



COGreen

COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION
FOR A GREEN TRANSITION

THE CO-GREEN COMMUNITIES GO PUBLIC

Public assemblies and round tables

Event 15



Co-funded by
the European Union

EVENT DESCRIPTION

OPENING WORKSHOPS:

Poland

In Poland in all four communities opening workshops took place.

GÓRNO: The workshop was held on 27.04.2024. It took the form Face-to-face workshop with trainers, activists and crucial stakeholders engaged/interested in the CO-GREEN project. The work and discussion during the workshop was divided into few parts: information about the project, its aims, methodology of the projects, crucial actions. The workshop was ended with the discussion with participants about the meaning of the project for the local community and the engagement of participants in the project.

The participants made an agreement on the further steps in the project and engagement of the participants (mainly activists) in the project. The local activists came mainly from local formal and informal organisations such as Senior and Youth Council, rural housewives' club. Trainers come from the Centre of Social Services in Górnó.

An agreed scope of engagement among participants include: taking part in stakeholder mapping, work on local activities devoted to green issues elaborated within the project, taking part in meetings, seminars and education and training organised within the project, taking part in evaluation process.

WIĄZOWNA: On 9.05.2023 an opening workshop took place. It took the form Face-to-face workshop with trainers, activists and crucial stakeholders engaged/interested in the CO-GREEN project. The work and discussion during the workshop was divided into few parts: information about the project, its aims, methodology of the projects, crucial actions. The workshop was ended with the discussion with participants about the meaning of the project for the local community and the engagement of participants in the project.

The participants made an agreement on the project's next steps and the involvement of participants (mainly activists) in the project. Local activists were mainly from local formal and informal organizations, such as Senior Plus Club, Youth Circle of Competence, local residents' association. The trainers came from the Social Welfare Center in Wiązowna.

The participants agreed to participate in: stakeholder mapping, work on local activities on green issues developed within the framework of the project, participation in meetings, seminars and education and training, winter school organized within the framework of the project, participation in the evaluation process.

STARACHOWICE: On 24.05.2023 an opening workshop took place. Participants debated the composition of the project team. They identified the key people and the scope of involvement of each key person. They discussed the different stages and how to implement them. The project will mainly involve senior citizens and young people. The emphasis will be on intergenerational integration around green themes. Issues of stimulating interest among other social groups were also raised.

ELBLĄG: On 10.05.2023 an opening workshop took place. It took the form Face-to-face workshop with trainers, activists and crucial stakeholders engaged/interested in the CO-GREEN project. The work and discussion during the workshop was divided into few parts: information about the project, its aims, methodology of the projects, crucial actions. The workshop was ended with the discussion with participants about the meaning of the project for the local community and the engagement of participants in the project.

The participants reach an agreement on the project's next steps and the involvement of participants (mainly youth and senior citizens) in the project. Local activists were mainly from local formal and informal organizations, such as Youth Council, senior associations. The trainers came from the Social Welfare Center in Elbląg.

The participants agreed to the scope on their involvement in the projects: Mapping of local communities - short, unstructured interviews with local stakeholders. Participation in meetings and lectures, participation in the winter school.

Italy

PANEBIANCO (CONSENZA): Here are some keywords for workshops on community development, environment, green issues, green space protection, and sustainability:

Community Development

- Social Inclusion
- Intergenerational Collaboration
- Active Participation
- Community Empowerment
- Local Resilience
- Network Building
- Active Citizenship
- Support for Vulnerability
- Volunteering and Civic Engagement
- Equitable Access to Services

Environment and Sustainability:

- Circular Economy
- Waste Reduction
- Biodiversity Protection
- Energy Conservation
- Sustainable Mobility
- Urban Regeneration
- Green Economy
- Territory Conservation
- Environmental Well-being
- Sustainable Agriculture

Green Issues and Green Space Protection:

- Urban Forests
- Environmental Education
- Reforestation Projects
- Public and Community Green Spaces
- Emission Reduction
- Responsible Consumption
- Climate Change
- Environmental Impact
- Ecosystem Conservation
- Sustainable Natural Resources

These themes can guide the structure of the workshops and help engage participants on critical topics for sustainable development and community cohesion.

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Croatia

Two opening workshops took place.

