

This is the third newsletter of JobTown, an URBACT network of 11 European localities concerned with **what local administrations can do to support youth employment and opportunity.**

## JOB TOWN NEWS

The **third JobTown Transnational Workshop has been held in Rennes** (France) in February 2014. A brief introduction to the main contents of the meeting written by Rennes' Local Coordinator:

*Rennes Métropole was quite honored to host JobTown's third transnational workshop. It was very challenging for us, together with the lead expert, to build the program with of our local resources. Our main partners CODESPAR, MEIF (house of employment) and Exploratoire des Métiers were greatly stimulated by sharing their experience with the other 10 cities. Hosting this event was also an effective way to strengthen our partnership with local partners, such as Rennes University.*

Nathalie Wright – Rennes JobTown local coordinator



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## MAIN CONTENTS OF THE RENNES WORKSHOP

The meeting in Rennes focused on the **Analysis and Forecasting of Local Labour Market Trends**, aiming at the improvement of youth policies.

The Rennes administration presented its own tools to foster youth employment, and its multi-stakeholder approach to labour market analysis and skills demand forecasting. The multi-stakeholder approach established a network of regional-level actors (companies, unions, elected representatives, and employment services), cooperating for the innovation of employment policies.

The technical activities, chaired by Ian Goldring, the JobTown Lead Expert, other experts and ULSG members, dealt with three main points:

1) Tools **forecasting** the skills demanded on the local labour market over the coming years, devised and

presented by Kieran Ferran, from Oxford Economics.

2) A statistical model for monitoring the **situation of young** jobseekers.

3) The importance of **involving local companies** in the identification and forecasting of the skills required by the local labour market, in line with the multi-stakeholder approach.

The workshop ended with some study visits to bodies and organisations tackling unemployment:

- Employment agencies
- Vocational training providers
- Social innovation companies
- Networks supporting youth entrepreneurship and self-employment

All the project partners and local stakeholders contributed to the positive outcome of the workshop, thanks to an active participation. Through the clues and suggestions stemming from the exchange of best practices, each of the partners will build and improve their own Local Action Plan, thanks to a better understanding of local labour markets.



## JOB TOWN'S FIRST THEMATIC PUBLICATION READY!



This publication looks at what makes different approaches to cooperation effective and how to establish and maintain effective local partnerships.

The document – in English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish – is available, along with many more JobTown outputs, at: <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/active-inclusion/jobtown/our-outputs/>

## JOB TOWN PARTNER NEWS

The 11th of June our partner from Aveiro had a seminar devoted to one of the three challenges of JobTown: Education for Entrepreneurship.

A workshop with around 20 professors was organized before the seminar.

Our other Portuguese partner, Gondomar, also took part in the working session.

More information about this event: <http://www.aveiro-emprededor.pt/seminario-educacao-para-o-emprededorismo-2/>

## EU HIGH-LEVEL GROUP ON MODERNIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

‘Europe’s Educational Evolution’, [reports/modernisation\\_en.pdf](#)

is an article whose publication roughly coincided with our Rennes Workshop, by Mary McAleese, a former president of Ireland, now President of the EU High-Level Group on Modernization of Higher Education. It’s topical, neatly summarizes her views, and is available here:

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/mary-mcaleese-offers-recommendations-for-improving-europe-s-education-and-training-systems>

The High-Level Group’s much more extensive first report to the European Commission, on ‘Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe’s higher education institutions’ is available here: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/>

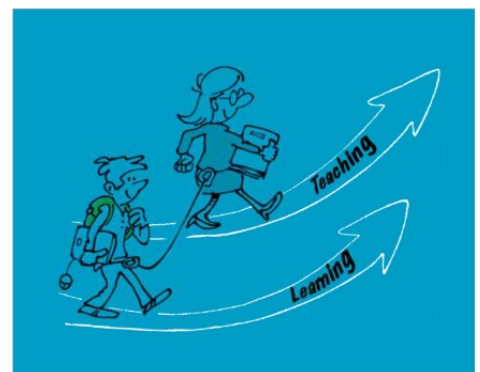
The report makes 16 recommendations regarding:

- **Systems and resources** for improving educational quality and effectiveness
- Changing **incentives** towards quality and improving teaching and research
- **Partnership** among employers and student input, across disciplines and research fields
- **Follow up** on educational outcomes
- Support and **guidance** Support for teachers and institutions in making use of new **digital** technologies

