

Towards an Inclusive and Sustainable CLLD. Lessons from a Neighbourhood Management in Berlin¹

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ABSTRACT

The Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) is a new area-based instrument launched for the 2014-2020 Programming Period of the European Cohesion Policy (ECP). It is intended to be a powerful instrument to address, at sub-regional level, crisis-related and other externally-induced issues, as well as to contribute achieving the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Nevertheless, concerns emerged with respect to the openness and accessibility of the CLLD's local governance framework, the scope and goals that would be targeted by local partnerships, and the suitability and effectiveness of the CLLD's area-based approach in tackling local deprivation.

With my contribution I address such concerns from an evidence-based perspective, in order to draw from the practice compelling insights for the improvement of the CLLD instrument. To do so, my paper brings a critical analysis of a recent ERDF co-financed local development programme, namely the Körnerpark Neighbourhood Management in Berlin, whose principles and features are strongly comparable with the approach underlying the CLLD, and which has indeed been taken as a model practice by EU policy-makers.

Relying on several interviews to key actors at different governance levels, socio-economic data, documents analysis, and field observations, I conduct an assessment of the case-study focussing on the inclusiveness of its governance framework as well as on its capability to enhance residents' living conditions. From this assessment, I then infer a number of crucial issues that are likely to be a common challenge for any initiative implemented under the new framework. In particular, I argue that two main lessons can be learned from my case-study. On the one hand participatory decision-making bodies at local level might not be effectively representative of the socio-economic composition of the target community, but rather risk to be dominated by local elites or powerful groups. On the other hand, fostering local development bears the risk that the most disadvantaged population of the target community might not be fully supported by the initiative but rather, to a certain extent, even penalised.

On these grounds, then, my contribution aims at stimulating the debate among European policy-makers towards the fine-tuning of the instrument as a means to effectively tackle poverty and marginality in lagging areas and foster their sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic imbalances and inequalities are critical and pressing issues for many European cities, especially since the 2008 financial crisis. The economic distress indeed amplified the effects of globalisation and of the progressive retreat of welfare state in several EU countries. Thereby cities have been witnessing the increase of income disparities, social polarisation and socio-spatial segregation to a level such that, in 2014, slightly more than 24% of citizens living in urban areas were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Commission of the European Communities, 2011; Eurostat, 2016).

Urban poverty is frequently spatially concentrated in specific neighbourhoods and districts, and it affects people's well-being¹ by the accrual of intertwined forms of inequality and

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exclusion in fields such as education, employment, housing, health and participation. Citizens are often trapped within a vicious cycle of inequalities, which undermines their opportunities to upgrade their socio-economic conditions, thus increasing the risk that poverty is passed from one generation to the next (EUKN, 2014; Eurostat, 2016). Whether poverty would become a persistent phenomenon, inequalities would then increase, leading to “long-term loss of economic productivity from whole groups of society and hamper inclusive and sustainable economic growth” (Eurostat, 2016, p. 21). Thus, as acknowledged by the Leipzig Charter, unless the social balance within and among cities would be redressed, in the long run cities would not be anymore capable of fulfilling their function as engines of social progress and economic growth (German Presidency, 2007). Accordingly, the Toledo Declaration claimed that “it must be a political priority to empower European cities to tackle future challenges and to unlock their potential, and to continue and to strengthen the public support for sustainable urban policies across the EU, in particular through Cohesion Policy” (Spanish Presidency, 2010, p. VI).

Against this background, tackling urban imbalances, fostering harmonious development, and allowing citizens to attain the most from the features and assets of their territories became key challenges for the European Commission, which indeed has made “inclusive growth” one of the three priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy (see Commission of the European Communities, 2010), and has developed several policy instruments to the purpose.

Yet, urban imbalances and inequalities are particularly hard to defeat, especially given the great complexity of their multiple and coexisting causes, and the specificities of each context. Hence, the Commission’s idea was to set the focus of policy initiatives down to the local scale, acknowledging that, as Johannes Hahn² stated in the preface of the Cities of Tomorrow document, “cities are places where both problems emerge and solutions are found” (Commission of the European Communities, 2011, p. III). In particular, since deprived urban neighbourhoods are the places where most of inequalities and imbalances manifest themselves, the Leipzig Charter claimed that directly addressing such areas through economic stabilisation, social integration and physical upgrading would be key to allow cities to “remain places of social progress, growth and innovation in the long term” (German Presidency, 2007, p. 7). Accordingly, the Commission started to consider the adoption of area-based strategies for the regeneration of disadvantaged urban areas, recognising that the downwards rescaling of the territorial focus of the policy, and the involvement of the civil society in the local policy-making process would be the proper means to enhance the legitimacy, accountability, and effectiveness of neighbourhood regeneration policies themselves.

Under this perspective, one of the new instruments introduced by the Commission for the 2014-2020 Programming Period of Cohesion Policy, and made available also for cities, is the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). Specifically, the CLLD is an area-based instrument focused on the development of small-scale territories between 10,000 and 150,000 inhabitants, among which, thus, deprived urban neighbourhoods. It has to foster integrated regeneration strategies in which the physical, social, and economic dimensions coexist and mutually reinforce each other; and it should adopt a bottom-up approach, with the involvement of local partners in all phases of the development process.

In doing so, the CLLD aims at putting into practice three key principles of Cohesion Policy: (1) *territorial cohesion*, towards the balanced and sustainable development of all European places; (2) *subsidiarity* and *multilevel governance*, towards the downwards rescaling and reorganisation of regulatory powers, especially in the horizontal dimension of local decision-making; and (3) *partnership*, towards the increase of democratic quality and the enhancement of the effectiveness of the policy.

Moreover, Urban-CLLD also builds on previous experiences, and in particular from the URBAN Initiatives and the LEADER programme. From the former it inherited, on the one hand, the values of community engagement and empowerment as a key factor for both the areas’ economic regeneration and the enhancement of local capacities and social capital; and, on the other hand, the adoption of an integrated and cross-sectoral approach against

neighbourhoods' deprivation. From the latter, the CLLD borrowed the concept of Local Action Groups, that is the institution of locally-based governance bodies composed by community members and local institutions and stakeholders, in which the even balance among different kinds of actors from the private, public and civil society sectors has to be guaranteed.

