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# Integrating Social Inclusion and Environment

## Exploring the potential for joined-up thinking

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Commissioned by Jean Lambert MEP of the Green Party

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## Executive Summary

This report examines the extent to which social inclusion and environmental policy is integrated at the EU level. It also provides a perspective on the concerns of young people from socially and economically excluded communities and groups about environment, social exclusion and training. Its principal aim is to encourage debate on how environment can be integrated into social exclusion agendas.

The report comprises the following four sections:

- Sustainable Development and Quality of Life
- EU Policy Background
- Concerns of Excluded Young People
- Lessons and Recommendations

Quality of life is an important part of sustainable development and is often concerned with issues of poverty alleviation and social inclusion. When examining UK and German sustainable development strategies, however, it was found that whilst social inclusion is a cornerstone of sustainable development, it is implemented using the economic perspective of improving income via employment or training. Neither country's strategies perceive social inclusion as connected to combating environmental inequality, which research suggests is a concern within the two countries. This national miasma is also reflected in EU policy on sustainable development and social inclusion.

In exploring the integration of environment into a social exclusion agenda of training, the report finds that there are a number of common objectives creating social inclusion within the EU strategic goals and employment guidelines, as well as national action plans. In all three policy areas social inclusion is seen as being

achievable by creating favourable growth prospects, high employment rates and access to employment initiatives. The hypothesis is that if an individual can earn an adequate wage then they can be *prima facie* brought into the mainstream. Though it is agreed that access to adequate income is a part of social inclusion strategies, this does not deal with inequitable environmental standards, for example, which are reflected in some of the concerns discussed by young people.

The focus group discussions with young people suggest that whilst policy on social inclusion, such as training, aims to increase employment, it fails to take into account the wider environmental concerns of young people. These focus group discussions with socially or economically excluded young people from London (England) and Hamburg (Germany) illustrated environmental concerns or awareness in the following areas:

- Inequitable standards of open space, streets, services
- Health and pollution
- Local open space
- Dirty industry or industrial practices
- Quality of life and income
- Crime and safety
- Laws and regulation
- Individual responsibility
- Education and access to information

Most notably the findings show that although it was not always easy for them to articulate, young people see training as a way of receiving accessible information on which they could base decisions that enable them to act responsibly towards the environment, in their work and private life.

The report concludes that whilst the links between social exclusion and environment can be complex, socially excluded groups are concerned about environmental issues. There is a need for the 'greening' of training for young

people, that meets their needs and concerns and provides a significant opportunity to shape future environmental citizens, entrepreneurs and employees. Training that is only aimed at placing young people in jobs ignores the significant potential that exists to empower young people to improve the environment. Current policy that seeks to deal with social inclusion, such as training, solely through an economic perspective of increasing income capacity, is neither integrated nor capable of working towards a society that lives by the principles of sustainable development.

Finally, the report gives four recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:**

The EU and member states need to develop a regional and national framework that facilitates the greening of training programmes and initiatives. These should be part of the National Action Plans and the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion.

**Recommendation 2:**

Youth groups and organisations should be involved in the planning and implementation process of the 'greening training' framework, programmes and initiatives at regional, national and local levels.

**Recommendation 3:**

Funders of training programmes should take steps to ensure that training providers green all their training programmes or projects by making an environmental component of the proposal a prerequisite for funding. Funders' audits on the effectiveness of projects should also include relevant qualitative and quantitative measures of how effective the training is in this area.

**Recommendation 4:**

In operating training programmes, all staff should be given training and resources that allow them to include environmental issues in courses they produce and teach. All training programme syllabi should include an environmental section. In addition, trainers should be encouraged to involve young people in deciding on the delivery of information within the training course.



## Introduction

Meeting the needs of socially excluded groups plays a central role in developing joined-up sustainable development policies, initiatives and projects. The European Community (EC) and its member states have been addressing the issue of environment and sustainable development for over two decades. The recent World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 highlighted the global and local need to link sustainable development more closely to environment and poverty.

This paper asks to what extent environment is integrated into social exclusion policy-making. In addition, it explores the potential for joined-up thinking on social exclusion, environment and training.

The main objectives of this paper are first, to locate the role of environmental issues in mainstream European Union social inclusion policy on the training of young people, specifically those who are perceived as economically or socially disadvantaged or marginalised. Second, to provide an overview of the excluded young people's reflections, needs and concerns in relation to the same issues. The main aims are:

- to identify broad policy on social exclusion, sustainable development and environmental sustainability;
- to use training as a variable to explore the integration of social exclusion and environmental sustainability;
- to offer a brief comparison between the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany;
- to investigate young people's perceptions of the environment and its relation, if any, to social exclusion and training.

The paper is set out in four parts:

Part One – looks at the wider contextual issues of sustainable development and quality of life. It identifies the main definitions and key components of sustainable development and its relationship to quality of life and social exclusion.

Part Two – presents a brief overview of EU policies on environmental concerns and social inclusion strategies. It focuses on the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion, National Action Plans for Social Inclusion and the European Employment Guidelines.

Part Three – presents the main findings of four focus groups with young people in England (London) and Germany (Hamburg). It provides an overview of their perceptions and concerns on environment, social exclusion and how they relate to education and training.

Part Four – concludes the paper by drawing together the salient issues and common themes of the paper, and examines the potential to address these in relevant policy areas. Finally, it provides a number of recommendations for developing joined-up planning for policy-making, new initiatives and projects.

## Part One

### Sustainable Development and Quality of Life – A joined-up agenda

This part of the report highlights the connection between sustainable development, quality of life, social exclusion and the environment. What emerges when reviewing social exclusion and environment are the tensions between all these agendas.

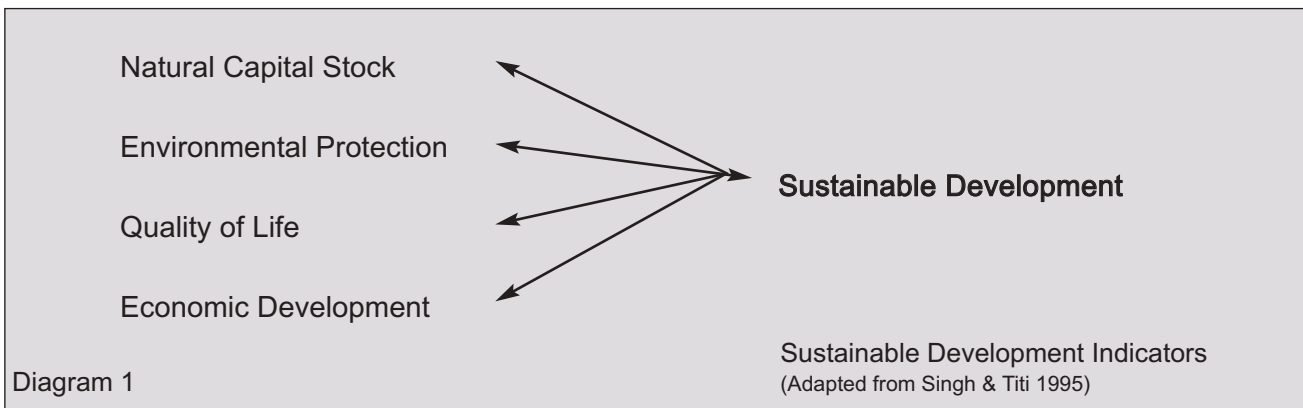
### Sustainable Development – An overview

The watershed for sustainable development discourse was the United Nations Conference

*'what is needed is a new era of economic growth ... that is forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally responsible ... together we should span the globe, and pull together to formulate an interdisciplinary integrated approach to global concerns.'*

Gro Harlem Brundtland  
Our Common Future (1987)

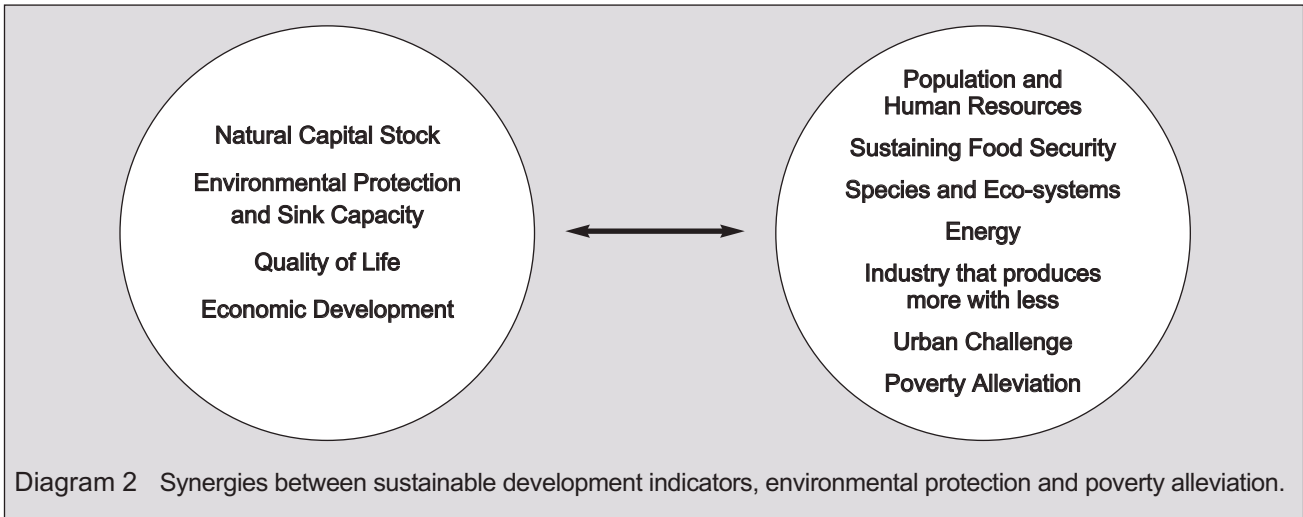
Although there is no one definition of sustainable development which is not contested, it is generally agreed that its objectives are similar to those proposed by the Brundtland Commission. They are to promote and implement paradigms that allow the needs of the present generation to be met without compromising the needs of future generations. In practice, this means creating benchmarks and indicators that give equal balance to the three pillars of economy, environment and society (see Diagram 1). The sustainable development indicators above



on Human Environment in 1972. The search for international co-operation on major global issues brought industrialised and 'developing' countries to design a new form of development. The 1972 conference clearly stipulated that any agenda for development must include a healthy and productive environment for all humans. More than a decade later the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) was given the task of framing a new model of equitable development that balanced economic, environmental and social needs.

illustrate some core synergies with the main policy directions on social inclusion and environmental protection (see Diagram 2).

