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1 Introduction

This is the report of ANPED's second Skill-share and Training Workshop on working locally on sustainable development and Local Agenda 21. The workshop took place in Bushteni, Romania, 29 October – 1 November 1998. NGOs from 17 countries took part, mostly from the CEE & NIS regions. It follows the first event on Local Agenda 21 and Grassroots Development as well as a workshop on Local Agenda 21 at the European EcoForum meeting in Denmark. The objectives were to develop the know-how to undertake successful projects in a sustainability framework, to build NGO capacity for work on Local Agenda 21 (LA21), to share experience, to strengthen support networks and to build support for LA21 from governments and other bodies. Workshops and training sessions were set up to achieve these objectives.

2 Local Sustainability – an ANPED perspective

2.1 Opening

The LA21 Co-ordinator of ANPED, Chris Church opened the skill-share and welcomed the participants. He highlighted the work done across Europe, and North America. He expressed his hope that all this experience can be shared and that those attending would find in ANPED the network that can meet their needs.

The director from TER (Ecological Youth for Environment), Bogdan Paranici welcomed everyone to Busteni, Romania. He highlighted the value of networking on all issues.

2.2 An introduction to Local Agenda 21

Summary of presentation by Chris Church

Agenda 21 sees sustainable development as the combined process of looking after and improving our environment; meeting our basic economic needs and building a fairer, more just society. It also highlights **the need for local action on appropriate issues**. This local focus has led to some interesting new approaches and developments. This local focus also poses challenges for ANPED:

First of all it is very important to recognise our immense diversity. North American, Western, Eastern and Southern Europe all have different needs and perspectives. Therefore it is important to look to the principles underlying LA21, rather than relying on a 'blue-print' approach. Secondly, if we are to co-operate effectively across the North then we must make use of existing networks. ANPED is just one existing network, others include the International Centre for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (ESCTC) and the World Health Organisation Healthy Cities (WHO Healthy Cities).

Agenda 21 was shaped by discussions and in some cases conflicts between North and South, governments and NGOs. It is a global action plan that reflects both North and South priorities. There exists a tension between North and South and also a tension between environmental and socio-economic priorities. This same tension is also visible in most cities and it is important to make that tension into a positive and creative one in which we can work together. In this way we can move towards sustainable development.

There are no defined 'rules'-- this is not a statutory process. As a result it is important to learn from each other through 'good practice'. Our strength lies in our communities and our shared concerns and we should seek to build this capacity.

There are some common points for successful work on LA21:

- Some links (perhaps a partnership) between NGOs and Local Government should exist. Governments should involve NGOs in sustainable development plans, making the best use of their abilities in such areas as education, alleviation of poverty and environmental protection and rehabilitation (Agenda 21 chapter 27)
- A plan should be developed that meets local needs. Local needs should be identified clearly in the plan. Social, economic and environmental needs should be taken into account since they are all linked with each other.
- Local needs should be put in a global context. Local Agenda 21 is more than just an environmental plan and is closely connected to global problems and future generations.

ANPED's work so far has made it clear that for some NGOs formal partnership with local government is neither realistic or desirable. We will seek to work with NGOs by supporting projects that may act as a base for building better links between those NGOs and other groups (including local government) within civil society.

2.3 ANPED working with other bodies

There are many other bodies working on local sustainable development in Europe and ANPED has worked to build links with as many as possible. Two important networks presented at the workshop:

2.3.1 The work of the Regional Environment Centre

Speaker: Adriana Craciun

The Regional Environment Centre (REC) was established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. The REC has its headquarters in Szentendre, Hungary and has Local Offices in each of its 15 beneficiary CEE countries which are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Yugoslavia.

The REC has three key work areas:

- Information exchange:

Since its inception, the REC believed that sufficient information is fundamental to public participation in decision making. The REC collects and disseminates useful information on such issues as the state of the environment, proposed legislation, and alternative measures for environmental protection. Furthermore the REC promotes co-operation by providing the contact information for environmental experts, government officials, funding institutions, businesses and NGOs that is necessary for building partnerships to solve environmental problems

- Programs:

- Public Participation Program: The REC promotes a more efficient use of legal and non-formal instruments in environmental decision making. In addition to legal rights, true participation requires an active public with the motivation to exercise those rights.
- Business initiatives: Finding practical solutions to environmental problems is not in the hands of governments and NGOs alone. As the link between economics and the environment is increasingly apparent, the business sector must be involved in the debate if sound environmental policies are to be developed.
- Environmental Action Program (EAP): The EAP has been the focal point for developing sound environmental policy in Central and Eastern Europe since it was endorsed by European environmental ministers at the Lucerne conference in 1993. The REC's assistance to the EAP has worked to help make the methodology of the EAP relevant to national and local policy makers in the CEE countries.

- Grants.

REC's grants program is designed to target NGOs at three levels:

- Local, emerging NGOs which work mainly to solve local environmental problems.
- Developed and experienced NGOs which work on projects of importance for a whole country, and which are able and ready to co-operate with other REC constituents within a country.
- Developed and experienced NGOs which successfully run projects of national and international significance in Central and Eastern Europe. These strong NGOs will use REC grants to reach across borders to implement co-operative, model-value projects with partners in other countries.

NGOs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Yugoslavia are eligible to receive grants from the REC.

Financial support is given to NGO projects to reach the following objectives:

- To improve the state of the environment and the level of public participation in CEE
- To help new, emerging NGOs to get organised, establish basic office operations and manage small scale projects
- To stimulate co-operative NGO projects on the national level and also between NGOs of many countries
- To stimulate constructive discussion and co-operation between environmental NGOs and other stakeholders, such as local and national governments and businesses, on the most important environmental issues of the region.

The REC's grant system addresses many NGO needs. The program is designed to respond flexibly to NGOs in different countries of the region. It offers long-term project support and it provides a link between donors who are interested in co-operating with the REC and NGOs in need of financial support. REC has region-wide environmental grants, national and local grants. The region-wide environmental Grants Program offers financial support to NGO projects addressing environmental issues with importance for the Central and Eastern European region as a whole. The projects involve international co-operation between NGOs from different countries of the region. National Grants are given to developed NGOs on the national level in order to finance projects which deal with issues of nation-wide importance, projects which include inter- and intra- sectoral co-operation and projects which enable the NGO movement as a whole to participate in environmental decision making on a national level. Local grants provide financing to NGOs for their operating expenses, training and education activities, local projects and local events

2.3.2 ICLEI - Building local government capacity for sustainable development

Speaker: Rina Schultink

The International Council for Local Initiatives, ICLEI, is an association of local governments dedicated to the prevention and solution of local, regional and global environmental problems through local action. Approximately 300 cities, towns, counties and their associations from around the world are Members of the Council.

ICLEI was launched in 1990 as the international environmental agency for local governments under the sponsorship of the UNEP, the IULA and the Center for Innovative Diplomacy. ICLEI maintains a formal association with IULA and has official consultative status with the UN through which it advocates the interests of local governments before international bodies.

The Council's strategic objectives are achieved through ICLEI's international campaigns. ICLEI's two current campaigns, the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign and the Local Agenda 21 Initiative, are supported by numerous technical assistance and training projects. These projects are designed to assist Campaign participants to achieve their commitments.

ICLEI is one of the five international networks or associations of local authorities that support the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign, launched at the first European Sustainable Cities and Towns held in Aalborg in 1994, by undertaking projects for sustainable development in which local authorities participating in the Campaign can participate. ICLEI's project include the European Local Agenda 21 Guidance and Training Programme which is open to any participating local authority of the Campaign.

ICLEI is organising a series of regional conferences across Europe on Sustainable Cities & Towns. The second was held in Sofia, Bulgaria, 12-15 November 1998: "Towards Local Sustainability in Central and Eastern Europe". The Sofia conference was directed at municipalities (i.e. all local groups and organisations, as well as all local decision-makers) and focuses on the specific problems in Central and Eastern Europe and the development of regionally adapted solutions towards sustainability. A Conference statement was developed containing the conclusions drawn by the participants. Other events will be held in 1999 before the Third Pan-European Conference, planned in the year 2000 in the ICLEI member city Hanover.

ANPED and ICLEI are planning to work together in the future. It is clear that ICLEI, like ANPED, is committed to a more sustainable society. According to Agenda 21 chapter 28 local governments should work closely together with local people, business and NGOs while setting up a Local Agenda 21 project. Co-operation between NGOs and local governments is not always found easy by both NGOs and local governments.

During the workshop “Working with local governments”, several problems were discussed. (A summary of this discussion can be found on page xx). One common problem is a lack of understanding between NGOs and local governments. Since ANPED is a network of NGOs and ICLEI an association of local governments, working together could be very useful. They could organise training together and share information among each other. They could for example share their databases and case studies. This way the relationship between NGOs and local governments could change for the better.

3. Making it happen - How to get started

3.1 Effective participation - the first step towards a successful Local Agenda 21 project.

Facilitator: Chris Church

Involving a community in work on a local sustainability project or a full Local Agenda 21 programme should lead to shared responsibility and a better programme. Working at the local level and prioritising the needs of a local community allows more realistic targets to actually be achieved.

Although Local Agenda 21 implementation produces many benefits, there are a number of serious constraints. It is essential to set up clear targets and outcomes and to discuss these and get agreements where possible before starting work. This can help ensure that people do not have unrealistic expectation. Once initiated, a Local Agenda 21 program may still experience difficulties with individuals having other dominating personal motives or conflicts between parties involved. Words are a lot easier to produce than actions. Realism is also necessary when it comes to finding the necessary funding. Obtaining the required resources is perhaps even one of the biggest problems.

What do people need to become involved in Local Agenda 21 programmes? People often want to know ‘what’s in it for me?’. The benefits of participation should be as clear as possible – show what people will gain if they choose to be involved in a Local Agenda 21 project. This might include small local improvements to their environment, better access to local decision-makers etc.

So what do you require to start a Local Agenda 21? The first step is to recognise the community the local project or the LA 21 programme will target. This can range from your local street to the town, city or region you live in. Once you have identified your target community you have to specifically target the people who will be affected by the work and who can also influence it themselves. If this is to be a full Local Agenda 21 then the involvement of local government is important. They should ideally approve and support the programme. Local Agenda 21 programs have to be on a small scale and realistic. Besides that the projects are often more beneficial if they are long-term projects.

Be clear who will be affected. For example a local project could involve cleaning up a river. An important first step would be to survey local people such as fishermen and people living near to the river. The relevant local authority branch dealing with the rivers status (environment department), and people who litter up the river etc should also be involved. Local industry could also be affected by the Local Agenda 21 and would have to be contacted (e.g. tourism industry). If these people become involved in a successful one-off project and can see the results, then they are far more likely to be interested in joining and longer-term project to develop a plan for sustainable development.