On these grounds, the Community-Led Local Development seems to have the potential to reach from the ground-up shared visions for the future of the target areas, to generate social and economic development at local level, and ultimately to effectively tackle urban deprivation and inequalities. Yet, given that at the time of this research (November 2014 – October 2016) the CLLD is still in its embryonic phase, whether the instrument will actually work or not, and how it will work in the practice are still open questions. In fact there are still a number of ambiguous points related to what will happen in the transition from regulation to the implementation on-field. In particular, there is no single answer to who and how will actually participate and manage the local decision-making bodies, which objectives will be pursued, and who will ultimately benefit of the initiatives. Thereby, the kind of local development model that will be eventually fostered by each single initiative is overall vague and undefined.

Hence, against this background, the main goal of my paper is to try and understand, through an evidence-based approach, under which conditions the Community-Led Local Development can effectively become a tool for enhancing the well-being of disadvantaged residents in deprived urban neighbourhoods, and thus for redressing social imbalances and inequalities within European cities.

To do so I carry out the analysis and assessment of the Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement in Berlin: a community-led neighbourhood development initiative, implemented through the ERDF co-financed Soziale Stadt Programme, which is being carried out in the area since 2006. The case-study has features comparable to the current CLLD, and it is indeed one of the models acknowledged by EU policy-makers as a best-practice model for the community-led development method.

Relying on several interviews to key actors at different governance levels, socio-economic data, documents analysis, and field observations, I conduct a thorough socio-demographic and economic analysis of the study area, followed by the ex-post evaluation of the programme. Such evaluation takes into particular account two main strands: on the one hand, the quality and inclusiveness of its governance framework; on the other hand, the capability of the local development strategy to address the most pressing needs of disadvantaged citizens' and to enhance their overall well-being.

2. THE POLICY CONTEXT: SOZIALE STADT BERLIN

The policy background of my case study is the German Soziale Stadt programme (Socially Integrative City, SIC). Fostering both physical rehabilitation and social, cultural, and employment goals, SIC intends to improve both living conditions and the attractiveness of neighbourhoods by the creation of stable social structures and the enhancement of life opportunities for residents in the fields of education, employment, social and ethnic integration (ARGEBAU, 2005; Commission of the European Communities, 2014; Semm, 2011; Vitrano, 2015). Accordingly, the programme targets areas with "Special Development Needs" threatened by socio-spatial segregation and social polarisation (ARGEBAU, 2005), and aims at triggering the development potential of such areas through the direct involvement of citizens within participatory planning platforms called Neighbourhood Managements (Quartiersmanagements).

In the specific case of Berlin, the national SIC framework is put into practice through the Soziale Stadt Berlin (SIC Berlin) programme, which has unique features compared to other German cities, especially concerning the way target areas are identified and the scheme for citizens' participation adopted. On the one hand, in 2006 Berlin developed the Social Urban Development Monitoring system (*Lebensweltlich orientierten Räume* LOR): a unique set of

static and dynamic indicators at neighbourhood level that serves as a basis for spatial planning, forecasting and monitoring demographic and social developments in the city, and upon which also the identification, assessment and classification of the “areas with special need” are rooted. On the other hand, the creation of Neighbourhood Councils in each of the 34 selected neighbourhoods is the peculiar scheme that Berlin adopted to provide a platform for discussion and consultation, as well as to enable residents to participate in deciding how funds from the SIC programme should be used to fund local regeneration projects (Pesce & Naaf, 2011).

Once the areas with special development needs are identified, and thus allowed to activate a Neighbourhood Management, the Senate of Berlin and the involved District appoint by tender a team (QM Team) in charge for the implementation of the initiative at local level.

Among its tasks, the QM Team is responsible for the involvement and engagement of citizens and local actors in the process; for promoting local networks with the various special-interest groups; for the development of the local integrated action plan (the so-called IHEK); and for filing all the bureaucratic procedures related to the implementation of actions at local level, as well as for working as mediator between the inhabitants, the District’s administration and the Senate (Colini & Tripodi, 2012; Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung Berlin, 2004).

Citizens, then, are involved in the decision-making processes of allocating funding through the micro-financing system of *Quartiersfonds* (QF). As Figure 1 illustrates, this system categorises funding by scope and budget. Formerly, over the 2007-2013 PP *Quartiersfonds* were subdivided into 5 categories all co-funded through the ERDF, whereas for the current PP *Quartiersfonds* have been reframed into 4 categories, among which only two are provided with ERDF co-financing. Under this framework, residents are enabled to participate in the allocation of *Quartiersfonds* through the establishment of two voluntary-based bodies: the Action Fund Jury and, more importantly, the Neighbourhood Council (NC - *Quartiersrat*). The former is composed of neighbourhood residents and experts, and is responsible for the selection of small projects worth no more than €1500 (former QF1 and current *Aktionsfond*).

The latter is a committee whose structure is strongly comparable with the CLLD’s Local Action Groups, and because of this it will be the main object of my study on the local governance of the initiative. Specifically, the NC it is composed for the 51% by local inhabitants appointed by elections, and for the 49% by representatives of local institutions such as schools, religious groups, police, local commerce and building companies. Members of the NC are involved by the QM Team in the development of their neighbourhood and maintain continuous dialogue both with the QM teams and the governmental administration. Each Neighbourhood Council is responsible for the selection and funding of projects under former QF2 and QF3 and current *Projektfonds* schemes. Furthermore, the NC is involved in the process of development of project ideas and concepts to be funded under former QF4 and QF5 and current *Baufonds* (Construction Fund) and *Netzwerkfonds* (Network Fund) schemes. These projects are then presented by the QM Team to the District administration that is in charge for prioritising and selecting among the projects presented by all QMs of the district the ones to be submitted to the Senate for final approval and funding.

Lastly, each Quartiersmanagement has a Steering Committee that meets monthly and brings together the local QM-Team with the representatives of both the Senate and the District administration, in order to fine-tune projects and to decide through which Neighbourhood Fund to finance each project.