Since the Brundtland Commission, sustainable development has been developed via international, regional, national and local regulation, law and policy. In 1992 the World Summit on Sustainable Development sought to steer global action on sustainable development. The 1992 Summit was the most prolific. It set international standards through laws, policies, guidelines and frameworks, including the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity, the



United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. They facilitated the setting of EU benchmarks for quality of life and environmental protection (or prudent use of natural resources). There is exhaustive literature, projects and initiatives discussing and implementing sustainable development that provide a broader picture. The aim of this paper, however, is to concentrate on the environmental and social pillars of sustainable development.

### Environment and Sustainable Development

The connection between environment and sustainable development is perhaps best expressed within the concept of environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability contains two strands. The first is concerned with sustaining the natural environment and resources. The second is the sustainability of society and its institutions within an environmental context.

Sustaining the natural environment involves the preservation of natural systems, such as eco-systems. The objective is to sustain the environment as a totality or as separate systems, for example: global biodiversity or European woodlands. Human activity is seen as the dominating stress factor on the environment. Because society depends on the environment for its survival (e.g. air, water, land), its preser-

vation is dependent on our ability to change or constrain negative human impacts on the environment. This creates tensions between preserving nature for its own sake versus preserving nature for human needs. For example, the conservation of forests by prohibiting the cutting down of trees could stop local people from using wood for heating and cooking. A sustainable society is a society that recognises these tensions and seeks to improve quality of life, in particular for people marginalised for reasons of poverty or other forms of social and economic exclusion.

### Poverty and Social Exclusion

Traditionally, poor and socially excluded people are often insufficiently protected by environmental policy or planning. This can lead to numerous gaps in our understanding of the conflicts and synergies between environmental sustainability and social inclusion. Quality of life - specifically improving the quality of life of the most disadvantaged – is a core axis of sustainable development.

### Defining Disadvantage

Poverty discourse in Europe is often subsumed into social exclusion discourse, although they have different definitions. The multi-dimensional nature of poverty is closely linked to social and economic exclusion. Whilst there are a

number of measurements for poverty, the predominant factor is an individual's or household's income level and their ability to get access to adequate resources. Social exclusion discourse, on the other hand, relates to an individual's or group's detachment from mainstream society. The process of detachment is linked not only to limited income, but also to inequitable distribution of (1) the resources required for dignified life and (2) access to civil, political and cultural processes.

Poverty and social exclusion are measured by a number of separate and interlinked indicators. The indicators provide a useful insight into the components required for a decent quality of life. Box 1 below offers a synopsis, rather than an exhaustive list, of some of these quality of life indicators.

Quality of life indicators vary according to the subjective concerns of individuals, households, communities, regions or states. However, the

• Diet	• Clothing
• Fuel and Light	• Household Facilities
• Consumer Durables	• Housing Conditions
• Health	• Education
• Environment and Location	• Family Activities
• Recreation	• Social Relations
• Social Participation	• Financial Stress
• Mobility	• Public Safety
• Human Rights	• Government and Politics

Box 1 Quality of Life - Indicators and Dimensions

importance of environment (built and natural) and its interplay with human well-being and environmental protection are common elements.

Inequality in accessing environmental 'goods', for example clean air and the inequitable impacts of environmental 'bads', for example pollution, are relevant to environmental and

social inclusion debates within the EU and its member states.

There are a number of correlations that have emerged between poverty and pollution. There is evidence to suggest that those least likely to enjoy social/economic benefits are also least likely to receive environmental goods. Factors such as descent, disability, age, gender and geography play a part in compounding negative impacts. The social aspects of environmental issues and the environmental aspects of social issues are reflected in UK and German policy.

## UK and German Policy

A brief overview of UK and German sustainable development strategies provides an interesting insight into how social inclusion and environment policy are, if at all, integrated at national level. Essentially both countries relate their strategies on sustainable development to social inclusion and the environment, but at national level clear direct links between the two are rarely made.

## UK Policy

*'Focusing solely on economic growth risks ignoring the impact – both good and bad - on people and on the environment.'*

Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister - UK Sustainable Development Strategy (1999)

Despite the UK's relative affluence, social and economic exclusion have grown in the UK. For example, the percentage of children living in households with incomes below 50% of the average increased by 35% between 1979 and 1997.

In response the Government has made public its commitment to improving the quality of life of the poorest sections of UK society. To this end the reduction of child poverty has been a key theme. The majority of the policies to reduce exclusion have been economic in nature (minimum wage, employment maximisation

through measures like New Deal, neighbourhood improvements through measures such as the Single Regeneration Budget). Joined-up policies such as reducing the negative impacts of environmental degradation on poor communities have been far less central.

This gap in policy has fuelled a growing interest in understanding the links between environment and social exclusion. As a result there is increasing awareness of the need to deliver joined-up policy on environment and social exclusion. Despite the fact that research in the UK in this arena is in its early stages, there is evidence to suggest that environmental impacts on the environment are inequitably distributed. This uneven distribution has a direct impact on tackling social exclusion. Although the research in this area is still developing, initial findings in Box 2 below illustrate some of the links.

Access to environmental goods such as heat-

ing, housing, transport and green space show an unequal distribution between wealthy and poor communities. For example, inequitable access to nutritional food, by way of cost and proximity of purchase, also illustrate how difficult it is for low-income households to benefit from healthy food. There are a number of reasons for this. The lack of local facilities and the impact of travel poverty/mobility constrain people's ability to access mainstream jobs, education and social opportunities. Even a simple trip to shops that offer a wider selection of healthy food is difficult.

Inequitable standards of open space is another issue that is coming to the fore in current policy debates (framed as improving quality of life and 'liveability'). The UK Quality of Life Agenda states that four main tasks are required to achieve sustainable development for the UK:

### **Social Exclusion and the Environment in the UK**

- People living in the 44 most deprived areas in England listed pollution, poor public transport and the appearance of their estate as major concerns (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998).
- The 44 most deprived areas in England contain four times as many people from ethnic minority groups as other areas (Seraaj, 2001).
- 66% of all carcinogenic chemicals emitted into the air come from factories in the most deprived 10% of communities in England (Friends of the Earth, 2001).
- Pollution is a major factor in poor health and health inequalities, with over 24,000 people affected by environment-related illnesses (Archeson, 1998).
- Child pedestrians from poorer communities can be 4 times more likely to be killed by vehicles than children from the most affluent areas (ESRC, 2001).
- Over 700,000 people in Scotland live in relative fuel poverty, spending more than 10% of their income on heating (Scottish Executive, 2002).
- Policies aiming to mitigate the environmental impacts of traffic may come into conflict with social inclusion of low income and other disadvantaged groups and communities (Lucas, K. , Grosvenor, T., Simpson, R., 2001).

Box 2 'Social Exclusion and Environmental Inequity in the UK', Eames, M., and Adebawale, M., (2002)

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

The inclusion of social progress is an illustration of the government's social inclusion priorities. This has changed previous government thinking on sustainable development, which concentrated on economics and environment. Thus the use of environmental and social (though not integrated) indicators of social exclusion and environmental protection offer a context that is receptive to the development of joined-up policy at the UK national level. National policy is, as yet, still directed by high economic growth and employment. This is reflected in the UK National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2001-2002. The Plan, whilst referring to the need for joined-up thinking, does not look at social inclusion through a sustainable development prism, let alone an environmental one. Rather, the Plan is based on traditional thinking on poverty reduction and social inclusion through economic and social responses, for example:

- life cycle interventions;
- mobilising interagency response;
- tackling discrimination; and
- ensuring all policy formulation is evidence based.

No links to environment are made or reflected in the Plan, the central theme being access to decent housing and health services. This is despite the fact that the Plan seeks to use a 'prevention and cure approach' to social inclusion.

Where joined-up policy in this area may be developed is in the area of citizenship and environmental governance. This is due to the signing of the Aarhus Convention and the integration of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK domestic law. The Convention requires the UK as a signatory to put in place procedures that facilitate decision-making and

environmental justice for the public. The issues of environment and inclusion in the context of governance could be brought to the forefront of environmental policy. It is possible that this area of integration may lead to the review of other environmental and social issues. There are a number of initiatives, projects and research studies reviewing specific integration issues, including sustainable development and social inclusion, health and environment, employment and environment, public space and regeneration by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community groups, non dependant public bodies (NDPBs) and government departments. However, not all these areas relate directly to social inclusion. A non-exhaustive list of work in these areas is produced in Box 3 below. There is no evidence that these pockets of work are the result of a central policy agenda by the UK government to integrate policy on environment and social inclusion. Rather, it stems from the concerns of individual government units or departments, NGOs and a number of research projects and findings.

