

Ecoteam for Dachas (low-cost low-income country houses)

Description of the problem

A lot of Belarusian low-income families cannot afford buying fruit and vegetables all the year round. That is why they grow the latter on their dachas, spending there all weekends and days-off, very often holiday-time as well, from April and up to October (about half a year). An average dacha is an allotment ten hundredth parts of a hectare in size with a small country house and a kitchen garden and / or a garden. There are gardening cooperative societies in our country to consolidate the dachas, which are one of the most vivid examples of how the principles of sustainable development can be put into practice. However in the majority of cases this can be explained not by the owners' environmental awareness, but by their low income level. At the same time many problems in the gardening societies become particularly acute due to underdeveloped infrastructure, as is the case with unsanctioned rubbish dumps, absence of sewerage system, heating, use of fertilizers, seeds of GM plants.

Project Goals:

- Promoting and implementing in practice the principles of sustainable development in Dacha sector (low-cost country houses);
- Developing local community and cooperation;
- Increasing quality of life for socially unprotected groups of the population by additional savings and reducing negative pressures on the environment and health;
- Developing of the market of „sustainable“ products and services in Dacha sector;
- Raising level of awareness on sustainability issues and low-cost simple measures in energy saving, water saving, efficient gardening in Dacha sector;

Project objectives:

1. To demonstrate practical examples of how the principles of sustainable development based on methods saving resources can be translated into action in the dachas' sector.
2. To strengthen the possibilities of the local community, which are necessary for the joint realization of practical activities helping to improve the quality of life and decreasing the pressure on the environment
3. To get the local community interested to take an active part in the realization of the sustainable development ideas with a view to continue and spread such practices in other gardening cooperative societies.
4. To study the possibilities for the development of business activity promoting the ideas of sustainable development in the dachas' sector.

Expected Results: Project will consist of information and demonstration parts. Five brochures will be prepared on various aspects of sustainable development at the local level. Information campaign will be conducted on low-cost and efficient sustainable approaches for Dachas. Awareness of the Dacha residents with low incomes will be raised on low cost and simple in use measures on achieving sustainable development. Barriers and possibilities for commercial activities that support sustainable development will be identified, as well as further plan of action will be developed.

Innovation of the proposed approach: First of all, target group of the project are the low-income city population that have Dachas in the country. Dachas are the ideal place for introduction and implementation in practice of the ideas of sustainable development at the local level, but no attempt has been made so far to use this enormous potential. Local community development initiatives as well as implementation of the low-cost measures in water, energy and other resources saving meet the needs of the low-cost groups of the population to the great extent. Secondly, the project will promote financial sustainability and involvement of the local private sector (suppliers of various equipment and materials for the demonstration part of the project. Local producers will be introduced to the new potential market where they can offer their services and products in spite of the complicity of the local economic conditions.