Project: Participate! Decide! Win!

“Improving the Practices of Public Participation: Next Steps in Implementing the Aarhus Convention in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo (territory under interim UN administration)”
Project: Participate! Decide! Win!

- The project Participate! Decide! Win! was supported by REC headquarter office
- Project duration was six months
- Project was realized in January-July 2006
The Project Background

- Green urban space occupies approximately 15% of the Municipality of Danilovgrad

- Local decisions on physical planning and the protection of the green urban areas do not exist at all

- State-wide laws are very general and not implemented to any degree in Danilovgrad

- No law or regulation to prevent abuse and misuse of the green territory and natural resources, or regulate the maintenance of these areas

- Series of activities for drafting of a Regulation on Physical Planning and the protection of Green Urban Areas
Project Goals and Objectives

*Environmental protection based on the main principles of the Aarhus Convention, through including citizens in solving ecological problems at the local level*

- Strengthening cooperation between citizens and local authorities
- Engaging an active public participation process
- Facilitate communication between authorities and the public while drafting and adopting a Regulation on Physical Planning and Protection of Green Urban Areas
- Assisting the working group in formulating a Draft Regulation on green space protection, and encouraging its adoption at the Assembly
How did we get there - Activities 1:

- Meetings with the local authorities and other relevant institutions on presenting the project, finalizing the action plan, involving the local government in the project activities
  - Danilovgrad Municipality
  - Bureau for Environment Protection
  - Bureau for Urbanism and Physical Planning
  - Bureau for Common Administration
  - Public Entity Danilovgrad
  - local NGOs
  - Registered Charity “Red Cross”
  - High Schools

- Questionnaire to find out the local people’s concerns about the most important problems and possible solutions regarding the protection of green areas
  - Send out by NGO Green Home and local NGO Ecologist Association of Young Ecologist Montenegro
  - 102 Citizens from Danilovgrad polled
  - Concrete suggestions of the citizens are formed and put in the Working version of the Regulation and used as one of the base elements for public debates
How did we get there - Activities 1:

- Setting up the working group to draft the Regulation on Physical Planning and the Protection of Green Urban Areas
  - NGO Green Home
  - Danilovgrad Municipality
  - Bureau for Common Administration
  - Bureau for Urbanism and Physical Planning
  - Bureau for Environment Protection
  - Center for Culture Danilovgrad
  - Public Entity Danilovgrad
  - local NGO
  - Primary school

- Project presentation on the round table: “Promotion the principles of Aarhus convention within the NGO sector in Montenegro”

- Mailing list network created in order to provide information exchange on AC issues and ongoing events
Project Outputs and Results 1

- Increased number of public institutions who are willing to work transparently and involve people to decision-making processes

- Increased quantity and quality of environmental information at the local level

- Increased quality of protection and physical planning for the green urban areas

- Law instrument created in order to reduce the misuse and subsequent damage to the environment

- Incorporating citizens into the public participation process, as well as testing these processes through the law-drafting
How did we get there - Activities 2:

- Conducting the media campaign together with a one-day cleaning action “My Park” and planting action in primary school
- Training on Organizing an Effective Public Debate
- Organising public debates (6 debates for 15 local communities, approx. 500 citizens) in order to increase the participation of citizens in the process of drafting and adopting the regulation and raising their voices in local environmental issues
- Analysing the suggestions collected thought the public debates and meetings of the working group
- Submitting the Draft Regulation via the Assembly of the Municipality of Danilovgrad
High level of citizens activated to participate in the process of drafting and adopting the Regulation on Physical Planning and the Protection of Green Urban Areas

Raised knowledge of local people, local community, NGOs, media, etc. on instruments of the public participation

Raised knowledge on AC requirements on decision making processes and its main principles

Current local decisions on public participation are promoted

Increased the quality of cooperation between, local authorities, local institutions, local citizens, media, NGOs.
Lessons learned 1

- Cooperation established with local governments, local institutions, citizens, media, NGOs is very important for involving people in decision-making processes and sharing information.

- Public processes raise public concern on local level environmental problems and facilitate their participation.

- Positive experiences in taking into account public voice on local environmental issues and decision making processes increase active public participation.

- Positive project experiences can be modelled and transferred to other municipalities in order to improve public participation and institutional cooperation between local authorities and citizens.
How do we provide project sustainability 1

- Creation of Regulation provide an effective instrument for protecting and enhancing green urban areas and strengthening the local authority in the legal implementation.

- Current legal framework set up obligation for responsible sector of public entity and other stakeholders on implementation the regulation.

- Knowledge on local decision making instruments and public participation processes transferred to human capacities (working group members, NGOs, and citizens) engaged during the project can be used in similar processes and regulation implementation monitoring process.
How we provide project sustainability 2

- Raised public concern has been reflected on other local decision making processes.

- Cooperation established with local institutions, citizens, media, NGOs, etc. raised public concern on local level environmental problems and initiated more open sharing of information.

- Examples of AC requirements in local decision making processes had been used in practice in similar processes.

- Strong public participation means that community can deal with problems constructively.
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!