



# SKOTPOL



## EXCHANGE PROJECT REPORT

# SEPTEMBER 2005

JACK KANE COMMUNITY CENTRE  
AND  
OHP CENTRE OF ZAMOSC

## **Activities Implemented**

### **Context:**

Cafe K is a voluntary youth organisation based within the Jack Kane Community Centre in the Greater Craigmillar area. Café K works with socially excluded young people between the ages of 13-18. Interventions are based upon social, recreational, leisure and informal educational opportunities and we aim to create new and challenging experiences for these young people. Café K provides a drop in sessions, one-to-one work and focussed group work sessions on issues that affect young people.

### **A) Description of Activities**

The youth exchange between a group of young people from Zamosc in Poland and young people from the Greater Craigmillar area in Edinburgh originally began in January 2004. This is where contact was first made with the organisation and young people from, Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy (OHP) in Zamosc Poland. As a result of this an exchange took place between both countries in June 2004. As a follow up from this, both organisations and groups of young people involved felt that it would be an excellent learning opportunity for other young people to gain from the experiences that they had just shared. Therefore through continuous communication between both groups it was agreed to implement a new exchange project, Skotpol, with 'new' young people being actively involved in all stages.

The Skotpol exchange therefore took place 17<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June 2005, however the initial planning stages and preparation with the group began on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2005. During the exchange the programme was implemented and both groups of young people participated in various leisure, recreational and educational activities which created the opportunity for both groups to analyse and discuss the main themes of the exchange, the access and development of information services for young people in order for them to fulfil their potential. As well as young people's identified issues around community well being, personal safety and femininity, comparing these experiences whilst taking into account cultural differences.

For example the groups visited a range of specialised youth project situated in Zamosc. These visits created the space for both groups of young people to share and explore their experiences of being a young person and encouraged them to discuss and explore issues that were important to them. Further more these visits encouraged the young people to discuss and analyse the access and development of information services for young people and to compare them in a European context. In result of this both groups of young people contributed and developed through intercultural learning in this environment.

The full exchange programme is attached as Appendix 1.

### **B) Preparation**

#### **Preparation with the host group:**

The group of young people who were the partner group for the exchange met on a weekly basis. Throughout the initial stages of the exchange the group devised their hopes, dreams and fears regarding the exchange as well as implemented a realistic timescale for the project. Through this subsequent group work the young people took into account the preparation of activities, the exchange itself and identifying ways in which the wider community could be included. The group also gathered information through the use of the internet regarding Zamosc and identified and implemented methods such as e-mails to communicate with the host group. The group also identified and implemented methods to combat any communication barriers that there may be for example devising a Polish/Scottish phrase book, and carried out a variety of role play scenarios to prepare them for the exchange. Additionally as this was the first time that many of the group had been away from their

communities, a range of one to one sessions were devised with the young people as well as a key worker was allocated to sub groups of the larger group to ensure that appropriate support structures and learning environments were provided for young people to be able to reflect upon the full experience.

### **Preparation with the host group**

Throughout the exchange project there was consistent contact with Magdalene Kozłowska and other staff members at OHP, this was made easier through strong relationships already built up from last years exchange project. Additionally Magdalene Kozłowska is the English teacher at OHP and is therefore able to translate messages and e-mail between both groups. The young people also communicated with the partner group through the use of e-mail and devised personal profiles of things that were important to them to send to the partner group. The group also collated a range of information that they felt was important for young people in the Greater Craigmillar area and sent this to the host group in order for them to build up links with one another and start the basis of discussion around the theme of the exchange.

During the exchange visit a preparation meeting was held at the start in order to ensure that the programme was suitable for all and that no changes had been made. There was also a meeting of both groups of young people where a range of group work games were played in order to build relationships and overcome communication barriers for examples games that focused upon different styles of communications such as body language and team building exercises. This was made easier through interpretation. Throughout the exchange programme there were evaluations were also carried out between both groups to ensure that young people's opinions were listened to and acted upon.

