

The project «EASY TOWNS - European Accessible Sustainable Young TOWNS» was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.2 "Networks of Towns"

**564281-CITIZ-1-2015-1-IT-CITIZ-NT
EASYTOWNS "European Accessible Sustainable Young TOWNS"**

5 events has been carried out within this project under the period 14/09/2015 – 13/09/2017:

Event 1: Kick off meeting

Participation:

The event involved 281 EU citizens, including

3 participants from the city of Gozo (**Malta**)

4 participants from the city of Vicenza (Italy)

4 participants from the city of Arad (Romania),

5 participants from the city of Pforzheim (Germany),

2 participants from the city of Craigavon (Northern-Ireland),

3 participants from the city of Sentjur (Slovenia),

3 participants from the city of l'Alfas del Pi (Spain),

3 participants from the city of Niepolomice (Poland),

4 participants from the city of Rijeka (Croatia),

1 participant from the city of Pula (Croatia),

249 participants from the city of Heist-op-den-Berg (Belgium)

Indirectly, 2.500 citizens were involved, as a press conference was organized and articles were published in local press and television and on social media and flyers were distributed.

Location / Dates: The event took place in **Heist-op-den-Berg, Belgium**, from 19/10/2015 to 21/10/2015

Short description:

The aim of the event was each partners Town participation with relevant actors on integration of young generations. The event was the occasion for presenting the road map of the project and the partnership started to share experiences and ideas and focused on the creativity contest contents to be developed at local level. The event was held in a rural town located just 50 Km from Brussels and 40kms from Antwerp, which enables to think and discuss about the relations between urban and rural areas and the integration context.

On Monday October 19th 2015 Heist team welcomed the different delegations from the 10 participating countries and they were invited for a light dinner in the cafeteria of the Cultural Center Zwaneberg, where on Tuesday October 20th and Wednesday October 21st the real Kick Off meeting took place. An informal first "speed dating" moment! Very important to get to know each other and to create a warm atmosphere of respect and open mindedness! Essential in a project dealing with integration and diversity! It all worked out very well, communication strategy on the program was cleared out, partners were delivering their material and presentations so as to be able to work efficiently the next day.

On Tuesday October 20th all partners presented their delegation on stage. Heist Municipality presented the research done for best practices, give a summary of all best practices present in Heist-op-den-Berg and went deeper into 2 Best Practices selected: 1. Babelberg (= a mountain where people chat, talk, meet). Babelberg is a project where volunteering buddies/monitors teach Dutch to newcomers, especially refugees, in Heist-op-den-Berg. A very successful workshop, very actively presented with testimonies in film and sound fragments. 2. Speelkoffer (a coffin full of games), taken to socially difficult districts in the municipality, to playgrounds, youth and hobby centers. Its aim is to teach children to play, in the real, creative sense of the word. One example is fully worked out with a life story.

Further on a Palestinian refugee told about the reason why he had to flee, the situation in his country, his integration process and the participation of his whole family in a local integration campaign. This campaign "Ik ben Heistenaar U ook? = I am from Heist-op-den-Berg. What about you?" was very successful and showed the daily and integrated life, the working atmosphere of refugees and newcomers on big posters at important crossroads and roundabouts. Then all the delegations presented - an all possible creative ways - their search, their work on, their success in Best Practices, in an order democratically decided by the partners themselves.

The second day of events ended with a theater group (Wuivend Riet) representation of an extract from "Patstelling- Helden" a piece of theater for PEACE on World War I. An official reception at the town hall, meeting all the officials of the municipality, gave a really official character to the start of this EU project.

Lord Mayor Luc Vleugels stressed the the importance of "Europe" in local politics, putting his full confidence in this particular EU project on integration, accessibility and sustainability and wishing all partners good luck!

