EUROCITIES Social Innovation Lab

'Making Inclusive Cities through Social Innovation'

25-27 March 2019, Glasgow

Highlights

GLASGOW, 25-27 March 2019 | The first-ever Social Innovation Lab of EUROCITIES gathered over 120 urban policy-makers, city practitioners and change makers from over 50 cities in Europe joined forces to pilot a new way of working for 'Making Inclusive Cities through Social Innovation'.

Over two days of workshops, site visits and networking sessions, city delegates co-learned, co-shared and co-created innovative solutions to pressing social challenges in their cities. Thanks to an engaging collaborative learning process, they gained new perspectives on social innovation, learned new skills and enhanced their capacity to design and deliver innovative approaches to social policy in cities.

Setting the scene for social innovation in cities

The Leader of the Glasgow City Council, Cllr Susan Aitken, opened the event by welcoming all delegates to Glasgow, a city of innovation and re-invention, where "everything we do is led by people and everyone who comes here from wherever in the world is an honorary Glaswegian".

The new chair of the EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum, Sedat Arif who is deputy mayor of Malmo, invited all members to "embrace change in our cities and innovate together. Let us work jointly to make our cities open labs for innovative solutions to improve the quality of life of all people".

The Scottish Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, Kevin Stewart, set out the ambitious plan to end homelessness in Scotland, saying "We work tirelessly to ensure that people in cities become the best that they can be. Homelessness is the result of inequalities rather than the fault of the individuals".

Callum Lynch, a young ambassador, gave an inspirational speech by sharing his own experience of being in state care and receiving full support to grow up as an active citizen.

Raffaele Barbato presented the EU funding opportunities for social innovations in cities through the Urban Innovation Actions programme, suggesting that "cities have to rethink how they are working and to act like ecosystem managers".

Co-learning: identifying what works, why and how to transfer it

In the first part of the Social Innovation Lab, city delegates learned from recent pilots of social innovations in cities (mostly Urban Innovation Actions). In five parallel workshops, participants examined in depth a case study of urban social innovation, identified success factors as well as challenges and obstacles in implementation and reflected on how to transfer and adapt the lessons learned to their own city context.

We learned what works, why and how to transfer the social innovations from:

- **Birmingham**'s approach to tackling urban poverty by 'Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together (USE-IT!)'
- **Porto**'s approach to tackling skills mismatch through 'Jobs City'
- **Athens**' model for empowering refugees and migrants to become active members of local communities by 'Curing the Limbo'
- **Nantes**' approach to tackle homelessness by 'Creating bridges between the homeless and local communities'
- **Glasgow**'s model of integrated social care and healthcare services

Co-sharing of innovative initiatives in cities with local partners

In the second part of the Social Innovation Lab, city delegates shared know-how and exchanged good practices of social innovations in their cities by:

- Networking with invited stakeholders on how to design and support social innovations in cities
- Speed-networking of city-led projects with innovative approaches to social policies
- Discovering Glasgow's innovative approaches to inclusive measures in 5 site visits about:
  - empowering people with disabilities
  - socio-economic integration of migrants at local level
  - preventing and combating homelessness
  - supporting people with learning disabilities and autism to access and retain employment
  - keeping women in custody closer to their families

Co-creation of innovative solutions to social challenges in cities

In the third and final part of the Social Innovation Lab, city experts analysed concrete social challenges of some cities and worked together to design new and more effective responses:

- **Amsterdam** challenge focused on how to address the impact and specific needs of the ageing population with migrant background
- **Ghent** challenge tackled how to ensure social cohesion and community participation in an area with high concentration of social housing and vulnerable residents
- **Glasgow** challenge was about how to produce a shift to a positive, inclusive discourse on migration to welcome diversity and ensure inclusive growth for all people in the city
- **Gothenburg** challenge looked into how to deliver equal school quality for children across the city neighbourhoods while at the same time satisfying particular local needs
- **Rotterdam** challenge tackled how to provide the most appropriate interventions to help vulnerable young adults become self-sufficient

Working in five parallel workshops, city delegates formulated actionable solutions to address these city challenges, which were valuable ideas that the experts from the city concerned by the challenge took back home to consider for piloting into new policies or projects.

Conclusions and main takeaways

1. Cities are facing similar challenges, such as skills mismatch, new forms of poverty, homelessness, inclusion of migrants and refugees and the need to better integrate services.
2. Cities also have a lot of common sources of inspiration and innovation by testing new ways of working to respond to social challenges.
3. We should be sharing much more our lessons not only about our successes but also our failures so that we can learn from each other.
4. We should keep this new working method of the Social Innovation Lab and further develop it to build capacity in our cities to become open labs for new solutions to social challenges.
5. Challenges like rising poverty and inequality are challenges that are bigger than any one single city and they require cooperation. EUROCITIES, as a network, is a true symbol for European cooperation. We need to be united to stand up for a Europe built on tolerance and collaboration, and reinforce the key role of cities for the future of Europe and our citizens.

All the presentations and materials from the event are available here: http://bit.ly/2Vium2p

You can view the photos from the event here: https://bit.ly/2uGJuLb

Did you miss our Social Affairs Forum? Not to worry, you can get a quick overview of the key messages from our social media stories here: http://bit.ly/2YKkuAj