



26 WAYS TO TURN YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY MORE SUSTAINABLE

Local Authorities, as drivers for change at local level, have the capacity and the appropriate means to motivate and engage citizens into global challenges and good practices towards sustainable development by promoting and supporting relevant initiatives in different fields, as follows.

ENERGY & TRANSPORT



1 PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT

- Bike Stations & routes;
- Public transportation;
- Promote eco-cars Stations (light electric vehicles).

Promotion of sustainable means of transport contributes to the reduction of the traffic congestion and the decrease of the greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, besides significantly lowering citizens' degree of stress. Alternative means of transport could be developed by increasing the routes of the public transport, creating bike races, reducing the car traffic etc.

More information and ideas:

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/smart-green-and-integrated-transport>.

2 PERMIT THE PEDESTRIANISATION OF ROADS

Pedestrianisation of roads is a good way of reducing the traffic congestion in key places of the city, by enhancing the walk and highlighting its landmarks. Pedestrians, cyclists and some alternative means of transport (rollers, skateboards etc.) take the advantage and increase the sustainability of the city.

Find more information in the document "Reclaiming city streets for people; Chaos or quality of life?" by the European Commission:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/streets_people.pdf

3 JOIN THE COMPACT OF MAYORS

The Compact of Mayors is a global alliance of mayors and city networks committed to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions enhance resilience to climate change and track their progress publicly.

Find more in the official site:
<http://www.compactofmayors.org/>

4 JOIN THE COVENANT OF MAYORS FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY

The “Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy” is a big climate and energy initiative of local and regional authorities voluntarily committed to implementing EU climate and energy objectives on their territory, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% and increasing energy saving by 27% with the deadline of 2030.

Find more information in the official site:
http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/index_en.html

FOOD & ENVIRONMENT



1 PROMOTE RECYCLING

Recycling promotion is a way to engage community into sustainable development practices. You can promote recycling in many ways such as informing citizens about the importance and procedure of recycling, adding recycling bins in every corner of the community and neighborhood, creating new and more efficient recycling programs. It is essential to introduce recycling in schools, so that children from young age can understand the reason, the importance and the impact of this action.

More information and ideas:
<http://blog.bigbelly.com/14-ways-to-improve-community-recycling-rates>

2 PROMOTE STREET RETAIL MARKETS

A weekly market selling local agricultural products is simple to organize but significant in its outputs: the reduction of CO2 emissions for transportation, exchange and communication incentive, besides freshness and quality of seasonal local products are generally higher. Marketplaces still need some regulations which can be provided by LAs themselves: the reduction of plastic bags in the most important one, as they are not recyclable and greatly contribute to greenhouse effect and soil pollution. The vendors should be incentivized to use paper-bags and reduce other packaging.

Find more information:
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/licences-permits-and-permissions/businesses-and-markets/markets-stall-rental>

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COOPERATE WITH LOCAL SUPERMARKETS

Cooperate with local supermarkets through creating a legal framework and incentives for the food donation and the sale of not perfectly good looking fruit and vegetables. The idea comes from the French campaign for “ugly fruit and vegetables” aiming to reduce the food waste. Selling dry food, like cereals, in bulk has also a very positive effect for reducing the use of packaging and the price of goods, the initiative has been introduced in Italy.

Find more information:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/food/article-2693000/Forget-ugly-fruit-meet-ugly-fruit-bowl-French-supermarket-introduces-lumpy-misshapen-fruit-vegetables-sold-30-discount-combat-food-waste.html>

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INTRODUCE PLASTIC BAG TAX

Plastic bag tax is an important action that should be implemented at the national level although LAs can for their part contribute to the reduction in use of plastic bags by influencing the decision makers at national level. As mentioned before, the elimination of plastic bags from markets followed by the supermarkets and other businesses would have an important positive impact on the environment. The UK has introduced a 5p tax on plastic bags in 2014 and after two years of such policy, the use of plastic bags has been reduced by 85% which is 6.5 billion plastic bags less. Avoiding the single use plastic bags is a better solution than, for example, using bio- or oxo-degradable plastic bags, which still cause damage to the environment.

