



Nitra February 16-17 2011 Workshop Report

Attendees:

Belfast City: Frances Dowds, Kim Lavery

Bilbao: Claudia Emmanuel, Fiona Bult

British Council: Maria Stanisheva, Carolina Jimenez

Dublin: Jamie Cudden, Peter Finnegan

Dusseldorf: Stephanie Bolten

Nitra: Miloslava Kollarova, Farok Abou Nabout

Sofia: Nadejda Angelska, Silvia Savkova

Vienna: Christine Petioky, Karin Koenig

Poznan: Wojciech Bauer

Lead Expert: Ian Goldring

Slovak political and institutional representatives and Nitra Local Support Group Members: Andrea Mrlianova, Jana Kadlecikova, Lubica Cibulova, Helena Holeckova, Juraj Barat, Petra Klimo Zlatosova, Denis Kristek, Vladislav Borik, Ivan Kuhn, Lubomir Lorincz, Emil Paliatka, Martin Caja, Gertruda Gyurovszka, Arpad Bak, Marta Kissova, Vojtech Markovic, Stefan Mrvan, L Felixdia, Pavol Kopinec, Silvia Sdradova, Miloslav Vransloi,

UK Ambassador to Slovakia: Dominic Schroeder

Day 1

Opening

Start involved a welcome and introduction from the Nitra partner host, Miloslava Kollarova; Vladislav Borik, **Vice-chairman of the Nitra Self-Governing Region** described the situation with regards to migration issues in Slovakia, Slovakia's **current revising of its legislation concerning immigration** and the consequent interest of legislators in becoming familiar with OPENCities' contents and concepts; introductory comments about OPENCities and the workshop objectives from the Lead Partner, Frances Dowds, and Lead Expert, Ian Goldring; and included an address from the **UK ambassador** to Slovakia, Dominic Schroeder.

Working Group

The following working group session consisted of a **Round Circle** learning exchange among the project partners, focussed on their approaches/challenges re. PR activities/events, communicating and building support with political people, decision



makers and other targeted groups. See Annex I for the questions partners were given to prepare the discussion.

It was agreed that there was a general need to better integrate **private sector** involvement in OPENCities – during and after the lifespan of the project – despite the challenges involved in doing so. Likewise, it was agreed that the dimension of OPENCities as an **economic development strategy and place promotion** tool had been underdeveloped and that focus on these aspects of the OC concept should be strengthened.

Partners reported broadly similar problems in navigating decision-making processes and structures in their efforts to build support for OPENCities' objectives and activities; seeing these commonalities was useful for partners in gaining a sense of perspective over their own situations and in **evaluating and revising** their own efforts.

LAP Presentations

- **Nitra** – LAP was a strong improvement on work presented in previous workshops, while some minor improvements remain to be settled based on LE feedback the progress made is promising; the LAP was particularly notable for its well laid out Stakeholder Analysis and Problem/Solution table.
- **Dusseldorf** – reviewed elements of their LAP and explained certain difficulties with producing a definitive official document, owing to issues of internal decision making processes and hierarchy, however the plan is substantially articulated and unofficial drafts are available to the Lead Expert for OPENCities internal use.
- **Dublin** – made a strong presentation that focussed on Internationalisation and the LAP's complementarity with the broader framework of Dublin's strategic development policies and crisis recovery efforts.
- **Sofia** – updated the partners on the development of their LAP – the final draft to be delivered later in February – which, notably, has benefitted from a recent involvement of key local political decision makers and effective public relations events that have significantly expanded stakeholder involvement and attracted the attention of press and media to OPENCities in Bulgaria.

Partners committed to providing final LAPs to lead partner and expert in English by 11th March 2011.

Afternoon session

Preparation for the Closing Conference

Discussion covered:

- Options for **keynote speaker**: agreed that priority should be given to good speakers and people with significant appeal; P Finnegan agreed to look into securing Mary Robinson as a potential keynote speaker and possibly panel member as well; Vienna to provide contact details of potential panel members specifically the vice-Mayor (Marie Vasilikou, Green party) and NGO representative (Emmanuel Inou); M Stanisheva to follow up on invites to potential guest speakers (Mayor of Stuttgart and Dep. Mayor of London);
- The proposed **City Leaders Panel**: Why do it? What it should be. Best choices for participants. It was agreed that the panel members would respond to a statement/question, yet to be determined – i.e. such as ‘An Open City is the only way forward?’
- The **invitation list**: what political, institutional or other partner contacts to activate?
- Partners will provide a quote responding to ‘**What Open Cities Means to Me**’. Quotes to be from project partner or LSG member or any other source that effectively responds to the question above and who was involved in the work of the project, not from political representatives.
- Agreed that Ian would decide on partners’ contribution in relation to projects and **good practise case** studies that offer elements of interest and transferability to other cities, subject to receipt of LAPs from partners.
- Agreed the need for partners to **rehearse** their input the night before the conference, and to provide written content in advance. Lead Expert will manage this process.
- **Press Conference & LAP Handover**: Details to be agreed based on guidance on local media protocol and EC Fast track requirements re LAP handover. Fast track projects are required to hand over LAPS to the EC and previous protocol has involved press promotional opportunities. It may be possible to do this at the start or end of the day, subject to guidance from the Commission.
- Partners to remind their **MA**s that this is the final meeting they agreed to attend and where they will hand over their final report to the EC and the URBACT secretariat.
- Moderator, **Jan Maarten de Vet** to open conference and do the conclusion, linking conference theme (economic crisis openness) and Europe 2020.
- Belfast to provide a **female representative** to strengthen gender balance, and act as chair for the initial Welcome session, introducing BC and EESC

