



poseidon
partnership on socio-economic
and integrated development of
deprived neighbourhoods

Exchange of Experience Report

Theme III
“Projects that improve the socio-economic
situation in deprived neighbourhoods”

Genova, August 2004

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE EVENT REPORT GENOA, AUGUST 2004.

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1. Theme of the Exchange of Experience Event

This theme deals with the broad range of projects and initiatives frequently implemented in the context of neighbourhood management policies, which aim at improving the social and economic context in deprived neighbourhoods. Such pro-active measures can cover new educational offers, the improvement of leisure and childcare facilities, job creation, gender mainstreaming activities, the organisation of educational, cultural, sports and leisure activities, the support to local businesses and the local/ethnic economy, the setting up of local alliances for economic and employment or socially-driven urban renewal measures in deprived neighbourhoods.

2. The Two Approaches Proposed

2.1 The Exchange of Experience Event (EEE) explored the issues around the theme of “projects improving the socio-economic situation in deprived neighbourhoods” as part of the larger Poseidon Project. Through studying the relevant policies and case studies around the issue of neighbourhood management over the last twenty years it was quite

clear that we were facing different approaches according to different geographical and economic conditions.

2.2 A pre-meeting was organised with North Kent to prepare the Exchange of Experience Event. This provided the opportunity to discuss the 3rd theme; to compare our different approaches and aims; and to consider the possibility of developing the theme further, through some key questions. These were agreed to be:

- a) Which approach, or combination of approaches has been the most successful in involving local people in your own area?
- b) What, in your opinion and experience, are the limits of each approach?
- c) What are the key issues/actions that you will be taking away from the day back to your own areas?

In order to maximise the involvement of partners in this discussion these questions were sent out to all participants in advance of the EEE.

2.3 In the joint presentation made by Genoa and North Kent, (see Appendix iii), we've tried to emphasize the two main approaches, linking each case study to one or other approach. The first one was named the **Urban Planning approach**: it starts from certain premises, that the built heritage is key and that where this has historical importance, it should be preserved; the second one is the **Social Management approach**: it focuses on the social rather than the built capital of a neighbourhood. It attempts to address issues of neighbourhood deprivation in a holistic manner with the cooperation of local residents.

2.4 This provocative way of presenting the context was intended to stimulate discussion particularly around the comparison of approaches used to deliver regeneration activity between such different countries.

3. The North Kent Perspective

3.1 The North Kent Perspective was presented by the North Kent Gateway Partnership (NKGP) and outlined their experiences of the regeneration activities they support in their region. The presentation gave an overview of the North Kent context; the role of NKGP; the programmes that they deliver; and some case studies of successful regeneration projects. A full version of the North Kent presentation has been included as **Appendix i**.

3.2 The North Kent Thames Gateway Context: The "North Kent" area is situated south east of London between the capital and the channel coast. It comprises the municipalities of Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale and has a population of some 600,000. It is a predominantly urban area with rural fringes. It is part of the "Thames Gateway", the area of land encompassing North Kent, the East End of London and South Essex, the largest regeneration site in Europe. It is an area of contrasts; of barren industrial land & areas of outstanding beauty; new executive housing developments & poor existing housing; part of one of the most prosperous regions in Europe & still with some of the most deprived neighbourhoods.

3.3 The Role of NKGP: The NKGP is a non-incorporated body of municipalities, non-government organisations (NGOs) and the business sector. The NKGP was originally

formed in 1996, to access funds under a UK Government funding stream called the “Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)”. It currently runs an eight-year £8 million SRB Programme of community based local regeneration projects. It also runs a programme under the EU Global Grants Programme, two further projects under the Interreg Programme, and will administer a £1.2 million a year programme under the North Kent Area Investment Framework (AIF) – an holistic area investment strategy. The NKGPs also undertakes consultancy work on programme management, monitoring and evaluation. As North Kent attempts to tackle neighbourhood deprivation holistically, especially striving to make the links between the physical and social regeneration of an area, the NKGPs is seen as a body that enables and promotes inter-agency working, local accountability and local control.

3.4 North Kent Case Studies:

3.4.1 The Vines Centre Trust is a social enterprise delivering a range of activities targeted at the needs of disadvantaged people. It has been recognised nationally as an example of best practice in community regeneration. The original project was started by a local church and now operates a number of recycling initiatives including recycling computers, paint, timber and furniture and giving supplying these to local residents in need at a reduced cost or free of charge.

3.4.2 The Making Connections project supports community development workers (CDWs) in deprived neighbourhoods, whose work is directed by local people. They have been very successful in helping people to help themselves and have delivered projects such as the Temple Hill Healthy Living Centre. This project involved the demolition of a local church (and the priest’s house, making him temporarily homeless!) to provide a community space, health centre and place of worship. The project was evaluated by a university, who considered it to be an exemplar of good practice in community consultation.

