Contents

Project Overview........................................................................................................................................... 3
Introduction...................................................................................................................................................... 4
Transfer theory, tools, and methodology ....................................................................................................... 7
The City Stories .............................................................................................................................................. 17
Outcomes: How do we know the transfer has worked? ............................................................................... 27
7 Lessons Learned: ...................................................................................................................................... 33
Final Reflections ........................................................................................................................................... 35

Related Documents

Genius Open Summary Report: “Genius Open – A Journey in Open Innovation”

Genius Open City Case Study – Siracusa

Genius Open City Case Study – San Sebastián

Genius Open City Case Study – Tallinn
Project Overview

The context
The Genius Open project was part of the European Commission’s ongoing URBACT programme that enables the exchange of knowledge and experience between cities through defined projects and networks.

The project tested the transfer of an existing practice to three other EU cities: Tallinn (Estonia), San Sebastián (Spain) and Siracusa (Italy). The practice being transferred was an open innovation model (“GeniUS!”) devised by and used in the city of York.

York’s model of open innovation was transferred to and implemented by the other three cities over 15 months during 2014 & 2015.

The Project
Genius Open was one of six pilot transfer networks commissioned by URBACT. These transfer projects had two main aims:

- Provide cities with new or additional benefit from adopting existing good practice already in use elsewhere;
- Test and understand the process of transferring good practice from one city to another and capture this as a defined methodology where possible.

Watch the Genius Open video...
http://youtu.be/gp-oTU_R80E
Introduction

This report is the concluding report for a pilot transfer network examining the theme of open innovation. The pilot operated by URBACT was the transfer of the GeniUS! Open Innovation model. The model was developed by City of York Council and their partners, as a way of using open innovation to engage citizens in the affairs, problems and solutions of their city. The project aimed to transfer the principles and practice of the GeniUS! model from the ‘Giving’ city York, to three ‘Receiving’ cities, Siracusa, San Sebastián and Tallinn.

What is open innovation?

Open innovation is a type of innovation originally developed within the private sector but which is now applied across a range of disciplines and sectors, including city governance. In a city context, it is a practice that invites us to look for support, knowledge, experience and ideas outside of a system (even complex systems, like cities) as well as internally. At its heart it has an ethos of openness and humility, the ‘art of not knowing’, combined with practices of participation, collaboration and design. These things together promote a different way of working, which is creative, innovative, and founded on relationships of trust and mutual respect.

In practice, open innovation is about looking outside an organisation’s normal boundaries for new ideas and perspectives, then working with people outside in order to develop those ideas into tangible solutions. In the case of GeniUS!, the typical boundaries are those of the city administration. By looking outside the City of York Council, groups including residents, community groups, businesses, and universities all became involved in the process of defining and solving particular challenges faced by the city and its communities.

Why is open innovation relevant?

In the current climate, systems including cities are facing increasingly difficult operating conditions. They are constrained by financial pressures, open to scrutiny, (through information now freely available via technological platforms and the internet), and face even greater demands for accountability and public value.

The traditional methods of running organisations (and approaching change) often fail to cope with these changing demands of want and need of the modern age, or the reality that organisations (and that includes cities) are living systems, not mechanistic machines. The mechanistic view, and hence traditional methodologies of change, are rooted in the traditions of the industrial age, where systems are managed through hierarchical leadership and operational procedures that are internally focused and ‘closed’.

Using Open innovation is a different approach to this traditional closed perspective. It is defined as; the breaking down of an organisation’s boundaries to encourage the flow of knowledge and creativity-both internally and externally- to promote innovation.

This practice of openness unlocks knowledge and assets that are invaluable to cash strapped city authorities. It brings about engagement in communities because it promotes transparency. It empowers users by involving them in the innovation. Open innovation processes ensure that the final innovation itself is more relevant and scalable because it has been shaped by the users who know how it will work best, and know how it will fit in their environment.

What is GeniUS!?

The GeniUS! model was conceived and developed in the City of York, built by using the principles of Open Innovation and applying them to a city context. It is a model which provides a city with a way of working with citizens and other local stakeholders in a creative, collaborative, innovative and open way in order to find new and better solutions to problems within the city.
GeniUS! was developed as a way of engaging a range of stakeholders (residents, businesses, charities, students, and public services) to identify and create ways to solve problems and improve the city – a way of unlocking hidden knowledge, skills and expertise and harnessing them to focus on challenges facing a city and its communities.

**Co-creation – using the power of “US”**

The GeniUS! model compromises five main stages:

1. **Define**: Problem areas (‘challenges’) are defined and refined through a process that seeks to understand the crux of the problem. The background and context are thoroughly researched, as well as existing solutions elsewhere, before refining the questions to be answered and engaging key stakeholders and the public. This is an important step to ensure time is not wasted creating a solution that already exists or that there is a focus on the wrong problem.

2. **Discover**: An online open innovation platform where challenge questions are published (‘posted’) to discover what people think, what ideas they have and how these could be brought to life as tangible solutions.

3. **Design**: A physical open innovation event, specifically created for the GeniUS! process, which enables participants to take the ideas and discussion from the online platform and then rapidly design proposals and prototypes for solutions.

4. **Develop**: GeniUS! uses a “pilot and scale” approach to rolling out these new potential solutions, whereby ideas are tested and evaluated on a small scale through the development of pilot projects.

5. **Deliver**: Successful pilot solutions are then extended to deliver their benefits on a larger scale.

But the GeniUS! model is more than just a linear set of activities. It is both a process (a set of steps to follow) and an ethos (a set of values and beliefs to guide our way). Whilst the process steps can be followed without considering the cultural aspects, and the cultural aspects can be developed in isolation, focussing on both simultaneously strengthens both aspects in a self-reinforcing way: applying the process helps to develop the right thinking and behaviours by doing things differently; whilst purposefully changing our ways of interacting, creating and deciding make the steps easier to take and yield more impactful results.

*Simply put, GeniUS! provides a structured response to the challenge of “How do you ask a city a question?”*

**The Genius Open Cities**

**York**

York is a city in the north of England. It has a population of around 200,000, supports more than 80,000 jobs and has a low unemployment rate. Its industrial past was built around railways and confectionary. However, over a number of years York has managed to develop themselves as an international hub for science and technology, and as a national centre for financial and business services. It also has a burgeoning research capability. That capability and expertise extends through biosciences, healthcare and medical research, bio-renewables, environmental research, IT, digital and creative technologies. It has two outstanding universities, and is the UK’s founding Science City.

GeniUS! forms part of a wider initiative of innovation in York, and is supported by, (amongst others), Innovate York and Science City York. York’s innovative approaches have won and continue to win awards and financial support. Their GeniUS! approach has to date held nine challenges, the latest is; how can we support York citizens and businesses to become an irresistible force?

**Siracusa**

Siracusa is a medium-sized city of more than 120,000 citizens with a rich archaeological and artistic heritage. Bounded by deep, natural harbours and Ortigia, its island promontory, Siracusa has been a crossroads for soldiers, merchants, artisans, builders, farmers and the Church. It has increasingly been an area of commerce and was transformed by the arrival of the petrochemical industry in the 1900s.
Today, Siracusa’s challenges reflect the many changes in South-Eastern Sicily and Italy; a reduction in industrial jobs, the slow growth of tourism, the lack of progress in infrastructural construction, mobility and accessibility, and the disassociation of many parts of Siracusa from the main life of the Ortigia district.

The Smarter cities IBM report of 2013 recognized the great effort and ideas that different stakeholders develop, but noted that:

- Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders was limited or difficult.
- The transport system uncoordinated.
- Siracusa, as a many layered city, lacked coordination when considering the needs of its multiple strata and districts.
- The support of its citizens in improving civic collaboration was in need of better compliance with local safety and regulatory actions.
- A lack of infrastructure for tourism.

Siracusa hoped that GeniUS! would help them find a path forwards. They aimed to trial GeniUS! as a method of developing; ‘more open, inclusive and participatory governance, that would unlock the potential existing within the city’.

**Tallinn**

Tallinn is the capital of the Republic of Estonia. Over 31% of Estonia’s population (425,249 people) live in Tallinn. Tallinn is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for business and industry. The local developmental policies of Tallinn are focused on diversifying city life, (to remain attractive), and also on developing education.

Despite a higher educational level in their population than the rest of Estonia, Tallinn has for many years experienced a lack of highly qualified employees and technical/engineering skills. They believe this is caused by change and focus of higher education; student preferences have changed, as well as the fact that the background, competence and ambitions of entrepreneurs have not been developed sufficiently for increased innovative production.

GeniUS! was intended to form part of the wider scheme of innovation in Tallinn- The Positive Program of the City of Tallinn. This programme aimed to gather citizen ideas and proposals to further develop the knowledge based economy of Tallinn. Specifically they hoped that GeniUS! would develop; ‘a participatory, collaborative approach, with residents and organisations, working together to tackle the cities educational challenges’.