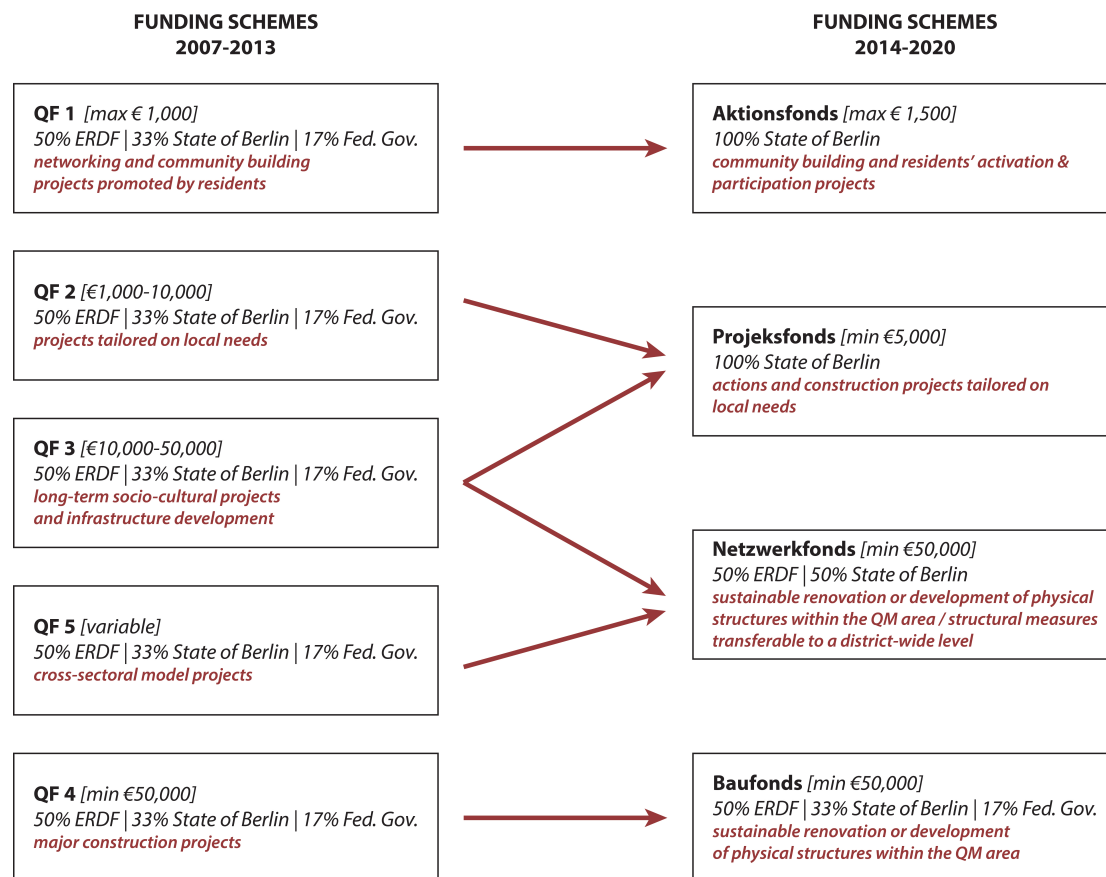


Figure 1 - Quartiersfonds Categories and Co-Financing Schemes for the PP 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 (source: personal elaboration on data provided by the Berlin's Senate Department for Urban Development and Environment)

3. THE TARGET AREA: THE KÖRNERPARK NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Körnerpark neighbourhood (or Körnerkiez), is a 36.21 ha area located in the District of Neukölln, in the southwest part of Berlin. It is bounded on the west and east side by the main roads Karl-Marx-Strasse and Hermanstrasse, on the north side by the cemetery and green area of Thomashöhe and by the S-Bahn-Ring railway on the south. Moreover it is very well connected to the city's public transport system through the U-Bahn and S-Bahn railway lines. The Körnerkiez has been for several years a very neglected neighbourhood, characterised by high rates of unemployment and welfare dependency and by a high concentration of ethnic minorities. Indeed, since the establishment of the LOR monitoring system, it has always been classified as a highly problematic intervention area.

The neighbourhood always registered a rate of residents with a migration background notably higher than the district's proportion and almost double than the city's figures. Indeed more than 50% of the neighbourhood's population, and nearly 80% of the local population under 18 years of age do not have German origins. Nevertheless, due to the progressive gentrification of Neukölln (see Häußermann & Kapphan, 2013; Hentschel, 2015; Holm, 2013), the multi-ethnic composition of the Körnerpark has been strongly reshuffled over the past decade. Originally, the area used to be one of the main clusters for immigrants coming from the Middle East³ and Eastern European countries, yet, as Figure 2 illustrates, between 2007 and 2014 a completely new trend emerged. Whether in 2007 the 3 most represented ethnic groups were Turkish, Arabs, and Former Yugoslavians, in 2014 their weight on the Körnerpark's population decreased dramatically. Indeed, in a 7-years timespan Turkish, Arabs and Former Yugoslavians respectively shrank down by 24.1%, 6.4%, and 21.2%. In turn, as of the early 2010s a new wave of immigration from wealthier countries emerged, among which nationals of EU15 countries (excluding Germany)⁴ marked the most significant growth, becoming the

second most populous group of residents with migration background, only behind the Turkish. In addition to this, the Körnerkiez became attractive also to a new wave of young Germans (see Hentschel, 2015). The number of Germans, which is the overall most populous group within the neighbourhood, indeed increased by 21.1% between 2007 and 2014.



Figure 2 - Evolution of the Multi-Ethnic Composition of the Körnerpark by Region of Origin (source: author's elaboration on data by Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg)

However, in spite of the influx of wealthier groups that partially redefined the local population's pattern, the Körnerpark still has a weak socio-economic framework and thus it is still considered as a problematic area. In fact, as Figure 3 illustrates, the neighbourhood is especially suffering from a high unemployment rate and a high proportion of welfare transfer recipients. Concerning unemployment rates, despite a general reduction at all territorial levels since 2009, the Körnerpark is performing substantially worse than the broader district of Neukölln as well as than the entire city of Berlin, whose unemployment rates are nearly half of the ones registered in the case study neighbourhood. Between 2007 and 2014, indeed, in the Körnerkiez unemployment rates have fluctuated between a high of 18.8% in 2008 and a low of 11.3% in 2014.

Also concerning the proportion of welfare recipients the Körnerpark is performing considerably worse than the district and the city, especially for what concerns the younger tiers of population. Indeed, between 2007 and 2014, the overall percentage of welfare recipients varied between a high of 30.1% in 2008 and a low of 25.8% in 2014, and between a

high of 67.9% in 2007 and a low of 64.9% in 2010 among children under 15 years of age, whereas in the same period such rates in Berlin have always been lower than 14% and 40% respectively. Moreover, between 2008 and 2012 the rate of migrant's receiving welfare support reported a low of 32.3% in 2009 and a high of 38.5% in 2012.

