

## International People's Projects - Hull, UK, 2004

# Teenagers and Self Esteem

This year, an International People's Project (IPP) was held in Hull, UK. The theme of the project was "Teenagers and Self - Esteem," and it was aimed specifically at local teenagers in the City from an area known as "The Quadrant." The IPP was the



culmination of two years' planning by four CISV Great Britain staff and various local organisations including community workers and the local surgery. It was their hope that, by providing a unique international experience for the teenagers, the participants would make a positive impact on a community suffering from many years of economic and social decline.

There were 18 participants from Egypt, Costa Rica, Norway, Thailand, Portugal, USA, Germany and Great Britain. We researched the theme in our own countries before meeting in Hull for an initial week of training prior to the two week project. Our training included presentations from partner organisations experienced in working with the target group, on topics such as sexual health and drug abuse, as well as a crash course in the local dialect, known as "Ull!"

It was certainly an ambitious project. With no established group to work with, we had to recruit the teenagers, encourage them to continue attending and develop trusting relationships within the group. But we soon had a sizeable group of "regulars", and were delighted that more than 30 teenagers joined in our activities over the two weeks and participated in a really positive way. We organised a range of activities designed to promote mutual respect, tolerance and self - esteem, often



incorporating traditional CISV activities such as cooperation games.

In addition, we helped the teenagers to prepare an event for the local community and leave a permanent physical reminder of the project. We worked with them to produce a colourful mural at the primary school where the project was held, as well as holding some playground games.

Most of the teenagers had never done activities of this kind before, yet they participated in discussions on topics such as aspirations and self-image, made new friends and learned circus skills taught by our Norwegian delegation. For the participants and staff it was a challenging and at times difficult project, but ultimately a very rewarding and enriching experience. We all learned a great deal about ourselves and the problems and pressures young people face, as well as the universal appeal of classic CISV games such as "Bang Bang!" and "Whales and Dolphins!"

We perhaps did not realise how much the teenagers had enjoyed the IPP until the emotional farewells at the end. Like many

CISV programmes, it seemed that everything was falling into place just as we had to bring the project to a close. However, it is hoped that Great Britain



Junior Branch and participants will help to keep up the newly established CISV link with the young people of The Quadrant.

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