3.4.3 The Sunlight Centre was established to tackle the causes of chronic multiple deprivation. It provides a range of services to the local community, including a GP practice with associated medical and nursing facilities, a community pharmacy, a day nursery, creche facilities, family support services, a community laundrette and a community café. The project has been identified as a ‘flagship project’ and an example of good practice, which is seen as a model that can be replicated both regionally and nationally.

3.5 Generally North Kent Approach adopts the “social management” approach to delivering projects that improve the social and economic context of deprived neighbourhoods and can be summarised as below:

- The encouragement of locally led projects;
- The most successful projects have been where there is true community involvement or active ‘community champions’;
- North Kent has strategic plans both at a national and regional level but favours a ‘bottom up’ approach.
- Less reliance by projects on grant dependency more on generating income providing for a more balanced approach.

- Strong leadership, commitment, focus, direction, professional management and entrepreneurial style.
- A clear project plan and a broad partnership where partners from all sectors are contributing to, and are agreed on the overall delivery.

4. The Genova Perspective

4.1 The Italian experience

In Italy we have on one hand a high level architectural heritage and on the other hand a lack of resources both financial and in terms of grounds available for new large housing programs. The lack of territorial resources is also a real problem for the Ligurian Region and for Provincia di Genova.

Twenty years ago, politicians and senior managers of public administrations realized that it was not possible to implement new building programs for disadvantaged people in suburban zones, and a new policy began, aimed to keep people where they were living.

The tool they put in place has been the “complex programs”, where public and private actors and very different types of problems are involved. The “complex approach” has also involved the neighbourhood management issue, because social problems have become an essential component of this approach.

The most important initiatives have been held in popular wards both in historic centres of towns and in suburban zones, where rehabilitation programs have been undertaken.

Many national and regional Laws have declared the priority of rehabilitation over new building programs, and have dealt with social problems in public housing.

Keeping people in their neighbourhoods, when rehabilitation programs are being developed, is not an easy task. If you undertake urban renewal you have to find temporary accommodation for inhabitants, you have to keep retailers in their shops, and moreover you have to enhance facilities such as schools, surgeries, sport grounds, and so on, to ensure that there will always be people who live and work in those areas.

Another side of the issue is to get a mixture of people with different incomes, ages, cultures and origins: exclusion arises when disadvantaged people are concentrated in “ghetto” districts; therefore complex programs aim to integrate local residents.

4.2 The Provincia di Genova experience

The main mission of Provincia di Genova is fostering a development process in its area, involving municipalities and other public and private actors. Therefore co-ordinating and planning are the key aims of Provincia activities, while the municipalities activities are more related to implementing actual projects, and to achieving practical results.

4.2.1 The PRUSST (integrated Programs of Urban Redevelopment and Sustainable Development of the Territory) is a tool for co-ordinating both public both private proposals, established by Ministerial Decree and represents the most important experiment in Italy of integrated planning extended over a large scale.

Twenty Ligurian administrations have submitted their programs since 1999-2000, eleven of which were approved by the Ministry. One of the successful applicants were Provincia di Genova who promoted an partnership among the most important local actors (municipalities, public and private companies, the park authority, entrepreneurs

and citizen associations) in order to get an overall plan with 45 detailed proposals to achieve local socio-economic development.

The projects have been related to three main threads: infrastructure and facilities; environment, historic and architectural heritage; and business activities.

4.2.2 The informalavoro net

Provincia di Genova has a special task related to job orientation and training courses oriented to people of different ages who are looking for a job.

The policy in this issue is to push near the demand and the offer and to link the relation with the specific contexts where they have to meet, but on the other side to create a net spread on the whole provincial territory.

In Busalla, the main urban centre of Scrivia Valley, has been created an information point linked to the Provincia net, about job orientation and professional training.

Informalavoro net is an initiative promoted by Provincia di Genova, according with local administrations and Mountain Communities within the reform of employment services, transferred from State to Regions.

A full version of the presentation from Genova has been included as **Appendix ii**.

5. Feedback From The Workshop

5.1 A workshop was held based on the five questions that had been distributed to participants prior to the event (see paragraph 2.2 above). The workshop was started by a provocative joint presentation advocating that there were only two clear approaches to neighbourhood management, an approach based around the **physical elements** and an approach based around the **social elements**.

A full version of this presentation has been included as **Appendix iii**.

5.2 The responses of the participants are recorded below under each question posed.

1) Which approach, or combination of approaches has been the most successful in involving local people in your own area?

