

Best practice 14: URBACT - MEDINT project "Integrated approach in Mediterranean local development" and PICTURE Project: the experience of Local Forums, Syracuse, Italy

Scale: Transnational and Urban/District

Stage of tourism development: Growing/Mature

Main objective: Urban (integrated) development/ Destination promotion

Categories of effects:

Effects on urban governance

- Cultural tourism strategy
- Sustainable partnerships
- Stakeholder participation
- Destination management

Effects on quality of life

- Built heritage diversity
- Urban economies
- Environment
- Social life, local values and traditions

The MEDINT Project network aims at constructing new relationships between ordinary people and the institutions - especially those of government. The network involves 12 cities: Syracuse and Misterbianco (Italy), Toledo, Seville, Grenade, Valencia and Alicante (Spain), Heraklion (Greece), Union of Communities of Larnaca (Cyprus), Zarzis (Tunisia), Kutna Hora (Czech Republic) and Bialystok (Poland). The main objective of the project is to promote "local models to increase citizens' opportunities for participation and influence". Specific objectives include the development of *feed-backed dialogue* between local residents (both nationals and foreigners), associations representatives, elected officials and municipal officeholders; the creation of "easy-structured" forms of *local participation and planning* (neighbourhood forums, thematic consultative committees, thematic development committees, district boards); the development of *infrastructures and services managed in collaboration* with their users (service charters, feedback systems, users panels), the use of interactive techniques (digital city forums, Internet channels, idea hatcheries, telecentres) of interaction. The participation of children, young people and other *disadvantaged categories* (women, immigrants, disabled and elderly people, etc.) is particularly encouraged. The Local Forums are not only technocratic organisms, but they form a sort of «enlarged permanent tables» opened to local experts, decision-makers, all types of associations (social, economic, environmental, cultural, tourism ones...) and citizens representatives. The forums are horizontally conceived to giving voice to all individuals who have interest to discuss the ambit of urban relevant issues affecting their lives and/or living conditions. Implementation operates through periodic working meetings coordinated by a moderator; each Forum can elaborate its own internal regulation, even if it is suggested to avoid excesses of bureaucratisation. It is suggested, if the composition of the Forum allows, not to give an excessive technical character to the works, but to be prevalently concentrated on the cases, in *the way and the language used is perceived by the participants*. This very good practice has revealed a great utility for both URBACT Medint project and PICTURE project, as it has created new, cross-cutting relationships among the different participants, allowing them the overcoming of diffidence and prejudice, along with the realisation of very interesting outputs: in the Medint case, new urban integrated plans, while in the Picture case, new shared proposals upon new cultural services and events to be managed by the same Forum's participants.

Sources: Proceedings of MEDINT Project, Syracuse, Italy, June 2003; PICTURE Local Permanent Forum's Reports, Syracuse, Italy, April 2004.

Link:

<http://www.urbact.org/medint>