**San Sebastián**

Donostia-San Sebastián is considered to be one of the most important towns in the Basque country. It has a population of around 182,026. During the last two decades, the Basque Country, led by its Government, has developed an extensive policy on science and technology aimed at supporting the existing industrial fabric and preparing it to face the challenges of the future. A complete network of organizations and tools in support of innovative processes has been set up during the last twenty years. Of particular note are the Science, Technology and Innovation network, the Technological Parks network (an international reference) and the Business and Innovation Centres (incubators for technology based businesses).

However, despite this proliferation of opportunity, including the Basque Excellence Research Centres (BERC) and the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC-CIC), their impact in terms of drawing talent to work and live in the Basque country is low. San Sebastián wanted to address this, working with the Fomento San Sebastián (FSS-an innovation ‘agency’), they were interested in the potential of GeniUS! and open innovation as a new way of engaging with stakeholders.
Transfer theory, tools, and methodology

This chapter explores the transfer process of the *Genius Open* pilot transfer project. It begins with an overview of *theory of transfer*, exploring the ambitions of the *Genius Open* pilot. It then explores the transfer methodology of the project.

In transferring GeniUS!, York followed a process of reflective practice. It was hoped that this would help York to develop the GeniUS! model further, improve the transfer process and also improve the practice in York. With this in mind the primary focus of this section is specifically on the transfer of the GeniUS! methodology from the perspective of York, as the ‘giving’ city.

The theory of transfer - How change happens

Systemic change is a change that affects the attitudes and behaviours of the majority within a system, often through periods of ambiguous uncertainty. The URBACT *Genius Open* project defines outcomes of change (or transfer) as; ‘a change in a target populations skills, attitudes, knowledge, behaviours, status of life condition brought about by experiencing a programme, project or initiative’.

There are generally understood to be two different types of change that occur within systems; change that alters or improves the methods and procedures that already exist in a system- it manages stability; and change that transforms the system itself though altering or creating new ways of doing, to meet new expectations or requirements.

This latter change reinvents procedures, changes ethos and challenges culture and even identity. Watzlawick termed these types of change, *first order change* and *second order change* respectively.

The GeniUS! model aimed to achieve second order change. The project aimed to do much more than transfer a set of activities. It aimed to change the system itself, changing culture and ideology as well as practices - through the removal of internal organisational boundaries within municipalities, and barriers between citizens and municipalities. However, this second order change was unlikely to be achieved unless a suitable level of readiness was present in each receiving city.

Transfer methodology

Transferring the GeniUS! model was always going to be a challenge. The approach needed to transfer the model in such a way that the practices and core principles remained true to its intent, thus retaining the methodology.

However, the project needed to do more than just transfer a set of activities – it needed to change the system itself. Changing cultural ideology and entrenched behaviours in cities was challenging. The transfer methodology needed to flex to the demands of local culture and organisational context if the model was to work in each setting – a simple “copy & paste” would not work. York therefore employed a coaching methodology to underpin the transfer, supporting the cities to work out their own way to make the model work in their particular city setting.

Because of these complexities and the importance of careful adaptation of the model as it was transferred, the transfer process was different to more traditional URBACT exchange networks. Unlike the other five pilot transfer networks, York adopted a bilateral approach to transfer from the start, with the focus on direct exchange between York and each of the partners separately to allow the specific approach and support to be tailored to each city and context.

As the project progressed, an increasingly multilateral approach (closer to the more traditional URBACT “transnational” model) was phased in as the cities became better placed to learn from each other as they all began to experience and test the model in their city.

The distilling of the values, principles and practices that underpin the GeniUS! model has been a complex interaction of methods; including coaching, structured workshops, the provision of
practical support, reports and regular updates, guides and tools. The criticality of this blended approach to transfer cannot be overstated.

Due to the diversity of the three participating cities and the challenges of simultaneous transfer to them, York decided to employ a coaching and mentoring methodology to underpin their approach. Coaching is a process that aims to help groups or individuals to discover or uncover what they want to do and how they can do it. It teaches and develops personal skills that can help improve the ways that a person or group ‘presents’ themselves and interacts with others. It is not prescriptive, but rather it is prompting. The process is supportive and asks people to find the way forwards for themselves, to learn-by-doing, through a process of inquisitive exploration, prompting consideration of actions, thoughts and feelings, whilst developing awareness of self and context.

A core feature of using a coaching methodology in the GeniUS! transfer was the creation of an environment of connectivity. This connectivity was valued by the cities, and coaching was considered by the cities to be a good way of working during the course of the pilot.

**San Sebastián**

‘Things that have worked well: Coaching sessions on organising specific phases of the process and with specific tools (like the one about how to run an OI event).’

### The GeniUS! Toolkit

The architecture of the transfer model was supported through the provision of tools that helped the participating cities understand the concept, process and culture of the GeniUS! model. Tools are a useful way of developing understanding in both partner and lead cities.

They are a useful part of the transfer process, but they are of little value in isolation. A coaching framework enabled them to be used successfully.

**Stakeholder Mapping Template**

**Stakeholder Mapping**

**Siracusa**

‘The stakeholders map was a very helpful tool in order to understand the context’

**Problem framing template**

**Siracusa problem framing**
The GeniUS! poster, the *Running the GeniUS! process* handbook and GeniUS! tool kit were the core. These were translated into the receiving cities languages. The toolkit contained a range of templates that could be used to support key activities within the project, such as templates to help with stakeholder analysis and problem identification.

The *Running GeniUS! process* handbook provided advice and a detailed step by step guide to the various stages of operating a GeniUS! project. It detailed the process of refining the challenge question, running online discussions and running the open innovation event. The handbook was considered to be a useful tool by the partner cities.

**Siracusa**

‘Talking with the York team, looking at the ‘GeniUS! poster visual’, receiving suggestions on how to manage (activities, possible tools, etc.) the different phases have been of great support’.

**Sans Sebastián**

‘The guides and toolkit have been very appreciated’.

**York**

‘Production of the GeniUS! poster was a highly informative process, as it made us consider sequencing and description of the activities very carefully and also helped us to focus on what were the critical points and which parts were more incidental. The poster was also a good prompt for us to better understand the fine balance and interplay between the process and cultural elements of the model’.

**Siracusa**

‘The drawing/poster of the process made by Laura has been very useful. Since the first transfer workshop in Siracusa, we had the chance to visualize all the steps and during the project. We returned to it several times. Actually we had the MAP in our mind... and we felt as walking throughout this map, even with the possibility to deviate off-piste!!!’ - Caterina Timpanaro
A feature of the transfer process has been the requirement of the lead city, York, to receive regular reports and updates of progress from the partner cities. This was a necessary part of keeping track of the project and the progress being made, but it is worth noting that San Sebastián found the pressure and quantity of this difficult to manage.

The Discover stage of the GeniUS! process was originally developed by York as on online discussion platform. The technology used is a well-established social media platform and is globally supported. It is considered easy to use and the functionality can be customised to suit this individual project easily. The subscription costs to access the platform and support are very low, and down-time has been non-existent. It is simple to access the platform on both smart phone and PC, through Facebook, Twitter or Google+ log-in details, or through registering an email address. Each of the cities, following the model provide by York, created a website and discussion platform, although it should be noted that whilst two cities (Siracusa & San Sebastián) opted to use the same technology platform (ning.com) Tallinn opted to create their own version of the platform. The success of the discussion platform as a participation forum has been variable from city to city. This seems to be partly down to cultural attitudes to participating in online discussion, and partly due to the preparatory work with stakeholders before hand. The nature of the specific challenges chosen also had a bearing on the relative merits of the online platform as an engagement tool. For example, Siracusa chose to work with a physical community who are less digitally connected than the average for Siracusa. They now have decided the most effective way to connect with their community is via Facebook but they are also considering other participatory tools instead of the ning platform.

All the cities were supported remotely through a combination of email discussions, phone conferences and Skype calls. This proved to be an effective way of helping the cities with questions and concerns, with the phone and Skype calls seeming to have the best effect in terms of building confidence in the ability to deliver the events and the pilot projects.

Throughout the project, the York team responded to requested for documentation and examples to support particular stages of the project or particular tools and methods. A number of these were planned to be produced at the beginning of the project, but others were put together upon request. On reflection, all of these materials would now be included as core support tools for the transfer of GeniUS!.

Documentation produced included:
- GeniUS! Model in York, explanatory video
- Design thinking templates
- Sharing learning templates
- Progress reports and summaries
- Agendas of the events
- Genius Open video
- Articles published in the URBACT website

However, the York team were always clear that the documentation was not a substitute for a clear understanding and discussions with them about the application. The toolkits and documentation alone cannot convey the full detail of the knowledge and experience accrued through three years practice using and evolving the model. Receiving cities were always encouraged to read the documentation and then call to discuss it after, to ensure understanding.