Ensuring effective participation of the ‘targeted’ community provides a solid base from which the Local Agenda 21 program can be most effective and successful. Dealing with such problems at an early stage can save time and costs later on in the program (particularly so in the UK which has time consuming legislation processes). Effective participation can make the local community produce a ‘feel good’ factor, adding value and less dissatisfaction.

The workshop focused on ‘the 3 P’s’ needed for success. These are:

a good participation **process**,

a realistic and effective local **project**,

ideally leading to the development of **policies** linked to a Local Agenda 21 programme which will result in long-term benefits.

3.2 Project development – making things happen

Facilitator: Jan Juffermans

This workshop started with participants sharing their experiences on local projects that they have started with their municipality. It became clear that there are still few joint projects between NGOs and local government on Local Agenda 21-type work in the CEE /NIS. In Romania there is an interesting project on working on Local Agenda 21 between several stakeholders. They are working on building a framework for the Local Agenda 21 process in the region where also Galati is part of. (See page 19) The next step will be the development of training and concrete projects in the region for local sustainable development.

NGOs often face several problems in developing projects. They often have a lack of management skills and resources. Some NGOs work in a hostile environment and have difficulty involving citizens. NGOs not only have to deal with internal problems, they also have to deal with a local government that is not always co-operative. Local administration does not always have interest in NGOs and do not recognise NGOs as partners.

The next issue that was raised, based upon the outcome of the former discussion, was the question of how ANPED could help with starting off local joint projects.

What is needed:

- Improvement of management skills on how to manage a project, how to start a project.
- Contact national associations of local authorities and encourage them to provide the necessary national top-down incentives for bottom-up approaches
- More exchange of experiences and good practice
- Help with searching for funding, e.g. create information links
- Skill-share or training on how incidental ideas and initiatives can become structural programmes
- Contribute to or develop a statement to national bodies to strongly encourage involvement of all groups and more, to really commit themselves to implement the statement
- Strengthen the role of NGOs to give a stronger message to local authorities, e.g. training
- There is a need for building capacity infrastructure

3.3 Local Agenda 21 and (Local) Governments

3.3.1 Different approaches to national LA21 programmes

Facilitator: Jan Juffermans and James Friel

Both the national programmes of the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands were being discussed as examples of approaching or dealing with national programmes. The UK started its Local Agenda 21 program in 1993/94. Local Agenda 21 developed in the UK very quickly and now 70 % of the local governments is involved. The Local Government Management Board (LGMB) has been co-ordinating the Local Agenda 21 initiative nationally since 1993, producing a wide range of documentation, supporting work on indicator development and running training. It may be difficult to decide the most appropriate level is to carry out your Local Agenda 21 project. In rural areas Local Agenda 21 is carried out on a 'county' or sub-regional level, while in urban areas Local Agenda 21 is carried out on town basis or in separate districts of large cities such as London. Generally the bigger the community the bigger the obstacles they face.

Government should involve business and NGOs in Local Agenda 21 projects. In the UK there are some developing partnerships between business, NGOs and local authorities. NGO involvement started through UNED-UK and is now linked through several networks of people involved in Local Agenda 21 work, steering groups on regional and national level and e-mail, internet and databases. More and more businesses become actively involved in Local Agenda 21 projects. The Government has called for all municipalities to have a Local Agenda 21 plan by the year 2000.

In the Netherlands there was little local authority action so NGOs started steering groups on Local Agenda 21. They invited ministers and the Society of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) and persuaded them to start with Local Agenda 21. The national government helped with the financial scheme and made Local Agenda 21 a priority. Twenty-five councils started with Local Agenda 21, and now there are 170 councils working on Local Agenda 21. The goal is to have all 500 towns working on Local Agenda 21 in 2002. DGIS (Ministry of development co-operation) and VROM (Ministry of environment) financed the Local Agenda 21 projects. The VNG published a book on good practices.

In Romania and Russia there is no national body to initiate a Local Agenda 21 program. In Romania the national government is not interested in Local Agenda 21, only in enlargement of the European Union. In Russia there are no national policies. There are a lot of programmes and plans, but there is no real action. There is no ministry of environment, only of national resources.

Issues arising from this discussion:

- What is the motivation of different stakeholders? It is important to find out the different reasons why local governments may start a Local Agenda 21 project.
- There is a lack of resources for both NGOs and local authorities. This needs action by Governments and funding agencies.
- On what level should you start a Local Agenda 21 program? There are many different levels (see sections above). Each level does have its own advantages and disadvantages.
- Public participation is very important for a project to succeed. Training of both local government and NGOs together to learn more about public participation is a way to improve public involvement. This for example can be done through co-operation of ICLEI and ANPED.

3.3.2 Working with local government

Facilitator: Jane Woodward

Local authorities need to work together with NGOs in developing and implementing a Local Agenda 21 program. This co-operation between NGOs and local governments is not always easy or natural. Participants identified several issues of concern for engagement between NGOs and local government.

In approaching local governments it is important to clarify at the outset what you want to achieve. Everyone has different ideas about what is important and what is not, it can therefore be difficult to agree on priorities and goals. Meetings with local governments also need to be well co-ordinated and organised.

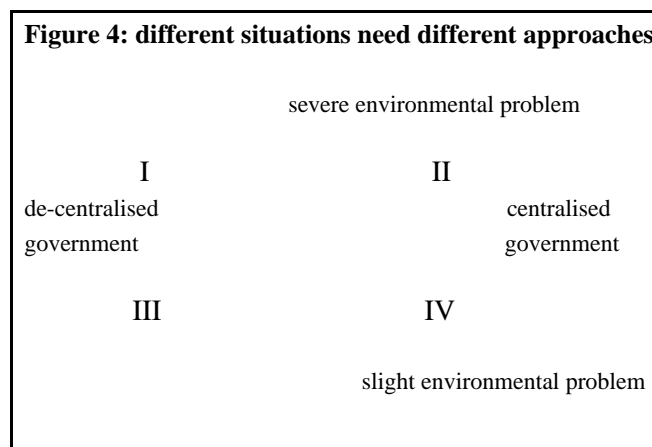
NGOs should also keep in mind that politicians are often only focused on winning the next election. Sustainable development requires planning and strategic thinking: Politicians are not geared to do this. They work only on daily problems. Besides that, the local government already has a lot to deal with and have no time for new things. This could also be a fear of change and a fear of not knowing among officials. They do not know anything about sustainable development and therefore avoid sustainable development as an issue at all.

Another problem is that politicians are not used to teamwork or partnership. There is no culture of open discussion in local government and NGOs. Especially in some countries there is great distrust. It is not their culture or tradition to be open.

Perception of each other can also cause problems. NGO delegates and local government delegates do not always have a good perception of each other. Furthermore access to information is sometimes difficult, especially access to information that has to come from the government.

There are some messages that have to be made clear to the local authority. The most important one is probably that sustainable development is not only the environment but has also to do with the economy and social life. This may help stimulate the local authority to talk to you, because they will not see you as 'one of those enviros'. Another thing you have to consider with the local authority is how a plan goes beyond words and is actually translated into action. There is often a lot of talking, but no real action.

There are a lot of problems and concerns of working with local governments. No one government is the same and therefore they all need a different approach. This not only depends on the government, but also on the seriousness or perception of the environmental problem. The more desperate the environmental problem, the easier it is to have influence. It depends on the situation, how you need to approach the government. Below figure 4 illustrates the different situations you can have. Situation I. requires a complete different approach than situation IV. You should find out in which situation you are in and adapt your approach to the specific conditions of that situation.



How can ANPED help:

- The proposed ANPED LA 21 manual should include good and bad case studies
- Develop networking and exchange of information
- Recognition or reward for NGOs which are doing good work
- There is not much on the agenda about public participation. This is a good idea for ANPED
- Combined ANPED / ICLEI training
- Framework for actions not blueprints
- Facilitate discussion to get laws changed

ANPED is a network of NGOs and ICLEI one of local governments. By working together and even organise a training together it is possible for both local governments and NGOs to get a better understanding of each other.

3.4 Local Agenda 21 and other stakeholders

3.4.1 Women and Environment

Facilitator: Marie Kranendonk

There are different reasons to involve women in Local Agenda 21. First of all chapter 24 of Agenda 21 is about the role of women in Agenda 21. Secondly, men and women have a different role in society and have a different combination of tasks, which are equally important. These differences between men and women gives women the opportunity to bring in their own visions and priorities in the Local Agenda 21 process.

Although women's organisations should be involved in Local Agenda 21 projects, this is not always the case and it is therefore important to find out how to involve women in the Local Agenda 21 processes. There are good examples of women's participation in Local Agenda 21. These can be found both in the Ukraine and in the Netherlands. In the Ukraine they held summer camp training. In the Netherlands women's groups developed a '6 steps strategy model' to involve women.

Specific problems.

St. Petersburg and Slovakia are two examples where women are dealing with great difficulties. The following common problems were discovered.

- Some Women's organisations are too scientific and technical;
- Only scientists and gender experts are involved.;
- It is often poorly organised, with a traditional focus and no funds available. Established women's organisations are dealing only with traditional issues.

However, examples from Wales and the Netherlands show that a change is possible: Traditional women's organisations are now active on sustainable development and Local Agenda 21.

How can ANPED help:

- ANPED should organise a skill-share between women from organisations in the UK and the NL and women in St. Petersburg and among others Slovakia
- ANPED should start a list-server on women and LA21
- ANPED could help with fundraising for electronic networking
- ANPED could collect examples of good practices

Women are also stakeholders and it is therefore good to involve them in your Local Agenda 21 projects in your own region. They can really make a contribution.

3.4.2 Working with business

Facilitator: Peter Woodward

Business is quite difficult to incorporate in the Local Agenda 21 process. Several concerns or problems arise when getting business involved. One has to break down the antagonism that may exist between business and NGOs. One has to find out how to involve business into Local Agenda 21. Besides this, there is a great diversity of businesses and they are often quite busy already.