Wednesday October 21st was the "open day" of the Kick off meeting for the Easytowns public event. So all secondary schools were invited to attend a lecture by professor Jan Blommaert on "Superdiversity". Not easy for all these youngsters although they have been coached at school in English their religion and history lessons. Not easy at all but extremely interesting and hopeful.

250 students and their teacher were very attentive and participating, no smart phone on their hands but open eyes and open minds.

Here the link of Prf.Blommaert presentation <http://www.easytowns.eu/reports/> and here some picture of the event <http://www.easytowns.eu/1st-transnational-event-in-short/>

Event 2

Participation:

The event involved 101 EU citizens, including

- 4 participants from the city of Gozo (Malta)
- 4 participants from the city of Vicenza (Italy)
- 4 participants from the city of Arad (Romania),
- 4 participants from the city of Pforzheim (Germany),
- 4 participants from the city of Craigavon (Northern-Ireland),
- 3 participants from the city of Sentjur (Slovenia),
- 3 participants from the city of Heist-op-den-Berg (Belgium),
- 4 participants from the city of Niepolomice (Poland),
- 3 participants from the city of Rijeka (Croatia),
- 69 participants from the city of L'ALfas del Pi (Spain)

Indirectly, 1.000 citizens were involved, as a press conference was organized and articles were published in local press and television and on social media and flyers were distributed.

Location / Dates: The event took place in **L'Alfas del Pi (Spain)**, from 18/04/2016 to 20/04/2016

Short description:

Partners participated with their local actors on inclusion/integration, that helped the partnership to start discussing about the 1st step of local creativity contest results, starting from: "where are we now?". Young people between 13-29, started in fact their paths, with educators or group leaders, to walk toward an analysis of their own realities.

They were asked to think about "what does integration mean for you?", "is it only related to migrants and foreigners?", following these first thoughts they were also introduced to European Policies about integration.

The event was held in a small Spanish town located just 50 Kms from Alicante and characterized by a population of 21.964 inhabitants, of which 12.846 are foreign residents, which means more than half of the population.

The City engaged, from several years, in promoting multiculturalism and in encouraging citizens participation, dialogue and knowledge exchange, was a perfect stage for this event.

L'Alfàs del Pi participated in the EASYTOWNS project a hosting town showing the work and progress made by the School Mediation Project designed in collaboration with the Municipality. Therefore, from the first moment, there was the active participation of students, mediators and other members of the local Educational Community that take part in the mediation project on a daily basis.

But not only that. They also wanted to take this opportunity to show both the EASYTOWNS and the Mediation projects to different actor of the local society.

L'Alfàs del Pi hosted then the second of the international meetings of the project in the month of April 2016. During the event, summing up the different activities that were organized, more than 200 people participated since the program was divided as stipulated on the bases of the project, in a part of internal work and another open to the residents of the city.

The first part of the event was devoted to publicizing the project to different actors of civil society in L'Alfàs del Pi and viceversa. Therefore, before tackling the specific work with school mediation during the afternoon, the representatives of the ten cities that traveled to L'Alfàs del Pi were able to visit the headquarters of the different associations that work in the city and, at the same time, meet their representatives both in their headquarters and actively participating in the monthly meeting that from the City Council of Residents of other nationalities is maintained with resident associations.

Therefore, the first part of the day (morning) was dedicated to visit the different associations and organizations (total of 5 including local services venue). After being introduced to the president of each association and being told what each of them do on a daily basis, the delegations were given the chance to ask questions in order to have a more in depth insight of their work.

The last visit was a more formal one to the Town Hall, where the delegation were received by the Major and the local government on an official reception. After that, all participants, members of more than 20 associations and local government shared an official lunch in which the organizers of the event distributed the participants in tables so they could chat and talk freely with the citizens of the town to get to know more about the topic.

The second part of the day (afternoon) was held at the Casa de Cultura (Culture House) and was open to public. During this, a debate was organized in which different organizations gave their opinion on stage and, after that, was given the chance to public to ask any question and give opinion. In addition, in a plenary session and open to all residents of l'Alfàs del Pi, a conference on integration was held by Professor Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist and the principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, who collaborated in a disinterested way with the project and who later shared a chat and Discussion with the participants of EASYTOWNS.