Find more information:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/food/article-2693000/Forget-ugly-fruit-meet-ugly-fruit-bowl-French-supermarket-introduces-lumpy-misshapen-fruit-vegetables-sold-30-discount-combat-food-waste.html>

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PROMOTE COMPOSTING

Composting is the recycling of the biodegradable waste—such as food or garden waste. A way to encourage composting in your community is to collect compostable at the kerbside and create some special areas for composting. Composting is a tool for municipalities to achieve a variety of environmental goals such as “zero waste” and greenhouse emissions reduction. Organic waste is actually an important resource if it is used for composting, it enriches the soil and becomes a natural fertilizer, but for this matter, it must be free from any other technical waste, otherwise it produces heat, methane gas and other toxins with dangerous effects on the environment.

Find more information:

<https://dusp.mit.edu/sites/dusp.mit.edu/files/attachments/project/Municipal%20Curbside%20Compostables%20Collection%20%20What%20Works%20and%20Why.pdf>

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REDUCE CITY WASTE

A local initiative to reduce the abandonment of packaging waste in the proportion to city waste that is almost entirely littered and land-filled would be innovative and smart. The amount of dustbins for separate collection should be increased in the first place. Besides a system to return beverage containers in exchange of incentives recently started by the municipality of Madrid.

For more information and for other initiatives undertaken by LAs as well as reports can be found on the website of the network for the exchange of good practices:

<http://www.acrplus.org/index.php/en/>



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UNDERTAKE TREE-PLANTING INITIATIVES

Planting initiatives raise awareness in citizens on the environmental issues and motivate to take actions for its preservation. Planting in nearest forests called reforestation, helps in avoiding climate changes by reducing the effects of carbon offsets, increasing air quality, maintaining the local temperature balanced and many more.

- If we plant 20 million trees, the earth will get with 260 million more tons of oxygen.
- One acre of trees can remove up to 2.6 tons of Carbon Dioxide each year.

Find more information:

<https://www.arboday.org/>

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DEVELOP COMMUNITY GARDENING

Community gardening brings citizens together and makes them aware of environmental issues. What is more, it provides places for wild life, improves play areas and insures that public green spaces are well-maintained. Gardens could be created in abandoned spaces, in public areas or in specially-designed areas.

More information:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/today_in_your_garden/community_about.shtml

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RUN FOR THE "CLIMATE STAR"

Participate to the European Competition for the best municipal projects promoting climate action and win the "Climate Star". The competition is initiated by "Climate Alliance" (an alliance of over 1,700 member municipalities throughout Europe committed themselves to climate protection locally).

Find more information:

<https://prezi.com/aeb83ffmxpni/climate-change-geography-project/>

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PARTICIPATE IN TOWN-TWINNING FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION

The "Town-Twinning for Climate protection" is the coming together of two communities, so as to take action and share each other good practices, concerning the development and implementation of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs).

Find more information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/news/events/town-twinning/>



SUSTAINABLE & INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



1 ADOPT GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PRINCIPLE

As a straightforward and concrete action, every LA can adopt a Green Public Procurement principle. The selection of green businesses to provide necessary products and services would be consistent with principles of sustainable development and would significantly support and expand green business. The easiest to start with: use recycled paper in your offices!

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm

2 DEVELOP VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism engages citizens to solidarity, brings them together for a common purpose and contributes to social cohesion and peace. What is more, volunteerism fosters people's participation in social change and human development.

More information and ideas:

<http://www.unv.org/fileadmin/img/www/Volunteerism-FINAL.pdf>

3 ADOPT CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES

LAs can enhance circular economy by providing facilities for the exchange and selling of used items like clothes and furniture. The money raised in this way can be allocated to social projects and initiatives thanks to collaboration of civil society organizations and volunteers. Such model has been already successfully implemented by organizations as Emmaus in France and Les Petits Riens in Belgium as well as in some other EU countries at the local level.

For more information:

<http://petitsriens.be/>
<http://www.emmaus-international.org/fr>

4 PROVIDE GREEN TOURISM FACILITIES

Green tourism can be promoted by organizing local fairs and festivals. Local recreational attractions can be created in collaboration with private business, which can be tailored as a win-win cooperation. For example, the creation of sports facilities as part of a project developed by a LA would create an opportunity for profit for a private business if it is in possession of sports tools rental activity, animation or entertainment facilities within the recreational park.