Therefore it is useful to ask the question why you should try to involve and work together with business on Local Agenda 21. Some of the reasons participants came up with during the workshop include:

- Businesses use local resources
- They generate wealth and income
- They create jobs
- They influence behaviour
- They have resources

- They can create problems e.g. pollution, congestion
- They add to the momentum and scale of impact
- Sustainable development's goal is to transform the currently unsustainable economic system and way of thinking
- Business must help us achieve the agenda. They are a key stakeholder
- Working in partnership with business is necessary to develop understanding and credibility
- Some businesses have sustainable development agendas
- Business can benefit from it (not all). For some it is an opportunity, like the service sector, 'green' energy, waste minimisation, local produce/craft, green technology, eco-tourism, exit opportunities. For others it is a threat, like coal, non-removables, landmine, military and heavy chemicals.
- Experts can work for business and NGOs

When you will start dealing with business it is good to realise that all business are different. You as a NGO cannot go in uncritically. You have to realise that there are both allies and enemies in the same business. Among business also exists competitive rivalry. It is also very good to know whether you have alternative solutions or just the problems. You will also have to know beforehand what your ethics are. Do you, for example, accept money from any businesses? These businesses could be involved in child labour, genetic modification, pollution and environmental damage, arms and tobacco, illicit operations, economic blackmail. Furthermore you will have to think about your reputation and image among peers

A last thing to keep in mind is perception versus reality. Business perception of NGOs might be outdated. This might hinder partnership. Business partners are not always representative of their company or branch of business.

After dealing with issues of involvement with business several guidelines for working with business were identified:

- Clarify your own objectives (what + who you stand for).
- Do some research (understand the company).
- Be clear about what you can deliver and be true to yourself (integrity).
- Think about key stakeholders in the business, like unions, shareholders and markets.
- Understand what business is about and be clear about what you want from business.
- Think through stakeholder issues (who is part of the community).
- Know also about alternative approaches and try to find allies. Consider whether others could be more influential and try to influence government policy to influence others.
- Check out the International Chamber of Commerce code and standards.
- Agree within individual NGOs what ethical standards are and are not acceptable.

What can ANPED do:

- Inform NGOs about the corporate responsibility project
- Develop training on engaging with business
- Provide information on these issues – sign-posting
- ANPED debate on responsibility and accountability needed
- Good practice on NGO/business: publish case studies

4 Local Sustainability in action

4.1 An Overview

During the course of the workshop six projects were presented in detail. In addition each participant introduced themselves and their organisation by making a poster about their organisation and what they do. Participants also indicated on sheets their level of involvement, their experience and their ties with their local authority. Below in figures 1,2 and 3 you will see a graphic representation of their

Figure 1: Participation Local Agenda 21 events

We came to the 1st ANPED event on LA21 5	we have been to other events concerning LA21 14	This is the 1st LA21 event we have been to 7
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Figure 2: Working on Local Agenda 21

We do not do anything On LA21 yet 3 1 4	2 1 1 1 1	we are heavily involved in Local Agenda 21 7
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Figure 3: Relationship with local government

no relationship 1	1 2	7	8 2 good relationship
		4	1 bad relationship

4.2 Specific Cases

The cases are all from the CEE /NIS nations and were chosen to represent the enormous variety of action that is taking place.

4.2.1 Busteni, Romania – The TER local development project

Speaker: Cerasela Stancu

The Prahova River is geographically located in the heart of Romania where it carves its way through a beautiful valley next to an ecologically sensitive forest and Bucegi National Park. The town of Busteni is about two hours by road or rail from Bucharest. It is a natural gateway to the Park and an ideal location for initiating efforts to protect and enhance the Park, provide tourist information and serves as a focal point for environmental education. The Romanian Environmental Center is located in Busteni as the result of an agreement in January 1996: the City is providing the land for 50 years while TER agreed to construct the Center, manage it and co-ordinate conservation, education and information efforts.

Currently the Busteni community is suffering from severe unemployment that is partially a result of a work force reduction at a local paper factory. Busteni has a great potential for increased eco-tourism. As part of its work on the Romanian Environmental Centre, TER has initiated development of partnerships with the local community by trying to help locals to address local problems using sustainable development planning. This must be a joint effort by local government, business and citizens. TER can help guide a broad based planning effort using its expertise on public participation, data collection and technically sound and participatory decision making processes.

Development must occur in a way that local citizens have control, financial benefits and improve their quality of life. Otherwise, there is a real possibility that development could result in environmental degradation, reduced quality of life and financial burdens to the local people.

The Romanian Environmental Center in Busteni provides staff, organisational stability and effective programs to fulfil its potential role in the sustainable development of the Busteni community. As a result of international articulation of the concept of sustainable development, formulation and development of a local strategy for sustainable development, in partnership with local and national stakeholders, has been considered a priority starting 1996.

Sustainable development is a concept that should guide the strategy for economic and social development as well as environmental protection. The premises for stopping economic decline and furthermore achieving economic growth are essential conditions towards sustainable development. At the same time they have a significant influence on setting up the associated strategic objectives.

The following short, medium and long term objectives were formulated:

Short term objectives (3 to 5 years):

- improvement of the livelihood conditions;
- setting up of the household market; renewing the ownership and development of respect for property rights;

Medium term objectives (5 to 10 years):

- ecological reconstruction of the most polluted sites;
- extension of services, creation of new working places;

Long term objectives (more than 10 years):

- modernisation of the infrastructure in order to reach a sound environmental performance;
- tourism development, including sport, entertainment, health treatment services and facilities;
- conservation of the rural elements of the area, improvement of the settlement's image;
- sustainable economic growth, structural adjustment, changing of consumption and production patterns, integration in the economy of the region.;

The formulated strategy takes into account stimulating and restrictive factors for the development of the settlement. It is obvious that sustainable development of the area is influenced by the: general level of economic and social development, at national and local level; existence of the road and railway networks that cross Bushteni and have a great impact (both positive and negative).

Three scenarios were considered, as follows:

1. an optimistic scenario (a continual growth of rough domestic produce)
2. a pessimistic scenario (decline of national economy will continue)
3. a realistic scenario (taking into account the presence of transport infrastructure)

The strategic objectives will best be achieved in the conditions that the national economy is revitalised and the industry restructuring is well articulated. In this case, the objectives can be prioritised taking into account the time frame, financial efforts, the availability and qualification of the workforce.

The mission of the Romanian Environmental Center of Busteni is conservation, environmental education, tourist information and sustainable development planning for the local area and ultimately for the region. While aiming for clear goals of Nature protection, the community who is part of this natural area has been involved in Local Agenda 21 like structures to take ownership of the area, and to be involved in the protection of it. Busteni is just outside the Bucegi National Park. This park has no staff or management. Many visitors do not even know that they are visiting a national park. Data collection, resource management strategies and people management strategies are necessary if the Park is not to further deteriorate.

Part of the TER protection plan of the Bucegi National Park involves the community. For this purpose TER has been working with the community of Busteni to, for example, clean-up litter with volunteer teams of citizens and visitors; discuss ways to prevent future litter problems; and implement practical solutions. Yet the TER team also works with the authorities of the park and the governments around it to set out trails, set up biological and geological protection measures, and talk about general park management issues.

TER also provides environmental education for school children. The Center and TER has materials, equipment and teaching aids that can be used to enhance the teaching of environmental concept with practical exercises that apply to the local area. A knowledge of nature develops a sense of stewardship and appreciation in the children, who often communicate about this with their parents. This will hopefully initiate action and involvement.

Staff can assist teachers through making the Center, materials or written guides available which may include translating to Romania. The staff, possibly using volunteers, can conduct special sessions for children. Sessions could be in the Center or in the nearby areas.

Tourism has the potential to provide economic benefits to local community but also to create problems. The Center can greet tourists as they pass the Center, show them maps of the area, give them ideas on hikes, other recreation opportunities, safety, interesting plant, animal and geological features to see, appropriate conduct and areas to avoid.

There is an interest in the local community for citizens to meet together and look at conditions, openly discuss ideas, consider possible solutions and offer recommendations for helping to address social, economic, environmental and political problems in Busteni and adjoining towns. Staff can provide a place, training and help to encourage productive discussions to pursue community involvement in problem identification, problem analysis and decision making.

The staff can also call meetings of the local citizens and discuss with them how they would like to proceed. Be prepared to initiate discussion or show video that may stimulate them to draw parallels with Busteni and to identify issues that want to address. Take names, phone numbers and addresses of those interested in further efforts. Center staff can also help citizens to take a next step offering Center staff and training resources to maintain the momentum.

4.2.2 The Slovakia Environmental Training Programme

Speaker: Slavka Macakova

The presentation was based on ‘Environmental Change in Cities and Towns or How the Process Affects the Outcome’, by Slavka Macakova and Andrej Steiner

The starting point of any program, project or activity is a question which most policy and decision makers ask; "how should we achieve our goals?". This question can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but within the context of methodological processes and environmental policy instruments can be rephrased as "which are the best processes and instruments for our purposes?". The heart of this question is the meaning of the word "*best*". "Best" can have several specific meanings. It can mean "the most effective", "the least cost", "the quickest", "the most politically acceptable" or "the most comprehensive". Both scientists and practitioners in the environmental (sustainability) field tend to focus on different aspects of this question.

The project team for the Sustainable Cities program in Slovakia, which consists of representatives of research and educational institutions as well as representatives of local governments and NGOs, has been trying for the last 2 years to assist local politicians, public leaders and administrators of Slovak cities and towns to deal with municipal environmental challenges. The basic idea of the conceptual approach is to point out, clarify and emphasise the systematic process necessary to achieve an environmental change in city life. The goal of the program is to facilitate the process of Environmental Change for city representatives by providing them with a logical philosophical framework, and methods and instruments for environmental municipal management. Taking into consideration that the final goals of any environmental effort are to improve the current environmental situation, preserve an acceptable environmental status or to mitigate the consequences of human activities, we can see four fundamental stages toward reaching these goals:

- I. An initial environmental assessment of the municipality
- II. A change of thinking among decision-makers in a city, technical staff and the public
- III. A change in behaviour by all the key actors within a city
- IV. A permanent environmental change in attitudes and accountability, in the routine use of environmental instruments and environmentally sound decision making process, and in the motivation of all stakeholders.

Throughout Slovakia, which is more or less representative of the typical Central and Eastern European country in transition, the principles of sound environmental management are rarely applied to general city management. This is in spite of the fact that the "old environmental sins" and the quick introduction of a market economy substantially affected public health and the environment in many cities. Local authorities in cities and towns have to deal with a complex array of interrelated economic, social, environmental and health issues.

In order to assist local politicians and administrators of Slovak cities to tackle the above mentioned challenge and to implement principles of Local Agenda 21 the Sustainable Cities Program in Slovakia is being conducted at four levels (educational, consultative, research and implementative) and has the following objectives:

- In selected pilot communities increase the level of responsibility that local government officials feel for environmental issues, provide them with skills to improve their capacity for effectively addressing these issues, and facilitate dialogue between community stakeholders through training and consultation activities.
- Develop the capacity of some local government representatives and other interested parties in the selected communities to introduce Environmental Management System - EMS (in terms of EN ISO 14 001), into city management through a step-by-step consultation process and sequential practical actions.
- Develop a set of environmental sustainability indicators for each pilot city which will reflect the opinions of all interested parties as well as take into account the type, relevance, and validity of the indicators. These indicators will be developed through the involvement of experts, local government representatives and the public.
- Improve the general managerial skills of local government officials from selected cities to help them increase their effectiveness and efficiency and by doing so try to create space for generating new ideas concerning sustainable development and its implementation.
- Disseminate through conferences, seminars, workshops, publications and personal consultations, all pieces of knowledge and information obtained and lessons learned during the process of the Sustainable Cities Program among other interested cities in Slovakia and in Central and Eastern European countries.