There were also instances where documentation was requested and then not followed. A good example that having the methodology documented does not always lead to the correct application in practice. Understanding and action are distinct and should be treated as such during the transfer process.
The Phases of Transfer

Following an initial kick-off meeting with all project partners alongside the other five URBACT pilot transfer networks and three pilot development networks, the main stages for the transfer process were:

Baselining: a visit by the Lead Expert to each of the four cities to meet with project team and key stakeholders to understand their existing context, current practice and “readiness” for GeniUS! and thus provide crucial input into the design of the transfer workshops and support materials.

Transfer workshops: two to four consecutive days in each city, working with the local project team and local stakeholders to communicate and demonstrate the model in an interactive and experiential way.

Demonstrating the Model: four days in York with all four city partners, including participating in a two-day Open Innovation event run by York as part of their current GeniUS! Challenge, as well as coaching and development workshops with the York team and the project’s Lead & Thematic Experts from URBACT.

Cities run their own GeniUS! process: Each partner city defined its own challenge with stakeholders and launched their own online platform and engagement activities.

City Open Innovation events: Each partner city held their own open innovation events to work with residents and local stakeholders to co-design solutions to their challenge areas.

Local Pilot Projects: Cities worked with stakeholders from the events to develop and run pilot projects to test out and refine the solutions designed during the open innovation events.

Initial Preparation Phases

The kick off meeting

The Genius Open kick-off meeting was part of a wider launch of 9 URBACT projects. It was attended by over 100 city representatives coming from 30 different cities spread over 15 EU countries, representing 6 transfer networks and 3 delivery networks. The meeting was held in Paris and ran over the course of 3 days. The event acted as an introduction to URBACT and its wider activities, as well as providing focused training for participating cities on their specific programmes; including GeniUS!. Its aims were to develop:

- A network with strong relationships and shared understanding between the project leads, from each partner.
- A shared understanding of the potential barriers and implications for the project on the culture and processes within a city.
- A clear vision for how the GeniUS! open innovation model can be used in their city.

The kick off meeting was the first time that all the participating parties were brought together. It gave the opportunity to forge connections, as well as develop a shared understanding concerning the GeniUS! approach, though this was restricted by timings and agenda. This had a more long-term impact on relationships, with both San Sebastián and Siracusa commenting that throughout the course of the programme, more dialogue -and thus support-between the cities would have been beneficial. There was an expectation that more visits to the other partner cities would have been included from the beginning.

However, York were clear that they felt there insufficient value for money in partner cities
travelling to share experience in the early stages until they all understood the model and were actively applying it, thus having more to share and exchange.

Siracusa

‘We were disappointed…we thought to have more time to share with the other partner cities our context, our aims, our fears…’

One of the aims of the kick off meeting was to consolidate the learning and understanding of each of the partner cities, so that they each entered into the transfer process from the same starting point. Achieving this during the meeting proved to be challenging and problematic, as each of the cities entered the kick off meeting with different levels of understanding about the culture and principles of GeniUS!

The delivery team found that this made sessions that involved all cities more challenging, and that they needed to work in more parallel ways. This meant that the approach and agenda had to be adapted ‘on the ground’.

It would have been useful, reflected York to have been more aware of each cities starting point before the kick off meeting. This would have allowed the approach of the kick off meeting to have been tailored better to the needs of the cities, (even if that meant beginning at the very beginning and going over ‘old ground’ once more).

While at the time the lead city, York, believed the intended outcomes to have been achieved, in retrospect they realised that grasping the principles and ideology of GeniUS! model didn’t actually happen until the transfer workshops.

York

‘This highlighted the need for a slightly different approach to preparation and transfer, with more time given to ensuring the fundamental principles of the model are understood early on’.

The baseline visits and report

The baseline report provided information about the open innovation model and the Genius Open project, as well as presenting factual, qualitative data concerning each city. It was the first step to understanding the background, culture, intentions, hopes and understanding of each city. In addition it included the outcomes framework (see Chapter 5: Outcomes ), which stated each city’s intended outcomes from the GeniUS! model. The aims of the baseline report were:

- To further develop relationships and trust between the partner cities, the lead partner city and with the lead expert.
- To gain insight and understanding of the partner cities cultures.
- To understand the starting point of understanding and engagement in each city.
- To encourage stakeholder participation and motivation.

Whilst much of the information gathered for the report was formal data, which could be easily recorded in the baseline report, observations concerning culture and understanding were harder to include - and also inappropriate for a public report. It was felt that to include and share these personal observations would have damaged relationships and trust.

However, although not formally reported, these observations have been important in understanding the cities and developing the transfer methodology. They have been useful in highlighting sensitive points of concern that needed a more personalised approach. An approach, noted York, that is built on the trust and relationships that comes with face-to-face, not remote interaction.

York

‘All the insights gained were key to shaping the transfer approach, both overall and in each individual city case’.

Siracusa Team
York recommended that future baseline visits should be more prescriptive, with set activities, questions and format expected from each city. However, this should be done, with the caveat that the research and reporting of the baseline needs to be carried out sensitively. It is absolutely vital that the cultural needs of the cities be considered and that an environment of trust, and a focus on building meaningful relationships between the project partner cities and the lead partner city and lead expert, are at the forefront.

York

‘The person or persons conducting the baseline must also be acutely aware of the cultural factors surrounding the practice to be transferred and the city context into which it is to be placed’.

Transfer Phases

Initial Transfer Workshops

These workshops were designed and delivered by the York project team and took place in each of the receiving cities in turn. The transfer workshops were bespoke to each city, based on their needs and their understanding of the GeniUS! model (as it was clear from the kick off meetings that each city had understood the concepts and method behind the practice differently).

The purpose of the workshops was four-fold: firstly, it aimed to reinforce trust and confidence and to build relationships between the giving city and each receiving city; secondly, it aimed to communicate the principles of open innovation to each of the cities; thirdly it aimed to enable cities to be able to take the model and use it for themselves, including beginning to consider their possible ‘challenge’ areas; and finally, the workshops aimed to deliberately engage with the ‘core teams’ and also with the wider stakeholders.

Siracusa:

‘The Initial Transfer Workshop was also an important moment to start a vis-à-vis and human relation with the giving city team… we need trust and ‘relaxed’ relations to be able to ask and exchange and learn from each other.’ Caterina Timpanaro

Reflections

The initial workshop in Siracusa was the first workshop to take place, and was described by the delivery team as feeling ‘chaotic’. It was held over a period of four days with the structure dependent on the availability of stakeholders. However the delivery evolved in such a way that it was possible for the local core team to deliver elements themselves, thereby strengthening the message -and thus engagement with the local community. This engagement and sense of local authenticity was galvanised further through the deputy Mayor’s participation in the workshop, which demonstrated active political support. The success of the workshop was evident in the transformation of the stakeholder’s attitudes from ‘sceptical’ to ‘highly engaged and positive’.

Siracusa

‘The first transfer workshop (York’s team visit in Siracusa) has been very very useful’.

The Tallinn team participated enthusiastically during the workshop and were enthused by the GeniUS! approach. However, there were initial difficulties due to cultural differences between the delivery team and the Estonians, (though after the first morning both parties had successfully adapted to these differences). Language barriers
also made the process feel halted and slow. The delivery team felt that communication was sometimes too one-sided, particularly as the model was described during the initial stages of the workshop. The necessary use of an interpreter added to the feeling of slowness. However, the later stages of the workshop were felt to be much more participatory as the Estonians engaged fully in debate and exploration of the model, and its principles, culture and implications.

Tallinn found the workshop to be useful in developing their understanding, developing their ‘problem’ and helping to shape how they can use the model. However, in reflection they commented that they found it difficult to turn this learning into action. They also noted that the workshop was valuable in fostering relationships within the group, as well as in developing enthusiasm, and motivation in support of the project.

**Tallinn**

‘The working group knew each other better as well as the motivation to contribute was significantly increased’.

**San Sebastián**

was the final initial transfer meeting to take place, as such, the delivery team had developed and adapted their transfer process. They described this workshop as the ‘slickest’, but also as ‘challenging’. The workshop was challenging in several ways: It became apparent that the attitude to change was causing barriers in both engagement and understanding, and that overcoming these difficulties needed much more time than was available during the first part of these workshops.

The first day of the meeting was affected by the fact that the San Sebastián team hadn’t fully understood the model (nor its implications) from the kick off meeting, and furthermore this lack of understanding hadn’t been realised by the delivery team. This meant that the delivery team was unprepared, and had to adapt to what they described as; ‘a critical deficit of understanding and concern among the PP (project partner) team’; they hadn’t understood what was expected from them, and therefore were unprepared for the meeting. This was one of the key experiences which led the York team to realise that the kick-off and baselining activities were absolutely critical, and that if repeated, more time should be spent to ensure effective communication and understanding of the model and its implications. Some of the cultural and behavioural changes required for the GeniUS! model to be effective are complex and subtle, so a clear understanding of (and adjustment for) the starting point of receiving cities is absolutely critical.