reps (4 mins each), and linking to keynote speaker, and commission rep.

- Lead Expert will present a section of the conference on the **LAPs**, divided into 2 main blocks – 70 mins presentation and 20 mins Q&A at end. The presentation will be carried out by LE overall, interspersed with partners who come in for a few minutes each to talk about their selected examples – as identified by LE previously. At the end of each partner mini-presentation, there will be an opportunity for short Q&A.
- Agreed to request of **Jean Loup Drubigny** that in his talk he address what he thinks the priorities are for Urbact going forward, new priorities for cities, etc
- Agreed that translation will be provided in **Spanish**.
- Media coverage and strategy, setting and other logistics. Displays, posters, other materials etc

OPENCities Message Delivery Exercise

Partners were asked to engage in friendly competition in developing their own ‘**elevator speech**’ about why their city is engaged with OPENCities and what the OPENCities project has done for their city. Results showed participants need to improve their preparedness in concisely communicate such messages in this last phase of the project, which is centred around a) communicating the project and getting support from leaders and decision-makers, and b) preparing to make brief presentations in public about their cities’ OPENCities work at the final conference.

It was thus agreed there was a need to clarify basic messages and practice delivering them.

Day 2, All Partners Business Meeting:

The day opened with agreements from the day before being summarised and confirmed.

Discussion covered: approval of the Minutes from the previous workshop in Sofia; Finance update; Update from Paris February Thematic Pole meeting; End date of OPENCities Project and final reports – administrative & financial; Partner outputs – what, how, when; Evaluator update; any other business.

British Council Update: Index and OPENCities Global - OPENCities Index

C Jimenez presented a video demonstrating the index and how partners can use it, explained the Index needs 20 cities in order to **continue** and was optimistic that European cities would enable this to happen. S Bolten (Duss.) encouraged partners to secure their city’s financial support for the continuation of the index. F Dowds (LP)



indicated it would be opportune to confirm and announce the partners agreeing to go forward with the Index at the Final Conference.

Comment was made by Dublin as to their desire for the **network** aspect of the index to be reinvigorated. A proposal will be coming from Dublin to take this forward.

Site Visit

In the afternoon, partners visited the organisation of one of the key Nitra LSG members – Juraj Barat. Mr Barat was interviewed for an OPENCities publication, sharing his views on the involvement of the LSG in OPENCities' project in Nitra and the possible benefits of the Urbact LSG **Summer University** – he felt the opportunity for networking was of particular interest.

ANNEX I

Learning Exchange – communication, messaging, lobbying – OPENCities Workshop, Nitra, February 16th, 2011

Objective: Learning Exchange among partners, on practical approaches to communicating about the project and building support for it (particularly the LAPs and the final conference).

The other partners are all trying to do essentially the same thing you are doing now – obtaining support for the OPENCities agenda and activities – and would be interested in hearing just *how* you are going about doing this.

Tell us, in practical terms, how you are communicating and building support with political people, decision makers, other groups you need to convince and the general public.

What kind of arguments are you using? What presentational tactics?

What reactions/results are you getting? What blockages? What are you finding facilitates the task?

In particular, tell us about how you are approaching:

- Politicians,
- People in in other areas of your city administration



- MAs and people in other levels of administration (regional, national or neighboring localities)
- Third sector groups (NGOs, associations etc.)
- People from the private sector (this has been a relative weak point in many of the participating localities)
- Any other relevant community leaders, representatives and opinion leaders
- Any use of media you are involved with, any PR activities/events
- Are you using any third parties to carry your message/represent you? If so tell us about it.

You are cordially invited *not* to use PowerPoint, unless you really must (e.g. if pictures are involved or something). Talking from your notes is fine. The focus is on **internal peer exchange** in order to build the capacity of all partners to communicate and build support for the project locally, not any packaged external output.