

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **RESTRICTED**

**Contract n°: SOE2 - CT97 -3038**

**Title: Making new Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities.  
Eco-social Approach and Social Impact Assessment in Social Work**

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**Final Report of the TSER-Project "New Local Polices against Social Exclusion in European Cities. Eco-social Approach and Social Impact Assessment in Social Work" (1998-2000) Prof. Dr. Aila-Leena Matthies, Magdeburg University of Applied Sciences**

**ABSTRACT:**

The main objective of the project was to fight against social exclusion through promoting new concrete models of local policies in living environment, especially concerning citizens' participation and social work methods. Theoretically the research was focussed on identifying the interrelation between social exclusion/integration and the quality of living environment, which we called an **eco-social approach** to social exclusion. The research took place through field projects by means of ACTION RESEARCH in three European Cities, Magdeburg (DE), Jyväskylä (FI) and Leicester (GB). The three detailed objectives could be gained with following empirical model developed:

1. *Social Action* (an approach enabling citizens to improve their environment through participation): Models of citizens' new involvement in local activities in all three cities in suburbs in concern, e.g. Community building from "bottom-up," initiating communicative centres with residents, participating in cross-sectoral forums, contributing to suburb's newspapers and supporting plenty of single projects.

2. *Social Impact Assessment* (SIA, a qualitative method to influence city planning and local political decision-making in order to gain social sustainability): improved cross-sectoral data base of suburbs' living conditions in all cities (SIA in Jyväskylä, Social Capital Survey in Leicester, interviews applying SIA and items in new community work networks in Magdeburg); models of direct interventions in urban planning in Jyväskylä, indirectly in Magdeburg, in Leicester the survey can later be used in urban planning, too.

3. *Deepening social work's theoretical understanding of the eco-social dimension of social exclusion*: Environment as a whole—including physical, cultural and social aspects—highly determines the chances of social inclusion (collective stigmatisation, opportunities of participation) But the interconnection between environment and social exclusion does not indicate a lineal causality but a very complicated and dynamic interdependence. We experienced that individuals and groups are not only products of their conditions, but can become an active part of their environment, what significantly reduces social exclusion.

**Conclusions**

We critically observed that social aspects are still not enough accounted in urban planning and in local policies. The increasing social exclusion is still dealt with as a marginal problem to be harmonised with fragmented programmes, and not as a priority issue challenging the entire structure of local policies and the idea of democracy. There is no single best practice to be defined, but *all kinds of strategies*—i.e. a solid mixture of individual, community level and macro-level political and planning interventions, including a co-ordination between them—are required to combat social exclusion in European Cities. The eco-social approach facilitates to identify the contextual conditions of social exclusion and to establish the strategies of integration in local communities. The "social dimensions" have to be based on relevant knowledge to be able to be bought in the city planning. Very concrete steps and hope for a better environment encourage the citizens to participate. Horizontal and vertical connections between citizen's groups and municipal authorities as well as horizontal working networks between social workers, city planners and citizens are significant.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Exclusion, Social Impact Assessment, Social work, Citizens' Participation, Social Sustainability in urban planning, Social Capital, Eco-social approach, Community Work

## **TSER-PROJECT**

### **"Making New Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities. Social Impact Assessment and Eco-Social Approach in Social Work"**

**(1998 – 2000)**

#### ***1. Executive Summary***

##### ***1.1. Objectives of the project New Local Policies***

The main objective of the project was to fight against social exclusion through promoting new and concrete local policies in the field of social work in European cities. The most central and characteristic thesis of our team was that due to the high unemployment rate, the integrative function of the labour market in all European post-industrial societies is seriously weakening. Therefore radically better and new kinds of opportunities for active individual life politics are demanded from the social and ecological living environment outside of the labour market, too. However, the living areas of European cities once built for working people of industrial society, structurally ignore the changed comprehensive social needs of unemployed citizens of today. This key mechanism producing social exclusion in terms of new structural passivity and powerlessness does already contain a ticking time bomb in European societies, especially in areas of rapidly increasing long-time unemployment of young people. But there are simultaneously experiences that acceptable options for being engaged in one's own living environment do prevent social exclusion and ignorance.