However, the delivery team were able to adapt to these demands, and ensure that San Sebastián understood the GeniUS! principles. The second day workshop with the full local stakeholder group was successful and positive responses from stakeholders helped the San Sebastián team to gain confidence in the use of the model. The meeting also enabled building new relationships and formalising engagement with local stakeholders.
San Sebastián

“At local level FSS identified a set of key stakeholders to establish a Local Support Group…interaction with this group was formalised in April 2014 and participation of their members has been maintained during the whole process.”

Open Innovation events: training, adaptation and observation

York’s Synergy Surgery: the model in action

An Open Innovation Event is part of the GeniUS! open innovation process. York has branded their event as a “Synergy Surgery”, although it was suggested to the partners that they consider branding which works for their context. The event follows the discovery stage of the process, and forms the core of the design stage. It is a continuation of the online and offline discussions and aims to draw together ideas from these initial discussions, but in a ‘real life’ environment. It brings together diverse groups of people and asks them to work collaboratively, doing in days what could otherwise take weeks. The process is described as ‘high energy and fast paced’. It allows the discussions to be explored further, with the intention of reaching potential ‘pilot-able’ ideas by the end of the event - thus moving the project into the ‘develop’ stage.

The York synergy surgery took place in July 2014. The workshop was a two-day creative, ‘hackathon’ style work event drawing on the themes of co-design and co-production. The meeting brought together residents of the city of York and other stakeholders. It formed part of the preparation for York’s entry bid into the Bloomberg Philanthropies, Mayors Challenge Competition. The Mayor’s Challenge Competition encourages cities to come up with innovative ideas to address their problems, awarding funds for the winning solution.

The synergy surgery meeting brought together stakeholders to address a specific ‘challenge’ which York were using the GeniUS! approach to tackle during the transfer project. This was a core part of the transfer methodology in that it would allow the partners to observe the process in action in York before designing and launching their own challenge and designing their open innovation events. The challenge aimed to address a bold question which looked at how a “next generation” of the GeniUS! model could be developed and implemented in the city, which would be entirely citizen-led and citizen-owned.

The involvement of the three partner cities allowed them to experience the creative & collaborative design process for themselves, through seeing a ‘synergy surgery’ in action. The city representatives also participated in the working groups as part of the event as well, so were able to experience it first hand - critical for understanding how their own stakeholders may feel about such an event in their own cities.

It also provided an opportunity to hold further training sessions during the same transnational visit (either side of the Synergy Surgery event), thus enabling the passing on of new ideas, skills and tools to the partner cities. The synergy surgery and related meetings/workshops provided a crucial opportunity for the further consolidation of learning and understanding for cities.

Planning workshop

Key feedback from the July meetings was that the cities would value more support in planning their own Open Innovation events. The opportunity to see and participate in a Synergy Surgery in York allowed the partners to understand the model but the York team reflected that it also meant that they also realised the scale of the challenge and felt that they didn’t have as good a grasp of the process as they’d thought. This had a result in a reduction in confidence in some cases and the York team therefore acted quickly to address this through arranging the opportunity for a further two day workshop in York for all cities to work through their planning and early experience of launching their respective city challenges.

This took the form of a “coaching workshop” where the York team and URBACT experts would work with the city teams to coach them in some of the techniques needed to plan and run their open innovation events and to help them structure their event plans clearly. Tallinn and San Sebastián took this opportunity and participated in the workshop and found it highly valuable.

Siracusa felt they would prefer additional support after the open innovation event, as the
implementation of the pilot projects was their main concern. York therefore supported Siracusa to design their event remotely through Skype conferences.

The *Genius Open* transfer aims:

- Introduce and experience a synergy surgery—showing them the process.
- Provide the cities’ with synergy surgery ‘tools’.
- Introduce new tools of practice such as the LEAN model.

AND

- Discuss cities interest and engagement with the GeniUS! model.
- A platform to find out the cities’ thoughts and feelings about GeniUS! right now in real time.

**Reflections**

The synergy surgery event was valued by the project partner cities. It provided them with a template to follow in order to hold similar style events themselves. It particularly helped them to experience the style and “feel” of an open and creative event. It provided them with the tools, skills and experiences necessary to hold their own events. This way of working was very new to all city partners and it would have been difficult to convey this in a non-experiential way. The experience did shake their confidence in some cases as it was the point that the sheer scale of the project became real. York reflected that the transfer process could be adapted to better prepare and manage the partners through that experience. But it ultimately gave them the confidence and impetus to be able to move forwards with their own GeniUS! programmes. Perhaps learning through being “worried” and then resolving that concern is the best way to truly understand and adopt a new practice?

**San Sebastián**

‘Following attendance at an open innovation event in York. We planned a set of off-line sessions to discuss further the challenge related topics aiming at strengthening involvement of relevant stakeholders in the process’.

**Siracusa**

‘Concerning the transfer event in York, participating to an OI event allowed us to better understand how it could be run. We also discovered a lot of useful tools, partially used during our OI event’.

Further information about the impact and influence of the synergy surgery event can be found in the **Design** sections in Chapter 3-The Cities Stories.

**Testing Phase**

Following the initial transfer activities, the project moved into a phase where the ‘receiving’ cities developed their own local version of GeniUS! and conducted their first “GeniUS! challenge” in their city, with ongoing support and coaching from the York team.

Through this approach, cities were “learning by doing” and thus developed their own local flavour of the GeniUS! model, underpinned by the principles of the model but tailored to work effectively within their local context. The approach ensured that the transfer had a practical application as part of the process and was not a purely theoretical exercise.

Each city went through the GeniUS! process, applying the principles of being an “open” city and following the main steps in the process. The next chapter describes the experience of each of the cities in applying the model locally.
The City Stories

This chapter provides the stories of the cities. It tells their own narratives of their experiences of the transfer and pilot. It will do this in linear way, exploring each city’s narrative from the beginning through to the present day. In order to reflect on the transfer process and understand and review the city’s aims and outcomes, the section will follow each stage of the GeniUS! process, examining each cities actions, feelings, aims and outcomes in more detail through the five stages.

Tallinn’s Story

Hopes and ambitions

Tallinn entered the GeniUS! transfer project with an ambition to learn how to use ‘a collaborative approach to solving city educational challenges together’. Their initial, specific aim was to use GeniUS! to help create the developmental programme for head-teachers in Tallinn. However over the course of the project, they realised that their topic was broader than just leadership in schools. This has meant that the initial aim has shifted, and new ambitions have emerged.

In the beginning…

They began their journey with the formation of a core team, and seeking the active engagement of stakeholders. They gained the support of the City Council and the local Mayor, but didn’t involve politicians. They later reflected on this choice, commenting, ‘from Siracusa we learned we need to involve more politicians’.

They have continuously sought to consolidate and gain further stakeholders, including community support, through publicity in local papers and radio. The GeniUS! process has remained at the forefront of educational concerns, including at the annual Conference of Learning.

Challenge definition and discussion

The core team and stakeholders began trying to define the ‘challenge’ area, a task they reflected on as being the hardest part of the whole GeniUS! process. Following workshops with the stakeholders, and with guidance from York, Tallinn realised that they needed to define their challenge further. They decided to focus on the specific educational problems in Tallinn. This led to the stakeholders defining their challenge around the oversubscription of many schools in Tallinn, which means that some children have to travel large distances to school.

The challenge question:

How to make ‘close to home’ schools and preschools meet the expectations of different stakeholders?

The discover stage saw the launch of the Tallinn GeniUS! website and discussion platform. Tallinn found that the platform simply wasn’t suited to them, and so adopted other ways of communication. They recognised that some contributors might prefer to remain anonymous,
so created an email account for suggestions to be sent to. Interestingly this became the preferred method of discussion and communication throughout the GeniUS! process, with over 100 ideas being received. The flexibility of the GeniUS! model to adapt to the situation on the ground worked well for Tallinn, but this was also hard for them to get used to, because they are used to; ‘following carefully what is planned in advance’.

‘Email communication worked well, even for the discussion stage- ‘the best ideas were gathered through this channel’.

Open Innovation event
Tallinn, like the other cities adopted the open innovation, synergy surgery approach during the design stage. They held a meeting to discuss six key areas that arose during the discussion stage. The meeting was successful with around 60 people, who were enthusiastic about the GeniUS! process, attending.

‘The organisers would call it a success as the vast majority of the participants stayed active until the very last minute of the seminar.’

The outcome was a pilot proposal that; ‘is about creating a space for school students to teach and learn from each other – Students Academy’.

Pilot Project
During the develop stage, Tallinn continued to involve the winning team in refining the pilot. They realised that to gain official support, (including funding) that a written proposal, with solid ideas needed to be generated. Unfortunately, the winning team decided not to commit to running the pilot, placing the success of the Genius Open project in jeopardy. Luckily a new leader has since been found, and the design of the pilot is an on-going process.

Success-Changing mind-sets
- Tallinn realised that developing new relationships away from the official channels was valuable to change, commenting; ‘the users had the best ideas’.
- They developed relationships amongst people from different backgrounds, relationships that are ‘open and creative’.
- The view of how things must be done is changing. People are realising that working through co-operation, co-thinking and co-creation, creates innovative opportunities. it can; ‘work better and make better things’.