On 23.03.2023 in Rijeka there was a presentation of the project, along with an introductory workshop, held for 15 interested community stakeholders. The goal was to involve them in decision-making around the project's communication strategy, including selecting effective dissemination channels and media outreach approaches. Agreements were reached on internal communication channels to connect participating organizations and individuals, as well as external channels to inform the public. These channels aim to raise awareness about current environmental issues and encourage citizen involvement in solutions for the challenges identified by the network.

On 3.06.2023 in Licina a presentation of the project and an introductory workshop with 22 interested stakeholders in the community was held in a Nature Park Lisina near Matulji.. Different organizations, institutions and interested citizens supported the idea of creating an informal network. The main interest of all involved is to raise awareness of the importance of protecting environment and push Green Transformation agenda in the local communities.

Greece

The opening workshop took place in General High School of Mouzaki Karditsa the same day with event 11.1. The project (objectives, actions, workflow) was presented in order to be highlighted, emphasizing the importance of public participation and the support of green activators in local communities for a successful green transition.

Specifically for the green activators, there was an extensive discussion on their role and the skills they developed through their 40 hours of training which resulted in the creation of two comprehensive proposals focusing on green initiatives that the Karditsa community can implement to address real challenges.

Also, during the workshop, the main issues that have already been identified in previous Events, were presented to participants and a questionnaire focusing on green transition issues for Karditsa was distributed to all. A total of 51 participants completed the questionnaire, expressing their community priorities in crucial environmental issues. Number one priority appeared to be preventing the effects of non-green management e.g. flood protection as Karditsa flooded twice in a three-year period. Choosing the most effective way of engaging citizens through various methods such as public meetings, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and local referendums seemed to be interviews and questionnaires. Last, participants expressed their opinion on the most efficient way to encourage public participation which is using active and passive media e.g. social media, sms, emails, local television and radio.

PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES:

Poland

In Poland three communities public assemblies took place.

GÓRNO: On 29.06.2024, the CO-GREEN project held an event that was open to all willing residents of Górnó municipality and guests. It consisted of two parts. The first part involved the cleaning of the 'Mała Kadzielnia' site and the areas adjacent to it.

This place is important for residents in terms of leisure, meetings and recreation. Participants organised in two groups collected rubbish in allocated sections. The rubbish was properly segregated into yellow, green, blue and black bags. They were then moved to a marked location, from where they were collected by the company responsible for the collection of the municipality. The second part of the event featured an inclusive barbecue. Competitions with prizes were organised. Participants were given reusable shopping bags. The goodies were created as part of the project and feature the logo and slogan that won the competition: 'Eco-mindedness in the municipality of Górnó is at a premium'. Participants also received water bidons. Residents of cleaned up the area after the game. The aim of the event was:

- intergenerational integration,
- waste segregation education,
- experiencing through action and cooperation,
- raising awareness of environmental issues (competition),
- supplying interested people with reusable shopping bags and water bottles.

The results are:

- a clean recreational area for community residents,
- increased levels of involvement in the cleanliness of their municipality's environment,
- increased practical skills in sorting rubbish,
- an increased sense of responsibility for the state of the site,
- strengthening the habit of using reusable bags and bidons,
- improved intergenerational relations.

Information on the progress of the activities was provided by village leaders, members of Senior Citizens' Clubs, Rural Circles Village leaders, members of Senior Citizens' Clubs, Village Housewives' Circles, Volunteer Fire Brigades, the Youth Council, schools, a community organiser, the Social Services Centre in order to reach the widest possible group of residents. The CO-Green project is intended to be a long-term project. We hope that the skills and knowledge acquired during the integration event will be used in and passed on to other residents. We would like the joint cleaning of places important for the residents of our municipality to become an annual tradition.

WIĄZOWNA: In August-September 2024, the CO-GREEN project organised a series of events for all willing residents of the Wiązowna commune. During previous meetings with trainers, leaders and the local community, ideas for a series of workshops

were developed. The involvement of young people from the community volunteer circle led to the idea of making films to document the workshops.

A total of 11 workshop sessions were held in rural community centres in the community.

The workshops focused on the use of herbs and plants in a home first aid kit, making natural cosmetics, and preserving fruit and vegetables.

24.08 (Saturday) 10:00 am Relaxation - Glinianka, 44 Napoleonska Street

24.08 (Saturday) at 15:00 Cosmetics - Lipowo, 2 Wierzbowa St.

