



# YOUNG CITIZENS' PROJECT

e-Bulletin Issue 2 — June 2005

[www.urbact.org/youngcitizens](http://www.urbact.org/youngcitizens)

Belfast • Birkirkara • Bristol • Evosmos • Hetton & Murton • Liverpool • Mazeikiai • Misterbianco • Sabadell

## Welcome to the second issue of the URBACT Young Citizens' Project's quarterly e-Bulletin.

We are now at the mid-point of our project with just one year to go before our toolkit is to be completed and indeed presented to the closing network conference.

## THE PROJECT

For those of you who did not have the opportunity to read the first bulletin...the Urbact Programme and in turn, the Young Citizen's project, aim to identify new solutions for disadvantaged urban areas. In doing so, the project sees young people as key to these solutions and seeks to capitalise on transnational partnerships and information sharing, towards producing a 'toolkit of best-practice models'. This will make practical recommendations towards engaging Young People as active citizens, overcoming the obstacles Young People face in decision-making structures and fostering better communication between Young People in the different member states.

## NEWS

### WORKING SEMINAR ONE

We are pleased to report that the Young Citizens' Project first Working Seminar, held in Evosmos, Greece on 15 – 16 April was a success. The meeting was attended by all network partners with the unfortunate exception of Belfast. The main aims of the seminar were to address the topics of Networking of project partners, Focus Group methods and practices and look at aspects of the Toolkit.

*The complete report and its findings can be downloaded from the Urbact website.*



Delegates to the Young Citizens' Project pose for a group photograph at the end of our meeting in Evosmos.

## FOCUS GROUP UPDATE

*Focus Group proposals and reports can be downloaded from the Young Citizens' Project website.*

### City of Belfast Council

(Community Development Department)

The first focus group took place on Thursday 24 of March and Monday the 11 April at Delamont Outdoor Education Centre.

The aims of this initial focus group were to

- establish an agreed framework and understanding of the aims and objectives of the Belfast Young Citizens Project
- build upon relationships with the view to encouraging collaboration in working together to improve participatory work.
- begin to collect and share information, experiences and thoughts on different models of youth involvement
- begin to review practices concerning the participation of young people in the local, national and international arenas and evaluate, via the focus group, these models of practice
- begin to identify areas which could become part of the Best Practice Guide on Participatory Practice (Toolkit)



The young people involved in Belfast's focus group engage in a little problem solving.

### City of Bristol Council

(Young People's Services/Urban2)

In Bristol's first focus group *Freedom Youth*, a voluntary sector group for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people, looked at council service delivery to young people from the perspective of an equalities group.

Unfortunately due to the long-term sickness of the officer in charge of delivery there have been some problems from Bristol in delivering their focus groups, and it has not been possible to finish the report for the first group. We hope to get back on track shortly.

### Municipality of Evosmos

(Cultural Enterprise of Municipality of Evosmos)

Evosmos' first focus group looked at school environment regeneration with 12 students aiming to influence local authority decisions regarding their school.



Evosmos: An example of the poor quality of existing facilities at a school in Evosmos

The students took the lead in researching how best to improve the yard with surveys of their peers. Having done this the young people then pitched their proposals to the vice mayor of

Evosmos. Finally the student produced a magazine (available to read on the website, in Greek only.) to publicise their work.

In the future Evosmos aim to involve more young people from independent groups (graffiti groups, photography groups) in this project. This will then be our second focus group.

### Hetton & Murton Partnership

(Urban2)

The overall aim of the first focus group was to establish a baseline assessment of the purposes, strengths and weaknesses of the Youth Forum and Peer Inspection Team<sup>1</sup>. It also enabled us to assess the young people's personal qualities and skills and how these can help them to participate in such groups, and to evaluate their understanding of the different governance structures. The event was held in March 2005.

The day was very productive and provided us with a considerable amount of information. The two groups mixed and interacted with each other well, readily sharing ideas and experiences. It was however quite a demanding experience, in particular for the young people, who had to address a wide range of issues in a short space of time.

The event has highlighted opportunities for the young people to take back to their groups and to try out, for example, the Youth Forum are keen to look at how they could be involved in inspecting youth clubs, etc in the Easington area. The day also provided a really good baseline from which the future focus groups can be taken. The next focus group will follow on and look at governance structures in more detail. Following feedback from the young people, future events will be more varied in their structure and include a wider range of activities.

