowledges that there are many initiatives in place, presenting a fragmented and messy picture to those in education. This short, focused work, will make recommendations on how to make engagement easier for schools.

Another is creating a set of occupational profiles designed to provide an insight into the detailed workings – and requirements – of different careers. This links into the metro-regional foresight activity, and its identification of the need for clear descriptions of modern day work patterns.

In schools, we heard that young people – particularly disadvantaged young people in Rotterdam South – struggle to understand the jobs of today, let alone those of tomorrow. We reported on this in the previous journal. Since then, strongly encouraged by the project's Steering Group, Bridge has commissioned this additional work towards this end.

Beneath these activities is the drive to help young people – as well as those advising them – understand the new (and current) world of work better. This assumes that doing so will encourage them to make different career choices. However, this assumption itself requires testing. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that young people are making future career choices against different criteria to earlier generations. Work-life balance matters more. The quality of the job matters more. For young people in the Netherlands, where the economy is strong and opportunities are abundant – even for those in Rotterdam South – this attitudinal shift may be a gamechanger. It may be one for employers too.

3.3 The Employer perspective

Our October 2018 Expert Field Visit included the opportunity to engage with employer representatives across three key industry sectors – Construction, Logistics and Health and Care. The structure of each session was broadly around industry needs, future trends and the interface with Bridge. The video capturing the headline points is here.

Some common patterns emerged from these discussions, but also distinctive issues for each of them. The most pressing shared issue is the current and growing need for labour. Each of these three sectors is already experiencing a pinch for qualified personnel, in the case of construction and logistics, due to a buoyant economy, and in healthcare due to changing demographics. Identifying a future talent pipeline is an increasing priority for all three.

As the baby boomer generation reaches retirement, they anticipate a significant labour

replacement challenge in the coming years. Increasingly, they will be competing against one another for the same employees, and in doing so they all seek to make their industry sector look attractive. Bridge is an important potential asset in this.

However, each sector faces image problems in attracting young people. The construction sector battles against the perception that this kind of work is dirty, physically hard and conducted outside in all elements. Consequently, we learned that although bricklayers earn €70 per hour, it is hard to attract recruits to the industry. This lends weight to the argument that in a world of abundant choice, money becomes less important for young people.

The logistics sector tries to address the perception that this kind of work is all about repetitive warehousing labour. In response to this, it sets out the global opportunities available – especially in a superhub like Rotterdam – and the fact that the impact of digital change is revolutionizing operations, and removing much of the low cognitive grunge work.

The health and care sector already faces acute personnel shortages. The discussion here focused on the need for the sector to better care for its own workers – and to underline the variety and human dimension to this work. There was also an acknowledgment that cultural issues were an important factor in dissuading some communities from the available opportunities Health and Care can offer.

3.4 Bridge and the Career Start Guarantee

The employers often struggled to understand the role and fit of various public sector interventions. This chimed with the message from schools, about the ad hoc and short-lived nature of these many fragmented initiatives. Consequently, they did not always understand what Bridge was, as a whole. However, all underlined the need to improve the interface with schools, teachers, parents and young people, and saw ways in which Bridge contributes to this.

The employers were all, to a large degree, familiar with the Career Start Guarantee (CSG). Although only one of the 20 Bridge interventions, it is perhaps the most striking, and its success will largely determine the overall success of the Bridge initiative.

The SEOR literature review concluded that, in term of comparisons, there is nothing exactly like the Bridge CSG. The small handful of vaguely comparable measures related to highly skilled higher education programmes in the United States. Furthermore, these examples were specifically linked to jobs, whereas the Bridge CSG is less clearly defined, instead offering a 'career start.'

What does this mean? The blueprint for the Bridge CSG model was, initially, a job offer after research indicated a chronic shortage of specialized process operators in the port. In tandem with schools, citywide, Deltalings[6], a representative body for the logistics sector, created a job guarantee model. However, after this proved undeliverable, the CSG concept emerged instead. Initially, this comprised a performance-related payment to students, an internship placement and a guaranteed number of job interviews. The Bridge 'Gaan voor een baan!' campaign evolved from this model.

A snapshot of the current state of play in relation to Career Start Guarantees illustrates high levels of variation across the participating industry sectors. In half of the cases (3 of the 6 sectors) there is no physical document summarizing the terms of the offer, whilst three of the six focus solely on Rotterdam South. In terms of commitment, this varies from sectors which offer an actual job guarantee (such as healthcare for those with level MBO4 and a CSG) and sectors like Food which are still working to clarify the terms of their offer.

Prior to study completion, and as part of the support package, there is also a variety of support available to students sector by sector. For example The Ministry of Defence and Deltalings offer potential internships whilst the Healthcare model provides support from a mentor already working in the sector.