25.08 (Sunday) 15:00 Kitchen - Izabela, 23 Postępu St.

31.08 (Saturday) 10:00 Kitchen - Wola Ducka, 19 Słoneczna St. (planned in Kąck were moved due to low attendance)

1.09 (Sunday) at 15:00 Cosmetics - Peclin, 1B Wierzbowa St.

14.09 (Saturday) 10:00 Relaxation - Stefanówka, 8 Sowia St.

14.09 (Saturday) 15:00 Cosmetics - Rzakta, ul. Mokra 4

15.09 (Sunday) at 15:00 First aid - Żanęcin, 2 Rajska St.

22.09 (Sunday) at 15:00 Cosmetics - Boryszew, Nadziei 3 St.

28.09 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. Kitchen - Kopki, ul. Napoleonskiego 35

28.09 (Saturday) 15:00 First Aid Kit - Dziechciniec Majowa 42 (originally planned in Majdan were moved due to low attendance)

The purpose of the event was:

- education on the use of herbs, plants, fruits and vegetables for home use, learning how to prepare organic cleaning products,
- intergenerational integration,
- experience through action and cooperation,
- raising environmental awareness,
- producing products for use at home.

The results are

- increased environmental awareness,
- increased practical skills in using plants and herbs available in the garden, forest and meadow,
- an increased sense of responsibility not to use chemicals that are harmful to the environment.
- strengthening the habit of making one's own cosmetics, medicines, preserves, cleaning products,
- improvement of intergenerational relations.

Information about the course of activities was communicated through the social media of the Social Service Center, village heads, members of Senior Clubs, Rural Housewives' Circles, village leaders, members of Senior Clubs, Rural Housewives' Circles, in order to reach the widest possible group of residents.

We hope that the skills and knowledge gained during the workshop will be used in the daily lives of residents. The workshops were very popular and there is a need to continue such educational activities. Residents are interested in practical skills in taking care of the environment by using available natural means instead of chemical and harmful ones.

ELBLĄG:

On 26.09.2024, the closing ceremony and activities of the international CO GREEN project took place. Green activists, project participants and district residents participated in a Family Picnic in the area covered by the project activities. Green activists, together with representatives of the Elbląg Social Services Centre, officially unveiled an educational ecological board. Visitors,

both children and adults, enjoyed information stands, refreshments, a bonfire with sausages, and participated in sports competitions and games supervised by animators.

The event was supported by local businesses: a bakery, a meat wholesaler, a local shop and producers of traditional products. The Elbląg Municipal Sports and Recreation Centre provided the infrastructure to support the security of the event. The Regional Volunteer Centre engaged a team of volunteers to support the organisation.

Objectives:

- promoting the outcomes of the project,
- strengthening and expanding local networking,
- intergenerational integration,
- integration of local residents,
- increasing environmental awareness.

Results:

- promotion of the effects of the project among the inhabitants of Elbląg,
- expansion of cooperation network through involvement of local companies,
- strengthening of pro-environmental attitudes and greater sensitivity to the environment,
- strengthening of cooperation competences and commitment to the environment.

Greece

A public meeting was held on 19 January in the Hall of the Municipal Theatre of Mouzaki, Karditsa, in the framework of a conference organized by the NGO ITAMOS-Mouzaki on "Local Government and Citizens", aiming at the connection and interaction of the Municipal Authorities with the Civil Society. At the beginning, the CO-Green project was presented and in particular the objectives, the actions, the workflow, the participatory processes, the important role and the significance of the training of green activators and last the results of the actions implemented so far. It was clearly shown that the relationship between local authorities and civil society is a pillar for the development of sustainable and participatory societies. This interaction, when it is constructive and continuous, leads to a number of benefits for both citizens and institutions. Also, that ensuring the participation and commitment of all stakeholders at national level is important and contributes positively to empowering and raising awareness of the green transition in societies.

Croatia

Two public assemblies in the form of round tables took place.