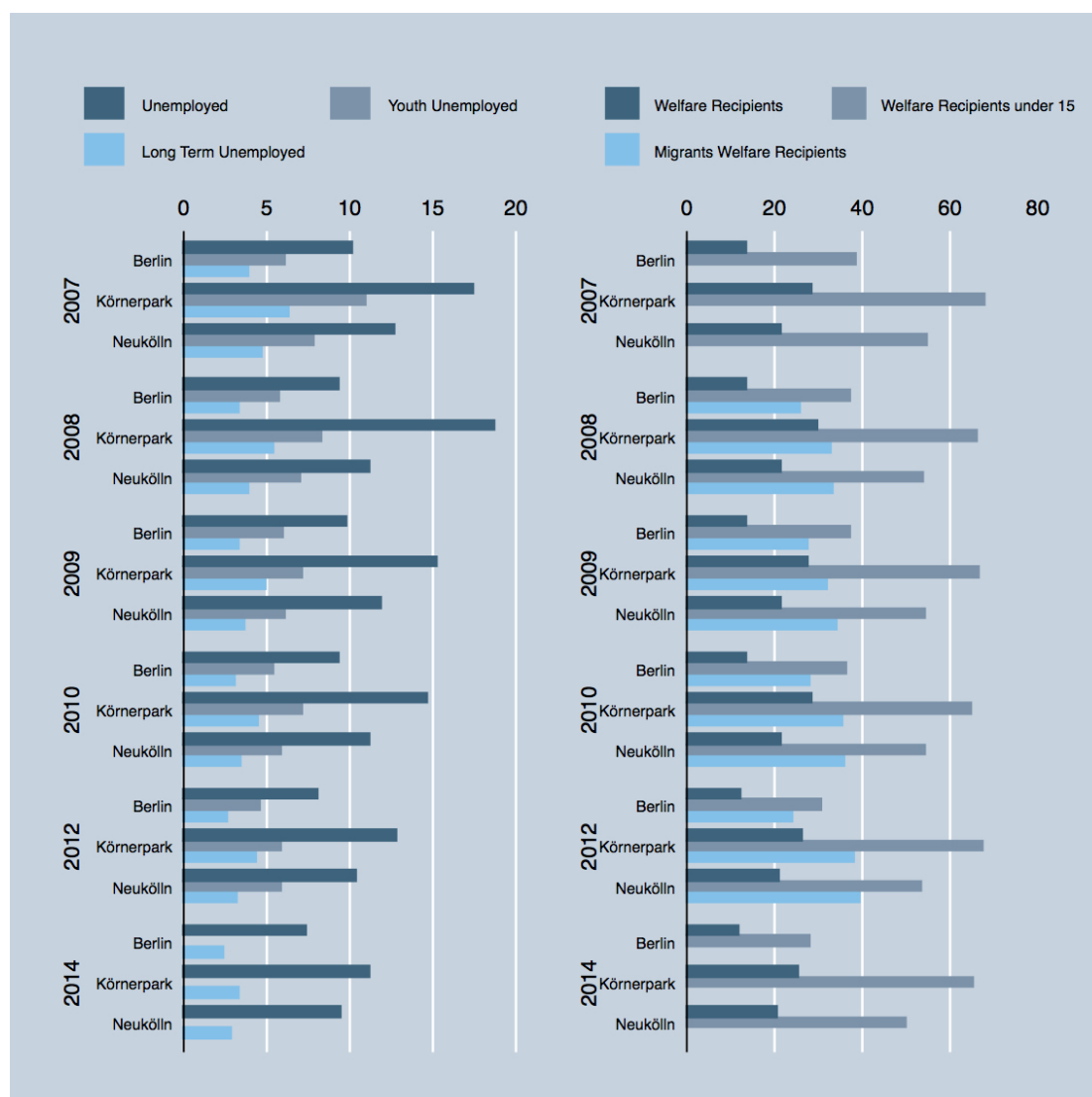


Figure 3 - Percentages of Unemployed and Welfare Recipients in Berlin, Neukölln and Körnerpark (source: elaboration of the author on data by SenStadt)

Furthermore, according to the analyses performed by the Körnerpark QM Team between 2006 and 2015 and made publicly available through the periodic Local Integrated Action Plans (IHEK), the neighbourhood's socio-economic weakness is also due to a number of other factors. Namely, an overall low level of education, a low purchasing power given by the aforementioned high rate of unemployment and reliance upon welfare as well as by a relatively large proportion of workers in the low-wage sector (Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement, 2015) and, especially in the early years of the Quartiersmanagement, a business framework mainly made of non-diversified cheap shops.

In addition to this, the high concentration of low-skilled and low-income ethnic minorities have had impacts on the neighbourhood also in terms of integration. On the one hand severe lacks in the knowledge of the German language create barriers and problems of communication. On the other hand, the coexistence of different cultures, lifestyles and age groups have often been difficult and a potential trigger for internal conflicts (see Tag, 2015).

Moreover, it has been argued that the overall weak social framework also reflected into the weak cultural environment of the neighbourhood. Especially in the early years of the QM, indeed, a general lack of cultural opportunities and places for recreational activities was reported. In particular, following the analysis of the QM-Team, this lack combined with the scarcity of role models, and the high rates of children in poverty (e.g. youth welfare dependency), severely undermined the opportunities of socio-cultural development for children and youths, and was thus perceived as a major local need (see Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement, 2008).

Furthermore, especially at the beginning of the Quartiersmanagement's activities, the neighbourhood was neglected also from a physical point of view, especially concerning the quality and accessibility of both public and collective spaces and facilities. Indeed, describing the neighbourhood in the early 2000s, local actors reported that:

"The neighbourhood was quite weak [...] so that you visually had the impression that it was a neglected neighbourhood: very many stores were empty and you could easily hire a flat here for very cheap prices because nobody really was interested to live here. [...] The impression was really that the whole neighbourhood was neglected. It was much unfriendly, it was dirty, it was grey... [...] Infrastructures were completely missing, [there was] nothing at all: the playgrounds were completely neglected, public sport places were existing but only with sand and in very poor conditions, and all those things that make a nice public impression of the public space were not existing" (Heeb, 2015).

"There were a lot of vacant houses and shops: the neighbourhood was in an overall state of abandonment" (Sohnemann, 2015).

Then, after the start of the QM, and especially over the last few years, the physical environment has significantly improved. Nevertheless the increased attractiveness of the neighbourhood has brought about a very tense housing market framework. As reported in the 2015 IHEK, at present there is hardly any residential or commercial vacancy in the neighbourhood, and new rental contracts are significantly higher in comparison to the already existing ones, even if no significant improvements have been made to the apartments. In fact, an overall repair backlog is recorded in a large number of houses (Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement, 2015). The accessibility and affordability of housing for the weakest social groups it thus developing as a new critical issue in the Körnerpark.

