



**DOBRY KLIMAT
DLA POWIATÓW**

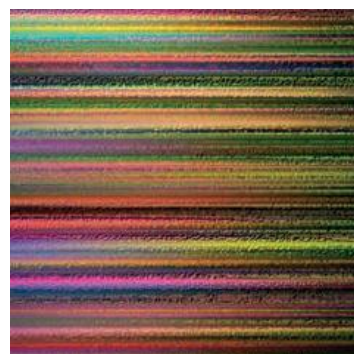
The Layman's Report

LIFE 09INF/PL/000283

Beneficiary responsible for the project delivery:



**INSTITUTE
for SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**



Other beneficiaries:



**COMMUNITY
ENERGY PLUS**

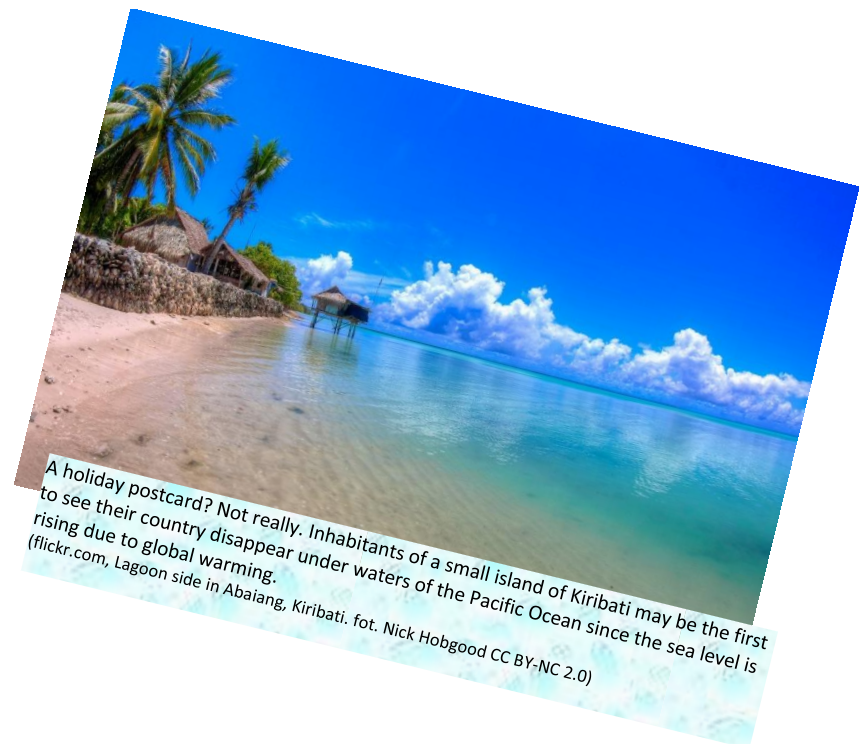


Co-funders of the project:



Why climate?

Why did we address the issue of climate change in our project? The world has many other problems to deal with. Over billion people in the world live in extreme poverty; millions of people on Earth are suffering from hunger or are threatened with it; nearly 50 million have had to leave their homes due to conflicts. Why did we therefore decide to tackle climate change? To a large extent we did it because we are not a humanitarian organisation which helps refugees or people suffering from hunger – we have left these issues to other specialised charities. At Institute for Sustainable Development (INE) we focus on questions linked to sustainable development, including climate protection. That the founders of our organisation made the right decision 25 years ago has been proved by subsequent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Reports. They all emphasise an urgent need to take action in order to protect climate and adapt to climate change.



IPCC is an organisation operating within the United Nations system; its role is to assess risks linked to the impact of human activity on climate change. Since 1990 IPCC has prepared five reports, each subsequent report being increasingly alarming. Scientists from all over the world have been participating in collecting and analysing data and then in presenting conclusions and recommendations. They have all been pointing out that not only is there a strong link between human activity and the state of climate but they have also confirmed that this impact is definitely negative. Climate change which we are witnessing is already causing phenomena described above: hunger, wars and resulting huge migrations of populations. Climate change is also the cause of increasingly frequent and violent extreme weather conditions such as torrential rains, strong winds, snowless winters and exceptionally high temperatures in summer. Young children know cold and long winters only from their parents' and grandparents' accounts. Instead, they know prolonged heat waves since the last few years have been marked by a series of record average annual temperatures.

The scientists have indicated that a 'safe' upper limit of an increase in global average annual temperature will be 2°C by the end of the 21st century, compared to 1750, which dates back to the preindustrial era. Above the 2°C level of rise in global average annual temperature climate change will become irreversible. Secondly, it is quite likely that it will launch a self-propelling mechanism in which certain changes will enhance and accelerate other changes. Today nobody can predict its consequences.