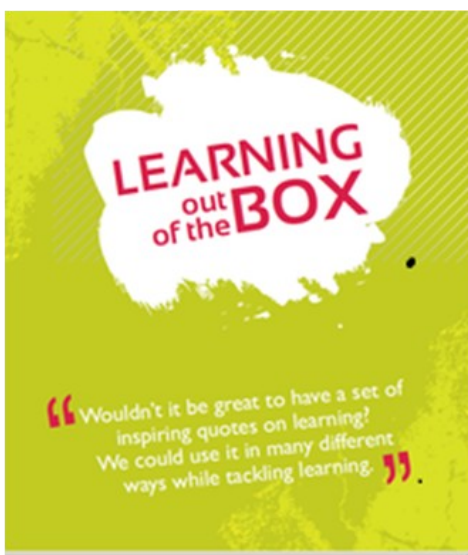
nologies

- **Internationalisation**, mobility, transnational learning delivery, internationalisation of teachers language learning and use

- EU support for all this and the creation of a **European Academy for Teaching and Learning**



## NEW TOOL ABOUT LEARNING FROM SALTO



The SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre, has created ‘Learning out of the Box’ – an interesting new tool to address the topic of learning in an engaging way, **created for youth workers, mentors, coaches and trainers**. Available here:

<https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/learning-out-of-the-box/>

Contact : Rita Bergstein or Kristiina Pernits, JUGEND für Europa/SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre, Bonn  
Tel.: +49 228 9506-271 email: [youthpass@salto-youth.net](mailto:youthpass@salto-youth.net)

## INDUSTRY AGREES WITH JOBTOWN

Orgalime, a major lobbying platform in Brussels, representing engineering industries, argues that “*this skills gap will only widen without strong **cooperation between industry and education** to produce proper lifelong learning and education and training systems matched to real labour market demand*”. See:

<http://orgalime.blogactiv.eu/2014/04/so-why-is-manufacturing-so-important-in-europe/?>

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## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE: COMMISSION ADOPTS FIRST PROGRAMME WITH FRANCE



The European Commission has adopted the first Operational Programme with France to use the available funding from the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) to **tackle youth unemployment**.

France will receive 620 million from the YEI and the European Social Fund (ESF) to help NEETs find a job, in French regions with youth unemployment rates **over 25%**. This is the **first programme adopted** in the EU for this €6 billion initiative covering 20 Member States.

See: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2073&furtherNews=yes>

# JOB TOWN INTERVIEW

## THE BUSINESSMAN AND THE POLITICIAN' LOCAL LEADERS TALK TO JOB TOWN IN RENNES, FRANCE



**Rémy Langlois**, local business person from the retail sector, chosen representative of the Rennes Chamber of Commerce and Industry, leader of “Employment in Trade” group liaising with the local authorities, and participant in JobTown’s third Transnational Workshop, February 2014 in Rennes, France.



**Gwénaële Hamon**, Vice-President of Rennes Région Métropole, Head of Economic Development and Employment, President of Rennes’ Maison de l’Emploi and the Plan Local Insertion et Emplois (PLIE)

Interviewed by **Ian Goldring**, JobTown Lead Expert

**IG:** *What do you hope to **get** out of JobTown?*

**GH:** Rennes wants to learn about better **matching** the skills companies need with the offer in the population and the training taking place. This is essential for economic **growth**, and all the more so at a time of economic difficulty like the present.

**Participation and partnership** – involving all partners concerned with employment – is key to success.

And, as in much of Europe, **youth employment** is a priority issue for us, particularly in the more **disadvantaged areas** of the city, where youth unemployment reaches up to **40%**.

**JobTown** – with its opportunities for comparison and exchange with our European partners – feeds into our understanding around this issue, and thus contributes to us taking **more effective actions**.

**RL:** In terms of exchange, I’m interested in everything to do with **partnership tools**. There’s a lot that can be done by companies working together, for example transferring employees to a different company if a company is unable to maintain job posts.

**IG:** *What sort of examples do you look at **internationally**?*

**RL:** People here don’t tend to look much outside France, and entrepreneurs are usually too busy just working.

There are issues of a lack of **awareness**.