Embedding the model
- Open innovation in Tallinn is spreading!
- There are planned training meetings for leaders.
- Planned further involvement of students and schools.
- The intention to involve more politicians in the process.

‘Leadership development is still an outcome. But we’ve realised it’s not straight a path - it’s much more broad. It’d be good to review if what that leadership development would look like has changed.’

‘We are going to share our experience and train and disseminate it to other departments and politicians in order to promote a different way to work.’
Siracusa’s Story

Hopes and ambitions
The city of Siracusa wanted to trial GeniUS! as a way of engaging with citizens to address long-standing problems. From the onset they were aware of the enormity and gravity of the task.

‘We were afraid to fail and to disappoint again citizens as well as the stakeholders’.

They hoped GeniUS! could build upon the expertise, experiences, skills and successes of other programmes. They aimed to trial GeniUS! as a method of developing; ‘more open, inclusive and participatory governance, that would unlock the potential existing within the city’.

However, they were also concerned with the scale of the task, and held reservations that perhaps the approach wasn’t for them. This was further reflected in their fear that they wouldn’t be able to find ways to engage with stakeholders, or gain political support, and that ultimately they would not achieve, ‘tangible results’. They were concerned that there would be a clash between the structure of GeniUS! and their own ‘hot and unpredictable culture’.

In the beginning…
Siracusa held several meetings with stakeholders and politicians. The Siracusa GeniUS! team found this process to be initially challenging. However, this initial hesitancy from stakeholders emerged into enthusiasm and support as they began to understand the GeniUS! principles. In fact Siracusa reported that following the initial meetings and workshops; ‘a strong engagement was registered…all the stakeholders asked to be part of the core team’.

‘In particular it was clear that the politicians gave us a chance, they were interested in this new method, but they were not sure about its replicability [in Siracusa]’.

Challenge definition and discussion
This was a highly supported process, with keen stakeholder and political involvement. Their initial thoughts and meetings to define the question were based around the Europe 2020 strategy document, (Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth). The strategy document helped Siracusa identify three key areas for improvement; the knowledge economy, quality of life- for example, mobility and urban regeneration, and also city attractiveness-culture, tourism, heritage.

The Challenge Question:
‘How to enhance the beauty of the Great Mazzarrona and contribute to its revival, restoring dignity and creating new opportunities and services to meet those needs of the residents but also to attract the rest of the city’?

It was, they recognised the most difficult option that they could have chosen. The area of Mazzarrona, although an area of great beauty is also defined as an area of urban poverty, characterised by the team as an area of; ‘severe marginalisation, neglect and degradation’.
The defining of the challenge, then lead to a mapping of potential stakeholders, with over 40 interviews taking place with potential stakeholders, including politicians and council staff. Although many of those interviewed had worked in Mazzarrona before on initiatives that were viewed to have failed, they were still keen to be involved. The GeniUSSiracusa team felt this was because of the nature of the method, being open, participatory and bottom-up.

Siracusa felt that their own lack of funds made it hard for them to attract stakeholders. They also felt that they lost some key stakeholders during this stage, including the university and some municipal departments. However, they continued to attract new stakeholders, including the Aretusa Bike Association. In addition the dynamic and often unexpected nature of the relationships developed during this stage surprised Siracusa.

“We were very surprised by the unexpected synergies arisen through this process... synergies which have continued to give and or propose innovative solutions and proactive cooperations”.

From the very outset they sought to engage with the neighbourhood of La Mazzarrona, and also with the wider community of Siracusa as a whole. This wasn't always straightforward, in fact their very first meeting resulted in them having to call the police due to the hostile nature of the residents, illustrating the importance of trust in an open process and the consequence of its absence. Publicity and Residents meetings formed the core of stakeholder engagement, supported by local associations and organisations such as churches, schools, hospitals and libraries. These meetings were instrumental in engaging with local residents. However, the meetings were also hindered by what the Siracusa team, termed ‘grandstanding’.

“We want to contribute together with the children and teenagers to rebuild the district and the territory...that means not just listening to the needs of residents but also, especially regarding children’s and young people’s ones, because without knowing their needs...it's impossible to plan anything of high quality’.

‘Everyone was trying to pursue his benefit, without fully understanding the broader objective of the project. Conflicts, insults, tensions have been fairly constant.’
Siracusa also hosted their own public events, to gain stakeholder and community support. Related to the ideation process, they realised that, because of the nature of their challenge, the offline discussion was also crucial. As a result, they decided to organise a bike repair workshop and a ‘bike donation’ appeal in order to gather ideas and feedback for the launch of the online discussion. La Mazzarrona GeniUS! challenge was launched by holding a bike tour in the area, the aim of which was to show both the possibilities and the problems of the area. The bikes were then made roadworthy and given away to local children who wished to participate in the bike tour event. The hope was that this activity, alongside a period of free shuttle bus use would promote ‘social solidarity’, as well as help develop ‘sustainable mobility’ in the community.

Siracusa, like the other partner cities developed a GeniUS! online platform. They experienced a high number of participants, but found the online platform wasn’t the main or preferred tool for discussion. ‘The discussion platform didn’t work due to the nature of the challenge and the group involved’
They found instead that the community and individuals were more comfortable, and more likely to contribute when they were given the ‘real life, face to face’ opportunity. To this end Siracusa held meetings throughout the community. These meetings combined with the public events hosted by Siracusa, including the bike workshops, provided a platform through which the GeniUS! project and the community could connect with each other — they gave an alternate space through which resident’s opinions could be heard.

**Open Innovation event**

Siracusa found their experiences in York to be useful in the design and operation of their own synergy surgery event. They kept the core design but adapted the synergy surgery format to meet their own needs. In particular, they had worked hard gathering ideas throughout the numerous participatory events, so the ideation exercise of the first day of an open innovation event was not necessary. They felt attendance over two days would not be suitable for their stakeholders and likely participants and so they ran a one day event to co-create specific solutions to their challenge.

Their event was a success, with a range of stakeholders attending, including community leaders and politicians. The four discussion areas were; recreational areas, mobility and accessibility, production and art and culture, all of which gave rise to an array of ideas and pilot proposals. The event also generated commitment from the City Council who promised support for their four short listed ideas rather than just one.

In addition Siracusa reflected that the event was of itself valuable, aside from the project ideas which emerged; it furthered community relations, strengthened sense of community, and triggered two community events, the creation of the ‘GeniUS!’ football team, and the organisation of a final show, or party to celebrate the communities link with GeniUS! and their joint successes. The role of the “Mamme” (mothers) of La Mazzarrona became a critical factor. They embraced the model, making themselves the real protagonists of the project. They saw in the project a new way of doing things that they believed will enable a better place to live for their children. Thus with the “Mamme”, the children and youngsters also became involved. This is an example of where a greater level of need provides a greater motivation for participation if the model for doing so is right – the Mamme perceived a genuine problem which they were motivated to help to solve.

**Pilot projects**

Siracusa were concerned about attracting funds to develop their pilot projects, but found that the enthusiasm and positive engagement of their stakeholders and politicians earlier in the project, now had the positive outcome of stakeholders who were willing to support the GeniUS! programme in more practical ways.

The four pilot projects from their event are now under the umbrella of the “Casa dei Cittadini” or “House of Citizens” - an agreement between residents, associations and stakeholders that aims to set up the basis for a permanent relationship in order to develop activities with and for the “benne commune” of La Mazzarrona.

Following a number of activities with citizens and groups leading the work, on 31st March they signed an agreement to “formalise” the Casa dei Cittadini. Some experts from other Italian cities were invited and asked to share similar good practices that had succeeded in their regions as well as useful tools and methods. One of the experts on ‘House of Citizens’ type concepts from Torino Municipality, Arch. Giovanni Ferrero attended the event. Residents explained what
they wanted for their neighbourhood and stakeholders and associations offered their time and skills to make it happen.

In addition they continued to hold meetings and workshops, promoting the GeniUS! model and their pilot projects. The result was the continued engagement of new stakeholders, often from surprising sources, who were keen to support the work. Though they noted that often this is down to luck - being in the right place at the right time. Several of their pilot schemes attracted both support and the funding that they needed in order to be able to move them forwards into development. This has resulted in them being able to continue holding events and GeniUS! projects, in schools and communities. This highlights the importance of relationships and networks in such a model: through the networks they established, the Siracusa team were already “in the right place”; it was then just required for the “right time” to present itself so the opportunities could be seized.

The ‘develop’ stage was marked for Siracusa by the positivity of the residents. Siracusa reflect that the residents are now no longer sceptical, but instead are engaged with the process; that they have become empowered to make change happen in their own communities.

“The biggest success: residents’ empowerment. During the last two meetings they asked us to be an active part of the organisation.”

However, as throughout Siracusa’s project, this stage has also had some problems, specifically in that the motivation of individualism, to claim credit, to look ‘the best’ continued to cause conflict.

“Everyone tries to take the merits of the projects/results, and this creates new problems.”

But at certain time there was a shift and the individualism turned into collective ambition.