Climate change leads not only to lower standard of living due to uncomfortably high and extremely high temperatures. According to the IPCC's latest report, in our region climate change will also threaten biodiversity (e.g. strengthening the phenomenon of supplanting our local species, both animals and plants, with invasive foreign species) or disrupting the stability of the energy system (e.g. by increasing demand for energy due to the widespread use of air conditioning, while lowering the level of rivers whose waters are used in power plants as a cooling agent). Processes occurring in distant places will also impact Poland and its inhabitants. For instance, according to simulations melting ice in Arctic will lead to the rise in sea level and will affect lives of 250,000 people in Poland. Global warming already is and will be increasingly affecting such areas of human activity as water management, green areas, transport, energy, industry, health care and food security, to name just a few.

Are 2°C a lot? At first sight it seems not to be a lot. However, we only need to imagine how we begin to feel when our body temperature increases by 2°C or when an external temperature changes from -1°C to 1°C. Implications of climate change are equally dramatic. For example, spruce grows in a habitat whose limits are convergent with the area delineated by the average annual temperature below 7°C. At present this quite widespread species is moving increasingly to the north and to the east. And this is only one of the examples proving that 2°C will really have quite an impact.

For these reasons, on the one hand it is important to support all initiatives which contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions coming for example from the energy industry. This can be achieved by increasing the share of renewable energy, generated by sunlight, wind and biomass, in the energy mix. However, it will not be possible to close down coal-fueled power plants or to produce only electric cars overnight. These changes will take time. The warming of global climate has begun and will continue, therefore we need to do everything we possibly can to adapt to consequences of these changes as best we can.

If and how can we prevent undesirable phenomena? We can distinguish two crucial categories of actions. The first covers all measures which help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, greenhouse gas emissions being the main cause of an increase in average annual temperatures – global warming. The second category includes measures which help adapt populations, economies and infrastructure to inevitable consequences of climate change - the present and the future ones.

The first category of actions which help reduce greenhouse gas emissions are mitigation measures, the second category is adaptation measures which aim at preparing people for inevitable changes triggered by global warming. In the project *DOKLIP – A Good Climate for Counties* we have drawn attention to an urgent need to introduce both mitigation and adaptation measures.

Why are local initiatives crucial?

The most important decisions regarding climate protection and adaptation to climate change are made mainly at the global level. However, local actions are key to success. Why? Greenhouse gases are emitted locally but they are carried by air currents across borders and continents and thus have a truly global impact. The implications of greenhouse gas emissions are also to a large extent local; this can be illustrated by torrential rains or hurricanes. They usually take a few or over ten minutes and focus on a relatively small area. Emissions from different places in the world are cumulated and their final global result is global warming which affects all people. However, if we want to effectively

implement actions agreed upon at world climate summits, it is essential to combine education, awareness raising and consultations at the level of smaller administrative units such as communes and counties. We have created the *DOKLIP* project in order to address climate change mitigation and adaptation to climate change locally – at the level of counties.

What was the project's objective and what did we do in order to achieve it?

The project's main objective was to mobilise our target groups – local governments, institutions and businesses, local leaders and inhabitants of counties – to take action in order to mitigate climate change and adapt to it. We have planned to reach out to representatives of the above mentioned groups, to invite them to our meetings and to make them realise that they need to take action. We have also wanted, within the realms of possibility, to support them in developing strategic documents which will provide frameworks for specific actions.

There are 380 counties in Poland. In order to effectively communicate with them and show them how to save climate and adapt to climate change we needed co-operation with strong, reliable partners. Institute for Sustainable Development (INE) was the project's main beneficiary. INE is a non-governmental think-tank organisation, established in 1990 at the initiative of several members of the Polish Ecological Club (PKE). Our first partner, Association of Polish Counties (ZPP), has ensured high quality of communication with the counties participating in the project. At that time ZPP grouped together 315 counties and towns with county rights. ZPP has been involved in promoting

