

Description of youth participation project

Name of project: A child-focused city map for Offenbach: A city map for children made by children

Cities for Children contact person

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Executive organisation

The project was implemented by the youth welfare office in cooperation with the children and youth parliament Offenbach.

Type of organisation: Municipal authority

Website:

<http://www.offenbach.de/Themen/Rathaus/Verwaltung/Organisation/Jugendamt/>

Additional information: The children and youth parliament (KJP) is a political, while independent from political parties, representation of children and teenagers in Offenbach. The KJP has been established in 1998. It stands up for the interests of children and teenagers in their hometown. The municipality of Offenbach has assigned a yearly budget of approx. EUR 5.000 to the KJP in order to secure the continuity of work. At the same time the municipality takes care that the KJP is supported and looked after by youth department officials. More information on the website: <http://www.offenbach.de/Themen/Rathaus/Politik/Kinder- und Jugendparlament/>

Project description

The project provides a solution to the following question/problem: The project especially the design and publishing of the city map can be regarded as a respond/first solution to the mobility and security needs of children and young people in Offenbach.

The project was initiated by representatives of the children and youth parliament Offenbach during a meeting dealing with questions of mobility ("Europäische Woche der Mobilität") in 2005.

Date of completion: The first edition of the child-focused map (10.000 copies) was published in October 2007 and distributed in schools all over Offenbach.

Evaluation steps for revising the first edition are in progress.

Aims:

Aims taking into consideration the result of the project – the map – can be described as follow:

First of all an increased mobility for children within the city by showing different (and safe) means of transport.

Secondly the map provides children and parents with an orientation and supporting tool in case of arranging their leisure-time activities.

Aims taking into consideration the project itself can be described as follow:
Youth participation as an instrument of initiating educational impetus as soon as children explore their environment and talk to authorities about interesting and informative places/institutions in town.
Youth participation as an instrument of strengthening social competences as soon as children conduct questioning and make interviews.

Target group: All children and young people in Offenbach.
The project reached up to nearly 10.000 young people.

Working method:

Different sets of methods were applied to the different stages of the project (the information and designing level, the evaluation level, the marketing level). Methods of the information stage included interviewing children in different institutions (Kindergarten, daily care centres, youth centres), exploring unknown city areas using a homemade questionnaire and drawing up first sketches of the map integrating all places of interests. Afterwards the collected information were examined regarding its suitability towards children needs, for example, bus routes and cycle paths were checked, museums attended (evaluation level). Methods of the marketing level finally included a project presentation in the city hall followed by a so-called "city map-rally" for children as well as recurrent information events of representatives of the KJP in Youth centres, schools ...etc.

Approximately 500 children were involved in the process of research, designing, drawing up and presentation. 20 of them were in charge of organising the whole project. They received advice and support by one official of the youth welfare office. Another official from the surveyor's office was responsible for technical details designing the map.

Finance:

Approximately EUR 3.500 were spent on behalf of the project, mainly printing costs. The entire project was sponsored by the municipal transport services of Offenbach (OVB).

Outcome:

Have the aims been achieved? Yes

What were the success factors? The participation of hundreds of children and teenagers, the city-map itself and the excellent cooperation between the partners and interest groups.

What were the pitfalls? The time limit of the project was exceeded by 18 months.

Future plans: a revised second edition of the city map, further participation projects are planned.

Quotes and opinions of young people: The city map is well done and includes many useful and informative details.

Any other remarks: Evaluation research for a revised second edition is in progress.

The presentation of the project will be completed by a five-minute-film, including statements from different project partners about the making of the map and its results.

Photograph: A detail of the child-focused city map of Offenbach