- Finance is probably the main issue for deprived areas not necessarily the approach; an example was raised by Haringey that they had limited resources but they had dedicated and enterprising local residents.
- The issues about how are resources allocated and who decides about money was seen as key.
- A high percentage of funding is spent in administration costs linked with the issue raised by Genova of the ending funding in 2006.
- Political and professional links are needed for a proper neighbourhood management.
- The question of the level of political commitment to involving the community was raised.

- Vienna & Sweden identified that for local people it is not what approach is more successful, but what are the key questions and issues concerning them directly in their lives and their neighbourhoods. It is important to address the question this way round. This will then allow the development of the appropriate approaches to tackle the issues.
- North Kent & London identified that the essence of the neighbourhood approach looked to involve local people more in the structures developed, however there were still questions and difficulties over the ability of the neighbourhood approach to involve the 'hardest to reach' target groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, young people, disabled, women, etc).
- It was felt that the reality of the situation is that we need a mix of the two approaches.
- In both approaches a good atmosphere of partnership working enables the process of regeneration to be delivered. An example of which was in Vienna – involving the most important actors (statutory authorities, agencies and investors) and the use of professionals to mediate how money and time are invested. Genova also identified that the approach used does depend on the organisation's ability, and those of its practitioners, to use the tools available to them at that time to successfully involve local people.
- London and North Kent gave an example of "Planning for real" exercises that enable local people to be actively involved in community consultation that directly feeds into the development of the local area plan.
- Recently in UK there has been an expansion of the Planning Aid service by the national government, recognising that there had been a failing of the planning-led approach to engage citizens in the planning process. The Planning Aid service provides free and independent advice on planning issues to local community/voluntary organisations, individuals, social enterprises and small businesses who cannot afford professional fees. In addition, the service provides outreach projects that aim to involve a cross section of the community in planning and regenerating their local areas. This enable local people to be fully engaged in the process, whilst equipping them with the knowledge, skills and techniques to deliver local projects.
- A key question raised was how to involve minority groups, because of cultural and language barriers, for example translating information into many languages.
- The issue of different perceptions of "democracy" in different societies and cultures was raised.
- Partners agreed that whatever approach was used, and been successful, in involving local people the big question was that of raising and managing expectations and then being able to maintain the continued commitment of stakeholders and the local people in the process of regenerating the neighbourhood.

2) What, in your opinion and experience, are the limits of each approach?

Planning-led approach		Neighbourhood Management approach
Limits	Common Limitations	Limits
Diverting/shifting problems to other areas. Area improved but not benefiting local people.	The timescale and funding available to deliver the programmes and projects within neighbourhoods.	The long-term commitment from local partners, stakeholders and local people in the regeneration process.
The scale of the approach can be too ambitious to be fully delivered in an area.	Question about the balance of political power and who has the control to decide on local action.	How to deal with conflicts which need resolving within the community or between partners.
Seen as a top-down approach to regeneration.	Managing and raising expectations within the neighbourhoods.	Getting a sign up to the process and agreements from all partners to deliver on the actions outlined for e.g. in a work programme or action plan for the neighbourhood area.
The amount of community/voluntary involvement in the planning process.	Organisations/practitioners ability to change and adapt to use different techniques in the field.	Representation on the many partnerships, subgroups or committees. As well as the political process and the difficulty of getting consensus on decision making within the neighbourhood.
Getting effective and meaningful participation from those hardest to reach groups due to the structures within planning process and the connection with local communities.		Getting effective and meaningful participation from those hardest to reach groups. This approach is able to engage with different groups but then it is a question of representation, involvement and who is to take forward the actions developed.
Planning processes seen as more technical and bureaucratic.		Stronger representative groups mainly participate in the process in the neighbourhood. As such, there is the question of understanding if local communities are to take on the responsibilities for managing change in their neighbourhoods.
Planning approach generally brings very expensive interventions and increased value/profit mainly goes back to the developers.		Working in a partnership approach to regenerating local neighbourhoods can be a complex approach with many pitfalls, difficulties, negotiating on action plans and receiving agreements.
Economic and social mix need services.		'NIMBY'ism (Not In My Back Yard). This is an issue raised by local people, who take resistance to change in their neighbourhood especially on major/big decisions that they feel they have a stake in and can influence.
High percentage of funding is spent in administration costs.		This approach too works with a transient population, which is engaged and then moves on and then the cycle of multiple deprivation issues arise once again in the community.
		In some instances the neighbourhood management approach brings some legal problems linked to legal status of the organisation working in the neighbourhood to deliver actions.

3) What are the key issues/actions that you will be taking away from the day?

