



Ghent, 2016 Summary of conclusions

Theme 1. Responding to migrant and refugee children and young people (1)

What should be municipalities' goal for migrant and refugee children and young people?

- The goal should be the positive adaptation and integration of immigrant and refugee young people in the community.

Why, and for whom, is their integration important?

- Children's positive adaptation and wellbeing provide the foundation for their healthy and productive adult lives.
- Investing in childcare, education, and health-related prevention and intervention programs comes with multiple economic and social returns, including more labour participation and reduction of crime.
- Their positive adaptation and integration benefits both the host society and immigrants



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Theme 1. Responding to migrant and refugee children and young people (2)

How can we promote their integration?

- Support them to adopt the host cultures and languages while also maintaining their heritage culture and language. This strategy will help them do better and contribute more to society than the strategy where they learn only one language or cultural orientation.
- Promote their feelings of belonging and being accepted by the receiving society. These strengthens their ties to the host society.
- Scientific evidence shows that discrimination, racism and exclusion have deleterious effects for positive youth development and social cohesion, and are risk factors for radicalisation.



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Theme 1. Responding to migrant and refugee children and young people (3)

What is the role of municipalities?

- Have political leadership at the community level support an inclusive approach
- Work as inclusively as possible from the moment people arrive
- Demystify stereotypes and raise awareness
- Invest in developing intercultural competences
- Focus on all vulnerable people whenever possible

How should involved and how?

- Empower the local community and connect people, organisations and services
- Establish appropriate structures with clear roles and responsibilities for administration, citizens, NGOs etc.
- Engage volunteers/civil society from scratch, and work to support them
- Involve refugees (win – win) and invest in peer-to-peer education
- Exchange good practice and develop networks between cities



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Theme 2 - Child-friendly policies (1)

Lessons

1. There are different levels of 'participation'. True participation remains a mission for the movement, with tokenism still a danger
2. Municipalities need to see children as citizens NOW
3. They should taken account of children's diversity (background, economic circumstance, culture, etc.) and have respect for different age groups
4. Child-friendliness is different in each context. However, while methods and practice may differ we should aim for consensus around the core vision and definitions.
5. A holistic approach is needed; all domains should be included
6. A child-friendly city is never finished, it is a process - 'we make the road by walking'.
7. It is a local responsibility but national support is needed



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Theme 2 - Child-friendly policies (2)

Challenges

1. The need for resources (time and money) and how to get children on local political agendas (if municipalities want, there is money to be found)
2. How to spread the message to parents, teachers, politicians, citizens, etc.
3. Child-friendliness as a part of community: i.e. people-friendly cities
4. Participation: -
 - how to manage expectations
 - how to adopt it on all levels
 - how to take into account that children grow older and realisations often take time.
 - Is a children's chapter a good tool?
5. Equality in all services and provisions: full accessibility
6. Securing long-term a legal basis so that child-friendliness is not an issue for just one administration; sustainable programmes are vital
7. Rethinking democracy, looking out for other democratic systems



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Theme 3 - The social position of children and young people in towns and cities

- The social position of children is an intangible yet vitally important topic, which needs regular review and debate
- It calls for an integrated, inter-disciplinary. approach.
- Participation, inclusion and citizenship are important recurring concepts for this theme, which may need to be re-examined in the light of current sociological, pedagogical and urban developments.
- The social position of children relates to different aspects of the city; advocates, researchers and practitioners need to look more at the challenges of commercialisation and commodification of the city as well as concepts of childhood, health issues and diversity.



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Theme 4 – Children and young people and the built environment

1. There is a need to link the CFC agenda to those of Healthy Cities, Sustainable Cities etc.
2. CitC to become more of a network
3. There should be more focus on teenagers
4. Challenges of the 'political cycle' (e.g. 4 years for a new mayor)
5. Get more involvement/input from developers (into issue and CitC)
6. Finding the right vocabulary (e.g. is 'child-friendly' right?)
7. Feeding-back and persuading colleagues and the as-yet unconvinced