- **Transport impacts**
- **Environment and health-related inequalities**
- **Factory pollution**
- **Public space and regeneration**
- **Access to environmental information**
- **Public participation and environmental decision-making**
- **Access to public space and health**
- **Conservation training and environment**
- **Fuel poverty**

Box 3 UK initiatives on joined-up thinking relating to environment and social exclusion.

## German Policy

*'The ... Government's major plans for reform ... are orientated towards the model of sustainable development. The consolidation of the national budget ... [and] pension reforms.'*

Chancellor Gerhard Schroder, Our Strategy for Sustainable Development (2002)

The German government has stated that sustainable development is considered to be a central theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Like the UK, Germany has developed social and environmental indicators to measure quality of life, but few are integrated. The German sustainable development plan's ten point rules for managing sustainability illustrate the need for balance and integration between society, economics and the environment (see Box 4 below).

Germany, also accepts that sustainable development is directly linked to improving the quality of life of German citizens: health, living space, sufficient income, safety and good edu-

cation. Combating poverty and social exclusion is seen as a central tool for delivering 'social cohesion'. This has predominantly meant bringing marginal groups back into the mainstream through economic development and social participation.

Economy and employment is seen as an important tool for social cohesion and inclusion. The main element of social cohesion, like the UK, is also seen as the development of the economy and employment. Involving all people in this economic development is seen as crucial in enabling groups to participate in social and political life. There is little evidence in Germany's strategic plan on sustainable development that issues on social inclusion and environment are actually being tackled, even in the areas of climate change and transport reduction.

Whilst social inclusion is obviously an objective of the German Sustainable Development Strat-

1. Mobilising public participation with the State.
2. Responsible business, consumer development and consumption.
3. Increased use of renewable energy, decreased use of non-renewable energy.
4. Avoiding unjustifiable risk to human health.
5. Integrated policy on economic growth, high employment, social cohesion and environmental protection.
6. De-coupling energy and transport from economic growth.
7. Public sector budgets taking account of inter-generational equity.
8. Sustainable agriculture that respects the rights of animals and protects consumers.
9. Strengthened social cohesion, economic development and participation for all.
10. Integrated international development frameworks on economics, poverty environment and politics.

Box 4 Ten Rules of Managing Sustainability German Strategy for Sustainable Development (2002)

egy, it is not generally visible. Where it is in evidence is in the discussion on international development. Here, there is a clear objective to develop policy and support initiatives that integrate thinking on poverty elimination and exclusion with that of environmental protection and political stability. The same paradigm is not applied to domestic policy. No comment is made on the issue of socially excluded people suffering the disproportionate effects of envi-

ronmental problems, such as pollution. If the EU used environmental sustainability as a key political driver for planning social and economic inclusion, it would be evidenced as a central principle within mainstream policies. Part Two of this paper provides an overview of the main EU social inclusion and sustainable development policies and investigates to what degree there is an overall joined-up policy agenda.



## Part Two

### EU Policy Background

The Treaty of Amsterdam came into force in 1999 and expanded the competencies of the European Community in social and environmental policies. The Treaty establishing the European Community now *inter alia* mentions a high level of employment, of social protection and and the improvement of the quality of the environment as its objectives.

Under the Treaty, Community institutions are obliged to take account of environmental considerations within all policies and activities, with a particular view to promoting sustainable development. At the same time they should, in co-operation with Member States, promote employment, improve living and working conditions and achieve proper social protection with a view to lasting high employment and combating exclusion.

The following review explores whether environmental concerns have been integrated into the new employment and social inclusion policies at the European level. The scope of this part of the report is confined to a desktop analysis of the social inclusion process of the European Union, and does not aim to provide an exhaustive picture of how social inclusion and environment issues are reflected in all EU policies and activities. The report does not evaluate the results of other studies in the area or examine other European social policy areas, for example equal opportunities, social security, ageing and pensions.

### EU Social Inclusion Policy Background

Following the transfer of new responsibilities, the Member States at the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000 agreed the EU's strategic goal for the following decade. This was to become the most competitive and dynamic

knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

In order to achieve this goal, the 'Lisbon Strategy' outlined three main aims :

- the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society by implementing policies for the information society and research and development, as well as by structural reforms for competitiveness and innovation and the completion of the internal market;
- modernising the European social model investing in people and combating social exclusion;
- sustaining a healthy economic outlook and favourable growth prospects by applying an appropriate macro-economic policy mix.

In order to implement the strategy an *open method of co-ordination* was introduced. This method was designed to encourage co-operation between Member States and give a guiding and monitoring role to the European Council. Its goal is to spread best practices, achieve greater convergence towards common goals, develop indicators, guidelines or specific timetables and allow for a diversity of approaches at the national level.

The key elements in the open method of co-ordination related to social inclusion are the common objectives on poverty and social inclusion, national action plans (NAPs), joint reports on the basis of the NAPs, the development of common indicators and a community action programme. The policy on social inclusion is also part of the European Social Policy Agenda to modernise the European social model by particular action in the fields of, for example, employment, information technology, social protection, discrimination and social inclusion.

## Common objectives

A first step was the approval of four objectives for the fight against poverty and social exclusion at the European Council meeting of Nice in December 2000. These common objectives are as follows:

1. Facilitating participation in employment and access to resources, rights, goods and services
  - by creating framework conditions (e.g. life long training or childcare) that allow all men and women who are capable of working to do so, and
  - by organising a minimum standard of social protection including access to housing, healthcare and special services for people at risk of exclusion.
2. Preventing the risk of exclusion by utilising modern technologies and support mechanisms to prevent life crises (e.g. indebtedness or exclusion from school) and preserve family solidarity.
3. Helping the most vulnerable groups, including the disabled, children and those experiencing integration problems.
4. Mobilising all relevant bodies (public authorities, NGOs, businesses etc.) and the people suffering exclusion to promote dialogue and exchange between them.

## National Action Plans and Joint Report

In response to the common objectives, all Member States submitted National Action Plans against poverty and social inclusion (NAPs). The NAPs presented their priorities and initiatives for tackling these areas over a two-year period. All fifteen Member States submitted the first round of NAPs during June 2001 (for the period July 2001 - June 2003). The next round of NAPs is scheduled for 2003.

The NAPs, whilst having different emphases, all comprise an analysis of the national background, a description of strategies and meas-

ures to combat social exclusion, indicators for progress, approaches on the mobilisation of stakeholders and examples of best practices.

On the basis of the NAPs a comprehensive Joint Report on Social Inclusion was drawn up comparing policies and approaches at the European level and outlining areas for further analysis and evaluation. The report identifies a number of factors that are commonly mentioned as significantly increasing people's risk of poverty and social exclusion. In addition to traditional social exclusion indicators mentioned earlier in the paper aspects such as age, sexuality and descent have been included.<sup>1</sup> (see Box 6 below).

### Risk Factors

- Unemployment
- Low income
- Low quality employment Homelessness
- Poor health
- Immigration
- Few qualifications and early school leaving
- Gender inequality
- Discrimination and racism
- Disability
- Old age
- Family break-up
- Drug abuse
- Alcoholism
- Living in areas of multiple disadvantage

Box 6 Joint Report Risk Factors for Social Exclusion

<sup>1</sup>'Descent' describes what is commonly referred to as ethnicity or race.

The report summarises eight core challenges for public policies emerging from the NAPs (see Box 7 below). In addition, ten primary and eight secondary indicators to measure the progress in the fight against poverty and social exclusion were agreed. They essentially focus

on the elimination of social exclusion and poverty by setting appropriate objectives at the Community level and by the implementation of the NAPs. Further development of the common indicators and issues identified by the Joint Report on Social Inclusion is expected.

### Eight core challenges

- Developing an inclusive labour market and promoting employment as a right and opportunity for all.
- Guaranteeing adequate income and resources for a decent standard of living.
- Tackling educational disadvantage.
- Preserving family solidarity and protecting the rights of children.
- Ensuring good accommodation for all.
- Guaranteeing equal access to and investing in high-quality public services (health, transport, social, care, cultural, recreational and legal).
- Improving the delivery of services.
- Regenerating areas of multiple deprivation.

Box 7

Joint Report Key Challenges

on the rates and distribution of income, the number of people affected by unemployment or a lack of qualifications, life expectancy and health. Also, quantitative information related to housing which should be included in the NAPs was specified. The challenges extend the four traditional components of social exclusion - employment, family cohesiveness, income and equal access.

### Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion

As part of the open method of co-ordination on social inclusion, a Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion 2002 – 2006 (SEP) was established by a decision of the European Parliament and the Council to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policies to combat social exclusion. The intention for the programme was to provide impetus

The action program supplements *inter alia* the activities of the European Social Fund, the Community initiative EQUAL, and programmes to combat discrimination and gender inequality as well as employment or e-Inclusion strategies. The SEP objectives are:

- to improve the understanding of social exclusion and poverty with the help in particular of comparable indicators;
- to organise exchanges on policies which are implemented and promote mutual learning in the context of national action plans; and
- to develop the capacity of actors to address social exclusion and poverty effectively and to promote innovative approaches, in particular through promoting networking and dialogue with all those involved.

