

**European City Network “Cities for Children” 3rd Annual Conference
29 – 30 June 2009, Stuttgart City Hall**

Protocol Stuttgart Meeting, 30 June 9h15 – 12h00

Protocol WG Housing and Outdoor Activities

Moderator: Mrs. Marianne Labre (Gent, Belgium)

Participants:

City	Participant
Athens, Greece	Miliadiades Kalafatis
Bern, Switzerland	Peter Schnyder
Dublin, Ireland	Anne O’Brien
Luxemburg, Luxemburg	Claude Faber
Magdeburg, Germany	Ruth Esther Gilmore
Malmö, Sweden	Ewa Sundström
Malmö, Sweden	Gunnar Ericson
The Hague, Netherlands	Rob Lubbersen
Zürich, Switzerland	Pascal Kreuer
Zürich, Switzerland	Karl Stammnitz
Zürich, Switzerland	Daniela Weiland
Zürich, Switzerland	Eva Sanders

The moderator, Mrs Labre invites all participants to write down their most important topics and pin them on a desk. After that the group sorts them in 8 main subjects

Main Subject	Chosen topics
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children’s participation in realization of projects (planning for and with children) - Shared guidelines – how planning of public areas should regards the special needs of children
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From children to youth/from playground for children to meeting place for youngsters - Separation between boys and girls? - European security versus children’s design wishes - Boredom of the “classical” playgrounds - Public space versus playgrounds - Handling of different kinds of restrictions of use of public and semi-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public spaces - Open places for alcoholics and drug addicts - How to connect play grounds with youth care
Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chat groups - Interactive playground map on the internet - Action plan - Create a collection of “Best Practices” (→ homepage with login for CfC-members)
Policy-Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable “sponsoring” - Methods and surveys for children demand and opinions - To have an open mind about new ideas and thoughts - Cooperation between different departments/administrations - What has worked well in terms of influencing higher powers in local authorities - Dare to try new working-methods - Seek new cooperation
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can we assure that family-housing is for families, not for couples or singles without children - Distances between playing areas & housing areas
Cities for Children Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political convincing Charta - Structure of WG- meetings: 3 hours / Year are too little for discussions and aims for future - WG-Work: - Develop of shared positions - Share made experiences - Develop for the CfC-network: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a vision 2. a mission 3. long term = strategy 4. short term = operator
Events/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy life-style activities for children in public space - Children events in public space (Theory and best practice)
Play Layer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening Factory-Areas for the use of children during the weekends - Car-free days - How to pick areas - Different types of places of action

	<p>and connection in between:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs of children 2. Needs of planning 3. Needs of other
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As it is not possible to discuss all topics in the short time, the WG decides to choose the most important ones. The other topics can be used as a base for the next meeting.

Policy-Organization

Cooperation between different departments

The participants discuss about the importance of the cooperation between the different departments. They agree that it is very important and helpful by carrying out different plans, but at the same time it's very difficult to make contact or to convince other departments to collaborate.

A good method is to get personally known to the staff or the politicians of the different department as it is a good base for collaborations. Maybe you could start a small festival for children with another department. You will get to know the staff, they see how you work and after that liaisons are much easier to establish.

You should try to convince the different departments that your work touches them too. For example by creating a new playground:

- How can we prevent vandalism? (Public policy)
- How can we avert that inhabitants complain about the noise of the children? (housing department / street-planning department)
- How can we make a playground useable for all generations, f. ex. as a green spot in the city (green department) or a sport area (sports department).

Often you need the approval of important politicians to fulfill your ideas or to get a budget for a project. The responsible politicians need to be convinced, that the investment for example in playgrounds can be very profitable for them. Through that they can gain more popularity as it is a political action that can be directly seen by the inhabitant.

Playgrounds

Children as designer

Cities built up new playground to make a city more child-friendly. But often they realize that there are no children who use the playgrounds or that the playgrounds get destroyed by vandalism.

Children are often bored by seeing always the same items and the same structure on each playground. A way to stop this bad progress could be to take children as designer of their playgrounds.

In a first step the children need to come together with the designer so that they get to know each other and that they understand each other in a better way. Children are more responsible-minded than adults mostly think

Of course this will cost more time and a little bit more effort and trust but the result will be more child-friendly than any other playground.

Another idea is to create a city map together with children in which all playgrounds and all interesting places for children (like a ditch or a good tree for climbing) are signed and subscribed.

Instruments

Action plan

The participants are afraid that all their discussions won't have any effect on the situation of the children in the network cities and that all their ideas will get lost.

So they decided that they would like to have an Action Plan where they can see their successes and plan the next steps. This would also give the members a better communal spirit and the plan would help other cities which are interested in the WG to join them.

In their eyes every group should have such an Action Plan.

Charta

The group realized that the links between the WGs are very poor. There is no communication and they don't believe that other groups get to know anything about their discussions.

The participants believe that the internet needs to be used in a much better way. On the homepage there should be some kind of a "toolbox" with different methods and tips related in a directory so that cities which want to become more child-friendly can use.

There should be a collection of best practice projects (from the award for example) where other cities can see them and learn something from them.

All groups together should follow a Charta (as an umbrella or roof for all WGs!)

But the participants decide the WG has not the time to think about such a Charta. This is a task of the main organization in Stuttgart

Next guest city

It was not possible to appoint the next guest city for the WG "Housing and Outdoor Activities" during the meeting. The city of Malmö admitted their interest but as it is not yet a member of the network they couldn't promise their availability.

Criticism

During the 2 day of the conference there was far too little time for "real" work. All participants agree that the ceremonial part and all the speeches are important as well, but the WG meetings should have much more of the time because 3 hours are not enough to gain professional results.

The WG meetings should not be all at the same time because this makes it impossible for a city to join several WGs although they may be interested different topics.