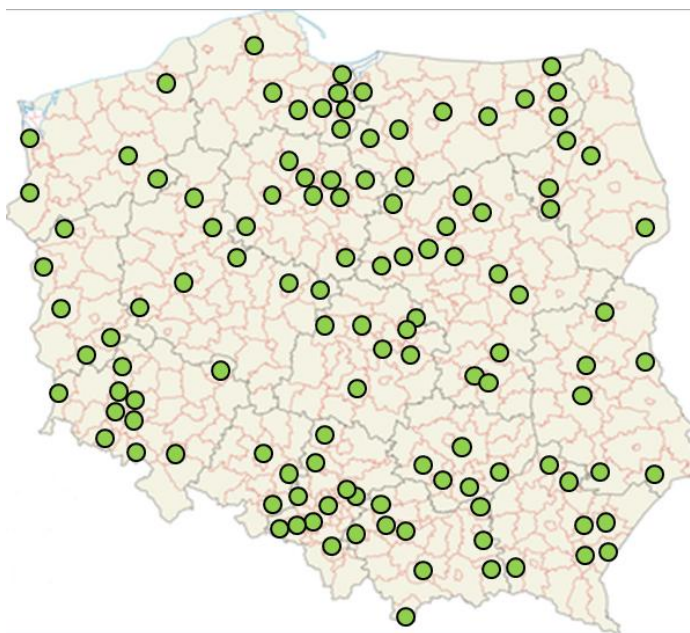


renewable, environmentally friendly energy for a long time. Our second project partner, Community Energy Plus (CEP) from Cornwall, the UK, is a civil society organisation and a limited liability company which works with many local partners in order to prevent climate change, to promote sustainable development and to reduce fuel poverty.

Both partners have had substantial experience in delivering projects linked to environmental protection, particularly climate protection. They both have expertise in mobilising local communities and organising training workshops. For us these were the crucial assets of our partners in order to ensure the effectiveness of the project activities.

Thanks to CEP participants of the project were offered the opportunity to go on a study visit to Cornwall. Cornwall is quite exceptional since in 2009 it was declared the first low-carbon development region in the UK. During the visit the participants have learnt about Cornwall's practical solutions and experiences in the area of climate change mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

The study visit took place towards the end of the project. The project was launched several years earlier with activities aimed at encouraging as many counties and local leaders as possible to take part in it. The task of the local leaders was to support counties in their climate protection actions. In total, 115 counties across Poland have participated in the project and 21 of them have signed the *Good Climate for Counties Declaration*. Over 100 persons have been recruited in order to perform the function of Local Civil Society Mobilisers; another group of 12 persons



were recruited in order to perform the function of Climate Debate Facilitators. Not only have both groups actively participated in the project activities but they have also relied on their competences and views and acted as ambassadors of the project, also after the project was completed.

Local Civil Society Mobilisers have helped us carry out large-scale surveys in the project's target groups in the counties which have participated in the project. The surveys were intended to examine to what extent respondents were aware of the need to protect climate and adapt to climate change



Climate Debate in Elk, January 2013

and to what extent measures were being taken in order to protect climate in the surveyed counties. The same survey was carried out towards the end of the project. The differences in the results were one of the indicators of whether we have achieved the project's results. In order to see the projected changes happen we needed to develop relations with the counties. Therefore we have organised 90 Climate Debates in the counties, they

have been attended by over 1,200 participants. The key issues discussed have been the following: low-carbon economy, green jobs, renewable energy, energy efficiency etc. During the debates we have presented arguments for taking urgent action in order to protect climate and for implementing initiatives which help minimize risks linked to consequences of climate change.

Apart from Climate Debates we have held Regional Climate Conferences at the level of voivodships and two-day National Climate Conferences to integrate findings, ideas and conclusions throughout the project. The first debate was organised towards the end of Year 2 of the project and the second one closed the project. The latter was of high-ranking character - on the second day its participants met in the Senate, the upper chamber of the Polish parliament, during the session of the

Environment Committee, and Maciej Grabowski, the then Minister of the Environment, was our special guest.

Since we also wanted to walk the talk, we have planned two activities with practical results, linked with the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The first was the calculation of the carbon footprint, which is the amount of greenhouse gases emitted, for five counties in Poland. The carbon footprint was calculated for the five counties twice, at the interval of three years. Furthermore, one of the counties has been selected to develop a pioneer document for it – a Pilot Low-Carbon Development Programme. The document has been prepared for the Starogrod Gdański county and was highly publicized and preceded with a series of meetings with the local authorities, representatives of inhabitants, business people and civil society organisations. The document includes the development programme for the region which takes into account a 20-percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2020, thus not only setting targets but also providing solutions in order to meet the targets. The local authorities of the county adopted the document by means of a resolution of July 2015.

The successful completion of the project would not have been possible without huge promotional effort. To a large extent it was put into the development, publication and distribution of all types of expert publications. In total we have published 19 publications, with a total circulation of 30,000 copies. We have also produced a film – *A week with a good climate* which was released on DVD and on INE's YouTube channel. When we add the number of copies of educational and promotional



materials such as flyers and posters and traffic on the website of the project, we have reached out to a few hundred thousand people who have learnt first-hand about the project. Interestingly, most flyers have been distributed at stands situated in county office buildings. Inhabitants have taken the flyers themselves; therefore we can be certain that our flyers have been read by people genuinely interested in the subject.