Alison Clark, Hetton & Murton Urban2

June 05

#### Urbact first focus group

Marriott Hotel

13th March 2005

The first focus group was held at the Marriott Hotel. A group of young people from the Youth Forum in Easington and the Young Person's Inspection Team from Sunderland took part in a number of activities ranging from a 'getting to know you' exercise to describing the functions of the groups the young

<sup>1</sup> For more information please see the [Young Citizens' Project website](#)

people belong to. We were also videoed for a DVD, where we were interviewed about our characteristics and knowledge of politics.

The day enabled the two groups to start working together and to share knowledge of the group they belong to.

Laura Gale

*Sunderland Young Person's Inspection Team*



A member of Sunderland Young Person's Inspection Team displays stickers/post-it notes showing her personal strengths and weaknesses (areas for improvement).

[Download Hetton & Murton's first focus group report](#)

## City of Liverpool Council

(Liverpool Youth Service/Lifelong Learning)

After a training weekend in February 2005 as part of the Youth Council, we held our first Focus Group in March.

The main aim of this focus group was to explore the underpinning support "structures" and people needed to motivate and sustain young people's involvement in decision-making.

We began by exploring issues and relationships in the Family, School and in Youth Organisations using a Thermometer Exercise to identify Boiling Points (issues and situations that anger/annoy the young people) and Cooling Points (the things or people that calm them down again).

We used a Dot Voting System on a Support Matrix to discover levels of support from adults – Mothers and Youth Workers were the clear winners with Fathers, Teachers and the Police towards the bottom of the list. Discussions then focussed on

seeing what characteristics or behaviours made people most supportive.

The young people's history of involvement was explored by asking each person to design the front page of a newspaper showing their story.

The young people were very positive in their evaluations of the group. They found the activities to be enjoyable yet thought-provoking and felt they could use them in their own work with their peers.

The main outcome of the first Focus Group was that it became clear that we needed to explore in much more depth the way in which youth worker attitudes and actions enabled the sustained engagement and development of young people. We needed to explore how young people's "every-day participation" in helping solve seemingly minor issues or disputes were a key element in developing the attitudes required – the desire to get involved and the belief that they can solve problems.

Paddy Logan, Youth Engagement Officer

June 05

## Commune di Misterbianco

(Urban2)

Due to problems in recruiting a local worker for the project Misterbianco have not, at the time of writing completed their first focus group.

## Ajuntament de Sabadell

(Youth Programme Department)

The Youth Department has recently opened a youth service called *EspaiJOVE*, in a local community centre. This service provides a space to socialise, games, workshops, internet connection and a youth information service. The objective of the focus groups is to give the opportunity to young people to get to know the new centre so that with time, it becomes an established gathering and leisure point for young people within the community. The overall aim of the first focus group was to study different types of leisure and in particular 'creative leisure' as a formative part of important values including solidarity and a sense of civic responsibility and inclusion.

The first focus group was held in February and it was organized in five sessions, four of them lasted 2:30 hours and

the last one 5 hours. In total, the activity took 15 hours and we concluded it having lunch together in the *EspaiJOVE*. The focus group was very successful in terms of numbers of participants: we expected to have a group of 10-12 young people but we had a stable group of 19 young people attending the focus group.

The majority of the participants didn't have a previously participative profile but they participated in an active way. Young people expressed, on many different occasions that one positive aspect of the focus group environment, was the opportunity to share their opinions and the fact that the activities proposed were actually interesting, which was something they had not necessarily anticipated...

Another interesting outcome of the focus group was the involvement of a youth entity which designed, together with the Youth Department, a strategy game that simulates the functioning of a city council and the decision-making processes that have to be made to reach agreements on projects. This helps young people (and adults) to think about the processes involved, the opportunities for joint work with others and some of the constraints imposed on decision-makers



Originally we intended to work with different young people in each focus group however, experience of the first group has changed our minds. We now think that working with a stable group gives us the opportunity to build up a relationship that hopefully will enable us to achieve our final goal: the creation of a stable group of young people responsible for designing the activity programme of the *EspaiJOVE* every 2 months.

Natàlia Subirats Besó, local Urbact co-ordinator  
June 05

[Download Sabadell's first focus group report.](#)

## NETWORK LOGO

A competition is underway to allow Young People involve in local focus groups to design a logo for the network. The closing date is July 29. The logo will be on display in the next issue of the eBulletin.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The Young Citizens' Project Second working Seminar will take place in Hetton & Murton on 14-15 October 2005.

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