The program's objectives are closely connected and inter-related. Indeed the whole process is conducted in such a way that the representatives from the pilot cities participate not only in the educational activities but they also become the key figures in the implementation of the elements contributing to the sustainable development of their cities. Pilot authorities in the towns of Puchov and Spisska Nova Ves are being supported by a consultancy team working on the overall program.

The process of the program is being conducted at four levels (educational, consultative, research and implementative) and through several phases:

- Getting official commitment of a mayor and city assembly to take part in the program and (what is very important) to finish it.
- Creation of the expert program team (from various relevant institutions and organisations)
- Establishing of local teams consisting of representatives of various sectors of the city (public administration, business, NGO)
- Development of the set of sustainability indicators which specifically characterises the particular situation in the city and reflects opinions of the experts, city authorities and broad public.
- Gradual adaptation of the Environmental Management System (ISO 14 001) for the specific conditions at the city management level, consultative process of the introducing ISO 14 001 into pilot cities management and preparation of the cities for a potential EMS certification. At the same time delivering basic knowledge to public officials about the tools and methods for sound environmental decision making process.
- Increasing of the environmental/sustainability awareness of elected officials, local government staff and general public.
- Setting up first short term environmental objectives and their quick implementation with direct involvement of general public in all stages of the process
- On-going dissemination of the results achieved in Slovakia and abroad.

In Slovakia and probably in other countries of CEE as well there is an inevitable need for close co-operation with the Ministry of the Environment (or other relevant ministries) national and regional associations of cities and towns and other concrete cities to speed up the process of implementation of Local Agenda 21 and broadly disseminate the ideas of sustainable development.

4.2.3 Sustainable St. Petersburg: is there room for NGOs contribution?

Speaker: Alexander Karpov

The Local Agenda 21 process in St. Petersburg is different from most processes in small cities. To achieve adequate public participation in this big city, NGOs had to deal with numerous obstacles which are related to the problems of big cities and to the attitudes of local authorities. This presentation explains how NGOs in St. Petersburg are getting involved in the work on city level.

We held a series of workshops and conferences during 1997 and 1998. We concluded this series by preparing a report on public participation in St. Petersburg. It is designed to serve as a tool for strengthening environmental NGO policies and to help them share resources within a common action plan.

Objectives of the report of NGOs on public participation are:

- The basis for the strategic plan for NGOs
- The basis for monitoring changes in the environmental policies in the region
- Information for the development of training and educational courses
- Analytical data for mass-media
- Tool for long-term agreement with the administration, business and other partners

In St. Petersburg several initiatives by mainly the city's administration, but also the region's administration and the university were taken to achieve sustainable development. Some were supported by Western aid.

Mainly it can be concluded that:

- in St. Petersburg there are numerous initiatives of which some are very promising. The process of Local Agenda 21 has however not yet started. This is due to a lack of common understanding and because only a few parties are involved and there is no incentive to participate.
- Poor management and administration skills undermines the LA21 processes.
- There is a significant difference between city and local level in motivation, resources and potential contributions towards LA21.
- There is a lack of traditions and working mechanisms of public-participation and generally a non-supportive environment for it.
 - representative democracy versus participatory democracy
 - a 'hostile' society
 - a society that is made up of many different cultures, which are in conflict with each other.
- There is a lack of infrastructure to promote LA21

Action will be undertaken to

- Raise awareness
- Give training
- Do research and monitoring
- Strengthen networking, capacity building and individuals organisations
- Find leaders
- Go from consultation to partnership
- Go from isolated initiatives to Local Agenda 21 development

4.2.4 Drinking Water in the Ukraine: the Mama-86 project

Speaker: Yelena Panina

A pilot project on clean drinking water in Ukraine was established by the environment and health NGO Mama 86 in October 1997. The goal was to study the problems of water supply, drinking water quality and its impact on human health. The project brought together community activists from different parts of the country, representatives of other stakeholders groups and government officials to facilitate an integrated approach to discussions on drinking water issues. Three local groups from Mama-86 co-ordinated this national campaign. The main objectives of the campaign are to:

- Research drinking water quality in these regions and in Kyiv;
- Raise public awareness and provide information about water safety;
- Bring together experts and representatives from different groups to establish a clearer picture of the situation in Ukraine and stimulate co-operation and debate between different countries;
- Exchange good practice from Ukraine and overseas in water supply and publication;
- Lobby and build public pressure for a change in water policy;
- Use international events, such as the WHO conference and CSD to highlight the Ukrainian situation and promote participation and consultation.

Mama-86 uses international agreements to develop joint action plans for health and environment, such as Agenda 21, 'Health for All', the WHO program to promote public health, the European Environmental Health Action Plan of 1994, which calls for the development of NEHAP. All of these agreements call for action by all sectors of society. Mama-86 has used meetings associated with these international and regional commitments to publicise its water project.

The interim results of the drinking water project were presented in a case-study or report “drinking Water in the Ukraine; Communication and Empowerment for Local and International Action”. The report describes the activities of the grassroots women’s initiative in different regions of Ukraine to stimulate a process of open and multi-sectoral debate on drinking water and quality. It includes the results of independent research and drinking water quality, public opinion and water use in households. This case-study was a joint initiative of Mama-86 and UNED-UK an organisation which promotes the participation of a range of stakeholders in UN activities and has helped to bring an international perspective to the Ukrainian project. Another partner is ANPED which has facilitated the participation of Mama-86 at the CSD.

In early April Mama-86 organised a skill-share with water experts and major stakeholder groups from the Ukraine and water experts from the UK, whose participation was organised by UNED-UK. The skill-share was used to share expertise and evaluate the data collected by Mama-86 to come up with perspectives and recommendations listed in the report. In late April the report on drinking water project was presented as a side event at the CSD session. Mama-86 also presented the water project as an example of implementation as part of the Eco Forum activities in Aarhus, Denmark

Mama-86 is planning to continue the work on the drinking water issues together with the members of the network. Mama-86 believes that NGO participation in international events associated with the implementation of Agenda 21 increases the role of NGOs and major stakeholders and the possibilities for co-operation with foreign partners in implementation of Agenda 21.

4.2.5 Prietenii Pamantului and Agenda 21 in Galati, Romania

Speaker: Camelia Zamfir

Prietenii Pamantului (Earth Friends) has as its aim to promote the principles of sustainable development and to help the community to implement them by spreading information, delivering training, organising practical activities and by creating partnership between authorities and civil society. While having worked on sustainable development issues since 1992, and having been involved in several international processes, Earth Friends realised the importance of acting locally.

In 1994-1996 Earth Friends developed a project that aimed to establish a partnership with local authorities, business, industry and other local NGOs from Galati for Municipal Management Plan for Pollution Prevention.

The project took place in two stages:

1. The organisation of several round tables with local authorities
2. Debates and actions meant to develop public participation in decision making processes affecting the environment

The achieved results were: the draft of Municipal Management Plan for Pollution Prevention, the Chart of the 4 Ps (Partnership for Pollution Prevention Plan), the Earth Friends’s proposal of Sustainability Indicators for Galati, a Working-Group for the elaboration and implementation of the Municipal Plan for Pollution Prevention, a large information campaign for the public aiming to generate the public participation in decision making process on environmental issues.

The basic knowledge on the environment, urban ecology and the relationship economic development-environment was in great parts lacking among persons in decision-making positions in the public authorities, NGO community, business and industry groups involved but also in the general public. There were many misconceptions as well as persisting fallacies in the way people thought about sustainable development. One serious obstacle was the thought that protecting the environment is a luxury and that other needs are more important. Also, models that would also protect the environment were deemed to be too expensive.

Under the conditions mentioned on the previous page, the project initiated by Earth Friends was welcomed and reached its main goals:

- Establishing a consensus on the necessity of co-operation in partnership between the local public authorities, the NGO sector and the public in order to come to an environmental policy able to ensure the sustainable development of the town.
- Signing a Charter by which the participants commit themselves to collaborate in a multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral Working-Group on a Municipal Management Plan for Pollution Prevention in Galati.
- A commitment to work together to establish contacts with other local authorities from Europe and with international institutions promoting the co-operation for a sustainable development.

The local authority was present at several international conferences on local sustainable development culminating in the signing of the Aalborg Charter. On some of these international trips, Earth Friends representatives accompanied the local authority. The local authority has, however, until now failed to establish valuable contacts with ICLEI.

The process of establishing a good relationship with the local authorities and of building mutual trust is a long term one. Even the concrete results are not visible from the beginning. By informing the local authorities on related events in the world and in Romania, Earth Friends was able to continue to focus their attention on the process and maintain the good relationship between local authorities and the non-governmental sector. We consider that by signing the Aalborg Charter, the local authorities expressed their willingness to work towards sustainability.

Romania is signatory to almost all international conventions and protocols concerning the environment. Romanian authorities are confronted with difficulties in implementing their requirements, due to the existing economical, political and social problems. A solution to solve this problem is the permanent dialogue between non-governmental organisations and governmental bodies. This reality make us more aware about the necessity to keep in touch all the time with local authorities in order to continue to respect the commitments Romania made in the international agreements.

Earth Friends understood that it is necessary to start common projects with local authorities to make them more confident in their own resources and in the NGOs capacity to work together, to be more open to the challenges of sustainable development in our area.

In October 1998 we started the project Green Agenda for Galati in co-operation with other two local environmental NGOs. The project is partially supported by Milieukontakt Oost Europa (The Netherlands).

Strong points of the project:

- A continuing improvement of the relationship with the representatives of local authorities, as a result of the activities that were developed and mainly as a result of the direct contacts established by the project co-ordinators.
- The enrichment of our own documentary material, most of which resulted from the activities we organised. This is one of the most valuable resources of Earth Friends. After having studied, for several years materials sent by some foreign NGOs, our members have now become creative themselves. This is a real evolution.

- An increase in the number of people, most of them young people, who came to ask for advice, materials and who expressed their wish to become Earth Friends members.

Conclusions of project: The role of environmental groups is extensive in working with the citizens to define the connection between environmental quality and quality of life.

It is not possible to find the best solutions for any problem without dialogue and co-operation between different actors. First one needs to develop trust, which is built on mutual transparency.