Have we achieved the intended objective?

Throughout the project we have conducted many surveys and done research in order to examine whether and to what extent we have raised the awareness of climate change and adaptation to climate change in decision makers and inhabitants who have participated in our meetings. We have also analysed contents of strategic documents being developed in the counties in order to see whether they included provisions that could lead to climate change mitigation and adaptation. We

have done this in order to answer the crucial question – whether we have achieved the project’s objective. Unfortunately, the answer is not unequivocal. We have certainly encouraged people to start thinking about this problem; however, decision making processes may often take years. From our experience we have inferred that an optimum period of time needed to objectively examine whether and what results the implemented activities have brought is five years after their completion.

Mitigation and adaptation measures are often accompanied by investments which do not offer immediate return. They are certainly not on top of the lists of investments planned by local governments since they all have tight budgets. However, we firmly believe that projects such as *DOKLIP* are much needed because it is the only way to limit the consequences of inevitable climate change. The lack of educational and awareness-raising campaigns regarding climate change will confine us to short-sighted thinking which does not go beyond one term in office.

It is essential to think not only about adaptation to climate change but also about climate change mitigation. We need to realise that by reducing greenhouse gas emissions we can decelerate the pace of climate change and the intensity of extreme weather conditions. The two categories of measures are equally important.

Having completed the project, what are we the most proud of? Our most important achievement is the fact that 23 counties have signed the *Good Climate for Counties Declaration*, thus committing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020, compared to 2005. Another tangible result of the project is the fact that the town of Płock has joined the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the EU initiative for sustainable energy consumption. We are also proud of the fact that our project has received substantial media coverage, with over 500 press releases and articles published in the media throughout the project. It is important because the media is one of the crucial sources of information for people.

The project has also been commended by the Polish government – the series of Climate Debates has been granted the patronage of the Ministry of the Environment and governmental representatives have been actively involved in the conference which closed the project.

The *DOKLIP – A Good Climate for Counties* project has definitely encouraged decision makers to think about climate change mitigation and adaptation, which is proved by the results of our research and the resulting interest in climate change in our target groups. We are convinced that the impact of the project will extend not only to relevant provisions in strategic documents in the counties but above all to specific investments.

Why are educational and awareness-raising campaigns important, even though they do not directly result in investments?

Educational and awareness-raising campaigns are the only way forward in order to avoid the mistake which was made by inhabitants of a British town of Boscastle. A sudden flooding which hit the town in 2004 took away all their possessions. It was not the flooding itself that took the population of the town by surprise but the scale of it. The flooding was so huge because a lot of violent rains accumulated on nearby highlands. This phenomenon used to be considered too unlikely to occur, therefore the town was not adequately prepared for it.

What's next?

As it was previously mentioned in the report, educational and awareness-raising projects are set to encourage thinking about certain issues, to contribute to changing attitudes and consequently to provide an impetus for action. This process however takes time that exceeds the time frame of this project. The completed project has not led to any investments, equipment or technologies which could be transferred or showcased. It remains, however, a question of time before tangible results of the project begin to emerge.

Thanks to the Internet all materials produced throughout the project will remain available for many years after its completion. Print publications will also be available, for example in libraries of faculties



Representatives of the counties involved in the project DOKLIP during the Second Local Government Climate Change Conference in the Senate, May 2015. (Fot. Katarzyna Czerwińska from the Chancellery of the Senate)

of environmental protection. At present there are 115 counties which are drawing upon the knowledge they have acquired thanks to the project. This knowledge and experiences will also be shared with communes where they may have a positive impact on Low-Carbon Economy Plans which are being developed. The *DOKLIP* project has also led to the establishment of a group of over 100 climate activists and resource-persons. This group is an invaluable resource we can tap into in our different initiatives or share with other environmental organisations.

In the *DOKLIP* project we have sown the seeds of future changes. Having conducted hundreds of conversations with representatives of the project target groups we know that the seeds have fallen on fertile ground. We are certain that no extreme weather anomalies will affect our harvest and in the coming years we will see the lasting impact of our work – increased awareness of climate change followed by smart and effective mitigation and adaptation measures.



INSTITUTE
for SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

In the interest of the future generations

Address:

ul. Nabełaka 15 lok. 1
00-743 Warsaw
Poland

Contact:

Phone: 22 851-04-02, -03, -04
Fax: 22 851-04-00
E-mail: ine@ine-isd.org.pl