More information and ideas at:

<http://www.cityparksalliance.org/>;
<http://www.sustainabletourism.net/> and
http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_c/mod16.html

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DEVELOP PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE

Organizing forums for citizens, regular transparent exchange and participative budgeting offer a chance to increase active citizenship and enhance democracy by giving the opportunity to citizens to express their point of view and be heard. It increases issue knowledge, civic skills, public engagement, it contributes to decision making among participants and empowers citizens.

More information:

<http://ras.sagepub.com/content/77/2/275>.

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USE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Self-assessment tools measure and evaluate the impact of Local Authorities' policy towards sustainable development. LASALA: "Local Authorities Self-Assessment of Local Agenda 21" is a self-assessment tool, developed by ICLEI, evaluating the processes and the progress of Local Authorities towards sustainable development. Surveys are also a useful tool to evaluate the given state of play.

Find more information concerning LASALA here:

<http://www.iclei.org/details/article/local-authorities-self-assessment-of-local-agenda-21.html>



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PROMOTE OUTDOORS CINEMAS AND THEATRES

Open cinema and theatre performances are a great opportunity to bring citizens together, engage them into culture and stimulate debate. As well as cultural events in the open air, debates are a powerful tool for the citizens to express themselves, as through Open Mic initiative.

Take more ideas:

<http://www.timecommunitytheater.com/>
<http://nicolavalleycommunitytheatresociety.com/about-us/>

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JOIN THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

ECOC is an initiative of EU aiming to highlight the diversity of cultures in Europe, fostering European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area and enhancing the contribution of culture to the development of the cities. Every year a different European city gains the title. However, the call for applications is published six years before the title-year by the host member states.

More information:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en

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MAKE DEVELOPMENT TRULY INCLUSIVE

Sustainable and inclusive development cannot disregard the needs of people with disabilities, on the contrary, it should include them in the economic system and underline their potentials.

Find more information at:

http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/best_practices_publication_2011.pdf

EXISTING BEST PRACTICES & INITIATIVES



1 START A "TWINNING"

"Twinning" is the coming together of two communities seeking to take action with a European perspective, aiming to face their problems and develop closer ties of friendship. Twinning can take place between small villages, towns, big cities or counties. It can also focus on a whole range of issues, and can involve a wide range of actors from two or more twinned communities. It started after the world war II to motivate the solidarity between European countries, now it brings advantages from economic, cultural and symbolic point of view.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) has developed a tool to find twinning partners:

<http://www.twinning.org/en/page/where-do-i-start#.VkyFe9KrTIU>

2 JOIN THE WEEK FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

It is a theme week during which NGOs, associations, Local Authorities, schools and unions, gather to organize activities, to inform and engage citizens. During these days, conferences, theatre shows, workshops, art shows, fair lunch and many more activities are taking place.

More information:

<http://www.lasemaine.org/>

European Sustainable Week

<http://www.esdw.eu/>

List of international days:

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/observances/international-days/>

3 CONNECTING CLASSROOMS

Connecting Classrooms is a framework initiated by the British Council, supporting schools to link through partnerships on global projects around the world. Funding is also available, given the fact that the programme offers grants of £1,500 per school for reciprocal teacher visits between schools in the UK and in developing countries.

More information:

<https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/>

4 JOIN "100IN1DAY"

"100in1Day" is a citizen movement, taking place one day per year, with the goal to inspire change in cities across countries, by compelling residents to activate 100 innovative, thought-provoking ideas into interventions to enhance their city.

More information in the official site:

<http://www.100in1day.com/>

The project “LADDER – Local Authorities as Drivers for Development Education and Raising awareness”. Funded by EuropeAid, LADDER has 1 global objective and 4 specific ones. Since the beginning of 2015, it seeks to enhance and increase the action of Local Authorities in EU DEAR policies: act in a sustainable way as drivers for development, engage citizens, cooperate with CSOs, improve DEAR methods in non-formal education system.

ALDA - the European Association for Local Democracy is a non-governmental organization dedicated to the promotion of good governance and citizen participation at the local level. ALDA in particular focuses on activities that facilitate cooperation between local authorities and civil society.

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