The Commission is responsible for pursuing the objectives at the Community level by, for instance, collecting, analysing and disseminating statistical data, facilitating the transnational exchange of information or personnel, identifying innovative approaches or areas for further research and allocating the financial resources of € 75 million. The Commission's remit, assisted by a Committee made up of government representatives from Member States, is to provide political guidance on the implementation of the programme.

The SEP provides useful indications of the proposed frameworks for combating social exclusion. The following themes are mentioned: information technology, research, employment, economic policies, non-discrimination, immigration, gender equality, social protection, education, training, youth and health. The annex to the programme, on indications for the implementation of the programme, further specifies child poverty, social protection, employment, education and training, health and housing as areas requiring special attention.

### **Emerging themes in social inclusion policies**

European policy to combat poverty and social inclusion puts a clear emphasis on the principal role of participation in employment, especially by groups that are under-represented or disadvantaged. Access to quality employment is generally seen as a primary safeguard against poverty or social exclusion.

The other themes that are recurrently perceived as key to the development of social inclusion policies within the European Union (EU) are: education and training, health, housing, discrimination, gender inequality, youth and age, use of information technologies, the need for appropriate state protection schemes, intact family structures and regeneration.

When the Lisbon Strategy was first agreed, 'sustainable economic growth' was referred to

as a key priority, rather than 'sustainable development'. Themes such as health or areas of multiple disadvantage allow for a link to environmental protection, but overall environmental considerations, for instance as a possible indicator for social exclusion, are marginal. The next section will investigate the EU Sustainable Development Strategy to identify some evidence of integration.

## **Sustainable Development Strategy**

In 2001 a Strategy for Sustainable Development was agreed at the Gothenburg European Council. The Strategy added an environmental dimension to the Lisbon strategy, recognising environmental protection as inseparable from economic growth and social cohesion. Sustainable development is proposed as a long-term vision for a more prosperous and just society that promises a cleaner, safer and healthier environment.

In order to achieve this the strategy proposed that:

- Policies in all sectors at the national and European level should contain an assessment of their economic, environmental and social impact, including gender equality and equal opportunities.
- Market prices should reflect the degree of pollution or wasteful use of natural resources involved in the creation of services and products.
- The EU and Member States should encourage investment in new technologies and the application of procurement standards taking into account environmental considerations.
- Earlier and more systematic involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process

and encouragement of sustainable and social business activities within and outside the EU.

- Co-operation with new Member States and other countries and international organisations to foster sustainable development in the rest of the world.

The Strategy deliberately focuses on a limited number of specific problems. These include global warming, hazardous chemicals, new strains of diseases, poverty, ageing of the population, loss of natural resources and transport congestion. The threats to sustainable development stemming from poverty characterised by the strategy are as follows:

*'One in every six Europeans lives in poverty. Poverty and social exclusion have enormous direct effects on individuals such as ill health, suicide, and persistent unemployment. The burden of poverty is borne disproportionately by single mothers and older women living alone. Poverty often remains within families for generations.'*

Specific measures outlined in the strategy focus on cleaner energies, new technologies, information, health, and the protection of natural resources and transport. The common objectives on poverty and social exclusion agreed between the Member States are reiterated as an integral part of the strategy for sustainable development, but no specific action is proposed in the area.

It raises familiar themes such as unemployment, health, modern technologies and equality. In outlining the means for sustainable development an integrative approach emerges towards impact assessment, with prices reflecting pollution, investment in new technologies, information and participation.

## Employment Guidelines

Since 1997 the European Council has issued annual Employment Guidelines which have to be translated into NAPs for Employment by the Member States. The findings and information presented in the NAPs are summarised and analysed in a joint report at the EU level and address recommendations to individual Member States.

Social inclusion has become a key concern for the Guidelines. The 2002 Guidelines provide an additional field for investigating how environmental concerns have been integrated in employment, training and social inclusion.

The 2002 Employment Guidelines reiterate the importance of effective employment policies as the primary tool to counter social exclusion and poverty. At the same time employment, economic reforms, social and environmental policies should be mutually reinforcing and employment in the environmental field should be specifically promoted. The following areas are mentioned for the consideration of Member States to maintain and improve the quality of work:

- intrinsic job quality
- skills
- lifelong learning
- career development
- gender equality
- health and safety at work
- flexibility and security
- inclusion and access to the labour market
- work organisation and work-life balance
- social dialogue and worker involvement
- diversity and non-discrimination
- work performance and productivity.

The Guidelines are built on four thematic priorities. First, improving employability. Second, improving entrepreneurship and job creation. Third, encouraging adaptability of businesses and their employees. Fourth, equal opportunity

policies for women and men. The necessary activities of Member States outlined under these pillars can be broadly grouped into the following key themes: (lifelong) training and education, facilitating workers' mobility, combating discrimination, realising the potential of information and communication technologies, establishing proactive social protection system, providing economic incentives for employment, reforming the taxation system, improving the conditions of work and gender equality.

The environment sector and modern environment technologies are repeatedly mentioned in the Guidelines as providing new opportunities for employment. Member States are requested to examine the possibility of incorporating environmental consideration such as energy and pollutant emissions into their tax systems. The social partners are invited to reorganise patterns of work according to the features of the knowledge-based economy and modern technologies.

The Council decision explicitly calls for a synergy of environment and employment policies. An integration of environmental concerns into employment policies is reflected particularly in the emphasis on cleaner technologies as a means to develop new business areas and professional skills and encourage the cessation of more polluting production activities through different economic incentives.

### **Summary - Integration or Add-On?**

This part of the report has given an insight into European social inclusion and employment policy themes. Gender equality, non-discrimination, social protection, education and training are reflected and feature prominently in most of the relevant policy documents. They do not, however, ever override the centrality of free market and persistent economic growth as the guarantors of social inclusion and employment that pervades social inclusion policy and sustainable development strategies.

European policies on poverty and social exclusion, employment and environment policies are closely interwoven. In this triangle of relationships social employment is perceived as the dominant tool in pursuing social inclusion. Environmental considerations are a peripheral additional feature of the employment strategy. That is to say, the principle of sustainable development in the context of the EU's social inclusion policy is not established on an equal footing with employment, but rather as a supplement represented predominately in 'friendly' economic activities, cleaner technologies, new business sectors and training and education.

The mainstream EU policy reviewed here implies that economic, social and environmental interests can be integrated. There is evidence of linked policy in some areas on economics and environment and economics and social exclusion in the 'traditional environmental sectors' mentioned above, but there is no clear evidence of this actually happening in mainstream policy.

Lifelong learning, in particular of vulnerable groups, is recurrently mentioned in EU policy documents as a safeguard against social exclusion. Employment has emerged as the key theme in the social inclusion of young people into the mainstream.

To further expand on the relationship between social inclusion and environment issues the paper has concentrated on the opinions and perceptions of socially excluded groups on training, employment and the environment. To this end the aim of Part 3 is to address the lack of information on how young people feel about these issues. A series of focus group discussions with socially and economically excluded groups offers an insight into their reflections.

## Part Three

### Young People – Perspectives and Concerns

*'Our message is directed ... in particular ... towards addressing the young ... Unless we are able to reach their hearts and minds ... we shall not be able to undertake the extensive social changes needed to correct development ...'*

Our Common Future The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

Whilst it is recognised that there is a diversity of socially and economically excluded communities or groups, this report concentrates on one group: young people. This group is particularly interesting in terms of future policy design and implementation.

#### Social Exclusion and Young People

Young people are identified in most European countries as an excluded group, by virtue of social or economic factors. Exclusion for young people is often caused by a number of variables, aggregated or disaggregated. They are based around the lack of access to resources and services, low education or training attainment, and low levels of participation in political decision-making. At the same time modernisation of government and the increasing demand for high levels of education and skills require young people that are familiar with governance structures, understand the principal concerns of sustainable development and can take employment in the new technology industry.

There has been an overall reduction in youth employment and economic exclusion in the European Union, which has seen a 1.5% reduction in average unemployment between 1999 and 2000, moving from 9.2% to 8.7%. Despite this improvement, deprivation indices

for young people within Member States show significant differences, and the ability to join the mainstream remains difficult for many young people from excluded groups or communities. Young people from low income households, women, or people of Black, Asian or other ethnic descent are more likely to have higher indices of deprivation.

#### Environmental Concerns of Excluded Young People

The focus group participants ages ranged from 15 – to 19 years of age. Although this is a relatively wide age range, we wanted to gain an understanding from young people who were thinking about, or going into, jobs, training or further education. To that end, open questions were posed that investigated the following themes:

- To what extent environmental issues have had an impact on socially excluded young people.
- To what extent socially and economically excluded young people's perspectives on training, if at all, could act as a source of information for environmental decision-making.

This section concentrates on the dialogue with young people in focus groups. The young people attending the groups were self-selected from community or training projects based in geographical locations with a high percentage of social and economic exclusion indicators. Whilst it is recognised that a small percentage of the young people may not have fallen into the strict definition of low-income households, the majority were. Each group had six to eight delegates and enquiries were made about their attitude to the environment and training using a number of questions, which were moderated or adapted *in situ* where requested from the group.