Overall, as Table 1 summarises, the local weaknesses emerged from these analyses condition several OECD well-being dimensions, both in terms of citizens' *Material Living Conditions* and *Quality of Life*. In particular over the last decade people's well-being has been undermined by weaknesses under the *Income and Wealth*, *Jobs and Earnings*, *Education and Skills*, *Social Connections* and *Environmental Quality* dimensions. Moreover, as of the most recent gentrification trend, also the *Housing* dimension is becoming increasingly critical.

Accordingly, the most pressing needs for the neighbourhood would be the improvement of residents' socio-economic status and education level, the enhancement of local social cohesion and environmental quality, as well as maintaining housing affordable for long term low-income residents.

Table 1 - Local weaknesses categorised by well-being dimension

WB Categories	WB Dimensions	Local Weaknesses
Material Living Conditions	<i>Income & Wealth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rates of dependency on welfare • Low purchasing power
	<i>Jobs & Earnings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rates of unemployment • Large proportion of workers in low-wage sector • Scarcely diversified, cheap business framework (especially in the early years of QM)
	<i>Housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges are emerging concerning the availability and affordability of apartments for low-income people
Quality of Life	<i>Education & Skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall low educational and skills' levels • Weak proficiency of the German language
	<i>Social Connections</i>	<p>Especially in the early years of QM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cultural and recreational opportunities • Difficult interactions among different ethnic groups
	<i>Environmental Quality</i>	<p>Especially in the early years of QM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglected public spaces and facilities • High rate of vacant or abandoned properties

4. A STRATEGY CAPABLE OF ADDRESSING LOCAL NEEDS?

Hereafter, relying on the information provided by the “Projekte” section of the QM’s website, by all of the available IHEKs (in total 5 documents issued yearly between 2008 and 2012, plus the most recent of 2015), as well as on a list of measures financed through the QF2-3/*Projektsfonds* for the years 2014-2017 directly provided by the QM-Team, I analyse all of the measures implemented through QF2-3/*Projektsfonds* and QF4/*Baufonds* from the inception of the QM until nowadays, that is the largest share of its overall outcomes.

Analysing the timeline of the measures funded through *Projektsfonds* and *Baufonds* provided in Figure 4, three main phases of activity emerged: (1) an initial phase of acknowledgment with the area and experimentation between 2005 and 2007 characterised by the implementation of a multiplicity of relatively short-term actions; (2) a second phase between 2008 and 2011 characterised by large investments on the built environment; and (3) a phase of consolidation of the QM with longer-term planning that started in 2012.

Overall *Projektfonds* and *Baufonds* have provided more than €2.72 million worth of *hard* measures and approximately €1.47 million worth of *soft* measures. On the one hand, *hard* measures substantially contributed to the enhancement of the general appearance of the neighbourhood, as well as to the improvement of both quality and functionality of public spaces and facilities. Concerning the targets or beneficiaries of this set of initiatives, 65% of the expenditure for hard measures went to local schools, 19% to local stakeholders (yet in many cases the local community would eventually take advantage of the services provided by such stakeholders), and 16% to actions on the physical dimension of outdoor public spaces.

On the other hand, the expenditure for *soft* measures has been distributed among the cultural (23%), recreational (17%), child care (16%), education and skills (13%), social cohesion (13%), public space care (5%), and consulting (1%). In terms of targets and beneficiaries, the highest share of expenditure has been dedicated to projects for children or youth (51%). Initiatives for the local community received the 13% of the resources for soft measures as well as actions open to the general public (also 13%), whereas actions for local residents were supported with 10% of such budget. The remaining amount was dedicated to families and/or parents (5%), outdoor public spaces (5%), and migrants (2%),⁵ then to stakeholders, women and disabled people (1% apiece).