Siracusa
“Now we have a group, a mixed group (made by residents, associations, teachers, students of Chindemi, and municipality’s staff) that continuous to face with its internal ‘dynamics’ and conflicts.. but is a GROUP” – Caterina Timpanaro

Success-Changing mind-sets
- GeniUS! has transformed relations with citizens. They now trust the council more and have become protagonists of their own change.
- Stakeholders stepped away from their traditional roles and became ‘individual people’-Humanisation is ‘surprising and really powerful’.
- Siracusa are considered the experts in open innovation and working with disadvantaged areas- Siracusa have become the exemplar of ‘good practice’.

Embedding the model
- They have received a national financial award – thanks to GeniUS!
- 2 of the 4 pilot projects (Casa dei Cittadini e Giano Svelato) are being implemented without requiring funding and using the open innovation approach.
- They have received municipal funding to pursue their pilot projects.
- The municipality’s goal is to set up a permanent ‘collaboration table’ , to keep up a constant dialogue between communities, other stakeholders and the council.
- It’s become more than just ‘us’. Other departments ‘are embracing this way of working’.
- The Assessors (councillors with portfolio) of the GeniUS! project in Siracusa see future potential in open innovation.
- ‘They are revising the Master Plan and they want to it to be a “Citizen Led Master Plan” Involving citizens in the process’.
San Sebastián’s Story

Hopes and ambitions

The San Sebastián GeniUS! project, supported by Fomento San Sebastián (FSS), was interested in the potential of open innovation as a new way of engaging with stakeholders. They were specifically interested in the GeniUS! programme as a way to develop; ‘a collaborative platform that facilitates the creation of tailor-made solutions and services, which are more adapted to business development’. They aimed to link highly qualified professionals and consequently companies through the amalgamation of common projects and the transfer of knowledge, generate an interconnected platform with relevant stakeholders and to build links and strengthen relationships and cooperation within this community in order to improve professional opportunities. Though they were worried about how, and if, they could foster participation.

They saw open innovation as an opportunity to trial a new way of doing. They planned to implement the model from a ‘technical perspective’, focusing on ‘the results’. They wanted evidence to the question; ‘is this sustainable’?

‘We were result-focused because through it we were going to be able to assess the suitability of the model’.

In the beginning…

San Sebastián decided to focus more specifically on youth unemployment in the area. They employed a manager to oversee the project and began to explore how to encourage stakeholders to become involved. They formed a local support group to encourage engagement in the GeniUS! process, whose first task was to begin to develop the challenge question. Membership of this group was noted as being ‘uneven’. They also wanted to engage young people and research institutions with the process through holding ‘offline sessions’ to discuss the challenge. The session with young people was positive, although not well attended, but unfortunately they had to cancel their second workshop with researchers due to lack of interest. However, San Sebastián considered the first event successful as they received positive feedback from those who did participate.

‘Despite the lower number of participants than expected we considered the session was very fruitful, with highly relevant contributions and generally very positive feedback about the session’.

San Sebastián reflected that their lack of success engaging with young people in the area was perhaps due to timing, lack of interest, and cultural influences such as habits of participation.

This was also a new style of engagement for FSS and consequently there was a hesitance to commit fully to it from across the organisation. There were also tensions about contacting existing stakeholders “too much” and consequently the Genius Open project sometimes appeared to take a back seat to other FSS projects in the early stages, in terms of prioritisation of stakeholder participation.

Challenge definition and discussion

San Sebastián were keen to involve as many people as possible in the define process. They began the stage by posing three alternative questions that could become the ‘challenge’. Voting took place through a questionnaire that was administered through the local support group they had formed. Whilst this process had some positive response, it was once again marked by uneven participation and the ‘wrong timing’ was once more a negating influence.

The Challenge Question:

How can we better connect professional opportunities and qualified young people in Donostia?

The online platform was launched to great publicity in advance of the local event, Donostia Week INN – Semana de Innovación en Donostia. A 10 day event focused on innovation in the area. GeniUS! was introduced by the mayor and supported publically by the Councillor for economic development and the General Manager and Head of Innovation and Projects of FSS.

Six areas for consideration were posed for consideration at the open innovation event; demand for employment, job offers, meeting spaces between employers and candidates, self-employment and entrepreneurship, information
systems and communication channels on professional opportunities, and also information systems and communication channels on qualified profiles in Donostia.

They received 21 comments. San Sebastián stated that the discussion has been; ‘a positive exercise’, but they also believe that participation could have been improved on- perhaps through a better website and also better preparatory work with stakeholders beforehand. However, San Sebastián also reflected that it should be considered that much of the influencing factors on participation are out of their control- specifically factors such as cultural habits of participation. Alongside the online platform San Sebastián also considered offline ways of engaging with stakeholders. They chose to work within the relationships that already existed between the FSS and their stakeholders. This was they commented, largely successful, attracting the support of key stakeholders.

‘The discussion platform didn’t work very well. It was difficult for them to engage people to participate and share their comments’

York reflected however that all the cities committed far less time to the promotion and maintenance of the discussion on the platform than was recommended in both the support materials and the transfer sessions. The York team felt that this contributed to a lower engagement than might have been possible in each city, had the recommended level of activity been input by the cities.

Open Innovation event
San Sebastián hosted an open innovation event during Donostia Week INN, which was attended by 40 people. Participation was noted as ‘active’ and they received positive feedback from participants. However, due to wishing to hold the event during the local innovation week, FSS felt they could not hold a two day event as they would not be able to ask local stakeholders to give up two days of their time and the FSS team were also busy with a number of other events as part of the local programme. FSS therefore decided to split the open innovation event across two separate days. Initially, the second day was intended for three weeks later. However, continued delays meant that it was not eventually held until three months later on 20th Feb 2015.

This afforded the FSS team time to develop the ideas and engage stakeholders but also meant that the ‘Design’ phase was completed very late in the project, leaving minimal time for support in trailing the develop phase, which can be challenging. It was also observed that the project ideas at the second event did not appear to have moved on significantly given the elapsed time and much effort had been required by FSS in retaining stakeholder interest.

That said, the second event had a significantly different style and feel to it - much closer to the intended nature of creative collaborative events and the FSS team seemed at ease and comfortable with the less structured nature of the second event, compared to the first event where there was a notable tension.
Nearly 50 people attended the second event (including some new stakeholders as well as those from the previous event) and it was a great success, with visible buy-in from FSS senior management and local stakeholders. York reflected that FSS potentially needed more time to adjust to the different style required to run the GeniUS! model, linking back to previous comments regarding local stakeholder need and readiness to be ‘open’. This was reflected by FSS stating that due to the uncertainty of the process and the uncertainty of outcomes, the design process can be ‘challenging’.

Success-Changing mind-sets

- The relationships that have developed with Stakeholders are based on co-operation. This has resulted in unexpected synergies that have made San Sebastián realise; ‘how powerful the co factor and openness of the model is’.
- They have realised that the human aspects of the model matter just as much as the process.
- San Sebastián commented that user involvement has brought ‘quality ideas’. They realise that these connections with users are productive, and that it’s important to keep these people on board.
- ‘Stakeholders, especially young people, have [sic] given them different perspectives of the city challenges and they want to involve them in their future challenges and also when they re-design their services’.
- They have learnt a new way of working, based on openness and building trust - ‘not controlling everything’. These have led to collaborative ways of working.
- ‘We’ve got better relationships (already established and new ones)!… and a new way of co-working’.
- The most important thing is the ‘internal empowerment’ that comes from changing mindset.

Embedding the model

- There’s funding from the regional agency to implement further challenges.
- The engagement from stakeholders has attracted the interest of the mayor and the council- they are curious about how open innovation can improve relationships.
- Other departments are curious about the model. And training programmes are being planned to develop new capabilities internally.

‘Someone from another department in FSS came and said she didn’t get it at the beginning but now she could see the value’.

Pilot project

At this time, San Sebastián are preparing for the develop stage of the GeniUS! process. They have finances in place to conduct the pilot, and they are aiming to attract new stakeholders as well as maintain the support of existing ones. They plan to meet with relevant stakeholders in the near future.

Success-Changing mind-sets

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‘Someone from another department in FSS came and said she didn’t get it at the beginning but now she could see the value’.
Outcomes: How do we know the transfer has worked?

From the outset of the Genius Open project, it was clear that establishing a baseline and framework for measuring success would be both a challenge and a critical priority.

Philanthropist Bill Gates has commented on how important measurement is to improving the human condition saying that “you can achieve incredible progress if you set a clear goal and find a measure that will drive progress toward that goal – in a feedback loop…”

This perspective may seem self-evident although it is infrequently applied and hard to get right.

Early on in the project, the York team and Thematic Expert worked with each partner city to co-create a bespoke, high-level results framework aimed at highlighting their priorities and ambitions for the project and establishing how progress would be measured.

The aim was to measure the implementation and effectiveness of each pilot. Each partner city identified their ambitions – or outcomes - and relevant indicators of success. The indicators were not a set of targets; rather, they aimed to identify where good progress was being made and where more work needed to be done to further define the open innovation model.