## A Youth Groups: London

### 1. St Luke's Estate, London, EC1

The group all lived in the same housing estate in East Central London (EC1). EC1 is close to a prosperous business sector and public amenities with some of the most expensive private sector housing in London. Despite this, there are a significant number of residential areas that lack access to facilities and jobs. For example, 90% of the residents live in social housing, 50% do not have access to a regular income. The rate of youth unemployment is 35% compared to national average of 15%. This area was earmarked by the UK government's New Deal for Communities scheme for regeneration, with a 60 million pound grant over six years. According to a study commissioned by the New Deal, 53% of the residents in EC1 believe that the poor environment impacts negatively on their health.

All six of the participants in the group knew each other through a small circle of friends and family. The group consisted of two females and four males. Three members were in their last year of school and the others had begun further education or training. They were of Bangladeshi descent, born in England or in Bangladesh. Their ages ranged from fifteen to eighteen years of age.

#### Community, Safety and Open Space

When discussing the environment, the group mentioned traditional aspects such as 'nature', but they also widened the definition to include the local infrastructure, access to green space and a cohesive community.

*'The environment is grass, birds, flowers and people walking about ...'*

*'Unity, being together, a garden, access to parks ...'*

They often thought about the impact of the local environment on their health and personal safety. Wider social concepts such as racism and crime were very much a part of the environment and their relationship to it.

#### Global Politics, Environment and Poverty

The group also understood the wider global environmental issues. In particular they spoke of climate change and flooding, and often related it to the impact on their friends and family living in Bangladesh or East Africa.

*'If Bangladesh floods it matters to us because we have family there. No one else cares in this country.'*

The majority of the group also discussed the relationship between poverty and environment and felt that the poorest countries often had the worst environments. Two of the group felt that this was due to the unethical practices of businesses based in those countries and the legacy of colonialism. All agreed that rich Northern countries cared little about poorer countries in the South.

#### Access to Information and Media

When the topic of environmental information was raised the group expressed frustration at the way the media handled environmental issues. They felt that the media often only took an interest in the environment in Southern countries when there was a disaster and did not give information on the environment beyond that. One participant suspected that even when the media reported on the environment locally, nationally or globally it gave the wrong, or biased, facts.

*'The media have made us forget that there is a problem.'*

## Education and Training

The majority of the group when talking about education and training said they would look for environmental information from newspapers and television despite the fact that they felt it was biased. Only two of the group could remember environmental issues being covered in their geography and social health classes at school.

They went on to say that whilst school and training could be a source of environmental information, they often did not receive the information they wanted in a format they enjoyed or understood.

*'We haven't been taught anything.'*

In response to a question about how they would like to receive information about the environment, suggestions were through project work, community activities and music, and not via the traditional textbook.

## 2. The MLK Project, London, N4

The group were all members of the MLK Project. The MLK Project is based in Holloway, North London. The project's objective is to work with local youth in the Islington area. The project is located in the centre of a large social housing estate. Although it is situated next to a number of prosperous private housing and cultural and leisure amenities, there are pockets of high and multiple deprivation. School attainment is a third below the national average of 32%. The group consisted of six members, four girls and two boys, ranging from 14 to 17 years of age, and of white English descent. Five were in their final year of school and one was unemployed. The participants already knew each other through a circle of friends and the project.

## Poverty and the Built Environment

*'Poor people have less choice here, less chances of a better environment.'*

In general the group were less discursive and often contradicted themselves on what they thought about the environment, poverty and training. In general their notion of the environment was tied to the domestic environment, housing and ownership of leisure goods. When discussing the environment outside of the domestic sphere, they primarily spoke about the local infrastructure and the built environment in the estate where they lived. Three of the participants felt the main issue was the standard of housing such as unkempt gardens and cracked pavements in poor neighbourhoods. They also felt that society's unfair distribution of wealth had an impact on the standard of environment people lived in. They were keen to note, however, that environmental issues should not be prioritised over and above health or housing issues.

*'People are ill, that's the first priority. Environment comes second.'*

*'Address poverty and shelter for the homeless.'*

## Environmental Issues

Traditional environmental issues such as rain forests, factory pollution, waste, health and transport were discussed by the group. The group spoke about production of food and the negative impacts on their health.

*'The poor suffer from their environment because of what's in it, stolen mopeds, noise, untidiness and graffiti.'*

## Crime and Safety

Discussion about their housing estate led to the topic of crime and safety. These were predominate concerns when they discussed the local environment. They were concerned about cars, not in relation to pollution, but rather the speed of cars and their likelihood of being knocked down. Although they were concerned

about health and safety, they did not express an understanding of how their own behaviour may impact on the overall safety of the estate. This was illustrated by descriptions of their own behaviour which may have jeopardised the safety of the neighbourhood wardens operating in their estate.

*'We terrorise them and jump on their cars.'*

## Education and Income

Three participants said that they would like to take on apprenticeships for trades, and two wished to attend further education. The majority of the group felt that training and education was to help get a job. They did not express an interest in environmental issues being part of their training course. The majority of the group felt that learning on the job was more satisfying because they were being paid to attend. They expressed strong concern about the need to increase their earning capacity throughout their lives.

## B. Youth Groups: Hamburg

The focus group participants in Germany were all from neighbourhoods in Wilhelmsburg, Hamburg, North Germany. Although it borders the industrial port area, it is one of the poorest areas of Hamburg with multiple deprivation factors: unemployment, low income and social housing. The local unemployment rate as at 2001 was 9.8%; 7.8% were between the ages of 15 and 25 years of age. 34.1% of residents are of non German ethnic descent, making up 42% of the local unemployment rate. The percentage of residents living in social housing is 38.3%.

### 1. Haus der Jugend - Wilhelmsburg, Hamburg

The project is based on the Elbe Island, on the outskirts of Hamburg, located near the ports. The project has been operating for around nine

years and is one of the few services available to teenagers. It is supported by the local authority.

The area was described as a predominately peaceful area, with a great deal of social control operated within a close community. There was, however, little infrastructure: only two shops, one pub, one school and one youth club. Most of the young people tend to stay in the area after leaving school. This area has a high percentage of residents who are not of German descent. The project worker who manages the project and works closely with the young people noted that 80% of the clients are predominately of Turkish origin, with the rest from Albania, Kosovo, and Greece.

The group consisted of six participants, five males and one female, between 15 and 18 years of age and of Turkish and Albanian descent. The group knew each other and often discussed the issues in a manner that reached a consensus opinion.

## Environment and Community

*'Environment is really about your surroundings, but when I hear the word I think about green stuff.'*

*'When people say 'environment' they mean environmental protection. That's where it comes from, but we know what is really meant by it: our surroundings - the society where we fit in or can't fit in.'*

There was a general discussion about the need to question the definition of the environment. For them the environment was about strong community. There was a clear understanding that when the environment is mentioned what was usually meant by it was the traditional concept of nature and conservation. However, they strongly felt that the environment must include their locality, the built environment, and human relationships within socie-

ty, specifically with family, friends and children. They added that the environment they lived in affected their economic aspirations to increase their earning capacity.

### Health and Quality of Life

The environment, as they defined it, was a constant concern for them and they said they thought about it a great deal especially if their quality of life or health was threatened in some

cussed what they felt were unequal environmental standards, nature and the state of neighbourhoods. There was a strong feeling that poorer neighbourhoods like theirs lived in the worst environments, specifically in terms of the lack of green space, access to services and litter on the streets. The feeling that there was too much litter in the area was constantly mentioned. They discussed how overconsumption leads to problems of waste and litter, and it was proposed that some of the problems could



way. The traditional concept of the environment had been explored by everyone in the group at school, and they were aware of the 'mega issues' such as air pollution, unsustainable consumption, nature preservation, conservation and the impact of war. One of the group was very proud of having attended a school that operated a number of environmental schemes such as using rainwater and solar energy to operate the school.

*'You always think about the environment.'*

### Environmental Inequality and Open Space

When the discussion moved on to the quality of the environment, they predominantly dis-

be dealt with through training, education and self-control. For example, schools in the local area had an annual campaign where school children picked up litter. They were ambivalent and sometimes critical about the 'short-term fixes' such as the annual one-day street rubbish collection operated in that area for school children. They felt more was required along the lines of self-help at a local level, and understanding their role to assist others in the 'third world' or poorer countries.

### Regulation and Individual Responsibility

The discussion around community led the group to discuss different forms of regulation and individual responsibility required to protect the environment and improve people's quality

of life. Many noted that a better environment would be achieved through self-regulation, for example, taking responsibility by not throwing rubbish on the street.

human activity on the environment in the past, without looking at what can be done by humans in the present to improve the environment.



They agreed that everyone was individually responsible for the environment. People needed to understand how they regulate themselves in order to act responsibly both as individuals and as part of the community. For them this form of self regulation was based around the ability to make informed decisions about what was the right thing to do, but this was often reliant on accessible information.

### Education and Access to Information

In response to a question posed about education and access to information, it was noted by the group that if environmental information was to be useful it had to be connected to both concepts of the environment: where people live and nature conservation. One of the frustrations with discussions about the environment in school was the way it was communicated solely around the traditional subjects on nature. Others stated that school education on environment only looked at the negative impact of

*We discussed the environment, but not this environment.'*

*'You always talk about stuff that's already gone.'*

It was clear from their response that accessible information for them needed to be simple, brief and precise. Everyone in the group vocalised their concerns that environmental information was too intellectual. This did not mean not using written information but it did mean that traditional methods of information dissemination such as textbooks should be complimented with the use of other media, such as videos, advertisements and slogans. One member of the group also felt that some of the issues should be connected to relevant political campaigns and demonstrations. When this was explored they explained that they meant that too much technical terminology and difficult expressions were often used.