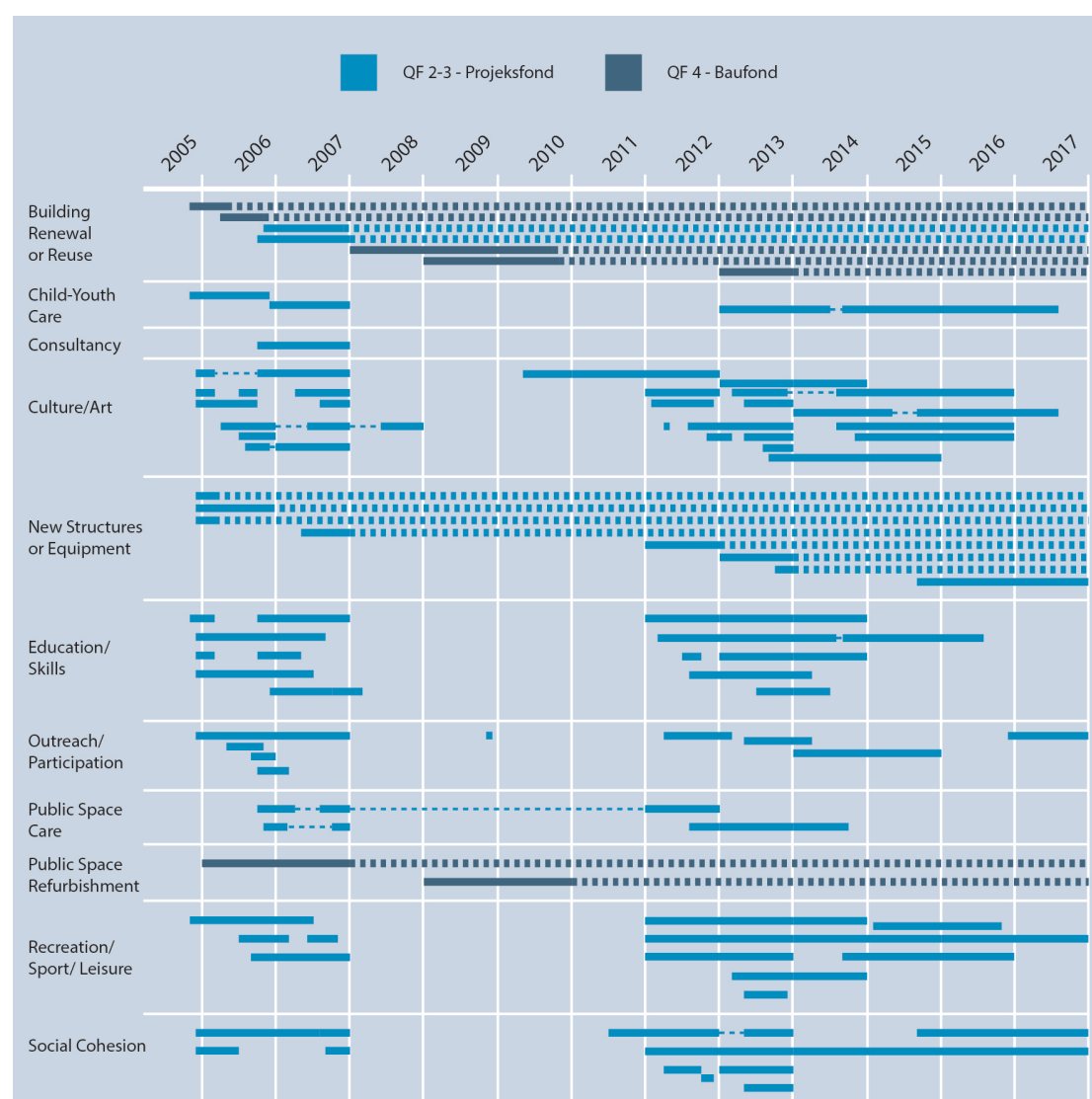


Figure 4 - Timeline of actions funded through QF2-3/Projektstfond and QF4/Baufond, categorised by their goal (source: author's elaboration on information by Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement)

As a whole, the Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement has implemented projects and measures aimed at bringing about change on both the physical and social characteristics of the neighbourhood, and addressed a number of OECD well-being dimensions. In particular, the greatest emphasis has been given to the *Environmental Quality*, *Education and Skills*, and *Social Connections* dimensions, and, to a lesser extent, also to the *Jobs and Earnings* dimension (see OECD, 2011). First, the environmental quality dimension has been targeted through *hard* measures concerned with the renovation and refurbishment of buildings and public spaces. Second, the education and skills dimension was addressed through measures aimed at fostering both people's knowledge and capabilities. Third, the social connections dimension has been chiefly aimed by measures listed both under the social cohesion and outreach/participation categories, but also, to some extent, by measures fostering cultural and recreational opportunities, and collective public space care activities. Lastly, the jobs and earnings dimension has been indirectly addressed through a project for the temporary re-use of empty shops, as well as through business consulting and job orientation measures. Yet, even though these initiatives were aimed at enhancing the possibility for the improvement in the local rates of employment and earnings, they could not directly provide local people with new jobs or better revenues. Indeed, the empty shops reuse initiative only helped to facilitate negotiations between owners and potential users of such spaces, whereas consulting and job

training could only contribute in terms of equipping people with resources (skills and knowledge) that might increase their chances to carry a more effective business or find a better job.

Yet, whether the priority of the programme was to improve life conditions of the most disadvantaged residents, then the strategy of the Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement might be overall questionable. Although it is true that the QM provided citizens with a number of services and opportunities previously unavailable, as well as with a sensibly improved physical environment, it is also true that the very same population targeted by the QM is now being progressively pushed-out of the neighbourhood precisely because of its increased quality. Of course the QM is not the only, and perhaps not even the main, responsible for the current gentrification process of the Körnerkiez. Nevertheless, now it appears that, paradoxically, QM's measures could have been even counterproductive. In fact, despite being originally intended to support the poorest tiers of the local population, by making the neighbourhood more attractive in general terms, QM's measures eventually contributed to trigger an uneven competition over the housing market in which long-term low-income residents are destined to succumb to wealthier newcomers.

5. AN INCLUSIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK?

The Neighbourhood Council is the most important community-based participatory decision-making body. Therefore, analysing its configuration as well as who has implemented the measures and projects directly approved by such body and funded through QF2-3/Projektsfond allows to understand the degree of inclusiveness and openness of the governance framework at neighbourhood level.

To do so, I consider, on the one hand, the composition of all of the Neighbourhood Councils that have been in charge thus far, and on the other hand, towards which organisations the NC has allocated QF2-3/Projektsfond funding from the beginning of the Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement to nowadays. Analysing the former allows to understand the kind of NC's members and their degree of turnover, whereas analysing the latter permits to discover to what extent the various actors have been involved in the implementation of local projects. Overall, then, such analyses allow to discover whether the Neighbourhood Council can be considered an open and inclusive governance body or rather if it has been dominated by any elite.

What emerged is that, even if by regulation the Neighbourhood Council admits only 18 voting members distributed among *local residents and merchants* (10 votes), *strong partners* (4 votes reserved by regulation to the 3 local schools and to the Neighbourhood Centre), and *local actors, organisations and stakeholders* (4 votes), in all cases a larger number of members was allowed to the assemblies with the role of deputies. Nevertheless, despite such enlarged membership, the capacity of the NC to fully represent the diversified range of interests of the local community, and thus its legitimacy, appears questionable for several reasons.

First, while the Körnerpark counts more than 50% of residents with a migration background, this proportion has never been respected in the Neighbourhood Council. Rather it is progressively becoming smaller and smaller. Indeed whether in the period 2008-2010 6 out of 16 members had a migration background, in the periods 2010-2012 and 2012-2015 this proportion was respectively 5/18 and 5/15, while in the current NC elected in 2015 it further shrank to 3/13.

Second, a low degree of turnover of *residents and merchants'* representatives has been registered between mandates. In fact, the NC elected in 2010 counted 11 new members and 7 whose role was renewed; in 2012 9 new members were elected while 6 confirmed; and in 2015 newly elected participants were 7 against 6 renewed.

Third, it emerged that a relevant number of *residents and merchants'* delegates can be also directly connected with relevant local actors or strong partners of the QM. Indeed, delegates

with such connections were 2 out of 16 in 2008; 5 out of 18 in 2010; 4 out of 15 in 2012; and 5 out of 13 in 2015. Among these, it is particularly worth discussing the presence of Ms M■■■■, S■■■■, Ms C■■■■ B■■■■, and F■■■■ Z■■■■. Ms S■■■■ served in the NC for 4 consecutive mandates (from 2008 until present) and she is also a collaborator of the Multikultureller NachbarschaftsGarten Neukölln e.V. (MNG), that is one of the organisations that has received the highest amount of QF2-2/Projektsfond funds. Similarly, Ms B■■■■ served in the NC for 3 consecutive mandates (from 2010 until present) and she is one of the founders of WerkStadt Kulturverein Berlin e.V.. This organisation is also one of the most funded through QF2-2/Projektsfond funds and, interestingly enough, since 2010 it is also represented by another delegate among the ranks of *local actors, organisations and stakeholders*. Concerning Ms Z■■■■, thus far she has been serving in the NC for 3 mandates (from 2010 until present) too. She is member of S.I.S. e.V., a local language and integration school with a strong cooperation relationship with the Quartiersmanagement, which has had been represented by another delegate among the ranks of *local actors, organisations and stakeholders* during two NC's mandates (2010-2012, and 2015-present). Accordingly, it appears that the presence and power of a rather small number of organisations active in the area is progressively growing within the Neighbourhood Council, also taking over some representation quotas that should be reserved to residents.