- Focus not on social work but on motivating people.
- Implementing small projects to improve appearance.
- Training for local project managers and their staff.
- Citizenship: to be integral to the process working together across all ethnic backgrounds/groups (elderly, women, etc).
- Need to think creatively and laterally about the issues and about involvement.
- Genoa - The importance of the integration of departments (that addresses ways to effectively change individual organisations' capacity). In addition, Genoa were interested in the presentation provided by North Kent and identified that previously when looking at the local stakeholders they hadn't actively engaged with the local faith groups and churches in the neighbourhoods.
- Amsterdam – Learnt about the key approaches to planning and neighbourhood management and how the two are indeed integral in delivering effective regeneration activities that provide locally agreed solutions.
- Vienna – clear understanding the importance of drawing together different funding streams, programmes and projects to work more closely together to foster the development of stronger working partnerships in those key targeted neighbourhoods to focus resources.
- Sweden identified the need for accountability throughout the regeneration process. With the importance raised of the need to bring all types of actors around the table at local community events to show local residents the actions taken and vice versa.
- A general issue around the distribution of power central or local and a key question to address is 'who are we regenerating for'?

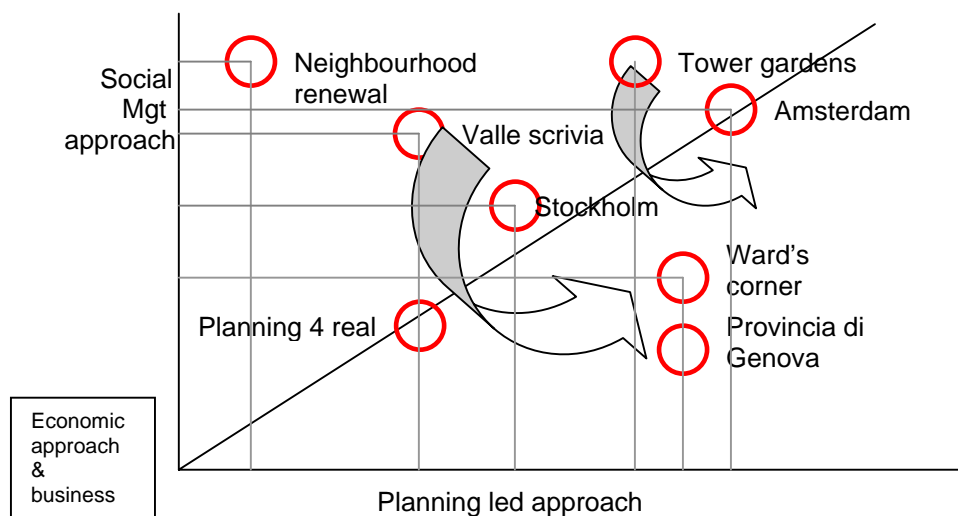
6. Summary of issues raised / questions answered

6.1 During the event, participants have communicated to each other, not only their main approach to the problem, but also the main results of their projects, and the discussion focussed on the main tools that each organization employ to achieve them.

6.2 The approaches have been changing over recent years, depending on national and regional policies, and on the increasing experience of each partner. In this context there is a good opportunity to look to other experiences in other situations in Europe, and in the world, to learn from successes and failures.

The event achieved increased knowledge of the participant's organizations and of participant's practical issues such as: how many people have worked or are working on a

certain project and what job position and qualifications have they; how much money has been invested; how much time has been needed; what tools have been used; what have politicians thought about the results of that certain project. (see graph below)



The final record sheet of the workshop has identified the key words from the event (to be deepened in the Poseidon glossary) and serves as a summary to the overall exchange of experience under Theme III of the Poseidon Project:

- Vertical Integration of organisations
- Horizontal integration off departments
- Sustainability
- Citizenship
- Area based initiatives
- Continuity
- Political consensus
- Neighbourhood management
- Neighbourhood renewal
- Public & Private resources
- Citizens/residents/inhabitants
- Additionality

7. Next steps – actions to be undertaken

7.1 Glossary

- Develop a ‘glossary’ of terms to describe different aspects of regeneration and their meaning in partner countries;
- Initially, produce a list of terms in English;
- Each partner to translate terminology and their meaning;
- Expectation that there may be differences in understanding of terminology from country to country;
- How does this relate to approaches/experience in each partner country?

7.2 Article

- Each word in the 'glossary' is related to an approach,
- Need to tell the story of different experiences and approaches;
- Are the social management and planning-led approaches valid?
- Are there any other approaches that we've missed?
- What is the philosophy behind different approaches in different countries?
- What are the successes, failures and limitations of different approaches?

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Genova/Rochester August 2004