## **C) Involvement of Young People:**

### **Group Selection:**

The young people whom were actively involved in the project were a group of young people whom 'Oot N About', a detached youth work project which is part of Café K, had met out on the streets. These young people did not use any existing youth services at this time. Through Oot N About the young people discussed and shared their hopes, dreams and fears regarding their community and issues that were important to them. As a result, the group identified the need to have their 'own' space to explore and learn from one another in relation to their issues. Thus Café K in partnership with the Jack Kane Community Centre assisted the young people to develop their own group. This group centred on focused group work sessions around the young people's identified issues. Through time the young people began to explore these issues on both a micro and macro level and therefore it was felt that it would be a beneficial learning experience to explore these within a European context. Therefore the young people's identified issues were formed as the theme of the exchange as these were similar to those identified by the host group.

### **Preparation:**

The young people were involved in all aspects of the preparation for the exchange. The first aspect of this is the young people from Craigmillar wanting to be involved in this exchange. The young people prepared all stages of the exchange project with the support from the Café K staff team, and made all the decisions in partnership with the young people from the host group, when appropriate. Thus, they decided the whole programme for the exchange (within financial limits) and identified jointly with the host group the most beneficial places to visit and activities to participate in during the exchange.

For young people whom have fewer opportunities a range of support measures were also put in place to ensure their participation. This included one-to-one meetings with workers and an allocation of a key worker throughout all aspects of the exchange project. This created the space for the young people to share and reflect upon their feelings, aspirations and concerns

as well as assist them in regards to their own individual needs. Strong links were also built up between Café K and these young people's parents/guardians, without breaching young people's confidentiality, in order to support them to fully participate.

### **Realisation**

Throughout the whole exchange process, (planning, implementation and evaluation), staff from both the partner and host group supported the young people as required i.e. organisational matters and language difficulties. However, the young people were actively involved in all aspects of the exchange and support when needed was on hand for matters such as budgets for activities etc.

### **Follow up/Evaluation**

The follow up for this exchange will take place by both the partner and the host group. The young people, who will be part of the partner group, will decide in what way they want to share with the wider community and present to them the experiences and issues that have arisen through their involvement in this exchange. They are currently in the initial stages of doing so and since they returned have been actively involved in two sessions dedicated to the evaluation and learning from this exchange project. Also through the support of the staff team during the exchange the young people identified innovative methods to evaluate each activity and the exchange as a whole both with themselves and with the host group. For example games such as 'evaluation twister' were implemented. The young people who were the partner group are used to evaluation processes and methods through their involvement in Café K. Also all staff who were involved in this exchange evaluated their experiences regarding every aspect of the project. And this was followed up on return with the assistance of an 'outside' facilitator.

Additionally the host group are planning to follow up the exchange in September by carrying an exchange with the Edinburgh group taking the role as the host

## **D) The Practical Organisation**

Throughout the exchange logistical and practical support was provided by the OHP Centre in Zamosc and local community organisations in the Greater Craigmillar area. This was vitally important as our partner group's funding for the project had fallen through. Therefore additional monetary support was provided by the Craigmillar European Programme and The City of Edinburgh Council in order to provide accommodation and transport throughout our visit. These aspects were arranged by our host group and the majority of activities took place in the OHP building and surrounding areas. Through the financial difficulties with our host group's funding falling through, our host group ensured that all costs regarding accommodation, food etc would be kept to a minimum.

Throughout the exchange the main language used was English. This was mainly due to the fact that no one in the partner group could speak Polish however some of the staff and young people from the host group could speak English. However at times the young people from the partner group would attempt to speak Polish through the aid of phrase books and some of the Polish young people and staff would encourage them to speak the language and would often act as a translator for the group. However both groups were also encouraged to use other forms of communication such as body language, participation in sports and leisure activities where the spoken word was not necessary. This worked well in the project and the young people appeared to overcome the language barriers through the aid of fun joint activities.