In addition to this, a low degree of turnover has been registered also among the represented *local actors, organisations and stakeholders*. Such actors are divided between cultural organisations, social operators, kindergartens, and property owners, yet the latter two groups gained a place in the NC only since 2012. Among cultural organisations, the Boom! Theater e.V. has been a steady presence since 2008, accompanied in 2008 and 2010 by Kunstraum t27 e.V., and constantly since 2010 by WerkStadt Kulturverein Berlin e.V.

Social operators in 2008 and 2010 have been represented by a member of the Jugendtreff JoJu23, a local youth centre supported by the QM and managed by Evin e.V., together with a delegate from the Stadtteilmüttern project in 2008 and of S.I.S. e.V. in 2010. Then, in 2012 delegates for this group have been members of Evin e.V. and Lebenshilfe e.V.. Subsequently, in 2015 S.I.S. e.V. and Lebenshilfe e.V. were represented, while a member of Evin e.V. was elected among *residents and merchants*. Moreover, since 2012 also two local kindergartens, Kita Babbelgamm and Kita Helin, and two property owners, Mr T■■■■ and Ms P■■■■ (the former had previously served for two mandates as a residents' delegate), have been included into the Neighbourhood Council.

A further crucial point concerns who has implemented the measures funded through QF2-3/Projektsfonds. Such measures have been carried out by 45 different actors, nevertheless, Figure 5 clearly shows how only a handful of organisations received the vast majority of funding. Indeed, the 75% of actors overall received 19.4% of monies (nearly €331 thousands), whereas the remaining 80.6% of funding (roughly €1.38 million) were allocated to 12 project carriers. Yet, within this quartile significant discrepancies can be noted: the quartile ranged between a low of €32,000 and an upper adjacent value of €71.151,67 but it also registered 6 outside values, which taken together constitute roughly the 63% of the overall QF2-3/Projektsfond's expenditure. Interestingly enough, such outside values correspond to actors that have had either a seat in the Neighbourhood Council or a close connection to one or more of its members in the same period when funding were allocated to them.

Furthermore, it also appeared that, taken together, the 9 actors or partners that over the years had a sit in the Neighbourhood Council, received the 68% (€1,155,913) of the total expenditure of QF2-3/Projektsfonds between 2005 and nowadays, whereas the remaining 32% (€553,254) has been divided among 36 actors, one of which being the Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement itself that has been the carrier of a number of projects overall worth slightly more than €71,000.

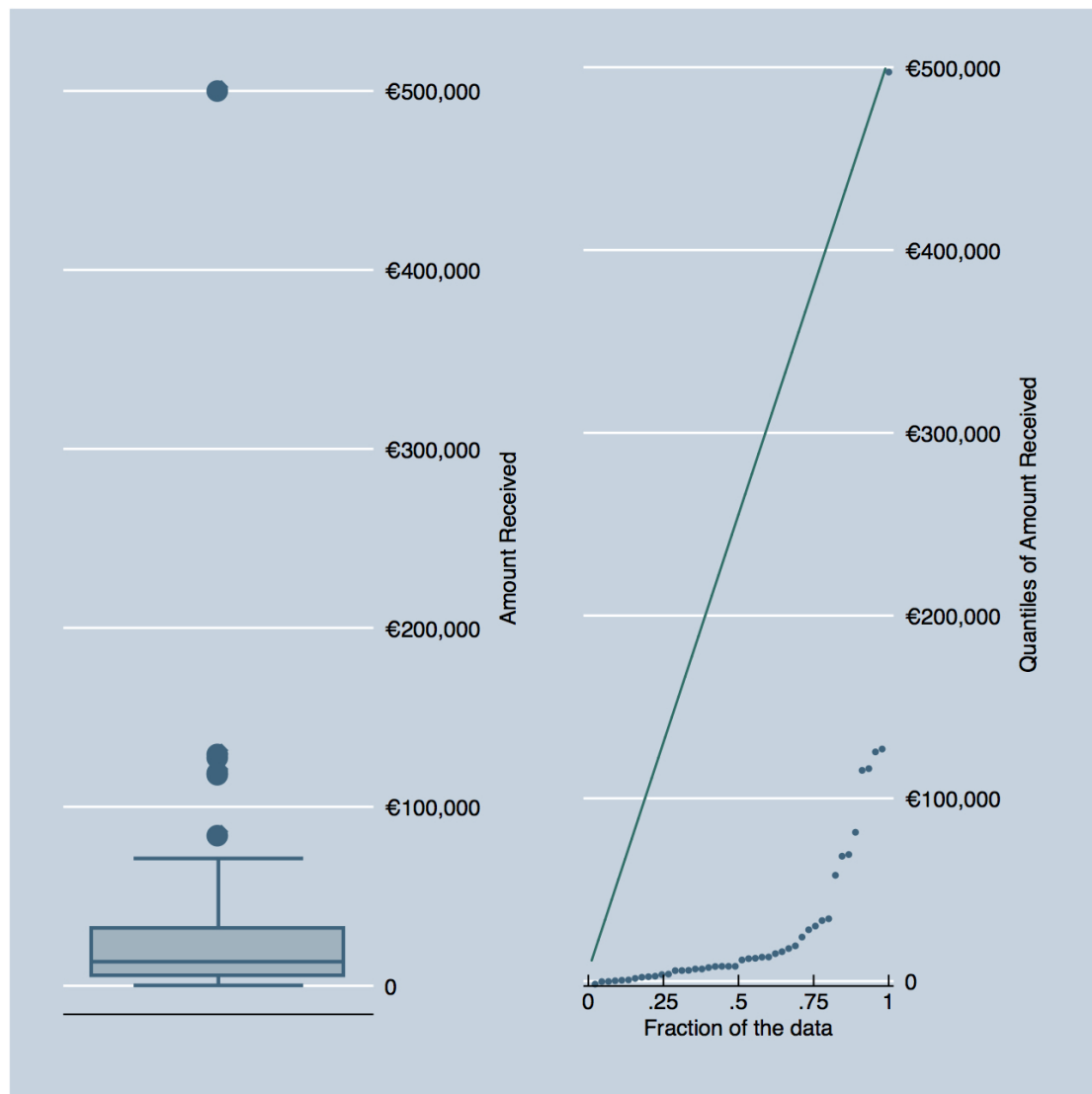


Figure 5 - Distribution of QF2-3/Projektsfond funding (source: author's elaboration on data by Körnerpark Quartiersmanagement)