He was the main founder of the Peace Research Institute Oslo in 1959 and served as its first director until 1970. He also established the Journal of Peace Research in 1964. In 1969 he was appointed to the world's first chair in peace and conflict studies, at the University of Oslo.

So during its speech young and older people, partners and local citizens, had the great chance of enjoying the sublime thoughts of this professor that has developed several influential theories, such as the distinction between positive and negative peace, theories on conflict and conflict resolution, the concept of peace building. He has often been critical of western countries in their attitude to the Global South, so the debate at the end of the speech was very interesting for the whole audience.

Event 3

Participation: The event involved 135 citizens, including

- 4 participants from the city of Gozo (Malta)
- 4 participants from the city of Vicenza (Italy)
- 4 participants from the city of Arad (Romania),
- 3 participants from the city of L'Alfas del Pi (Spain),
- 1 participants from the city of Craigavon (Northern-Ireland),
- 3 participants from the city of Sentjur (Slovenia),
- 4 participants from the city of Heist-op-den-Berg (Belgium),
- 4 participants from the city of Niepolomice (Poland),
- 4 participants from the city of Rijeka (Croatia),
- 4 participants from the city of Pula (Croatia)
- 100 participants from the city of Pforzheim (Germany)

Indirectly, 4.000 citizens were involved, as a press conference was organized and articles were published in local press and television and on social media and flyers were distributed in schools, associations, etc.

Location / Dates: The event took place in **Pforzheim (Germany)**, from 06/10/2016 to 09/10/2016

Short description:

Each partners town participated with 4 relevant actors specialized on YOUTH POLICIES and where existing with Youth City Council representatives.

The partnership meeting focused on the 2nd path of local contests, to be sure that local groups were working on youth proposal on integration policies. This was also the perfect link to discuss the role of Youth City Council.

The event was held in the city of Pforzheim (Germany), a town with a population of almost 120.000 inhabitants, which since 2010 is engaged in the master plan process "Pforzheim shapes the future" involving more than 1.000 citizens, especially young people, in the development of urban policies to make the city young and integrative.

The partnership was hosted in the Bad Liebenzell castle, where all activities were possible. The International Forum Burg Liebenzell was founded in 1952 as an Academy for Political Education and International Youth Exchange. They offer and realize seminars and international meetings with young people on current political issues such as European integration, international politics, human rights, migration and participation of young people. So this was the perfect location for EASYTOWNS!

On the arrival day each delegation had to introduce their Youth Councils or, if not existent/inactive best practice examples of youth participation or integration projects.

Friday started off with a short lecture on Pforzheim's 2000 years of migration history by Ms. Solombrino a free associate of the city's office for cultural affairs.

Thereafter the group went on to the city lab.

The city presented integrative projects the city lab offers, provided for refugees, in order to help them improve their language, get to know Pforzheim and make new friends. In the afternoon the group visited the Jewelry Museum of Pforzheim. The guided tour was on the theme "Cultural Transfer in Jewelry History - Focus Europe" .

The whole of Friday evening was dedicated to an international event, that was open to the public with experts on integration, youth participation. This event also celebrated 25 years of twinning between Pforzheim and Vicenza.

Prof. Dr. Dirk Wentzel from Pforzheim's own college delivered a key note speech on Europe, in which he urged people to advertise the EU more fervently. For this cause he gave the audience 10 pro-arguments for the EU. He explained that Europe is first and foremost a peace project, the biggest common market in the world, the Currency Union with 19 states is unique and up to now a success. The Erasmus and Bologna process ensures academic freedom for scholars and students. Europe is leading in environmental standards and sustainability and Europe is the leading force in the fight against global warming and climate change. The four liberties are beneficial for people and for companies at the same time: Free movement of goods, services, capital and people. He also mentioned the transeuropean networks (Communication), the Millennium Charta of fundamental human rights. Europe is the first time in its history a community of law and civil rights: The rule of power was replaced by the rule of law.