## **E) The Achievements**

### **Objectives:**

The following details the objectives for the exchange project as well as highlighting how these objectives were reached:

- To enable a group of young people from a socially deprived area to reflect and play an active role within their own community and culture and within a European Setting.
- *Through the young people's own personal experiences they were able to compare and reflect upon their own community and culture as individuals, as a group and within their wider community. This was particularly encouraged through the themed workshop implemented during the exchange programme. This created the environment for young people to raise their awareness of living in a European context as well as creating a personal and social educational process for them that contributed towards their personal development.*
- To promote the friendship and understanding between the young people of Poland and Scotland through personal contact and cultural exchange.
- *Through a variety of educational and outdoor activities the young people developed effective communication and team building skills. This was achieved through active participation in activities for example the sports activities where teams consisted of both Scottish and Polish young people. This enabled the young people to develop and sustain friendships with one another and enhance their personal contact and understanding of each other and their cultures.*
- To promote and develop public knowledge and information in regards to social exclusion around these two countries.
- *Through educational opportunities and informal learning settings the young people discussed and compared their experiences of social exclusion both at a micro and macro level. The young people from the partner group during the evaluation process identified ways to use this information and present it to the wider community for example articles in the local newspaper.*

Overall the whole exchange project contributed immensely to the young people who actively participated personal development. Through their involvement the young people benefited from a range of new and educational experiences. This in turn developed the young people's skills particularly in relation to the preparation of the exchange where a vast amount of organisation, communication and compromising skills were developed by the group.

## **F) The impact at local level**

### **Involvement of the local community:**

Through the participation of the young people in this exchange project the local community was involved in a direct way as the young people are all an important part of the community. Therefore all the experiences that the young people gained from their role as a partner group in this exchange project were directly fed back. Also the wider community was informed of the project as the young people wrote articles about the project for the local community newspaper. Other young people who attend Café K were also involved especially those who participated in last year's project and they were able to share their experience and knowledge with the 'new' group. The group is also looking to hold a presentation night to feed back and share their experience to the wider community and hoping that this will act as a catalyst for more local people to become involved in the September exchange where the young people will be the host group.

### **Who benefited from this exchange:**

Although not all the young people who use Café K and the Jack Kane Centre were directly involved in all aspects of the exchange project they all benefited in a direct way. All the experiences of the partner group have been welcomed into Café K and the Jack Kane Centre

with the sharing of information and young people contributing their experiences into the project. Also through the personal development of the young people who participated, they now have a developed and informed understanding and awareness of intercultural learning. This has become apparent in the young people's attitudes and behaviour which in turn has had an effect on other young people that they are in contact with within their environment.

### **G) Intercultural dimension**

Participants from the exchange programme became aware of the 'European Reality' and the process of European Integration at the start of the exchange. This was mainly due to the fact that Poland had recently joined the E.U. This therefore created the opportunity for workers from both groups to explore and discuss with all the young people what this meant for Poland, Scotland and the wider world. This was again followed up during the themed workshops on a more local level directed at young people and young people's dreams, issues and aspirations for themselves, and their local and European community.

In general, throughout the exchange, varying degrees of the intercultural dimensions of the project became apparent. In regards to the young people many of them felt that they were very similar in regards to their hopes, dreams and issues as young people whilst comparing and contrasting the differences between living in a European and pre-European union society. This was made more apparent through the visiting of youth services in Zamosc and created the background for both groups of young people to analyse and discuss the social and economic factors in both countries in relation to youth issues i.e. un/employment, education, poverty and so on.