## 2. INA, Wilhelmsburg, Hamburg

The INA project started in October 2002. The project is an official initiative of the mayor of Hamburg. The local authority and the European Union Social Fund support the project. Its official aim is to facilitate access by young people of non-German descent into the job market. It operates a training scheme that provides skills and specific vocational training course options. Most of the participants have educational attainment up to the age of sixteen years and are from a multi-cultural background.

A project worker at INA also commented that for many of the participants in the project, gaining self-esteem was as important as gaining job-related skills. The group consisted of six people aged 16 to 18 years of age. They were of German, Turkish and Eastern European descent. The group had only known each other

group. Whilst this may have had an impact on their general dialogue, the overall discussion was similar to the group in the Haus der Jugend, who had not been briefed. This leads to an assumption that the trainer's presence or earlier discussions did not heavily influence the results.

### Environmental Issues

Like the previous group, the participants were concerned with localised environmental issues, specifically waste, rubbish and recycling. Their concept of environment was based on the traditional definition of environmental conservation. Whilst one participant felt that the environment was about their community and built surroundings, the others said that community was separate to the environment.



for from two days to two weeks, depending on when they joined the course. This may be why as group they did not seek consensus, in contrast to the previous group.

A project worker sat in and it was mentioned that they had had a 'brief' discussion on environmental issues as a precursor to the focus

*'I don't know what the environment has to do with ... neighbourhood and family... that's the surroundings (Umfeldt) rather than the environment (Umwelt).'*

Everyone in the group expressed statements that illustrated their awareness of local and

global environmental issues, talking about issues of pollution, clean technology, the impact of war, the role of rain forests, and unsustainable and unequal consumption patterns. All were concerned about the impact of industrial practices that caused pollution in their local environment. A good deal of discussion was around pollution of the local River Elbe and the issue of industrial responsibility.

### **Environmental Inequality**

They showed frustration and anger when discussing what they felt were unequal environmental standards. Their perception was that the local authority, and politicians cared less about their area because it was poor, and as a result they had less access to services, green space and amenities, and less aesthetically pleasing surroundings which they could feel proud of. As an illustration, a number of more prosperous areas were mentioned which had all the things they did not, such as clean streets and parks.

*'You can't lie on the grass here. There is no grass, there are no greens or parks.'*

### **Pollution and Dirty Industry**

Although spending time outdoors in good weather led the group to sometimes think about the environment, nearly all mentioned that they thought about the environment most of the time because of the pollution from local industry. Their specific concern was about a distinct unpleasant smell that fumes from the local industries in the area emitted. The group, however, felt that this could be improved if industry and individuals were more responsible, cared more and were better informed.

*'It smells ... really bad, if people had take care ten years ago it would be better today.'*

### **Regulation, Politics and Individual Responsibility**

Improving the environment was about implementing laws and regulations. They mentioned things like fines for pollution and on-the-spot fines for dropping litter, or illegal tipping.

*'The police can issue fines in Frankfurt ... but the police can't be everywhere.'*

*'I've been to different areas where everything is clean and why is this? Because people feel responsible.'*

*'Everyone has to be a role model.'*

Many felt that present regulators cared less about their area because they were poor and because politicians did not want to invest money if it meant losing political favour. For this reason, they thought it was up to them and other individuals living in the area to protect the environment. One member of the group thought that this was the same situation in countries across the world.

### **Mobilisation and Access to Information**

The discussion moved on to the provision of environmental information. Half of the group felt that the best way to educate people was through grassroots campaigns and demonstrations about the state of the environment. A number were imaginative on how environmental issues could be popularised through music and the media.

The role of training for many participants was to provide accessible information that could inform them about taking responsibility in their working lives. The entire group wanted to learn more about the environment within their courses.

*'These topics should be discussed in school.'*

However, few were aware of any environmental component within projects or future training courses. Further discussions by the group on training led the majority of the group to suggest that environmental issues should be related to their careers or training.

*'We should talk about the environment and nature protection, not only about the past but how it relates to today.'*

It was felt that this was important if they were to take on a leadership role in their places of work in implementing environmental practices. The role of training as an important means of disseminating information was also related to learning about environmentally friendly products or industrial methods.

### Environmental Careers

In general they felt that while most people could protect the environment as part of their job, for example by encouraging company recycling, only a few jobs were directly related to environmental protection.

*'I don't know if my dream job in hotel management has much to do with the environment but maybe I can help by making people in the kitchen recycle.'*

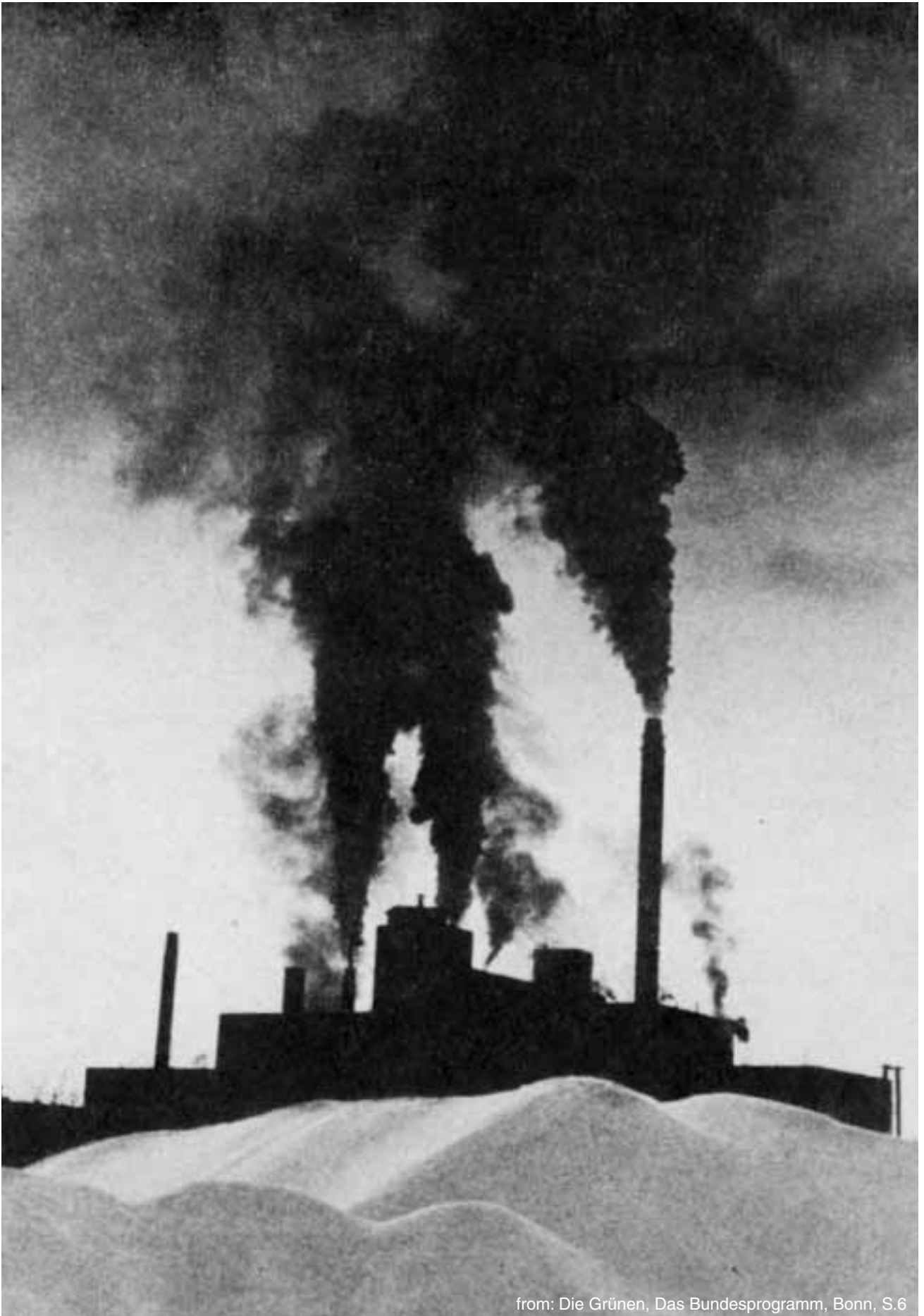
Two of the group expressed an interest in being employed in jobs that were directly related to environmental protection: environmental research and statistics and a conservation warden. However they stated that their present level of education prevented them from going into these careers. This created a feeling of frustration, as they were not sure how they might obtain the further qualifications required to gain employment in these areas.

*'If I could choose any job, it would be re-search about forests: the plants and animals .... You need higher qualifications to do it, even though there are people without those qualifications who are clever.'*

They also suggested that the cleaning up of the environment could create local employment, which would also provide jobs directly related to the environment and help reduce the high unemployment rates. However, they were quick to point out that jobs such as refuse collection would not be popular jobs for most of their friends because the stigma attached would dissuade them, even if there was a good salary.



Plakat: Beirat für Stadtentwicklung Wilhelmshburg



from: Die Grünen, Das Bundesprogramm, Bonn, S.6

## Part Four

### Conclusions

The scope of this study has been to provide a preliminary examination of some of the issues relating to joined-up thinking on social inclusion and environment. It recognises that the issue offers far more complex paradigms than this paper aims to cover. The objective has been to review a set of specific European policy documents at the heart of social inclusion and sustainable development and has not examined other strategies at the European or national level. Similarly, the focus groups represented a small number of young people in the UK and Germany. Further research in this area with a larger number of focus groups and an investigation of focus groups may provide wider perspectives.

