



Youth Conference Change! May 1-3-2008 / A Big Success

Thursday May 1 at 17.30 International Lokaal Dek-22 at Coolhaven, Rotterdam was buzzing. Nearly 50 young people and youth workers from Belgium, Germany, England, Lithuania and the Netherlands were gathered to participated at a 3-day conference to discuss issues like; Safety, Tolerance, Involvement, Health and how to influence politicians and making yourself heard.

The dancers from "**Hiphophuis**" **Coolhaven Rotterdam** gave a really spectacular demonstration and they and **DJ Robbert** set an atmosphere that made everybody feel at home and curious for what would be next...



Masood Yasin (Birmingham) chair of the conference introduced the participants and let them get to know each other a bit better simply by making contact. The participating countries introduced themselves and their cities and furthermore we had dinner, dance and fun.



Friday May 2,

What did we do?

There were workshops, debating sessions and visits to the Rotterdam quarters: Hillesluis, Pendrecht and Delfshaven, getting informed about activities and projects for young people. Mixed teams were formed so that all participants had to interact with youngsters from the other countries. It was remarkable to see that although sometimes language can be an obstacle this was easily overcome by making an effort to really listen and trying to understand what was being said.

A big compliment to all participants they really made an effort so that nobody was excluded, they helped each other to understand and did so with a lot of respect.



Saturday May 3,

What did we achieve?

Our aim was to let young people and youth workers from different European Countries get in touch with each other. So that they could exchange stories and experiences to learn from each other and get inspired to come into action and bring about a change in perspective and attitude.

We did succeed in bringing together 50 young people that shared ideas and get a sense of how young people in different countries than their own live and how they solve problems and are active in their neighbourhoods. But of course thanks to the DJ we also had lots of fun and made new friends. We celebrated being together in Rotterdam with dancing, jumping, singing and laughing with our new friends.

We've established an **International Youth Panel**. This panel will maintain and expand the Young R4R network. We hope to organise a follow up to this conference in 2009 when Rotterdam will be the European Youth Capital. The panel will be meeting in June in Birmingham to evaluate this conference and to discuss what actions should be undertaken for future cooperation.

All and all this conference was a big success, thanks to firstly our conference chair **Masood Yasin**, from Hogde Hill: Birmingham who set the framework for this successful meeting but also due to the inspiring and active cooperating help from **Rob Bekenkamp** (Coolhaveneiland) **Dek-22**, conference venue, **DJ Robbert, The Hiphophouse, Terra Catering** And last but definitely not least!
Youth and Youth workers of Belgium, England, Germany, Lithuania and the Netherlands. Thank you for making it work!

Participant Reviews:

"I became aware of the divers range of youth issues within Europe and the amount of deprivation in some countries. The idea of youngsters having authority over others appealed to me, as youngsters are more likely to relate with each other than with adults.- Hafza, Birmingham (age 15)

"Don't give up because, Change starts with Youth participation!" - youth worker Ellen, Antwerp (age 26)

"I had fun, I know now that is important to speak English so that we can communicate. And I have also learnt that it is possible to make changes if you a little help and really want it things to be different" – Vanessa, Dortmund (age 17)

"I like the idea of old buildings, which aren't being used, to turn into Youth Centres/ Facilities: it can only benefit the generations of the future" – Kiran, Birmingham (UK)(age 17).

"I now know more about Youth Centres and their work. And how to involve young people when you want to organise events." Laimonas, Vilnius (age 18)



Download photos on: www.r4r-europe.com