



European residents regeneration network

Based in Brussels, QEC-ERAN is a network of EU cities/towns/district councils as well as strategic NGOs, all of whom are connected by being involved in national, regional and EU policies and programmes concerned with Area-based regeneration. Established in 1989, it is one of the longest established networks in relation to the theme of urban regeneration and remains committed to being at the leading edge in relation to the changing realities experienced by regeneration areas.

The objectives of QEC-ERAN are:

- Developing programmes/projects which facilitate the exchange of experience and practise between such areas
- Supporting initiative based on greater participation of targeted groups
- Promoting joint up working and thinking between local authorities and other key agencies, and in particular local NGOs
- Undertaking research and evaluation in order to impact on existing and future Urban regeneration policies/programmes
- Representing the views and needs of such localities within EU and EC groupings and networks
- Creating a network which constitutes an European "think tank" regarding the issue of diversity, integration, social and economic exclusion and urban regeneration

QEC-ERAN has been one of the founding European bodies in relation to the development of area based, integrated approaches to Urban Regeneration. The European Commission has indicated that for the period 2007-2013, such an approach will continue to be key feature of urban policy and programmes. Whilst this is to be welcomed, our experience makes it very evident that we need to support capacity building and empowerment for residents. The commitments to effective participation of residents in area based regeneration programmes have not been very easy to achieve in practice. There are some examples of good practice, but these are over shadowed by tokenistic and poor practice in engaging with residents. One issue that repeatedly comes up in evaluation relating to community participation is the need to build up capacity and empower residents in order that they can engage on at least a better if not equal basis in regeneration partnership arrangements.

For this reason, we decided to create a network to sustain residents' participation in area based regeneration. Citizens' initiatives are developing and represent a new key feature in improving the situation in these areas. Urban Policy is getting more important in General Policy of the EU Members' preoccupations because of the worsening of the situation. Residents' participation contributes to a better understanding and recognition of local problems. This action needs to be support and encourage.

This is in that perspective that we want to introduce this network.

The short-term goals of the network will be to:

- Provide members with an information service which keeps them updated in terms of EU Urban Policy developments and indeed the wider policy context that drives the Lisbon Agenda
- Provide also information regarding EU funding programmes
- To undertake a needs and offers analysis of members of the network in order to identify how best to support and empower residents AND identify good practice that can form the basis exchange between groups of residents

The medium term and long term goals (2007 onwards) is secure funding in order to create an online academy for residents linked to a programme of exchange of experience workshops.

Membership is free. If you agree with the need to establish such a capacity building and empowerment then simply send us an e-mail to the address below with the subject heading "European Residents in Regeneration Network". (Copy to tierneyg@nwb.n-i.nhs.uk) Please include your name, name of your organisation, your contact details and a sentence saying "I would like to join the European Residents in Regeneration Network." We will then contact you and you will start receiving bi-monthly electronic newsletters.

E-mail: info@qec.skynet.be

Haroon Saad : hsaad@qec.skynet.be English, French, Dutch

Laure Marquet : lauremarquet@qec.skynet.be French, English, Spanish, Portuguese

Minna Riutta : mriutta@qec.skynet.be English, German, Swedish, Finnish

Giorgio Zoia : giorgio.zoia@qec.skynet.be Italian, English, French, Spanish

Andrea Giordano : andregiordano@qec.skynet.be Italian, English, French

QeC-ERAN
Rue van Artevelde 80,
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 524 45 45
Fax: +32 2 524 44 31
E-mail:
info@qec.skynet.be
www.qec-eran.org

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