The report presents the multiple perspectives on training and environment for young socially excluded people and serves as a snapshot capturing some of the salient issues for them in this area. Hence the conclusions derived from the research do not seek to cover all aspects of the topic. They may help to identify common concerns in relation to training and environment for young people, which cut across national boundaries. This report identifies existing shortcomings in policy, and offers insights on joined-up thinking and initiatives on environment, training and social exclusion. This final part of the report therefore summarises the dominant themes that have emerged and gives a background analysis of how they can be potentially addressed.

#### **Joined-up Policy on Social Exclusion, Training and Environment**

There are a number of provisions which directly or indirectly tackle the social exclusion of young people. The Maastricht Treaty includes actions in the field of education and youth. In

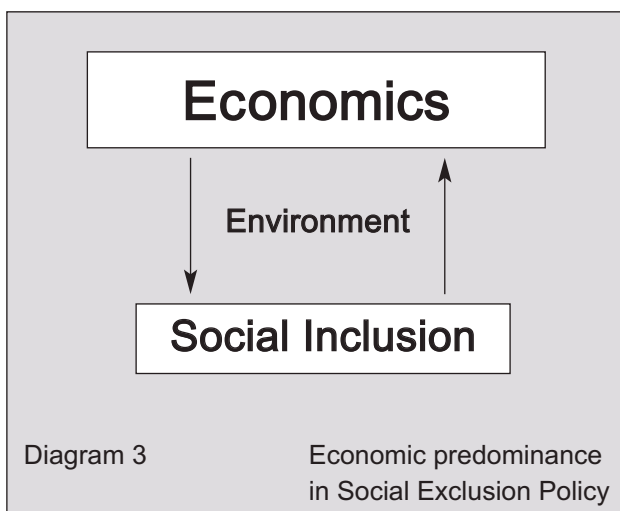
addition there are a number of incentive measures, action programmes and European Council resolutions that promote youth policy such as participation, social inclusion and entrepreneurship. The extent to which these measures have encouraged joined-up thinking on training, environment and social inclusion at local level is best assessed by looking at whether young people themselves are able to relate to environmental concerns and understand a relationship to training, education and life long learning.

What has become clear in reviewing EU policy on social exclusion, training and environment is that they still tend to be tackled separately. Yet effective long-term sustainable development policy requires integrating all three areas. This is starting to be recognised. Linkages are being made between the use of modern technologies, the application of health standards, and economic incentives for environmentally friendly economic activities such as the development of the renewable energy sector.

However, whilst training for young people is seen at EU and national level as a crucial element to bring young excluded people into mainstream society by providing them with the skills to find employment, there appears to be little evidence of any environmental perspective or 'greening' of that training. This is despite the fact that these young people are more likely to live in the worse environments. Yet all young people are the future stewards of local sustainable regeneration and environmental protection.

The dominant theme in economics and social exclusion policy is provision of employment as a route back into economic independence and the removal of individuals from reliance on state welfare. To this end, EU policies make a link between economics and social exclusion where the environment serves as a factor, but not in practice as cornerstone of sustainable development. The diagram below illustrates

the general relationship between the three areas as it emerges in this report.



At a policy level the environment serves as a means of linking economics with social inclusion. It is not given equal weight with economics and society as required under the definition of sustainable development. Rather, the predominant factors for social inclusion come from the paradigm of economic growth and the attainment of high employment. Consequently, economic development rather than sustainable development is the primary factor, and this creates a substantial barrier to joined-up thinking in relation to the social exclusion agenda.

The traditional approach to training is to get people into employment through the provision of skills required by the existing job market. It is a tool used for individual and national economic development. This emphasis neglects the complexity of problems that modern society currently faces. It is dominated by the existing framework conditions of employment. It lacks understanding on how the interests of socially excluded young people can be effectively tackled and translated into training policies that reflect environmental issues.

It appears that social inclusion policies tend not to take full account of the fact that young people from socially excluded backgrounds going into training have an understanding of how their future work could relate to the sustainable

development or the environmental protection of their local area. The interviews conducted with young people indicate a genuine concern for the environment and a perception of environmental issues as having an impact on their lives and future. Understanding of the term 'environment' often went beyond the sphere of nature, soil, air and water, and reflected the broader concepts of community, neighbourhood and quality of life.

The main issues drawn out from the discussions in the focus groups were:

- Inequitable standards of open space, streets, services
- Health and pollution
- Local open space
- Dirty industry or industrial practices
- Quality of life and income
- Crime and safety
- Laws and regulation
- Individual responsibility
- Education and access to information

The opinions expressed by the group indicate that social inclusion and environmental issues are a concern and have not been sufficiently tackled in school education or training. They all agreed with carrying a certain responsibility for their environment, but at the same time did not always see how this could be done and were sometimes sceptical of short term initiatives. For example, the one day cleaning campaigns organised by the local authorities or schools were perceived as artificial or pointless as the issue of rubbish was only dealt with for a short period of time.

Some of the young people had been through a school system that had sensitised them to some environmental issues and their role in 'improving things'. However, nearly all complained about the methods used to teach in these areas. Some direct links were made. They intuitively understood that training could

be related to improving the environment as well as their ability to gain employment. For example, those wanting to work in the metal factories in Hamburg understood that there would be environmentally friendly practices within the industry that their training could cover, but they were not always able to articulate the way in which their concerns could be integrated into training programmes. The majority agreed that training for young people could and should deal with these issues in a way that was meaningful to them as young people.

In general, however, they pointed to the lack of information on environmental issues within training courses. Whilst the courses they hoped to take may have covered some environmental issues on an informal basis, they were not part of the formal syllabus. This may be the reason why they were not able to make the concrete connections between work and the environment in some areas such as the service sector.

The question to pose is therefore: how can the environment be successfully integrated into training? The following section highlights lessons and recommendations that could assist in implementing a strategy for integrating the environment and training policies.

### Lessons and Recommendations

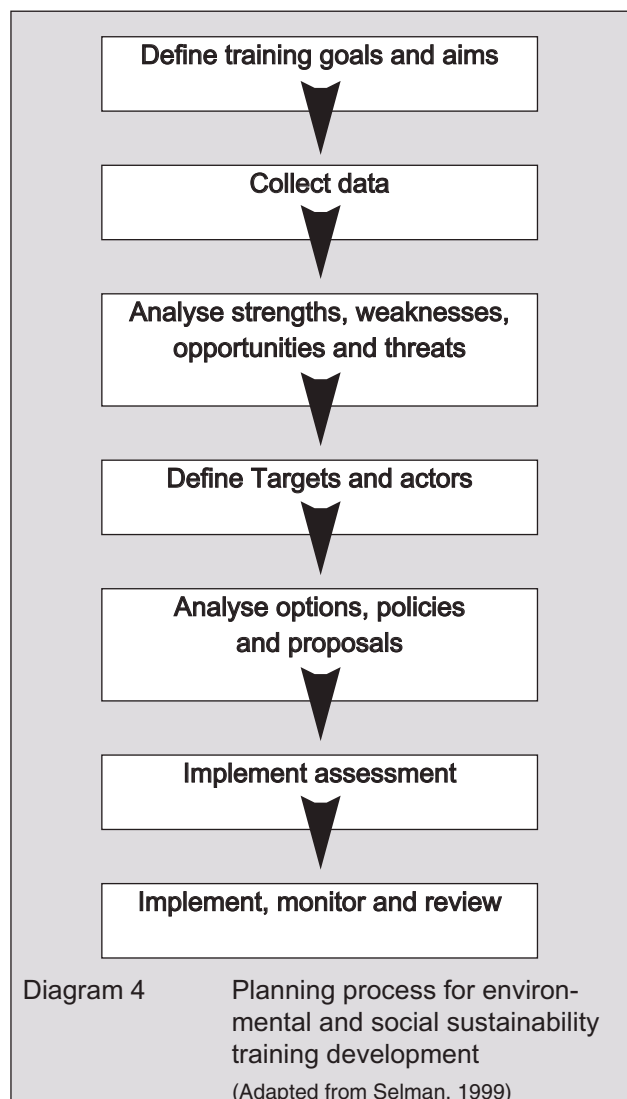
It appears that to engage and maintain their interest, young people must be able to relate their personal situation to the environment. Any strategic approach therefore has to be developed in close co-operation with them in order to reflect their concerns and adequately respond to their respective expectations. Although this represents a complex task, the practical implementation of which varies depending on the context and requirements of the particular training project, four key areas can be suggested to facilitate the integration of environmental issues in training. The findings from this report indicate that four main corner-

stones need to be developed to facilitate the greening of training:

- Research to develop integrated approaches
- Stakeholder involvement
- Sustainability as funding criteria
- Training the trainers.

### 1. Integrated Approaches

Whilst there is an increased concern about the interplay of environment, society and economics, there is little evidence of a detailed framework to shape integrated training policies at different programme or project levels (regional, national, and local). In order to establish this framework, a basic planning approach needs to be implemented (see Diagram 4).



This framework can be used to facilitate and adopt training practices that are sensitive to environmental and social issues. The process will assist with:

- greening training programmes; and
- developing environmental career paths.