The framework was embedded in the on-going evaluation of the transfer. It provided a helpful tool for checking in with each partner city at strategic points to review and reflect on progress. Whilst the framework established a focus on results, it was recognised that there are many interrelated factors in designing and delivering the Genius Open project and the indicators that we established could never tell the whole story and a parallel focus on capturing stories and other artefacts to inform case studies would be required alongside the main framework.

For the purpose of the project, ‘outcome’ was defined as a change in skills, attitudes, knowledge, behaviours, status or life condition brought about by or through the Genius Open project. Co-creating a results framework for knowledge transfer of an open innovation process was necessarily an iterative, inclusive and dynamic process and the evolution of the cities expectations of results during the project lifetime was as informative as the defined results themselves.

Each partner city engaged with the process in their own way according to local context, experience and relevance. The results and indicators were defined towards the beginning of the project and midway through they were reviewed and in some cases refined as each city’s understanding of both the pilot transfer process and their own ambitions evolved. Generally each partner city felt that it was helpful, important and challenging to identify their aspirations and to reflect on these over the course of the project.

At the conclusion of the project, each city was asked to reflect with us on this process. The following is a review of the results that each partner city defined and some of the reflections on the extent to which they were successful in achieving them.

Overview

The outcomes from the project have exceeded expectations for all the cities. Each city has experienced a positive impact, with systematic culture change within the city administrations and positive benefits experienced by citizens and other stakeholders involved in the GeniUS! process.
New relationships and groups have formed to understand problems and develop the solutions. These new networks are one of the important results of the project - by collaborating on challenges and on ways to solve them, the cities are unlocking talent, assets and skills that otherwise would never have been used to tackle the challenges they set.

The way city departments work is also changing as a result. The cities using open innovation to change the way they work - having tested it out through this project, the city teams are now using it to engage employees in other departments in an open and collaborative way. This means again that there is a greater range of skills and ideas on any particular project or problem.

But the changes to networks, relationships and the way cities work are only really relevant if this leads to changes for those living and working in a city. The most significant impacts from Genius Open, are where the pilot projects are creating change.

The specific outcomes for each city are considered below.

**Siracusa**

The city’s municipal services are adopting a more collaborative approach to engaging residents in solving city challenges together. The municipality had identified that it lacked a defined way of incorporating social entrepreneurs and social innovation in addressing city challenges in a coordinated way. For this reason the Genius Open transfer pilot was embraced as a way to move forward and to help the city develop a vibrant open innovation practice and infrastructure through developing its own version of the City of York’s GeniUS! model.

Siracusa identified three specific aspirations and the GeniUSiracusa project team felt strongly that (to varying degrees) each of these ambitions have been met through the course of pilot transfer:

**Outcome 1)**

The Europe Office of the Siracusa Municipality (EOSM) would have an improved understanding of open innovation and acquire the skills to explain and use open innovation methods.

Since early on in the project, the project team engaged with many people across the municipality though this was not always an easy process. At times they felt it was easier to engage with people outside of EOSM. The project team felt that this reflected a conservative, territorial mind-set within the municipality. However, bringing an open innovation platform to the municipality proved to be an excellent way to bring people together from across different municipal functions who would not normally work together.

As the project was progressing, positive aspects and future success were envisaged thanks to both an intensive communication campaign and the project itself face-to-face approach. Thus, the project gained external recognition such as the URBACT National Contact Point (ANCI/Cittalia), who showed interest in the project and published several articles in their website, disseminating the project as a case of good practise amongst Italian cities; between the stakeholders like the residents of La Mazzarrona who were directly contacted and engaged to participate in numerous activities and over 20 events or people from the city of Siracusa who knew about the project through 15 local press article, a local TV interview or the publicity campaign on social media (Facebook, twitter and their GeniUSiracusa! platform).

External recognition evidenced and unveiled the potential of the model to people from the EOSM, including politicians, who started showing their interest to the core team members, particularly towards the latter stages of the project when results started to become more visible.
Outcome 2)

**Open innovation methods begin to be actively used in city processes**

As a consequence of the EOSM interest, open innovation methods now begin to be tried out in different departments, supporting them work together to actively use the model in city processes. A permanent “discussion table” has been set up in order to tackle challenges with this new open approach.

The pilot also created a forum to integrate projects between departments. Concrete evidence of this is that the municipality intends to use an open innovation process to revise the city’s master plan which is traditionally done through a top-down, technocratic exercise. The aim is to create a more dynamic plan and one that responds more closely to the needs of citizens. As an additional benefit, a citizen-led master plan could be a resource that could attract external funding and could provide a powerful precedence for future transformative and inclusive action plans.

Outcome 3)

**Citizen engagement is improved**

Has citizen engagement been improved in Siracusa? Without a doubt this ambition for GeniUSSiracusa has been realised and significantly exceeded in La Mazzarrona, where the model was piloted. In the beginning, relationships were strained and tense between the municipality and local residents, fuelled by many years of underinvestment, but through the adoption and development of the GeniUS! model, relationships have gradually improved and eventually began to thrive. The local project team chose to work in La Mazzarrona with its many challenges including high levels of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. The local delivery team felt that these challenges made the pilot project such a success - residents and community groups were highly motivated to seek better solutions to improve their lives and the lives of those around them.

Through 46 initial interviews with their stakeholders, numerous events such as the “Bike repair workshop” or the bike tour “La Mazzarrona in Bici” and other events in crucial places of the neighbourhood like the library, the schools or the churches, the project team brought together individuals into a community. They even created a GeniUSiracusa football team. As a result of these activities and the communication campaign, residents and key stakeholders were actively engaged.

In the final analysis, the GeniUSiracusa team feel that citizens are not only engaged but empowered which has been an even better result than they had dared to hope for.

Other Outcomes

In addition to the three results identified at the outset, the GeniUSiracusa team felt an important success of the project is that the professionals and experts who engaged with the project were able to leave their ‘official’ roles and were able to engage with the residents of the La Mazzarrona on equal footing. This was key to the success of the project – experts became humans rather than job titles. This was surprising and powerful – untapped energy was unlocked and new opportunities were created.
San Sebastián

Fomento de San Sebastián (FSS) – the local economic development agency for this Basque city - aimed to build a collaborative platform to facilitate the creation of bespoke solutions and services. FSS envisaged using Genius Open as an enabler of creating dialogue amongst different stakeholders with a particular focus on the business community.

Initially, the GeniUS! FSS team struggled to identify their specific aspirations for project. In the first several months, the team was focused on identifying outputs (e.g. redesigning their service catalogue) rather than results. However as the project unfolded and they started to understand the potential of the model, they were able to take a more ambitious view of what they might achieve. This change is closely linked the eventual appointment of a project leader for GeniUS! FSS who was able to engage more fully with the project, energise stakeholders and consider the wider aspirations for FSS and the city. Fomento de San Sebastián had the following aspirations:

Outcome 1)

Highly skilled professionals engaged in the decision making process

Upon reflection, the GeniUS! FSS team felt that they have been able to engage with a new set of stakeholders through the pilot transfer – not just highly skilled professionals but also young people who had not previously been engaged by the organisation. New groups were formed to design the challenge areas and to develop solutions. This marked a shift in focus to what young people prioritise rather than focussing on the priorities of FSS. The co-creation aspect of the GeniUS! process was a key part of the process that was embraced by participants and stakeholders over the course of this project.

The first meeting with their stakeholders held in May was crucial. Most of the attendees were existing stakeholders for FSS, hence there was a concern about damaging the existing good relationships. However, they explained they were determined to lead the implementation of a participatory an open model that was totally new for them, and for which they counted on the help and collaboration of the ones in the room along the way. Enthusiasm and support of their existing stakeholders gave the core team self confidence and validated the project for them. From that point, they understood the need to incorporate new stakeholders, with young people bring key, so they organised further activities to specifically to engage them.

During the two day-long open innovation events they engaged their existing stakeholders and new equally enthusiastic stakeholders. The pilot project, “Talent Network” a local employment market “matching-website”, is being developed by 7 entities, namely: a university, one technology centre, one school, two companies (dealing with branding and technology for society), one spin-off working on urban regeneration and participatory processes and a research centre working on social architecture.

Outcome 2)

Services redesigned

Whilst they identified ‘service redesign’ as a result, in the end this was really more about using an open innovation approach to redesign public services. The GeniUS! FSS process didn’t achieve this result but did put it on the agenda for FSS for the future. The local team felt this was an important step forward in changing mindsets within and around the organisation. This is evidenced by the fact that FSS have already identified new areas to launch and run the GeniUS! model, though the specifics of when and how this will happen have yet to be determined.