Saturday was a "workshop day". The participating cities all explained where they are at the moment with each of their respective creativity contests.

Gertrud Gandenberger from the International Forum instructed a so-called fish bowl exercise on the topic "What makes us European? Does Europe even exist? Who is able to know that, if not we?". Everybody had

to write down a sentence or question on this topic and they were collected in the middle, where volunteers then debated while the others listened to them.

In the afternoon 4 different workshops on the topics of the meeting took place.

Workshop 1 "Diversity – Living Practice"

This workshop philosophically debated every human's diversity and uniqueness. They came to a conclusion, that the world would need more people like our group, to spread the thought of tolerance towards diversity. And "Il mondo è bello perche è vario" – The world is beautiful, because it is colorful.

Workshop 2 "Youth Participation in Europe"

Several conclusions were made on how to better integrate Youths in Europe. Information and direct communication with young people are crucial, Youths have to be given a feeling, that they can change something and have be given hope for the future.

"Integration and Participation"

The group debated that people both from the outside and from the inside still have to be integrated better into the community. Many fears are strengthened by ignorance and projects should be found to encourage participation through practical work that brings people together. Furthermore they defined the word integration, next to exclusion, segregation and inclusion.

Workshop 4 "Types of Youth Participation"

In this workshop the participants thought about their favorite places in their city. By these means the group started debating about important factors to enable youth participation. These were a motivated supervisor, a sort of benefit structure, fun, communication, communication., communication et. During their presentation, they then invited the hole group to play the game "Out of the box".

Event 4

Participation: The event involved 127 citizens, including

- 4 participants from the city of Pforzheim (Germany)
- 6 participants from the city of Vicenza (Italy)
- 4 participants from the city of Arad (Romania),
- 4 participants from the city of L'Alfas del Pi (Spain),
- 2 participants from the city of Craigavon (Northern-Ireland),
- 4 participants from the city of Sentjur (Slovenia),
- 5 participants from the city of Heist-op-den-Berg (Belgium),
- 4 participants from the city of Niepolomice (Poland),
- 3 participants from the city of Rijeka (Croatia),
- 4 participants from the city of Pula (Croatia)
- 87 participants from the city of Gozo (Malta)

Indirectly, 4.000 citizens were involved, as a press conference was organized and articles were published in local press and television and on social media and flyers were distributed in all schools of the college network.

Location / Dates: The event took place in **Gozo (Malta)**, from 22/03/2017 to 25/03/2017

Short description:

Each partners town participate with 4 relevant actors on youth and social inclusion policies.

The partnership discussed about the 2nd step of the local creativity contests results and messages. The event, as decided from the partnership at the end of the 3rd project meeting and as allow by EACEA, was held in the island of Gozo (Malta) instead of Pula (HR).

It was proposed to meet in Gozo (Malta) for two main reasons:

- a) Gozo College was the only partner that is not a Municipality and can give a different perspective on project topics, even on organizing the transnational event;
- b) Gozo and Malta are a crucial point for refugees and migrants, that are one of the main focus of our project, so the partnership wanted to have the chance to get closer to the theme not only theoretically, but also practically/physically.

Mr Victor Galea, College Principal welcomed and addressed the present delegations. The delegations consisted of 40 participants from 10 different cities.

Day 2 was dedicated to presentations and updates from all participating countries: Creativity contests and celebrating good practices in Multicultural and Diversity. The partnership made the point on the state of the art and decided the following steps towards the final semester of the project, starting to talk about a possible new project to design all together, to go on building new activities on EASYTOWNS results.