4.2.6 Working to support Local Agenda 21 – the KE Association, St Petersburg

Speaker: Natalia Gouzel

The KE Association has worked during 1998 to promote activity on the theme of Local Agenda 21. Its work has included:

1. Publications

KE Association has translated Baltic Local Agenda 21. In May 1998 KEA has published a brochure called “Karelian Isthmus, nature protection and forestry” about the Russian Forest Sector Report of the Baltic Agenda 21. More than 1000 copies have been distributed.

2. Seminars on municipal level

Local Agenda 21 can be implemented at different levels. KE Association carries Local Agenda 21 out at municipality level. This level is politically the most stable one in Russia.

The meaning of ‘municipalities’ and their functions is perceived differently in different parts of Russia. For example, in Ufa city (Ural region) every district corresponds to a municipality, and city municipal functions are shared with governments of the cities. In the Novgorod region (Northwest Russia) it is completely different. Every city or town like Borovichi is by itself a municipality. St. Petersburg city has near 70 municipalities with approximately 70,000 inhabitants each.

- KE Association had started Local Agenda 21 projects in almost 30 municipalities, like Kolomna, Yekaterinofka - in St. Petersburg, Nizhnekamsk - Republic of Tatarstan, Kirovo-Chepetsk - Kirov region, Samara, Otyabrcki and Ufa - Bashkortistan. Most Local Agenda 21 projects were started in regions and municipalities which had favourable budget conditions (a surplus). Regions and municipalities with bad economic conditions are generally not interested in environmental issues; social issues like education and unemployment are much more important.

- In July 1998 KE Association organised a seminar on Local Agenda 21 in the town of Borovichi 1998. Borovichi is the town in Novgorod region. It is situated between St Petersburg and Moscow. The population of Borovichi is about 70 thousand. The most important industry branches are metallurgy and fire-bricks production. 90% of the Borovichi production is concentrated in fire-bricks enterprise which also produces heat during the general production cycle.

Representatives of local authorities were also present at the seminar. KE Association explained their Local Agenda 21 goals and objectives and the possibilities of involving population into Local Agenda 21. KE Associations told about the Danish experience with environmental issues allocation into the spatial planning procedures in Helsingør. This is a good example of how the spatial planning procedures are being realised at municipality level and how population and stakeholders are involved in the process and different interests are taken into account.

The seminar has also been held in Ufa city (Republic of Bashkortostan). Ufa has a population of about 1,200,000. The main industry is petrochemistry. This region is one of the 5 non-subsidised regions and the regional tax surplus is 2 times more than in the St. Petersburg city. Representatives of the regional government and local authorities of Ufa were also present at the seminar.

KE Association is now negotiating with some municipalities of St. Petersburg and Velikie Luki city (Northwest Russia) to give the same seminars on Local Agenda 21 in these municipalities.

3. Consultations

KE Association holds consultations on the process of Local Agenda 21 for partners which talk about Local Agenda 21 in their region.

4. New needs: Local Agenda 21 Information Facility

Municipalities in Russia wish to know more about the process of Local Agenda 21 in Europe. KE Association took the initiative to set up the Local Agenda 21 Regional Information Facility where a library, database and experiences with Local Agenda 21 and spatial planning will be concentrated. KE Association already has about 50 books on Local Agenda 21.

5 Making it happen – tools and techniques

5.1 Sustainability indicators

Facilitator: Slavka Macakova, Jan Juffermans and Jeffrey Barber

Jeffrey Barber and Slavka Macakova gave presentations on sustainability indicators:

Jeffrey Barber focused on the Metro Washington Community Indicators Project (CIP). This project is an effort to improve the quality of life in the region and neighbourhoods of metropolitan Washington by building a community knowledge base. The aims of the CIP are:

- To identify appropriate measures for defining and assessing regional and community progress.
- To help build a useful and accessible public knowledge base to help improve the quality of life in Washington's communities.
- To help build greater mutual understanding and collaboration among local community advocates.
- To help improve local decision making by voters and policy makers.
- Contribute to community-based planning for regional and community sustainability

CIP emphasises dialogue among local groups working on specific issues like water, energy, transportation and food. CIP invites community advocates, researchers and others working on a specific issue to define the goal or target to be achieved and help determine the indicators needed to measure progress towards that goal. This approach is in contrast with the approach of ETP in Slovakia very "bottom-up".

Slavka Macakova described the experience of ETP in Slovakia. The methodology of ETP is in contrast with the approach of CIP more "top-down" and expert-based:

- identification of objectives, target groups, relevant users and time schedules in relation to proposed indicators;
- setting up a conceptual framework for indicators evolution and selection;
- identification of possible theme areas of indicators;
- setting up criteria of optimal indicators selection;
- proposal of a set of relevant indicators and drawing up a methodology of their implementation;
- indicators testing (in participation with representatives of city councils, city administrations, NGOs, academic institutions and business sector);
- testing evaluation;

- alteration of indicators selection methodology, respective modification of the set of indicators (depending on the results of testing);
- second indicators testing and completion with the subjective indicators (selected with an active public involvement);
- practical indicators implementation and their periodic monitoring, evaluation and publication.

Characteristics of indicators:

- relevancy to sustainability
- significance
- representativeness
- reliability
- measurability
- uniqueness
- availability on a regular (yearly or biennially) basis
- ease and financial availability
- short acquisition time
- efficient use
- understandable to the community at large

Another subject of interest was the ecological footprint. This concept has originally been developed by W Rees in Canada. This idea is essentially a measure of the amount of land needed to supply the consumption of a particular community. The ecological footprint puts the existing inequalities of a community's consumption and waste into a clear perspective.

5.2 Global Footprints - How sustainable are our choices?

Jan Juffermans, Netherlands

People depend on nature for the supply of food, energy and fibre, the absorption of waste products and other life-support services. If we are to continue to have good living conditions, we must ensure that nature's productivity isn't used more quickly than it can be renewed, and that waste isn't discharged more quickly than nature can absorb it. To find out whether nature provides enough resources to secure good living conditions, the Task Force on Healthy and Sustainable Communities at the University of British Columbia has developed an ecological accounting tool: the ecological footprint.

Our ecological footprint

The ecological footprint is an accounting tool for ecological resources. Categories of human consumption are translated into areas of productive land required to provide resources and assimilate waste products. The ecological footprint is a measure of how sustainable our life-styles are. The ecological footprint of the average Canadian adds up to 4.8 hectares. This is the total amount of land required for food, housing, transport, consumer goods and services. Energy is a large component of the footprint: some 2.9 hectares are necessary for the long term provision of a biological substitute for fossil fuels. The second largest component at 1.1 hectare is agriculture for food supply and consumer goods. Forestry takes up 0.6 hectare to supply the fibre for housing and consumer goods. Finally, the built environment takes up 0.2 hectares for housing and transport.

Can everybody on earth live like the average North-American today?

No. In fact, if everyone on earth lived like the average North American, it would require at least three earths to provide all the material and energy she or he currently uses. Preliminary estimates show that the ecological footprint of today's consumption in food, forestry products and fossil fuels alone might already exceed global carrying capacity by roughly 30%. About 3/4 of the current consumption goes to the 1.1 billion people who live in affluence, while 1/4 of the consumption remains for the other 4.6 billion people. This demonstrates the ethical implications of the sustainability dilemma and questions economic expansionism as a remedy for poverty.

Source: Our ecological Footprint: Reducing human Impact on the Earth, by Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees. (Gabriola Island, 1996) <http://www.ire.ubc.ca/ecoresearch/ecoftpr.html>

5.3 What do we need from a network

Facilitator: Pieter van der Gaag

The workshop started by looking at why NGOs should start or join a network:

- Networks are a good way to spread information and shape your knowledge. You also have the possibility to divide labour i.e. you can work together and divide tasks.

What does a network need? There are several basic needs necessary for a network to be effective:

- Members. Without members there is no network and is therefore an absolute necessity.
- A common purpose. If the network is to be effective you all do need a common purpose
- Communications system. Without telephone, e-mail or other communications system it is hardly possible to keep the network alive and working
- Shared expectations.
- Leaders. Persons who co-ordinate everything
- Terms of reference. A mandate to act
- Funds and resources (someone's time, someone's computer, a contact address.. Without it you cannot do very much. It is not necessary to have a central office, if members of the network can give some of their time and the use of their equipment to maintain the network.
- Good co-operation.

How can ANPED help?

ANPED members can share their expertise, provide contacts and pull in or find others. Share your ideas about resources, collect information and give links with funders. Other possibilities are training and facilitation. ANPED has the luxury of a staff and a secretariat. This can be used to stimulate the interaction between the members.

5.4 How to use networks for LA 21.

Facilitator: Peter Woodward

There are several networks participants already use.

ANPED

ANPED is organised through the AGM (Annual General Meeting) where the policy for the coming year is decided. The AGM is open to all. Besides the AGM there are also skill-shares, which are organised two times a year at different locations and open to anyone interested. Furthermore ANPED publishes Northern Light (4 per annum), has list-servers to spread information through mailing lists and has delegations at UN gatherings.

ICLEI

ICLEI is mainly focused on local governments through newsletters, e-mail, mailing lists and a website

Friends of the Earth International (FOE)

FOE has a newsletter and a programme on Local Agenda 21.

Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign

This is open to NGOs, has a free newsletter (4-5 per annum), organises events and conferences, has a website and deals with good practice

Many other examples of networks were discussed. Some are international, some within one country or one regional, and all work in slightly different ways. The importance of personal contacts or informal networking via E-mail was also mentioned.

Although several networks exist and are working there are still things that can be improved. It is for example felt necessary to share information about events well in advance. ANPED and ICLEI could each publish each others material. Some CEE/NIS countries have problems getting hold of basic materials like Blu tack it therefore is a good idea to set up a swapshop for basic materials at skill-shares and conferences.

There should also be more built in space in events for personal contacts and discussion. Participants would like to know in advance who is attending. Not only is it nice to know in advance who is attending the skill-share, it is also a good idea to publish a "who is who in ANPED". This is a booklet or something with photos and maybe two sentences about them. More and more people are getting involved in the skill-shares or other events and it therefore is good to have a booklet with some background details on their particular skills (humanise the network).

Another suggestion was to evaluate the networks to assess the effectiveness of networks to see how they meet people's needs. This will be hard to do, since it is for example difficult to define people's need. An abstract service of existing information may be a more useful idea. Instead of getting ever available piece of information NGOs need to select information. Therefore look at the existing databases, abstract services and pool them. St. Petersburg has an abstract information service which groups can use to pull information or articles from publications they do not subscribe to. Networks could highlight this on their websites or in their newsletters so people can make use of it.

ANPED is only as good as its members. We therefore must support ANPED. As well as general networking we need to network based around specific issues.