### **H) Follow-up and evaluation**

#### **Evaluation during the exchange**

Many different methods of evaluation were used before, during and after the exchange, these included:

- Daily and weekly (in regards to group work sessions) evaluations in the form of evaluation sheets which were completed by all the young people. Through this the young people were able to clearly express their thoughts and their experiences and were particularly useful for joint activities.
- Mid evaluation review took place during the preparation for the exchange. This created the space for the partner group to evaluate all aspects of the project to date i.e. sessions, participation, staff etc. A variety of games were also used such as 'evaluation twister'
- Two meetings for joint evaluations between both groups in Poland. Here the young people were able to share their experiences and discuss any issues that may have arisen. This also provided an opportunity for both groups of accompanying youth workers to discuss the programme and any issues that may have arisen. And make appropriate changes if required.
- Paper based diaries were given to all those involved in this exchange. Thus providing everyone with the opportunity to record their feelings, thoughts etc regarding their experience at any time either individually or shared with the group(s).
- The partner group used a video camera throughout the exchange as a way of recording all the activities as well as all the groups' experiences for both themselves and the partner group.
- The partner group was split into 'sub groups' with a dedicated worker. 'Sub group' meetings were held on a regular basis so the young people could openly discuss and explore their views away from the wider group if required.

#### **Evaluation after the project is finished**

One week after the exchange has finished two whole evenings were dedicated to evaluating the exchange for the young people involved in the partner group. During this evening there was time to review the entire experience from the preparation to the actual exchange and to complete a final recording of all experiences through summarising the evaluations throughout the exchange and to give each other feedback. Additionally

young people identified there 5 key points from their experiences and approaches such as role play were implemented so that the young people could demonstrate particular experiences and how they would change these as well as what they had learnt.

### **How to follow up this youth exchange**

The direct follow-up for the partner group will be their continuous involvement in the Café K project as well as the development of individual and group work that has arisen from the young people through their involvement in the exchange. The follow-up in terms of the host group will be a exchange visit in September (both groups have been awarded funding for this) and this will continue upon the themes and issues identified during the exchange. Therefore the young people and hopefully the wider community will play a large part in preparing, implementing and evaluating this aspect of the project.

### **I) Publicity and Products**

The exchange project was publicised from the initial stages. Articles were put into the local newspaper informing the wider community of the project. Additionally the young people held an information night which was attended by 15 local people to inform them of the project as well as demonstrate the preparation and organisation of the project that they had carried out. This was delivered using a range of innovative tools such as art activities and role play. The young people also put together a display for other young people whom use Café K and the Jack Kane Centre informing them of the project using a range of visual materials such as photographs in order to highlight their awareness of the project.

Additionally updates were provided at Management Committee and Youth meetings in order to publicise the project to local organisations and members of the community that they have contact with.

During the exchange photographs and video work was undertaken. The group have currently decided to continue to work on the video and incorporate the September exchange before they edit. This is to highlight the similarities and raise awareness of living within a European Context. It is envisaged that after this the video will be put together and used as a tool when raising young people's European awareness and intercultural learning.

Photographs are attached as Appendix 2

### **J) Financial Aspects:**

Funding for this exchange project was obtained primarily by the British Council who overall funded the majority of the project. However local organisations also supported the project, in particular on a financial basis, this was extremely beneficial as the host groups funding had fell through. Therefore additional funding was obtained from the Craigmillar European Programme and The City of Edinburgh Council. These monies were used towards transport and accommodation costs. Overall there were no major difficulties in acquiring these monies and additional support. This was as through publicising the project and from last years successful exchange project most local organisations and people were fully aware and support of this exchange.

### **K) Conclusions:**

Overall all the young people, youth workers, organisers and supporters of the project found it to be fun, exciting and a positive learning experience that not only benefited those directly involved but also the wider community of Craigmillar. Through evaluations and discussions the exchange project was viewed by many as a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet other young people from a different country through actively participating in joint activities. Thus building relationships and learning about one another's culture though maintaining a fun learning environment.

Young People's evaluation is attached as Appendix 3

In regards to the whole exchange project Café K would definitely take on a similar project in the future. From the initial stages the British Council were informative and supportive throughout the exchange process and this was shown even more so when representatives visited the group and encouraged them to participate in the 'sound sculpture'.

Overall the exchange project was a huge success for all those involved with both young people and youth workers vastly benefiting from a new, exciting and educational experience.