The first round table that focused on renewable energy sources, specifically energy poverty, gathered 20 interested participants of different profiles on January 31, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Faculty of Philosophy in Rijeka. Moderator and presenter Damir Medved (University of Rijeka, Association Without Borders) led a conversation with expert guests Zvonimir Anić (DOOR), Hrvoje Kek (Grid One d.o.o., My Energy Community Association) and Damir Juričić (Innerga d.o.o., Association Energy Community of the Northern Adriatic) about renewable energy sources: their potential, the role of local self-government units and their availability to citizens in informing and enabling the use of renewable energy sources, and about energy poverty and ways to reduce it. The lecturers presented the research and opportunities provided by the initiation of public-citizen projects, such as the local civic energy initiative, which is currently led by the Energy and Climate Office of the City of Križevci, the first of its kind in Croatia. It was concluded that the cooperation of cities and municipalities with associations and citizens is possible and extremely important in achieving the most successful transition to renewable energy sources, and for the benefit of the local community. Damir Medved introduced the audience to the topic by talking about energy communities as actors in the fight against energy poverty. He explained that the term energy poverty refers to a state in which individuals or households cannot adequately heat or cool themselves at an affordable price, but he emphasized that it is not clearly defined in Croatia and that there are no established ways of monitoring it. The introducer further informed the audience that according to the Recommendations of the EU Commission on Energy Poverty 2023/2407 (October 20, 2023), energy communities are the solution to energy poverty. Zvonimir Anić gave a

presentation of the Center for the fight against energy poverty and pointed to an example of good practice from Križevci, as well as a solution for energy independence in the EU and Croatia.

Hrvoje Keko presented on services in the domain of advanced networks and on the modernization and optimization of energy infrastructures, for which the connection of research organizations, energy startups and local communities is key. Damir Jurčić spoke about civic energy initiatives in PGŽ, financing models for energy communities, and the impact of the Electricity Market Act on the implementation of civic initiatives. Local self-government units should have a strategy for collecting data on energy poverty, they should have advisers for citizens and adopt an action plan to combat it. He stressed that energy poverty will not be solved until everyone involved has an interest in its suppression. After the presentation, the discussion started on the following questions: To what extent are citizens ready to participate in solar installation? To what extent are the citizens themselves social activators in the matter of sustainable energy, and how much should they be encouraged? It was concluded that the percentage of the elderly population is increasing in Croatia, and people of an older age are most often in energy poverty. Therefore, they do not have enough resources and strength to be social activators themselves, so the cooperation of cities and municipalities with associations and citizens is necessary for a successful transition to renewable energy sources.

The second round table entitled "Climate changes and the future of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County" took place at the Gervais Center in Opatija on May 7, 2024. The program began with a thematic lecture by Korad Korlević on possible threats to the environment and life of the citizens of Liburnia as a result of climate change, and continued with a panel discussion on regional policies in the context of the green transition and climate change. The focus of his lecture is the damage we have done to the environment through our actions (e.g. eradication of characteristic species of butterflies on Učka, which are important pollinators, aggressive public lighting that disrupts the biorhythm of insects and birds), as well as forecasts that can be expected based on the conditions on the ground, that is, sudden changes in air and sea temperature, for which we need to adequately prepare. Zoran Skala, ambassador of the European Climate Pact and member of the Transition Initiative TIKO, gave the opening speech entitled "Unsteady about the climate", highlighting only some of the current issues in the field of green transition, which include further intensive dependence and greater use of fossil fuels, as well as the devastation of space and pollution of natural resources, such as marinas for megayachts in the port of Porto Baroš - Rijeka, the construction of a new section of the highway Križišće - Žuta Lokva, a floating LNG terminal in Omišlja. It was also an opportunity to review the results of the Green Network PGŽ research "View of the social climate around CLIMATE" on the personal views of decision makers on the climate crisis and its impact on current and local planned projects and activities. The opening remarks and the mentioned results of the survey as well as the infrastructural and strategic projects that are being implemented or are still being planned in our County served as an introduction to the discussion that followed with the panelists. In a dialogue between citizens and decision-makers about current trends related to climate change in our county and how to adapt to them, the County Mayor Zlatko Komadina referred to the regional policy that strengthens the food security of the population, the Mayor of Opatija Fernando Kirigin focused on changes to spatial and urban plans, the president of the City Council of the City of Rijeka, Ana Trošelj, shared with the audience in which ways citizens can be part of the decision-making process in the context of the green transition at the local self-government level, Zvonimira Grdić Šverko from the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management about the mutual impact of climate change on tourism and vice versa and Korado Korlević on whether there are real alternatives to fossil fuels and what obstacles prevent us from turning to them. Some of the more important conclusions of the very dynamic discussion are that it is important to timely and adequately address the serious and real impacts of climate change in our area, especially when it comes to sea level, sudden and dramatic changes in air temperature, and especially the sea. In accordance with them, adapt existing and develop new, sustainable tourism products and services, and certainly unite joint efforts in the community towards sustainability at the local level in all areas of activity. A special topic of importance was food, i.e. the issue of the sustainability of the food system and the concrete measures that need to be taken at the county level in order to enable farmers, and especially citizens, to produce local and seasonal foods easier, simpler and more successfully (especially when it comes to supplies water and soil quality), and ideas for edible urban points were also planted. Several interesting questions were asked from the audience regarding sustainable mobility in cities, and one question was sent to the organizers via email before the panel, which appeals to important decision-makers to save Rječina due to the likely construction of the Kukuljani reservoir and the new Valići hydroelectric plant. Numerous unanswered questions and unaddressed topics that remained after the panel speak in favor of the fact that public space lacks time, place and platform as an opportunity for dialogue of all stakeholders in the community and active involvement, which are in the service of democratic, inclusive and sustainable management of resources in communities, on which the quality of all citizens depends, as well as the current and future generations to whom we leave them as a legacy.