- Share information on resources and needs e.g. on region, country or area basis. This means that when you are running a training event you should let others know through the network. Information needs to be made available in a variety of languages to allow those who do not have a second language access.
- No issue is too big or too small to be considered in this exchange. But for it to work effectively there needs to be someone or a group of people to take on jobs to make it happen.
- We do not need to duplicate but just make better use of the networks available and only create further networks if necessary.

5.5 10 golden rules for a workshop

Facilitator: Peter Woodward and Jane Woodward

There are ten golden rules which will help make your workshop be a success. These are:

1. Aim:

Strive to achieve a useful outcome and to get the most out of all participants. Focus on the issues at hand and encourage full participation. The participants must feel they own the outcome, that they had an opportunity to contribute.

2. Room and Layout (arrangements):

It is very important that the room is quiet. The room should be the right size for the group involved and there should be an exact number of chairs for the participants and equal setting (This way everyone is involved). Lighting and temperature can be regulated and there should be a minimum of distractions. There should be enough space to put things on the wall. It is also important that people are able to find the room easily. Clear signs will help.

3. Roles, tasks:

If you know the participants you can be more informal.

Facilitator:

- This person should make sure that the aims will be achieved
- He or she should manage the process and time
- He or she is the leader

Reporter:

- This person captures all the comments and views
- Handwriting should be clear
- Very good listening skills required
- Synthesise information

Supporter:

- This person could deal with all the domestic arrangements
- Late arrivals etc

4. Time planning:

Be the master of time or time will be the master of you. It might be useful to put a clock in your workshop. Abuse of time causes frustration. Agree with the participants the end time and breaks. Be a little bit flexible.

5. Engagement, introductions and expectations:

Before you start it is good to explain or agree on some ground rules (e.g. only one person speaks at the time, be open and constructive, no smoking and have fun!). If the participants are unknown to each other all the participants should introduce themselves (one sentence can be enough). It is also very interesting to find out everybody's expectations of the workshop before you start.

6. Tools of the trade:

Make sure that all necessary equipment is available and working! A flipchart is very useful. You can refer back and it is an accurate way of recording. Other tools: Blu tack, chisel tip pens (no red), electrical equipment (prepare this beforehand)

7. Managing the process:

This is a task of the facilitator.

- Facilitator should not talk too much
- Good ‘engagement’ will make this easier
- Kick off with a good relevant question
- Silence is powerful
- Ensure everyone is involved, but respect those who do not want to
- Watch out for ‘lost’ or distracted people
- Get people to work with you – use humour, do not be bossy or dominant
- Develop some agreeable gestures

8. Outcomes and reporting

Be disciplined and identify the outcomes to be achieved at the start

Photo-reporting is good for those who are there

Keep the flipcharts for some time, to insure that nothing gets lost.

Record particular views throughout

9. Evaluation:

Below are some sample questions you could ask the participants. You can ask the participants to put their responses on a sliding scale ranging from the answer NOT AT ALL to the answer of VERY MUCH.

- **Did the workshop meet your expectation**
- Where you able to participate as much as you wanted to
- Do you feel we made progress?
- Do you like this way of working?
- You should give 10-15 minutes for the evaluation

10. This is your own golden rule – develop it as your experience grows!

5.6 Public presentation

A training session on public presentation was held: a full briefing on these skills will be produced by ANPED at a later date

6. Good Practice

Part of ANPED’s work is to identify and support ‘good practice’. Learning from good practice is a central part of developing genuinely sustainable solutions to the problems we face. Yet it is also clear that different organisations often have very different views on what constitutes good practice. For that reason, developing some criteria for assessment of good practice was a central theme of the skill-share.

Those involved started by agreeing some outline points. Any good practice must:

- Be in line with sustainable development goals
- Link with local needs
- Must be replicable

With these in mind working groups identified 22 criteria for discussion. A selection exercise involving all members of the workshop prioritised ten of these, and further selection work helped define five key issues for ‘Good’ projects.

These are listed below, along with ideas on how good practice could be defined for each point. It was suggested that some are ‘Yes / No’ criteria and that some are not quantifiable, but after a full discussion it was felt that the process below could help us assess all the key issues:

1. Does the project meet defined local needs?

Good practice would thus imply:

- An initial survey identifying genuine local needs
- Anchoring these needs in the project plan
- Continuously monitoring the extent to which the needs are being met as the project develops.

That the reports clearly show the success or lack of success in meeting needs

2. Has there been effective participation by those affected?

Good practice implies:

- A strategy was set out for participation
- A stakeholder analysis of those affected was done, and that stakeholders were given genuine opportunities to participate
- Particular attention was paid to support minority or excluded groups in participating
- Number of participants grew or at least stayed constant
- Local people were asked for their reactions at the end and felt that they had indeed had good opportunities to participate.

3. Has there been a positive impact on people and the environment?

Matters to be assessed within this issue are:

- The project has not damaged local livelihoods at the expense of the environment
- Any resulting economic development has not damaged the environment
- There is a clear beneficial environmental outcome
- Jobs and/or livelihoods have been created
- Local people are more involved and engaged in local issues.

4. Has there been a transfer of skills, meaning that those involved are then better able to do more good work?

Good practice implies that:

- A list of skills needed to carry through the project was prepared.
- An assessment of existing local skills was done
- Training was made available to those involved who lacked necessary skills
- Ideally all those involved should be encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities.

5. Will the project be financially self-sustaining after external funding has ended? (This is not always relevant - project such as conferences or publications have clear end points). Good practice should mean that:

- An 'exit strategy' has been prepared as part of the project plan.
- Those involved are aware of the ending of funding and have helped to make plans to deal with this.
- Ideally the project has found ways to generate some of the necessary resources through the work of those involved.

From these criteria a final workshop went on to develop a simple evaluation methodology that can be used at any level. An essential part of this is self-evaluation, so we have sought to develop ways in which local projects can evaluate their own (and later each others') projects.

Evaluation checklists (based on tick box methods) were considered and felt to be inadequate. For each it was felt that there were a range of outcomes, and accordingly a 'continuum' approach was developed. For each of the five key issues a line would be developed (see below): at one end is 'No compliance with the particular criteria' and at the other end 'Complete compliance'. The evaluator could assess the project and mark the position on the line they feel most closely matches the situation. It would also be possible to identify guideline points on the line that match the 'sub-criteria' above.

Example: Effective participation:

1 2 3 4 5

Here the guideline points could be:

1. No compliance - little or no public participation
2. Some occasional participation by a few people
3. Participation on a regular basis by a good number of people
4. A plan / strategy for participation, with moderate success

Putting five such lines down a page would provide a quick project ‘snapshot’.

The benefits of ‘good practice’ evaluation. Such an exercise can have many benefits.

- Firstly it can highlight real good practice, and help bring forward more cases to the attention of the larger database projects (such as ICLEI and ESCTC)
- It also acknowledges people's efforts: for smaller projects recognition can be an essential part of capacity-building.
- Evaluation can (if it is done honestly) help identify weaknesses and gaps in projects. This in turn can help identify opportunities for new projects.
- If a project meets most of these criteria, then it is almost certainly replicable, although ANPED is doing more work on assessing replicability.

Meeting the criteria?

It was agreed by those present that failure to meet all the criteria does not mean that a project is ‘not good practice’. This is the essence of the continuum approach. Projects that are particularly strong or innovative in one area and weaker in another may well be good practice for certain reasons: these should be identified.

However these five basic criteria are to some extent fundamental. There is no reason why others could not be added by agencies developing this approach, and those extra criteria could meet local circumstances. Our concern is to provide a cross-Europe base for common action.

ANPED will produce a separate paper on this work in the near future. All comments on this work to date will be gratefully received

7 The ANPED ‘Benchmarks’

There was a discussion of the ANPED ‘benchmarks’ paper (see Appendix 4). ANPED’s work on benchmarking is guided by certain key issues:

1. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development was originally defined in the 1987 UN Report on Environment & Development as: “Development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

Agenda 21 simplifies this by suggesting sustainable development brings together three issues:

- Protecting and Improving the Environment
- Ensuring Economic Security
- Promoting Social Equity

It also highlights the need for local action on key issues and emphasises the importance of participation: “The overall objective is poverty alleviation and full and sustainable employment, which contribute to safe, clean and healthy environments - the working environment, the community, and the physical environment” Agenda 21 , Chapter 29 - first objective

2. Agenda 21 - different perspectives?

It has been suggested that common criteria are hard to develop due to widely differing circumstances. It is certainly true that Western, Eastern and Southern Europe all have different needs and perspectives, and that while CEE / NIS and Western nations both suffer from poverty, pollution, and environmental degradation they do so for different reasons. Equally it is true that there is often a tension between environmental and socio-economic priorities, but that same tension exists in every city and community.

3. LA21 - common factors from successful programmes.

ANPED members are heavily involved in LA21 programmes in both Eastern and Western Europe. From these we have identified common success factors:

- Extensive consultation with a wide variety of organisations to create a shared vision, and to identify proposals and priorities for action.
- Active participation of such groups in preparing a sustainable development action plan.
- Participatory assessments of local needs and conditions (social, economic and environmental).
- Setting of deliverable targets, goals, and objectives to achieve the vision and goals set out in the action plan.
- Establishment of monitoring procedures to track progress and to allow participants to hold each other accountable to the plan.

ANPED sees LA21 especially in the CEE / NIS as a slow developing process but that the benefits make that process very worthwhile:

1. Effective local programmes can help increase understanding of and support for national level planning for sustainability.
2. Participation of NGO and community organisations in drawing up an action plan is likely to increase public support for the policies in the plan.
3. Local Agenda 21 can improve the effectiveness of policies by helping to develop long-term partnerships between local governments and other local organisations.
4. Local Agenda 21 can stimulate interest in local democratic processes.

It was agreed that the Benchmarks document as it existed was a good start, but that if it is to be used at a national level it needs a revision.

8 Summary and Next Steps

8.1 Summary

During this second skill-share on Local Agenda 21 participants shared their experiences and discussed a wide range of issues related to Local Agenda 21 such as getting started with a Local Agenda 21 project and working with local governments and business. The Local Agenda 21 Guide was also on the program as well as the ANPED benchmarks and good practice criteria.

The presentations given by participants on their Local Agenda 21 projects show that there are some very successful experiences with Local Agenda 21, but that there is also a lot that still can be improved. The workshops and training were aimed at identifying the key issues, the problems participants are dealing with, and what ANPED can do to help others.

The workshops showed that organisations still face several problems developing projects. During the workshop on effective participation it was emphasised that ensuring effective participation of the community provides a solid base from which the Local Agenda 21 program can be most effective and successful. However involving the local public is often considered problematic. This problem was being put forward in several workshops among which “project development” and “different approaches to national programmes”. ANPED will produce material on public participation in the near future. Public participation is not the only problem. Lack of management skills and resources, working in a hostile environment and a local government that is not co-operative are also considered as major difficulties.