**IG:** *What’s the **employment/unemployment situation** like here and how does it compare to the **national situation**?*

**RL:** Traditionally Rennes has outperformed French averages, with relatively lower unemployment rates, but this advantage has been eroding. Unemployment here is now 8.5%, versus 10.5% for France as a whole.

A lot of **industrial jobs have been lost**; in 2007 PSA Peugeot Citroën employed 12,000 people, now, in 2014, it’s 4,200.



Image of Rennes - The old center of the city

While we enjoy a **growing ITC** sector, this hasn't created as many jobs as were lost.

**GH:** Our local economy is still quite dynamic, but not evenly. The **car and food** sectors are fragile.

A lot of the hiring is in **IT** and the **'green'** sector. These tend to be fairly **highly qualified**, skilled jobs, though other sectors are hiring lower skilled profiles.

Our job is to reinforce these opportunities with the **right training offer**.

The unemployed will not just be automatically picked up by new job creation. We have to take actions to **support those having more difficulty**, be it because of skills, life issues... whatever.

**IG:** *Is it a **supply or a demand** problem?*

**RL:** Both. A lot of educational paths **aren't preparing young people adequately** for work, and there just **isn't enough work** out there.

**GH:** Clearly it's both. We're working, **with the region**, to put in place innovative approaches to training, which closely match needs and demand.



Image of Rennes — The project of the "Centre de Congrès"  
<http://metropole.rennes.fr/politiques-publiques/grands-projets/>

**IG:** *Where are the **gaps**?*

**RL:** Here it's hard to fill posts in **retail**, there's a lack of suitable candidates. Typically, you get most supply issues in **new emerging** sectors.

With some sectors it's an **image problem**; people have aspirations and don't want to go into construction, become a butcher or fishmonger.

**IG:** *How can those **image problems** be **overcome**?*

**RL:** **Money**. Money does a lot to change an image. Pay people enough and they'll sell fish.

**IG:** *How have the **local economy and labour market** **changed** over the years?*

**RL:** I was **born in Rennes and grew up here**, and I've seen how it's changed.

With digital, the **photo studios** are practically all gone.

Separate **car mechanic** and body shops are disappearing, and moving to an all-in-one model.

People don't bother **repairing their shoes**; it's usually cheaper to throw them out. It's only worth it to do maintenance for expensive high-end shoe products.

Businesses have to evolve and keep **finding the added value**; the right specialisations survive.

**IG:** *And the **job market**?*

**RL:** It's a different world now. 20 or 30 years ago, **you didn't worry about getting a job**; companies were competing to hire you. They used to come into the schools to try and attract us, convince us to work for them.

Now the **situation is reversed**; young people have to bend over backwards to convince someone to hire them.



**IG:** What about people from **immigrant backgrounds** who seem to have more difficulty entering or advancing in the labour market?

**RL:** We don't have a **ghettoised** situation here; we've been careful to support integration over the years.

**GH:** A lot of analysis on this issue has been carried out, and we're using it in Job-Town. **Discrimination is a factor** – be it about people's origins or their gender or some combination, and so on.

As soon as a given job or internship candidate is **associated with a 'bad' neighbourhood, their chances decline** or disappear. Nonetheless, a lot of young people in these stigmatised districts are **highly qualified**.

There are **perception problems** – vis-à-vis young people and companies, and young people and institutions. On both sides.

**IG:** What to do?

**GH:** A lot of our response to the problem needs to be about **networks**. We have to combat **unequal access** to networks. What is missing for a lot of young people in disadvantaged areas is fruitful social networks.

We can tackle this by through neutral employment selection processes (anonymous CVs etc.), or actions to support and accompany those having difficulty – actions for overcoming **disadvantaged starting points**.

There are **prejudices** and we have to undo them – **people meeting people** can do a lot for that. Plus, we've been doing a lot of **long-term work with companies** on this issue.

**IG:** A lot of people I've talked to here look at me strangely when I bring up this issue of discrimination. How is it that they **don't believe it is a significant problem**, or they're quite unaware of it?

**GH:** Some people in the private sector are aware of this problem and very collaborative, others are farther from it and not as aware.

Admittedly, in Rennes we don't have the kinds of ghettos some cities have. Some citizens just don't perceive the problem; they don't encounter it in their own lives.

But I can show you the figures. Like it or not, **unemployment rates are at least double** in these 'priority' (i.e. disadvantaged) neighbourhoods.