The three academic partners were selected for the network due to their particular theoretical strength in one of the central approaches of the research. The cities as end-user partners were selected to be "practical" partners in the field projects and because of the certain socio-economic similarity with the other city partners (disadvantaged living areas, high unemployment, high interest in creating sustainable urban development). The overall objective of the project was originally planned to be concretised during the three thematic emphases, which can be seen as focussed objectives:

#### **A. Social Action**

- To provide and evaluate intensive methods of social work, which enable especially the unemployed citizens to improve their environment through participation in Social Action, Empowerment and Self-employment.

## **B. Social Impact Assessment**

- To advance the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) as a qualitative method to influence social sustainability in city planning and local political decision-making by applying social work's specific knowledge (urban (re)construction, welfare services, traffic politics, space utilisation). The concrete result of this detailed objective should not only be the completed and tested frame of SIA-Criteria, but also the results concerning the comparative evaluation of its implementation in different European local political practices.

## **C. Eco-social approach to social exclusion in European social work theory and methods**

- To give a strong push to European social work's theoretical discussion on the so-called eco-social dimensions of exclusion processes in different urban contexts. Eco-social approach considers a holistic view on living environment in order to gain sustainability (see Matthies and Närhi 2001). In our research this approach was additionally understood as a theoretical and methodological analysis of the interdependence between the quality of living environment and social exclusion/integration.

### ***1.2. Partners of the project and idea of the European network***

The very specific character of the research network in the project "New Local Policies" is based on the fact that we took the requirement of the Commission "involving end-users" very seriously. We also recognised that—acknowledging the expectation of the Commission that the TSER-projects should produce models for solution of problems in European societies—this process of developing models can best of all take place in action research. Consequently each of the three local networks consisted of

- city partners (a contact-person from the medium management level, one researcher involved in the project and several street-level professionals of social or community work, city planners and finally also residents of the suburb engaged in the field projects), and of
- scientific partners (universities including scientific leader, involved researcher, other members of scientific staff and students).

The three local networks in Jyväskylä (FIN), Leicester (GB) and Magdeburg (GE), consisted of city and university partners, together carrying out the action research in the field projects in the research suburbs. According to the methodology of action research, the theoretical emphasises were planned to be applied and further developed in a dialectic relation in concrete field projects.

At the European level the idea of the project has been to combine various European knowledge of social and community work concerning the question, how to promote citizens participation, especially in areas with high social risks, and to combat social exclusion. Concerning the means of working it was planned that during the three years' duration of the project each of the three partners would be for one year responsible for one of the thematic emphases, which is their special contribution to the European network. This structure and task division is demonstrated in the following figure 1:

**Figure 1: EUROPEAN RESEARCH NETWORK “ New Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities. Eco-social Approach and Social Impact Assessment in Social Work”**

### Three Local Networks

MAGDEBURG

Fachhochschule, Co-ordinator of the project  
City of Magdeburg

\*Field Projects in  
Neu-Olvenstedt

\*Discussion Forum

**THEORY OF ECO-SOCIAL  
APPROACH TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION  
(2000)**

**INFLUENCING  
LOCAL POLICIES  
(1999)**

JYVÄSKYLÄ

University of Jyväskylä  
City of Jyväskylä

\* Field Projects in Huhtasuo, Pupuhuhta,  
Keltinmäki, Lutakko

\*Discussions Forum

**European Network**

\* Exchange  
\* Comparison

**SOCIAL ACTION (1998)**

LEICESTER  
De Montfort University  
City of Leicester

\*Community Development in  
Saffron  
\*Discussion Forum

(Figure: Matthies 1999)

As seen in the table above, each of the local networks had its special area of competence to be brought into the European exchange. Each network's own thematic emphasis as well as the impacts of European partners were planned to be applied in local field projects. Theses

processes with similar theoretical approaches but different socio-cultural context were compared on the European level by the external researcher from Sweden, Päivi Turunen.