The role of local governments was given special attention in the workshop “Working with local governments”. In approaching local governments it is very important to be clear about what you want to achieve. Sustainable development is a new subject and politicians sometimes tend to avoid new issues completely, because they do not like change. It is often also felt that local governments are not used to teamwork and do not accept NGOs as new partners. Co-operation between ANPED and ICLEI might be a very good solution to the problems with local governments. ICLEI represent local governments and co-operation between both organisations might give a better understanding of each other. NGOs not only have to co-operate with local governments, but also with business, industry, health professionals and women. The role of business and women have been discussed in workshops. Not only local governments need to be approached in a certain way, also business and women are valuable partners who both need to be involved in Local Agenda 21 projects.

Not only did participants identify their problems concerning Local Agenda 21 projects, they also followed some very useful training workshops on networking, giving workshops and public presentation skills. In “what do we need from a network” participants discussed the use of a network and the things needed for a network to be effective, like members and a common goal. In “how to use networks for LA21” participants discussed how they could use the existing networks of Local Agenda 21 more effectively. Both “10 golden rules for a workshop” and “public presentation” give tips and ideas to improve NGO skills.

The Local Agenda 21 Guide, benchmarks and good practice list were also very important issues during the skill-share. Developing some criteria for good practice was a central issue. Since good practice is not clearly defined, participants developed together some criteria for good practice. It has been agreed that good practice must be in line with sustainable development goals, links with local needs and is replicable.

The Local Agenda 21 guide was discussed at the first skill-share. A draft outline of the guide was brought to this skill-share for new ideas, amendments and suggestion before the final version will be written. Besides changes in the outline it was also agreed that the draft should be edited by volunteers in Central and Eastern Europe.

8.2 Next Steps

The following points were agreed as the next steps for ANPED’s work:

- **Produce the Guide on Local Agenda 21**
- **Develop the Paper on Good Practice**
- **Develop material to help local action on public participation**
- **Revise and improve the benchmarks document**
- **Strengthen co-operation between NGOs and local governments**
This should involve organising a training workshop with ICLEI on implementing Local Agenda 21.
- **Identify and develop Pilot Projects, and get an effective network running.**

Annex 1 Agenda

Programme for the

Skill-Share & Training “promoting sustainable development locally and Local Agenda 21”

Bushteni, Romania

October – November 1998

Thursday October 29th

Arrival & registration

Friday October 30th

9.00 Registration

9.20 Introduction and welcome from TER

- Aims and objectives of the skill-share
- Local Agenda 21 across CEE / NIS – update
- Current action by ANPED & UNED

10.10 Participant introductions & Poster session

11.00 Coffee & work on posters

11.30 Work in progress

Presentations on projects from:

- Bushteni, Romania by Cerasela Stancu
- ETP, Slovak Republic by Slavka Macakova
- St. Petersburg: is there room for NGOs contribution by Alexander Karpov
- MAMA-86's Water Project, Ukraine by Yelena Panina

12.20 Links with other bodies

- Updates on TACIS programme, Chris Church
- REC activities, Adriana Craciun
- ICLEI, Rina Schultink
- European progress & Aalborg Charter, Jan Juffermans

13.00 Lunch & display of posters

14.00 Introduction to first workshops

14.10 Workshops

- LA21 different approaches to national programmes, Jan Juffermans & James Friel
- Working with local government, Jane Woodward
- What do we need from a network? Pieter van der Gaag
- LA21 first steps, Chris Church

15.30 Coffee

15.50 Workshops

- Women & sustainable development, Marie Kranendonk
- Project Development- how to make things happen on the ground (Jan Juffermans)
- Working with business locally (Peter Woodward)

17.30 Break, Dinner

19.30 Open session

21.00 End

Saturday 31st October

9.15 Case Studies & good practice : *How can we build a bank of CEE / NIS cases?*

- How can we build a set of good case studies
- How can we assess good practice – Presentations with examples
- Discussion groups: what criteria should we use for good practice
- Reports from groups

10.35 Two working groups

- The ANPED LA21 Guide
- 11.10 Coffee
- 11.30 Presentations
- Galati, Romania by Camelia Zamfir
 - St. Petersburg, Russia by Natalia Gouzel
 - Moscow, Russia by Andrey Ozharovskii
- 12.00 Reports back from open space and Action Guide
Reports from workshops
- 13.00 Lunch followed by free time
- 16.30 Coffee
- 17.00 Workshops
- Public presentation, Chris Church
 - Ten golden rules of making a good workshop, Peter Woodward
 - Global Footprint - local action & Sustainable Indicators, Jan Juffermans & Jeffrey Barber
- 18.30 Reports back
- 19.00 Dinner - followed by party Halloween
- Sunday 1st November**
- 9.15 Plenary discussion
- Outstanding issues, The LA21 Guide
 - Ways of going forward
 - Building the network
- 10.00 Workshops
- Planning 'East-East' good practice links
 - Making an action plan to get started (Peter Woodward & Jane Woodward)
- 11.10 Coffee
- 11.30 Final full discussion
- Next steps
 - Priorities for action (CC)
 - The ANPED European meeting (January 1999) and the
 - International Sustainable Communities Forum
 - Evaluation
- 13.0 Formal close** and Lunch

Annex 2 Participants list

List of Participants to the Skill-share and Training on Promoting Sustainable Development Locally and Local Agenda 21

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Annex 3

12 The ANPED LA21 Guide

The proposed ANPED Local Agenda 21 Guide was discussed. ANPED is to produce a Guide on local sustainable development. This is for the NGOs, and aimed specially at NGOs from CEE/NIS. It should be easy to use, and should encourage people to act.

The aim of this manual is to:

- Give NGOs a better understanding of the principles of sustainable development.
- Help NGOs make better links with local government bodies and other partners
- Support NGOs who wish to develop Local Agenda 21 programmes in their locality
- Help NGOs work well with other community groups and NGOs.

At previous ANPED meetings these ideas have been discussed. Now the Guide will move ahead. But before that we wish to make sure that what will go in it meets the needs of those who may use it. Participants were asked to give comment and advice on:

- What is in the outline (Are these topics the right ones?; Are they clear and understandable?)
- What is not in? (Are there other matters that it should cover?)
- Are there things in here that are unnecessary?
- What case studies and examples should there be? (Do you know of any NGO activities that are good examples to illustrate certain topics)

The main points made were:

- For whom is this guide intended. It should not only be written for the CEE/NIS countries, but should focus on all of UN ECE.
- Is the Guide intended to be a once-only issue or a book that will be continuously revised and updated, especially with new case studies and new information.
- It should be translated into different languages and also adapted to the local situation. This means that words and terms should not be translated literally, but adapted to the local situation and terms.
- Part 2 and 3 should be joined together
- Furthermore some concrete suggestions, like editing, illustrating everything with real examples and end all chapters with a resource list.

These points will be taken into account when finalising the draft text.

Guide outline contents

Part 1: Introduction and background

1.1 What is Local Agenda 21?

Agenda 12 & the Earth Summit; the idea of LA21

Agenda 21 links environment with health, poverty, employment

1.2 Why should we work on Local Agenda 21?

We need to solve local problems as well as global ones

1.3 What has happened so far?

Action across Europe

Examples of pilot projects

ANPED's initiative

Part 2: Strategies for working on LA21

2.1 Before we start

Deciding to work on this – can we do it?
Setting some objectives
Getting agreement in the NGO

2.2 Politics and Partnership

Starting to work with local government
Starting out with projects

2.3 Stakeholders

What are stakeholders?
Doing a ‘Stakeholders Analysis’ (identifying stakeholders)
Contacting stakeholders – how, when and why

2.4 Why should people be interested in Local Agenda 21?

The specific roles for:

- Women
- Business and industry
- Local people
- Health professionals
- Consumers
- Other NGOs

Part 3: Working with local government and municipalities**3.1 NGOs and local authorities – an important relationship**

Knowing what is needed
Understanding local government
Approaching local government bodies (strategies)

3.2 Dealing with problems and difficulties**Part 4: Making it happen****4.1 Getting people involved**

Effective meetings
Practical actions and projects

4.2 Public participation

Involving people in making plans
Techniques for effective participation

4.3 Problems with stakeholders and participation

conflicting interests
Mistrust
Different access to information and influence
How to combine democratic representation and people’s participation

4.4 Resource problems

Distribution of funds
Shortage of funds
Fundraising on sustainable development

Part 5: Making it happen

Developing an action plan

Part 6: Networks

What do we need from an network

Building networks
East-East links

Part 7: Good practice

7.1 Does it work and is it good?

Criteria for good practice
Who says it is good?

7.2 Measuring success and other things

The use of indicators
How do you develop indicators
Good and bad indicators (experience)

Part 8: List of resources, e-mail and information

Annex 4 Local Agenda 21 Benchmarks

Implementing Sustainable Development through Local Agenda 21 – guidelines for government ministers

This document has been prepared by ANPED, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability, in consultation with NGOs from all parts of Europe and the US, following the ‘ECO Forum’ meeting of NGOs in Slovenia in November 1997. It is being presented to Ministers attending the Environment for Europe Conference in Århus, Denmark, in June 1998.

Introduction - the Political Context

The governments of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe have committed themselves to *Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development*, adopted at the United Nations Conference for Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and to the *Programme of Action for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21* at the Special Session of the General Assembly (Earth Summit II) in New York in 1997.

The latter document states that ‘*by the year 2002 national strategies for sustainable development that reflect the contributions and responsibilities of all interested parties should be completed in all countries*’ and that ‘*Local Agenda 21 and other sustainable development programmes should be actively encouraged*’ (§24). It also emphasises the need to link this work with meeting commitments made through other UN Summits including the World Summit on Social Development and the Habitat II Conference on Human Settlements.

Since 1997, the principle of sustainable development is also a central element in the European Union Treaty, and countries aspiring to join the EU have to apply it in all their policies and regulations.

It is widely recognised that if sustainable development is to become a reality, then many of the necessary changes must be implemented at the local level. Much of this work will be delivered through Local Agenda 21 programmes, through other local level initiatives such as the WHO Healthy Cities Programme, and through broader programmes such as the European Sustainable Towns and Cities Campaign. The local level is where the energy and ideas of people and NGOs can most easily become engaged in sustainable development, but if this is to happen then more support is needed from national governments.

Current Work on Local Agenda 21

Work on Local Agenda 21 started soon after UNCED. A period of experimentation has been followed by widespread implementation of the ideas behind Local Agenda 21. It is perhaps relevant to remember that Local Agenda 21 (LA21) was originally defined by the first objective of Chapter 28 of Agenda 21, which calls on local authorities everywhere to undertake “*a consultative process with their populations*” and thus to achieve “*a consensus on a ‘Local Agenda 21’ for the community*”.