Overall, the sense is that the CSGs remain work in progress. This is understandable given that the target group remains within the education system. However, given that the Dutch system requires young people to make early career choices, and that sector perceptions impact strongly on this, there is a big incentive to strengthen the interface with schools and young people through the CSG mechanism.

There remains scope for employers to be more actively involved in this. Based on these exchanges, it seems that they still assume a rather passive role, expecting initiatives like Bridge to produce a talent pipeline. As we have suggested, shifting attitudes amongst young people mean that this may not work as it did in the past. Consequently, there are good reasons for employers to assume a more active co-design role in future.

[6] Deltalings is an association of over 700 logistics, port and industrial enterprises in mainport Rotterdam, providing work – directly or indirectly – to over 180,000 people.

4. Emerging lessons for Europe's cities

4.1 Closing this chapter

This journal provides a snapshot of Bridge in full operation and as it starts to report on its initial results. Inevitably, for a project adopting a long-term perspective and focused on young people, these are currently limited. However, the initial evidence supports the rationale behind the Bridge's intervention logic.

In doing so, it illuminates the scale of Bridge's ambition – and with it the city's ambitions for Rotterdam South – as part of a wider exercise in area-based regeneration and renewal. It is not surprising that the obstacles facing this transformation also form part of this narrative. In this journal we have referred to institutional, human and cultural issues that will have an influence on the eventual results.

As we move towards the concluding part of the Bridge story, we will continue our focus on these themes – as well as the project's considerable successes – in our remaining journals.

4.2 The Bridge challenge and targets – revisiting the dashboard

It has become customary before concluding these journals to consider the project through the lens of the UIA innovation challenges. We do this through a traffic light system that scores each challenge on whether it is high risk (red), medium (amber) or low (green). Based on the October 2018 expert visit, our latest conclusions are set out below.

Table 5: Mapping bridge against the established uia challenges

Challenge	Level	Observations
1.Leadership for implementation	Low	Recent local elections – and resulting decisions – have strengthened support for Bridge.
2.Public procurement	Medium	Minor procurement issues at the commissioning stage of interventions – now passed.
3.Integrated cross-departmental working	Medium	Work across policy areas remains a challenge. Collaboration with the education sector continues to be labour intensive.
4.Adopting a participative approach	Low	High levels of participation evident across stakeholder groups – scope to increase employer buy in
5. Monitoring and evaluation	High	Encouraging initial report, but M & E remains a challenge with such a complex long-term project.
6. Financial Sustainability	High	Absence of universal unit costs presenting a barrier to social investment options. Innovative approach clearly evident.
7. Communicating with target beneficiaries	Low	Sophisticated campaign in place – optimising all potential media channels & codesigned with youth.
8. Upscaling	Medium	Upscaling potential low, but much of the Bridge approach is highly transferable

4.3 What this Bridge experience tells other cities – 5 messages to share

What can Rotterdam share with other cities from the experience of the past six months? Given that many cities struggle to align education systems with the changing demands of the local economy, we would underline the following insights from Bridge's recent work.

1. **Invest in improving relationships between employers and schools**. This site visit has underlined the growing importance of dialogue between employers, schools and young people. Although central to the Bridge mission, the scale and complexity of this task has become clearer as work has progressed. Succeeding requires a deep understanding of the success factors important to both stakeholder groups.

2. **Drive the levels of buy in from employers.** The world of work is changing for young people. But it is also changing for employers. As well as the Next Economy transition, basic demographics make the future of all sectors increasingly uncertain. Employers can no longer wait for talent to knock on their door, and must assume an active co-design role in initiatives like Bridge. Mutual need is at the heart of this new evolving relationship.

3. **Invest in teachers – and the teachers of tomorrow**. Building teacher capacity in the interface between education and work has also been evident from the start. However, specific needs have emerged from recent research activity. In particular, supporting teachers to help their students reflect effectively, is a distinctive and important conclusion.

4. **Recognise the centrality of effective career guidance for future economy**. Career guidance has too often been a Cinderella service within education. This means that its importance has too often been overlooked and as a service it has been subject to underinvestment. The scale of the Next Economy transition require a reassessment of its importance, as employees face a working life of continual transitions.

5. **Push funders to work to longer timescales**. At this mid-point stage, it is evident that Bridge will be unable to generate definitive evidence of its impact within the lifespan of the project. From the start this was clear, due to its focus on young children and a long-term change agenda. Although the initial evaluation report is encouraging, genuinely innovative projects require more time to demonstrate their results. Funders of innovation should take greater account of this.

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.

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