**IG:** Earlier you said '**educational paths aren't preparing young people adequately for work**' – can you elaborate?

**RL:** Too many young people, of whatever background, are being held back by a **lack of skills, or the wrong ones**.

Many who pass a baccalaureate (secondary schooling) in commerce are still **not work ready** in lot of fields.

There's a lot of **demand for IT skills**, in lots of ways – such as tech knowledge in salespeople. Saturn (a tech retail company) has difficulty hiring people who can understand and explain their tech products.

**e-Commerce** is a big growing sector, so there's a need for people with the corresponding qualifications. Retail needs to adapt, bring in new employee competences.

**IG:** What's **causing the problem**?

**RL:** Education is behind the times. Curriculum is maybe 3 or 4 years **outdated**.

**IG:** Why?

**RL:** Inertia. **Central government** controls education, so change moves slowly.



Image of Rennes — - Musée des Beaux Art de Rennes

In the private sector, training takes **resources** smaller companies don't have. **SMEs need support**, in adapting management, in anticipating change and in achieving the right diversification. **Chambers** of commerce have a role here.

**IG:** *As you know, our Transnational Workshop hosted in Rennes is about **analysing and forecasting local labour market needs**. How's Rennes at doing that?*

**GH:** We have the tools to anticipate change, and change is speeding up across all sectors, but we have to maintain some sense of **long or medium-term action**, we can't allow ourselves to be caught up in a short-term reactive attitude.

**RL:** We have a pretty good knowledge of what current skills demands are – the problem is **we don't do enough** about it.

**Forecasting is weaker.** I'd say we could do with a better understanding of where things are going.

That said, even when we have told people about what trends were coming, they typically ignored it till change had finally materialised **and tomorrow was today**.

People hear about problems, but **don't really react until** they have their backs up against the wall.

You need to start with the **early adopters**.

**IG:** *Early adopters, what else works?*

**RL:** **Second chance schooling** works.

You have to go into the neighbourhoods where young people are – pursue practical things, like finding **transport** solutions. There are effective programmes that lend young people a vehicle to get to an interview.

**Older people can volunteer** to teach young people to drive.

Creative solidarity is a wonderful thing, and it's growing under the pressure of the crisis, but it's not enough. The problem is always resources.



Image of Rennes - The old center of the city

**IG:** *How do you **involve young people in the process, give them a voice**?*

**GH:** Institutions don't find it easy to involve the voice of young people in their decision-making.

**Local associations** often work most effectively with young people. We have to pay attention to them, and we do, but it's **not structured**, it happens more on a local basis, from neighbourhood to neighbourhood.

**IG:** *How about **city-region cooperation**? That's one of the priorities among the JobTown partners in their approaches to tackling employment issues.*

**GH:** Cooperation with the region is extremely important for us; we work in tandem with the region, coordinating employment strategies and training, anticipating skills demand.

More generally, we have a **strong partnership culture** in the city and region. **Bretons work together** on common projects and aims.

**IG–** *Where is Rennes going? What will we find if we come back in 15 years?*

**RL:** Rennes is becoming a dynamic **hub and regional capital**. We'll be better connected to Europe and to France, with stronger linkages between city and region. Rennes will be the entry point for Europeans into the region.

We have cards to play and a strong capacity to **experiment**.

**GH:** you'll find a more **digital** city, more open to working in new ways, with **big data** and so forth.

**Greener transport**, more electric cars, friendly for both people and the environment.

A strong centre for **research**.

More economic and job **diversity**.

**IG:** *That's Rennes, how about France? From outside, there's a generalised perception **of France as being blocked**. How does it look from inside?*

**RL:** **France is not blocked, but it is complicated**.

**GH:** It's difficult here compared to Germany – and also to Spain, as we weren't hit as hard by the crisis. **Rupture is harder here**. Questioning accepted *acquis sociaux*, expectations for a certain type of life, is difficult.

I don't mean we should accept to take a step backwards, but we have to ask the hard questions about debt, retirement. There are blockages, some of them **cultural**.

I understand people outside France must have an impression of a country that has a hard time questioning itself. I get it.

Nonetheless, we have a lot of innovators here, more than ever. **The energy is there**, but also structural blockages stemming from the past.

Now I have to go back to work.





**For more JobTown information:**

Visit our website: <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/active-inclusion/jobtown/homepage/>

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