Fomento de San Sebastián has built new capacities internally and as well as they incorporate new departments in the “new way of co-working” they aim to review the services they are providing currently.
Outcome 3)
Capacities increased in FSS

In terms of new capacities being developed - FSS has begun to experiment with new ways of working – one that is much more integrated across departments. The GeniUS! model is now viewed by FSS as a way to add value to how the institution can continue to build open innovation skills. After the second open innovation event, internal FSS staff reflected that previously they didn’t get what Open Innovation was all about, but now they did and were fully bought into it as a way of working.

For the GeniUS! FSS project team, it has been important that the GeniUS! model offered the opportunity for the institution to work in a new way and change mind-sets employing a method of learning by doing. For the future, FSS would like to be able to link to impact and measurement to the open innovation model. Being able to do this will help to embed the model more systemically.

FSS have finances in place to conduct the pilot and the next GeniUS! challenge which will enable them to further embed the model. FSS core team have internalised the principles of the model and now they are refining GeniUS! method, to both train people internally and to better explain it to their stakeholders.

They understand there are important results of the new model that are difficult to measure, nonetheless, whenever is feasible, they want to measure the impact to be able to assess the results but also to construct pragmatic arguments when communicating to certain audiences.

Tallinn

Tallinn identified the need to create an overarching and collaborative approach for engaging residents and organisations in solving educational challenges. Through the Genius Open pilot project, Tallinn aimed to create a viable platform and process for using open innovation to understand and address how to improve the education system – in particular – how citizens, institutions, and associations could work together to create new synergies, develop new abilities and competencies as well as promoting social innovation.

The GeniUS! Tallinn project team were clear from the outset about what they wanted to achieve through the pilot transfer. Whilst these aspirations were periodically reviewed over the course of the project, the local team at each point felt that they had selected the right ones. At the conclusion of the project, they were satisfied that they had identified the right aspirations and that these aspirations were largely met.

Tallinn had the following aspirations:
Outcome 1)

Partnerships strengthened

According to the local team, the pilot transfer created the conditions to understand the principles and methods of open innovation. The project team aimed to strengthen partnerships through engaging a range of stakeholders – some of whom were ‘unusual suspects’ – in the GeniUS! Tallinn process, particularly students and parents. Their open innovation event was very well-attended and included a diverse range of participants from the Tallinn Education Department, Tallinn School Heads Association, Tallinn Pre-School Heads Association, Union of Tallinn Pre-schools Parents Boards, Estonian Teachers Union, students, parents, community members, Tallinn University, Nordea Bank, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, colleagues from Helsinki City Education Department (Finland).

As a result of the first open innovation event they understood that they needed to redefine their original challenge theme the enthusiasm of their first stakeholders prompted them to involve “users” far more, so parents and students became increasingly crucial during the evolution of the project.

The numbers and names of groups don’t tell the whole story; the success of the event is also connected to the high level of engagement and enthusiasm over the course of the two day intensive event which was well-organised and achieved the goal of identifying a winning idea which will be implemented from March 2015 as a pilot.

Outcome 2)

Improved leadership skills for the Heads of Tallinn educational institutions and networks

Improving the quality and leadership skills amongst the Heads of Tallinn educational institutions and their networks was another key aspiration for the project. GeniUS! Tallinn provided an excellent platform for those who engaged with the process to learn how to engage a range of diverse stakeholders in an effective, open co-creation process.

Now they want to extend the use of the model along different Tallinn schools and a training programme for leaders is going to be launched, with the intention that all schools in Tallinn can also use the model locally in addition to it being used on a citywide basis by the education department.

Outcome 3)

Experiences and good practice learnt and shared

One key learning point for the GeniUS! Tallinn team came through visiting the GeniUSiracusa project. This was the need to engage more politicians and wider city processes. This is planned for the next GeniUS! Tallinn challenge. The team is planning on using the GeniUS! model next year for the Annual Education Conference. This will be an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of the model and help to embed it as good practice in the educational sector and more widely.
7 Lessons Learned:
the importance of...

Learning

The workshops were a learning process in how to manage transfer. York commented that the experiences and lessons taken away from the earlier workshops helped them to improve subsequent workshops, and thus shape ‘a stronger transfer methodology’. And the process of understanding the transfer also enabled the model itself to be strengthened through reflection and challenge. In this regard, transfer and self-learning about the existing model are inextricably linked.

Leadership

Leadership was always identified as a key part of the GeniUS! model, however specific types of leadership are needed for success. Autocratic styles and closed have been shown to be ineffective during this project and the case studies all point to a “systems leadership” approach being highly suitable to working with open innovation at a city level.

There are many ways in which systems leadership and open innovation complement each other and these is explored in more detail in Appendix A.

Scale

Throughout the workshops, despite their flexible approach to local need and circumstance- or perhaps because of it- the delivery team were unable (in all the workshops), to deliver their full intended programme. This raised questions of scale, alongside the question of how to balance the challenges of giving enough information to build a rich picture, against the risk of ‘information overload’.

York
‘A tension exists around covering each stage of the process in sufficient detail and being able to present a complete picture which includes the potential to scale.’

Flexibility

Despite a planned agenda, once on the ground and running it was necessary for the delivering team to adapt both agenda and content to the circumstances that reality presented; such as cultural barriers, use of interpreters, and understanding of the model by participants. This resulted in an emergence of events in ways that had not always been envisioned or anticipated. The ability to adapt quickly and smoothly to these challenging and emergent conditions was identified as a key feature and strength of the workshop management. A flexible approach, explains York, allows ‘much needed space for iteration and improvement which is essential given that GeniUS! is still an emergent and evolving approach’.

York
‘It’s important to be flexible and responsive to local circumstances, needs and context’.

Developing understanding

It became clear during the course of the transfer workshops that the different cities had each come away from the kick off meetings with a different understanding of the ideology of GeniUS!, the core practices and the implications of adopting the model. The initial transfer workshops enabled this understanding to be developed further.

For the delivery team, the difficulties that the cities had in understanding the model demonstrated just how complex the GeniUS! model is. In trying to explain the sticking points,
York realised that in fact their own understanding of some of the issues wasn’t as clear as they had first thought. They were drawn to question their own perception and examine more closely how the model works. In this way the workshops also developed York’s own understanding of the GeniUS! model.

York
‘Seeing how others missed the point made us question ourselves and subsequently be more clear about what the point was!’

These difficulties encountered in transfer workshops also highlighted to the delivery team that changes were needed in the delivery of the kick off meetings to ensure that the basic model was understood early on. The transfer meetings also highlighted a need for the baseline report to be constructed differently, with more emphasis on understanding the city culture and hence the cultural difficulties and possibilities that may emerge during the transfer of the model.

Stakeholder need

The workshops successfully engaged with stakeholders and built relationships between them. They were also beneficial in illustrating the needs of stakeholders. For some, it was clear that the ambiguity and uncertainty brought by using the GeniUS! model can be comfortably handled, but others would have preferred ‘a fixed road map’. The question was; how can the cities adapt to and meet these disparate needs? York suggested that an extra effort is needed in how cities communicate, engage with and enthuse their stakeholders. There was a certain “leap of faith” required by cities and their stakeholders as the set out to embrace GeniUS! as a model to adopt. The giving city has a key role in the transfer process to help create the conditions whereby the key players in the receiving city can be bold enough to take that leap. All the main stakeholders must be able to say the right things but also take the right actions. That needs to be allowed for (or tackled!) during the transfer process. Ultimately, they have to comfortable enough to try something new.

York
‘The transfer process gives cities an unprecedented opportunity to admit that they don’t have all the answers – which for some cities and policymakers is a radical admission’.

Narrative

York
‘Having effective and relevant tools, methods and materials is very important to take stakeholders through the approach with a clear and structured narrative and concrete examples and case studies’.

The theory of the GeniUS! model, whilst compelling when bought into the principles, can sometimes appear abstract and intangible to a still (semi-) sceptical audience. On reflection,

York concluded that an approach that mixed theory with example worked well. It made the GeniUS! model become alive. The effect of this was to make both the lead and partner cities realise that GeniUS! is about more than the umbrella term ‘City’; it’s not about city to city transfer, or the city doing ‘GeniUS!’ GeniUS! is about people.

York
‘The transfer process is not city to city but human to human’.

San Sebastián
‘At the beginning, San Sebastián were focused on process, not on contributions and perspectives of stakeholders. Now they realise the “human” aspects of the model are also crucial, for example to achieve a new, closer and more productive relationship with the stakeholders’. 
Final Reflections

The project has had many positive impacts on all four cities involved, both strengthening the understanding and practice of open innovation at a city level but also greatly deepened the understanding how to transfer practice between cities and contexts.

What it has also shown is that this type of model works best when it is used to tackle challenges arising from a genuine need coming from the stakeholders, resulting in more significant buy-in to the process and philosophy offered by GeniUS!

Many factors in the success of the project have been discussed in this report but the overall key aspects for success have been:

- A ‘giving city’ that is flexible, responsive, listening, structured, supportive;
- ‘receiving cities’ that are humble, open, curious and brave.

*Genius Open* has shown openness, participation and creativity are powerful qualities which enable incredible things when harnessed by cities.

Sources
URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants.

www.urbact.eu/genius-open