The lead actors in these efforts have been local governments, national and international local government associations, UN agencies, and NGOs across Europe. An impressive amount of experience has been gained since 1992. There has been action right across Europe ranging from well-co-ordinated national and local campaigns in some nations, notably those of western Europe, through activity in individual towns and cities in other areas, to pilot programmes in one or two cities in almost every country. In central, eastern and southern Europe, despite a frequent lack of government support, there is fast-growing interest in Local Agenda 21 and the participatory approach which is essential to it. Local Agenda processes are now under way in over 1300 communities throughout the UN-ECE countries, and their number is rapidly growing.

While every LA21 has been different, some common factors have emerged from the more successful programmes. These include:

- -extensive consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders or interest groups in order to create a shared vision, and to identify proposals and priorities for action
- -the active participation of such groups in preparing a long-term sustainable development action plan
- -participatory assessments of local needs and conditions (social, economic and environmental)
- -the setting of deliverable targets, goals, and objectives to achieve the vision and goals set out in the action plan
- -the establishment of monitoring and reporting procedures, including local indicators, to track progress and to allow participants to hold each other accountable to the action plan.

While most LA21 processes have been started on the initiative of local government, there have also been many cases where the initiative has come from a non-governmental local group or platform of groups. In all cases, it has taken time for trust to be built between the partners, and often for cynicism and distrust to be overcome. As a result, the consultation and negotiation phases on what the local agenda should contain typically take 2-4 years. It has also become clear that this is only a first step: the real challenges come with moves to implementation.

The Benefits of Local Agenda 21

It now seems clear that Local Agenda 21 is here to stay. The process is, in most cases, an effective and politically rewarding tool for implementing Sustainable Development. There are numerous benefits arising from work on LA21, which include:

- Effective local planning programmes can help increase understanding of and support for national level planning for sustainability.
- The participation of non-governmental and community organisations in drawing up an action plan is likely to radically increase public support for the policies in the plan.
- Local Agenda 21 can improve the effectiveness of policies by helping to develop long-term partnerships between local governments and other local organisations.
- Local Agenda 21 processes provide the opportunity to develop 'win-win strategies', involving mutual benefit, partnerships, vertical and horizontal co-operation, and a better use of the social, economic and environmental potential of a city or locality.
- Local Agenda 21 can help promote equity and stability. As integrated plans, Local Agenda 21s take into account the social development situation in communities. By focusing on a better quality of life for all groups, including disadvantaged ones, communities with a Local Agenda 21 will be more stable. In countries with a potential for ethnic or minority conflicts or other kinds of social unrest, Local Agenda 21 processes can be a proactive strategy for helping identify and resolve local conflict issues.
- Local Agenda 21 can stimulate interest in local democratic processes and increase citizen involvement to the long-term benefit of society.

The Obstacles Facing Local Agenda 21

Developing an action plan for sustainable development has not been an easy process anywhere. Just as there have been common success factors, so growing experience of Local Agenda 21 shows that a number of obstacles recur across Europe:

While action at a local level is identified as vital in Agenda 21, in many countries **local authorities often find their powers insufficient for an effective implementation of a Local Agenda 21**. They may be given responsibility for waste management, water supply and treatment, housing, social services or transport policy, but they often lack the finance or the revenue raising powers to pay for innovation in such areas, or even to maintain basic services. New approaches often require management capacity and skills which are lacking in municipalities.

There is still a **lack of environmental awareness** among citizens in many European countries. Processes like Local Agenda 21 depend on grassroots activity, which in turn require that the public understands the need for change and that they can help deliver such changes.

Many European countries still **lack national sustainability plans, or guidelines containing concrete standards or objectives for regions or municipalities.**

Poor enforcement of existing environmental and other laws by government agencies is another major obstacle. A local programme may identify the need to restore the water quality in a river, but if the national government will not act to stop the cause of the pollution and if the local government has no power to act, then the initiative will be frustrated and participants will lose heart.

A common barrier is the **poor availability of environmental and social data.** Accessible information is vital if a Local Agenda 21 initiative is to assess the current situation in a municipality - to inform people of the state of affairs and to identify problems and solutions.

Local Agenda 21 processes can help the development of less developed regions and towns. However, if there is **no government policy supporting local initiatives** (e.g. for a diversified economy, eco-tourism or urban agriculture) in such regions and towns in the form of subsidies and investment programmes in infrastructure, then these communities may be discouraged or frustrated in their efforts.

National government policies fail to promote sustainable development and may hinder local action for sustainable development. Innovative economic instruments have to be used on a national level to provide support to local initiatives: full-cost accounting, polluter pays principle, green tax reform, removal of perverse economic subsidies, and development of positive incentives to promote eco-efficiency, etc.

Local governments also lack power over local affairs due to increasing **globalisation.** Increasingly, global trade and investment agreements and policies, such as the GATT/WTO and the MAI as in its currently negotiated form, do not take into account the interests of local communities.

Local Agenda 21 – towards Good Practice across Europe

We, NGOs working across Europe and the US, recognise the value of Local Agenda 21 and its potential to help deliver real long-term sustainable development. We also recognise that the enormous amount of time and energy that has been put into LA21 programmes by voluntary organisations and individuals may be wasted if the obstacles to implementation cannot be overcome.

Accordingly, we appeal to the Ministers of the countries in the UN-ECE to support the implementation of sustainable development by enabling the Local Agenda 21 initiatives in their countries.

We suggest that Ministers, working in collaboration with their colleagues in their national Governments, do this by:

- A programme of policy development
- Developing an institutional framework
- Capacity-building
- Leading by example

A Programme of Policy Development

This should include:

Develop and implement a national strategy for the implementation of Agenda 21 and sustainable development, balancing social equity, environmental implications and economic development.

Such a strategy should:

- go beyond an environmental action plan, and provide a framework for sustainable agriculture, transport, industry, tourism, energy, employment etc. in the next century.

- include a public information campaign on sustainable development and measures to increase access to information and environmental education.
- link clearly with national programmes on health and poverty, as laid down in Agenda 21.
- Develop and adopt subsidiarity policies, so that decisions are made at the most appropriate level, and so that local municipalities have the responsibilities and the resources necessary to draw up and implement LA21s.

Set up a national framework for co-operation and consultation with regional and local government levels on urban affairs or Local Agenda 21. If there is no National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) which includes representatives of all the government departments (see below), a framework for interdepartmental policy co-ordination should also be set up in support of sustainable development.

Establish a national Local Agenda 21 campaign to promote the process and to link Local Agenda 21 initiatives. Such a campaign could include:

- a fund to support innovative work by municipalities undertaking Local Agenda 21,
- setting a date before which all municipalities must have started Local Agenda 21,
- the publication of a national manual with information, good practices and of Local Agenda 21 municipalities and programmes.

Identify and amend or remove legal and administrative constraints in all areas that impede Local Agenda 21 and international co-operation between local communities. This work may be shared with a National Council for Sustainable Development (see below).

Review national investment programmes so that they support the implementation of Agenda 21 and of Local Agenda 21 action plans.

An Institutional Framework for Local Agenda 21

Experience from those countries where work on Local Agenda 21 is well advanced shows that three specific institutions are desirable to support this work. National governments can play an important role in building these institutions.

An association of all municipalities or local governments should be supported or created if no such body exists. Such associations can play a key role in publicising Local Agenda 21 among their member municipalities. They can also act as a co-ordinator of international co-operation in twinning programmes, and of participation in international networks such as Healthy Cities (World Health Organisation) and the Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (European Union).

A National Council for Sustainable Development should be a priority. This should be a publicly appointed body, guarding the common interest and monitoring national progress towards sustainability. To be effective, this body needs a clear mandate and an official legal status that specifies its role and responsibilities and explicitly authorises its activities. It should report to the Head Of State or government and not only to the environment minister. It should include representatives of all sectors of civil society, as well as representatives, preferably at ministerial level, of all relevant government departments, including those with responsibility for social and economic policy.

There should be a body (possibly set up by the Local Government association) to take forward the implementation of Local Agenda 21 by:

- promoting local Agendas 21, and encouraging and developing multi-stakeholder approaches,
- working with government ministries to identify national laws or policies that impede local sustainability,
- creating sustainable development indicators at national and local level, and working on national and local Ecological Footprints or indicators of 'environmental space',
- setting criteria for good practice on local sustainability, and by identifying examples of such good practice,
- helping to create and support national networks of communities implementing Local Agenda 21.

National governments can provide valuable support for Local Agenda 21, and all aspects of local development, by helping build the fiscal, legislative and spatial-planning capacities of local governments, where these are currently weak. Two specific areas where such capacity building is needed are revenue enhancing strategies and municipal finance on the one hand, and participatory planning and working on the other hand.

Training in participatory democracy should be set up as a national programme in areas where this has been lacking. This should also be included in school curricula, to ensure citizens are taught how to use their rights in a meaningful way, fostering a responsibility for their community.

Leading by example

All governments should set a good example within their own organisations. The procurement policy within ministries and government agencies should favour products that benefit the national economy, social well-being and environment. Environmental management systems should be set up to promote energy conservation in government buildings. Environmental Impact Assessment on public investment projects should be implemented in a meaningful way. The cross sectoral-working needed in local government to deliver LA21 should be developed across government departments.

Linking international and national action on Agenda 21 and LA 21

UN and Environment for Europe programmes have set new responsibilities for governments. We call on the Governments of Europe to meet these challenges.

All governments signed to Agenda 21 should develop a national support structure for Local Agenda 21 before 2002, to satisfy the UNCED requirement of having in place a national framework for the implementation of Agenda 21 before Earth Summit III.

Global targets for the establishment of national Local Agenda 21 campaigns should be set and obstacles to Local Agenda 21 dealt with.

All Governments should sign the Convention on Public Participation, Right to Know and Access to Justice that is being presented at Århus 1998, and develop strategies for its implementation.

Every government should have a national strategy for the implementation of the national CO₂ reduction targets agreed at the 1997 Kyoto Conference on Climate Change must be drawn up with the involvement of representatives of all levels of government, economic sectors, NGOs and other citizens' organisations.

Governments should take forward the key recommendations of the 1995 World Summit on Social Development by drawing up a National Poverty Eradication Plan in consultation with all sectors of civil society.

Governments should develop and agree a National Environment and health Action Plan (NEHAP) in line with WHO guidelines and link this to their Agenda 21 programmes.

National governments of OECD countries should reconsider their support of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment and in any case demand a review to better protect the rights of local governments to regulate investments and make trans-national companies accountable on a local level.

The influence of the World Trade Organisation and multinational companies on local initiatives for sustainable development must be taken into account by national governments in their negotiation positions.