After lunch, a cultural trip to mainland Malta ensued. The excellent organization of Gozo College allow to included a courtesy visit to Her Excellency the President of Malta at the Palace, San Anton Gardens and later a short visit to the Capital city of Valletta. The President was very clear in her message to the present delegates: "Let's keep working with our young people in order to ensure safe environments and peace in our towns". The participants were shown around Valletta and its rich mix of culture architecture and history explained. Free time to roam around Valletta. Return to the island of Gozo and late lunch was served.

Day 3 was the public event day, so an official welcome speech to guests (partners, college students and teachers, EuroDesk Director) was done by College Principal (Mr Victor Galea). Followed presentation by PSCD Teachers regarding their role in cultural-responsive pedagogy, Transformational Leadership for Diversity and Inclusion presentation (Mr Gaetano Calleja); Head of School and Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary Diversity and group of young people.

All those speeches were very well organized and inspiring, especially for those partners representatives that are taking care of young people education (formal or informal).

Many hands were shackled and contacts details shared during the coffee break: a lot of new ideas came into partners minds.

Solidarity with Migrants - Dr Colin Calleja from the University of Malta gave an idea of the actual situation in Malta about migrants and asylum seekers.

Promoting Justice – fostering dialogue between cultures and religions was the theme proposed by NGO Integra Foundation.

And finally a presentation from Gharb Local council Mayor – Reaching out to foreign residents and Mr Alexander Borg, European Commission Representative in Malta, that spoke about how citizens can get in touch with the Commission thanks to their local representatives.

This day included also a cultural tour to the island of Gozo.

Event 5

Participation: The event involved 132 citizens, including

7 participants from the city of Gozo (Malta)
4 participants from the city of Pforzheim (Germany)
4 participants from the city of Arad (Romania),
12 participants from the city of L'Alfas del Pi (Spain),
4 participants from the city of Craigavon (Northern-Ireland),
3 participants from the city of Sentjur (Slovenia),
4 participants from the city of Heist-op-den-Berg (Belgium),
4 participants from the city of Niepolomice (Poland),
5 participants from the city of Rijeka (Croatia),
4 participants from the city of Pula (Croatia)
81 participants from the city of Vicenza (Italy)

Indirectly, 4.000 citizens were involved, as a press conference was organised and articles were published in local press and television and on social media and flyers were distributed in schools, associations, etc.

Location / Dates: The event took place in **Vicenza (Italy)**, from 11/09/2017 to 13/09/2017
Short description:

The event was the occasion for presenting what has been done at project level to the wider public and to give an additional opportunity to relevant actors to evaluate the efficacy of the proposed solutions and of the developed actions in making the participating cities EASY TOWNS . The final event was structured into a public round table focused on sharing and evaluating local works results and in developing concrete measures in response to the emerged indications and requests.

After two years of partnership work, the entire consortium came in Vicenza with a huge cultural and human baggage, full of activities and good intentions for the future.

An intense 3 days final event was organized, to give to the biggest group of delegates of the project the chance to summarize, collect, share and plan all together.

A pretty good number of teenagers was traveling to Vicenza (12) making this partner group the youngest of the entire project, demonstrating that the involvement of youth was fully achieved.

The teenagers were especially awarded during the last evening dinner with a “diploma for EASY TOWNERS”.

In Vicenza as well young people were waiting for them, ready to meet during the public event and to work during the workshops.

The first part of the event was dedicated to partners meeting, having all delegations presenting their final results and achievement, confirming that the local network has been consolidated, that good practices implemented during the project life are now finalized and sustainable, thanks to municipal offices (participation, integration, education, sport, social services, etc.), associations, youth city councils, schools, youth centers, that are fully committed to go further with those activities.

Videos, presentations, storytelling, all partners in their own way told to the consortium their local success and recap about creativity contests.

The project website host pictures and materials also of this final phase.

All delegations met in the City Council Room and received their first welcome from a group of adult disabled that weekly collaborate with the culture, tourism and twinning department, thanks to an inclusion project agreed between the Municipality and a local NGO. Those people prepared in fact a welcome kit for each participant and had the chance to deliver it personally.

