

POLSKOT PROJECT YOUNG PEOPLE'S EVALUATION

The following illustrates the views of some of the young people who were involved in the Skotpol project. In doing so it highlights whether the project lived up to the young people's expectations and what, if anything, they have learnt from their experience.

Expectations of the project:

At the start of the project we were all really excited about being involved, however we were also a bit nervous. Having a group of young people from a different country, coming over to Craigmillar sounded really good but was also something that was very new to us and we did not know what to expect. We were all wondering what they would think of our area and where we live, because our area normally gets a bad name but we wanted them to really like it here. We were also nervous about getting on with them, even though we'd met a lot of the polish young people in Zamosc in June we were still not sure who was definitely coming over and it would still feel strange as our others pals and that would be here to. Also when we went to Poland there was not a lot for young people to do and we also wanted to make sure that the activities were fun so that the polish could have a good time and a laugh with us. However, meeting as a group every week to plan stuff for the project helped us. With Gina, Emma and Alison we could talk about what we were thinking and what we could do to make sure that things we did not want to happen didn't happen. Also because we had got the opportunity to go over to Poland to meet the group we were excited about seeing them again. It had been hard when we were in Poland trying to talk with the polish young people and we were nervous about this again – but we practiced our polish a wee bit before they came. At first we didn't really know what to expect from the project but it has been a really good laugh and new experience that has taught us loads as well as made us stronger as a group as before this we were not all pals but now we all hang about with each other outside the group.

What you have learnt through your experience:

We have all learnt loads from being involved in the Skotpol project. We have learnt new skills especially in communicating with each other and different people and trying new ways to do this for example body language. Also we've learnt that you shouldn't be scared to try new things, at first we did not know what it was going to be like but it's been really good and we're glad we've had the chance to do this. We've also learnt a lot about the polish people. Even though we live in different countries and in different communities with different stuff to do, the same things are important to us like education and employment. But we think that we have more opportunities in Scotland than they do in Poland. We have more of a say in what happens in Café K and the Jack Kane Centre than the polish young people do at the OHP centre. It seems a lot more stricter in Poland. The area we live in is seen as really poor but spending time with the polish people has shown us how much we do have as young people living in our area and made us appreciate what we have for example the Jack Kane Centre. Because young people in

Zamosc don't have as much facilities as we do and are often bored with nothing to do. Also being involved in the project has helped a lot of us get into college. Before the project some of us had left school with only a couple of exams and did not have a lot to talk about and were nervous about going to interviews. But being involved in the project gave us some confidence and showed that we could do stuff, like plan for the exchange and this seemed to impress the people at college. The whole Skotpol experience was a once in a lifetime opportunity for both us and the polish young people and is one that we will never forget.