Italy

PANEBIANCO (CONSENZA): In the assemblies, several in-depth keywords emerged, reflecting discussions and future visions on community development, environmental sustainability, and green space protection. Regarding community development, the importance of integrated social ecology was highlighted, emphasizing an approach that combines ecology, social inclusion, and community development to build resilient communities. Participants discussed the role of inclusive community leadership that fosters widespread and inclusive leadership to strengthen local action capacity. Solidarity economy was identified as a model for local development based on collaboration, sharing, and economic inclusiveness. Additionally, there was a proposal to create community living spaces, such as cohousing, to encourage intergenerational interaction and strengthen social cohesion. The need for green skills was discussed, with training courses oriented toward sustainability to promote employment and empowerment. Neighborhood solidarity networks were recognized as essential to increase mutual support and a sense of belonging. Among the proposals, participants highlighted the need for co-design and co-decision processes to actively involve citizens in public planning and decision-making. Another idea was the regeneration of marginal places, through projects that rehabilitate disused or abandoned areas, restoring social value and utility. Discussions also focused on accessibility and inclusion policies to create spaces and services accessible to all, including the most vulnerable, as well as the need to develop social adaptability skills to make communities more resilient to economic, social, or climate crises.

Regarding environmental issues and sustainability, participants proposed a model of regenerative and circular economy, where resources are regenerated, and waste is transformed into raw materials for sustainable production. Ethical sustainability and social responsibility were recognized as shared values, raising awareness of sustainability as an ethical choice. Local adaptation to climate change was discussed, with specific solutions to tackle climate challenges at the community level, along with the need to reduce the community's carbon footprint through targeted practices. The topic of community energy transition was explored, proposing initiatives that involve citizens in renewable energy production and management. There was also discussion around bio-architecture and sustainable urban planning, envisioning constructed spaces that respect the environment and minimize ecological impact. Other key themes included sustainable tourism, aimed at enhancing local natural and cultural resources, and sustainable innovation through green technologies to reduce environmental impact. Participants emphasized the importance of promoting conscious consumption through short supply chains to reduce the ecological footprint and supporting projects for self-management and energy self-sufficiency to create energy-independent communities.

Finally, in terms of green space protection and natural resource management, participants spoke of urban forestry and sustainable ruralization to improve the local climate, and agroforestry and resilient crops as tools to increase biodiversity and protect the soil. Proposals were made for the restoration of local ecosystems that have been damaged, and for a responsible water management plan to preserve water. The future vision sees cities as living ecosystems, where urban planning contributes to ecological balance. Participants proposed the creation of community gardens and urban gardens to foster socialization and environmental education. Conservation practices also included erosion prevention and soil care, and urban ecological corridors to connect different green areas and promote biodiversity. Proposals were also made for flora and fauna conservation programs and education on the care of public green spaces, to raise awareness and train communities in the stewardship of urban green spaces.

This text summarizes the keywords that emerged from the assemblies, providing a holistic vision that combines community, sustainability, and environmental issues in a future-oriented perspective focused on conscious and inclusive growth.

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