After the partners presentations of final results, the consortium dedicated some time to a common brainstorming on new possible projects, having Heist and Vicenza proposing to co-lead the design on the new idea. Partners were asked to write into three post it if they wanted to keep working together on new ideas, two main topics of their interest and if they would like to host an international event on a specific topic, in order to show their best practices. From that information, the consortium fully embraced a couple of ideas for new projects.

After the technical partner meeting, a special speech was dedicated to the theme of Europe's Future and Youth Chances thank to Dr.Enrico Peroni (Assistant to the EU Parliament Member Mr.Zoffoli) that proposed a very passionate bunch of thoughts around its presentation “Young Europeans what are the expectations for the future”. Delegates, especially youngsters, were very attentive and participate actively to the final discussion.

Before the lunch break, after almost 5 hours of continuous work, Vicenza Mayor and the Councilor for Participation gave their special welcome to the partnership, thanking all those new friends for the excellent work done in those years and wishing to collaborate again to foster as far as possible European citizenship,

supporting more and more citizens in the debate and the policy-making process thanks to the friendship agreement for the transnational stable network born with EASYTOWNS.

The afternoon session was dedicated to a guided tour of the city, UNESCO site from 1994, taking this chance to talk about EU policies to support cultural heritage and sharing opinion and ideas with cities like Rijeka (HR), European Culture Capital 2020, or Arad (RO) that was candidate for the 2021 as well, about the opportunities of integration and inclusion through culture. Some good practices and ideas were shared walking around the city and visiting the museums network, like the project of Vicenza that foresees the use of a dedicated exhibition and workshop room in one of the greatest museums of the city (Palazzo Chiericati) for thematic exhibition proposed from one side from young artists and from the other from migrants artists.

September 13th was the last project day and it was shared with students during their first day of school. Classes from High Schools (mainly art and foreign languages Lyceum) very attentively listened first to the speech "Words on the border - food for thought for young generations" that the Lawyer Igor Brunello presented. He was very inspiring, especially for young people, that discussed a lot with him at the end of the presentation about integration. He proposed in fact to them two points of view, one as lawyer, that daily support migrants and asylum seekers, and the other as director of a annual Festival dedicated to "Words on the border" (<http://www.paroleaconfine.it/>) that is about the cross-fertilization between cultures through cinema, storytelling, art, etc.

All participants received at the entrance the EASYTOWNS T-shirt, created during the creativity contest path and presented during the first local public event in Vicenza, and Igor Brunello was the first to wear it, putting himself immediately in connection with students and the public.

The event continued with an imaginary journey around partners cities (Vicenza included with the stories of local associations), that presented their best practices on integration and inclusion. A lot of connections popped up within youngsters and schools teachers, exchanging their contacts with some of the partners to talk soon about cultural exchange.

Finally, the association ARCIRAGAZZI Vicenza presented the youth exchange founded by ERASMUS+ named "I SEA YOU" (<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/e0a1c834-c30c-4767-9b37-9a53fb860c61>) that they implemented about the theme of migration and integration. Young from Civil Service program, some of them Italian and some other Africans, told about their open mind experience through this project and through daily association activities in favor of integration.

This group speech gave the chance of presenting to young presents information on which kind of opportunities Europe and European Programs give to young people and then to discuss Youth European Policies and role of youngsters in Europe's future.

After a lunch in a little restaurant promoting a special project of integration, having within its collaborators young people hosted in a special house for disadvantaged young people, the partnership was involved in a workshop, based on art and music, organized by two of the local associations involved in EASYTOWNS, to demonstrate that sometimes integration does not need words.

Dinner was organized under the inclusion light, having been the catering prepared by an association that gives second chances to ex prisoners to re-integrate into society. A lot of thoughts were shared once again and all partners and local people involved left the venue with a renewed European feeling of cooperation.