There are encouraging examples of exposing young people to career possibilities in their local communities in areas such as waste water, recycling or energy management. Such training programmes could, for instance, combine hands-on experience with paid work, further education and a mentoring scheme. Equally, the introduction of green issues ranging from health education to environmental citizenship or access to information in other training areas may not only create environmental awareness, but could lead to a change of business or production patterns.

Following a strategic planning process will require further research and the utilisation of substantial resources in terms of time and finances. The data collected in connection with such frameworks might only be of a limited duration and open to different interpretations, whilst objectives are not always transferable to other situations. The development of policy guidelines is best placed in the EU and left to Member States to implement on an individual basis. This should be done in the context of the open method of co-ordination. This method encourages the spread of best practice to improve convergence towards the common goal of environmental integration into training and other social exclusion agendas. A well-implemented planning process can act as a catalyst to develop and promote sustainable practices. It can potentially create the basis for new thinking on training and its ability to impact on young people, who are a major social force.



## Recommendation 1

**The EU and Member States need to develop a regional and national framework that facilitates the development of the greening of training programmes and initiatives. These should be part of National Action Plans and the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion.**

### 2. Stakeholder Involvement

As already mentioned, most young people did accept an abstract responsibility towards the environment. The young people in the focus were generally aware of traditional environmental concerns and particular problem areas in their local environments. In principle they realised that environmental knowledge and skills were relevant to general life long learning and a precursor for acting as informed employees and citizens in decision making processes. But at the same time they expressed general frustration with information currently available. Their perceived lack of adequate information and the feeling of disempowerment points to their insufficient involvement as stakeholders in training provisions or policy.

The development of adequate training policies will essentially depend on the successful involvement of young people. All the groups consulted were able to identify a number of ways in which environmental issues could be brought into education and training. They mentioned, amongst others, the use of multimedia, local campaigns and traditional dissemination such as presentations or leaflets. Their general dislike of how training and education is presented through textbooks and lectures also reflects a need for their involvement in the delivery and dissemination of information. Participation in decision-making about the course syllabus could also help to reduce the number of people leaving the course without completion. If young people felt the training was connected to their life situation and that

they had some degree of ownership in its design and delivery, they would be more likely to finish it.

Stakeholder involvement is a crucial element in the development of integrated youth-orientated approaches to the greening of training programmes. There could be a needs assessment on the basis of workshops or other forums for discussion at the local, national or even international level. Young people would be allowed to explore their needs and expectations and possibly develop formats for teaching or training purposes. Participants could then become coordinators to facilitate further discussions on a project related basis or, for example, in schools or community centres. Such discussions may provide a useful impetus for compiling training syllabi and feed into strategy development processes at a higher level. A good example of this type of stakeholder involvement is the European Youth Forum, which creates youth involvement in EU and local level policy debate.

Schemes to train pupils in mediation skills have reduced the number of violent incidents in some schools. Similarly young people who act as green 'monitors' or in another capacity may be better suited to understand and present grass roots concerns than trainers or experts. They would possess the necessary credibility to explain environmental issues and translate complex relationships into understandable language. They may act as advisors and filters to determine and decide on suitable training strategies.

## Recommendation 2

Youth groups and organisations should be involved in the planning and implementation process of the 'greening training' framework, programmes and initiatives at local, regional, national and international levels.

### 3. Funding

The predominant concern about training courses is often the number of young people that gain employment at the end of the course. This reflects the basic assumption that jobs guarantee economic independence and social inclusion. Using sustainable development as a funding criteria for training activities is often neglected, and no environmental or social assessment of the course syllabus and methods is carried out.

The purse strings held by funders can broker influential change, by developing economic incentives or disincentives for desirable or non-desirable objectives. Funders at all levels therefore have great potential to encourage the greening of training and the development of green career paths. This could also stimulate corporate social responsibility within business practice as green training is closely linked with 'doing business' in a responsible way that has a positive social and environmental impact. The EU, Member States and private funding foundations should apply environmental standards in their training, placement or work experience schemes

Currently, this is not happening, except in some areas of training which are traditionally viewed as directly related to the environment such as land conservation and the renewable energy sector.

## Recommendation 3

**Funders of training programmes should take steps to ensure that training providers green**

**all their training programmes or projects by making an environmental component of the proposal a prerequisite for funding. Funders' audits for the effectiveness of projects should also include relevant qualitative and quantitative measures for how effective the training is in this area.**

### 4. Training the Trainers

The focus groups' discussions suggest that some environmental issues such as nature protection and recycling had been brought into their school curriculum at different levels. There has, however, been little follow up into areas of learning at the end of school life. As such there is a gap in learning about the environment in the period between leaving school and starting employment. The wider implication of providing life long learning in this period is likely to increase the capacity of young people to participate and make informed decisions, not only in relation to the environment but also as active 'citizens'.

Most of the trainers and project workers consulted for this report were sympathetic to the inclusion of environmental and social issues within training courses for young people. The majority stated that whilst global environmental concerns were important, the way to get these across to young socially excluded people was to relate them back to, or to start from, local environmental issues such as litter in the streets, refuse collection, pollution, access to open space or clean waterways. At the same time not all of the project workers felt that environmental issues were a priority for training in comparison with the more 'fundamental' requirements of obtaining basic communication, language or reading and writing skills.

Even where trainers would have liked to put environmental issues in to a training course syllabus, they were not all able to do so because either they lacked the required knowledge of the subject, or lacked the authority or

support to make these changes. Getting environmental issues into training will require dialogue at all organisational levels, from senior project managers to class room trainers, on environmental and social related issues; a receptiveness to stakeholder concerns; and the provision of information and resources.

Additionally, the scope of potential training issues should be extended beyond traditional areas such as conservation, energy and recycling. This would expand the ownership of environmental citizenship and keep it on the mainstream agenda.. The inclusion of issues such as ethical and environmental business practices, access to information and environmental citizenship in training course syllabi

would also broaden the framework. Trainers should give participants the tools for accessing information and understanding their tasks in the wider context of capacity building in all areas of public citizenship

#### **Recommendation 4**

**All staff in operating training programmes should be given training and resources that allow them to include environmental issues in the courses they produce and teach. All training programme syllabi should include an environmental section. In addition, trainers should be encouraged to involve young people in deciding on the delivery of information within the training course.**



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## Annex II: Authors and Commissioner

### **Maria Adebowale, Director, Capacity Global**

Maria Adebowale is the Founder and Director of Capacity Global (Capacity). Capacity works on social inclusion and environment, sustainable development, environmental justice and human rights, and capacity building. Maria is the author of numerous publications in her specialist areas. She is also a Research Fellow at the Centre for Sustainable Development, University of Westminster, London.

Maria specialises in environment, poverty and human rights law. She is a Commissioner of the UK Sustainable Development Commission and a former member of the UK Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment. Maria is an advisory member of the UK Sustainable Development Research Network.

### **Christoph Schwarte, Associate, Capacity Global**

Christoph Schwarte is a German lawyer working with the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in Hamburg. He holds a Masters degree in Islamic law from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, and he has published on European and UK Environmental Law.

For many years he was the spokesman for the Green Party in the constituency of Lauenburg (Germany) and served as Green Party whip in the regional parliament from 1988 to 1991. He has been working with Capacity Global since it was founded and has contributed to various projects as an Associate.

### **Jean Lambert MEP, Green Party, London**

Jean Lambert is London's only MEP from the Green Party, and only the second Green Party MEP in Britain. Among other committee work, Jean has the following responsibilities at the European Parliament:

Vice chair of the Green Group/EFA

Full member, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Member of the European Parliament contact group with the Commission and Council for Social Inclusion

Full member, Committee on Petitions, for which she wrote the opinion on public participation in respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment

Deputy member of the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs.

Jean was Principal Speaker for the Green Party of England and Wales in 1992-93 and 1998-1999. She was Chair of the Green Party Executive in 1994 and has been an active member of the Green Party since 1977. Her specialist interests are Democracy and Human Rights, Rights of Refugees and Anti-discrimination and Social Inclusion.

Jean is a Member of the Charter 88 Council and an Executive Supporter and signatory for Charter 99, an initiative for global democracy. She is also a member of the Hansard Society. She has been involved with Make Votes Count (a pro – PR organisation) since its inception, and has been active in Waltham Forest Race Equality Council for many years. She is also a member and supporter of Justice.

## The Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament

The Greens/European Free Alliance is the fifth largest political group in the Parliament, comprising 35 Greens and 10 MEPs from the EFA which includes Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party.

Shared principles:

- Economic and social reforms to make development sustainable for both human beings and the natural world
- A democratic process linking trade, security, economic and social issues to environmental, cultural and democratic rights
- High ecological, social and democratic standards to ensure the quality of life
- Solidarity, guaranteed human and citizen's rights for everybody
- Improved structures for democratic participation in political decision-making
- Guaranteed equal rights and opportunities

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## Capacity Global

Capacity Global (Capacity) works as a catalyst for social justice and sustainable development. Its key aim is to empower marginalised people around the globe who suffer the indignities of social, environmental and economic deprivation. It believes that the solutions for poverty elimination, good health and a clean environment need to be integrated.

Capacity aims to facilitate partnerships of work and the sharing of knowledge between grass root organisations, non-governmental organisations, business and the public sector. Capacity does this by working on environmental justice, human rights, social inclusion, sustainable development, and regeneration, in the following three areas:

- Research & Training
- Advocacy
- Community capacity building & participation

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