On these grounds, it emerged that a handful of actors and organisations has played a major and dominant role both within the Neighbourhood Council and in the implementation of the measures directly approved by such body. Thus, the degree of inclusiveness and openness of the governance framework at neighbourhood level appears to be low. Moreover, given the amount of funding received by organisations that held a sit in the NC, also an issue of conflict of interest seems to raise.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The evidence gathered from the Körnerpark QM case study unveiled how, in the practice, a community-led development initiative may risk to be captured by a dominating coalition of stakeholders, and to achieve results far distant from the redressing of social imbalances and inequalities. Accordingly, in order to guarantee an open and inclusive local governance framework as well as an equitable redistribution of resources and benefits, the Community-Led Local Development regulation would need to provide a framework capable of preventing local initiatives from falling into the same pitfalls emerged in the case study.

First, the CLLD should ensure high levels of both legitimacy and inclusiveness for the local decision-making processes. Therefore, Local Action Groups should become truly independent

and community-controlled bodies. In this sense, their activation, as well as the appointment of their managers/coordinators and the definition of local priorities, need to be grounded on (and subordinated to) a broadly shared consensus among the local citizenry, avoiding the top-down imposition of the participatory process. Moreover the composition of LAGs should evenly reflect the socio-economic pattern of the target areas and, accordingly, the regulation should better clarify the criteria for the allocation of voting rights to residents, stakeholders, and organisations. In particular the CLLD should prevent that more resourceful actors, lurking behind the rhetoric of participation and partnership, would eventually form coalitions and capture the initiative in spite of the most disadvantaged inhabitants. Instead, capacity-building measures, together with an overall simplification of bureaucratic procedures, will be needed in order to better empower low-skilled residents and ultimately to enhance their chances to access to the decision-making arena as well as to the projects' design and implementation phases.

Second, the case study raised awareness on the possible paradoxical effects of local development initiatives, which indeed risk to be counter-productive with respect to the goal of improving disadvantaged people's living conditions in the places where they live. For instance, in fact, an enhanced environment can likely increase the target areas' attractiveness for wealthier populations, in turn undermining the affordability of housing for low-income long-term residents, and thus potentially triggering displacement processes. Against this background, the CLLD needs to provide specific guarantees, safeguards and/or protection devices in order to make sure that the main beneficiaries of local development would be, first and foremost, the people in need. Moreover, since the instrument has to promote sustainable and long-term solutions to deprivation, it would be crucial to avoid that disadvantaged residents become merely the end-users of an economy of service-provision. Rather they should be proactively engaged in addressing key OECD well-being dimensions towards a structural and long-lasting improvement of their socio-economic status.

Accordingly, the main overall argument is that any initiative carried out through the Community-Led Local Development instrument should be as flexible as possible in terms of the kind of measures and projects implemented at local level, but at the same time such initiatives should be the result of a strongly inclusive decision-making process, and they should primarily aim at enhancing the well-being of disadvantaged people already living in the area. Therefore, it is desirable that, in the practice, all CLLD initiatives would eventually meet mutual standards in terms of governance quality as well as of outcomes and impacts on the communities, possibly informed by the a participatory solidarity economy approach.⁶ On these grounds, it is of crucial importance that the European regulation establishes an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system for local initiatives. In this respect, addressing the issue of evaluation in the Soziale Stadt Programme in Germany, Friedrichs and Hommerich (2005) stressed the need for an objective assessment based on criteria defined by an external institution. Moreover, Kolosy (2013) argued for the establishment of a common baseline approach for assessing Community Led Local Development that should be based on quality of life indicators. This is particularly relevant when the priority is to bring about change in the well-being of local inhabitants, especially against the background of what emerged in the Körnerpark, where the success of the initiative was argued only on the basis of overall improved socio-economic facts of the area, without considering the displacement of disadvantaged population that occurred meanwhile. Hence, binding local initiatives to the achievement of previously defined performance goals on selected indicators can ultimately ensure that the primary scopes of the CLLD are universally pursued. Nonetheless, it is also important to take into account that a too strict framework of requirements can eventually undermine a widespread adoption of the CLLD, hence evaluations have not to be intended and performed as a threat or constraint for Managing Authorities and Local Action Groups (see Friedrichs & Hommerich, 2005). Rather indicators and evaluations should become a means for facilitating and guiding in the implementation of initiatives at local level.

Ultimately, thus, whether all of these conditions would be fulfilled, I believe that the Community-Led Local Development might become a powerful instrument towards the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development of European deprived urban neighbourhoods.

Endnotes

¹ Stiglitz et al. (2009) noted that well-being has to be assessed considering 8 dimensions: Material living standards (income, consumption and wealth); Health; Education; Personal activities including work; Political voice and governance; Social connections and relationships; and Insecurity. The OECD (2011), instead, identified 11 dimension of well-being: Housing, Income, Jobs, Community, Education, Environment, Governance, Health, Life, Satisfaction, Safety, Work-life balance.

² Member of the European Commission in charge of Regional Policy between 9 February 2010 and 1 November 2014

³ A common definition of the Middle East encompasses the states or territories of Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, and the various states and territories of Arabia.

⁴ The following countries belong to the group *EU15 excl. Germany*: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁵ Actions directly and explicitly addressing only migrants accounted only for the 2% of the expenditure for soft measures; nevertheless migrants have been targeted by a much higher number of initiatives. In fact, it has to be considered that the 80% of children and youths have a migration background and consequently also the largest share of families and parents has a migration background. Moreover several other actions are aimed at bringing together migrants with the rest of the local community and thus are not categorised as targeting “migrants”. Accordingly actions targeting this group of residents can be also recognised within the following categories “children or youth”, “families/parents”, “local community”, or “residents”.

⁶ van den Berk-Clark and Pyles (2012) define the Solidarity Economy as “a new way of conceptualizing a variety of transformative economic values, practices, and organizations with the goal of enhancing democracy and distributing resources more equitably” (p. 6)

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