### **1.3. Analysis of the Research carried out**

The significant benefit of the research set was its structure with pluralistic actors. It was one of the most innovating points to bring not only scientists, but also social and community workers, students and decision makers, citizens and municipal authorities together. One could even regard it as an option for "recovering politics" and a pre-condition for sustainability, discussed, for instance, by Beck, Giddens and Lash (1994). Due to the involvement of end-user partners in each of the local networks of the project, there was an immediate possibility to participate and implement the new theoretical and methodological discussions. By using a European research network it was possible to compare the application and development of the eco-social approach in different societies and in different contexts of social work.

However, as typical for action research, the agenda of the field projects changed according to the issues and challenges in the local context. The original idea of identical field projects in the three cities was not realistic. One could not compare more similar kinds of new projects in various contexts in order to gain the same objective. Instead the revised methodological set led to a frame, where various field projects in various contexts were observed in order to achieve the same objective: new local models against social exclusion. But it was surprising to see, how similar problems and observations emerged in each local research group.

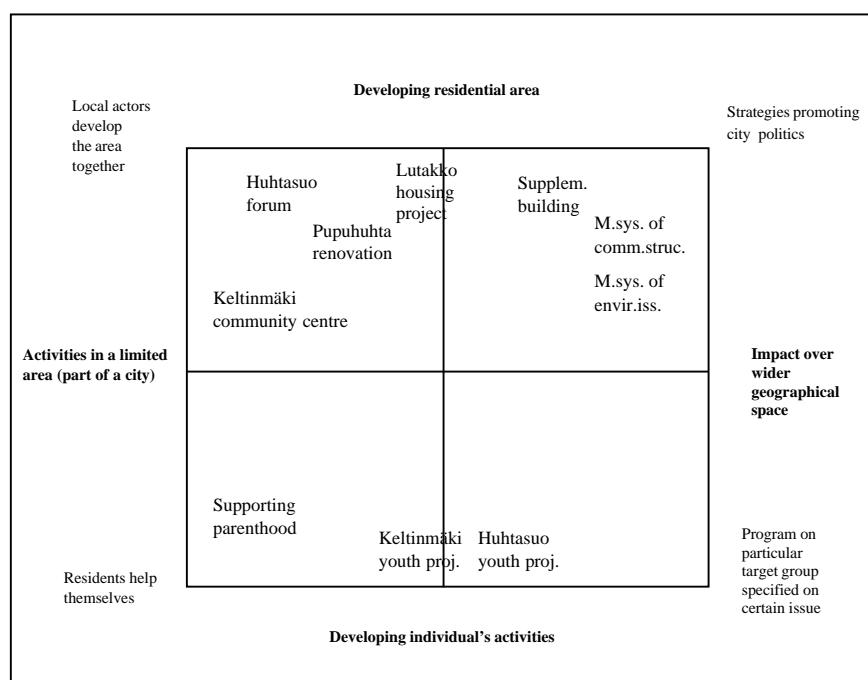
To analyse and compare the three different models of the local research approaches in using action research, we have referred to Hard and Bond (1995), who have typologised the variety of action research traditions in social sciences. Following this typologisation we can very exactly describe the models as follows: Jyväskylä is closest to the professional, Leicester to the Empowerment and Magdeburg to the experimental model of action research (S. Turunen 2001). In the following we give a short description of the contents of the field projects in each city.

#### The Professional Model of Jyväskylä

The specific contribution of Jyväskylä to the Euro-local exchange was the Social Impact Assessment, a form a eco-socially orientated social planning. In accordance to this model,

action research was focused on a professional type of action research in order to develop new types of professional expertise for studying and combating social exclusion in a cross-sectoral community partnership between social workers and other local actors (authorities, community organisations, service users and citizens). In this model, social workers gathered data by means of interviewing service users and residents, as well as writing about their own experiences of their field work. The reflections were carried out in co-operation with researchers at the Social Workers' Discussion Forum. The concrete practices for combating social exclusion encompassed creation of holistic knowledge and skills for participatory activities and eco-socially sustainable planning. Some of the social workers' strategies were targeted to individual needs of coping and surviving in everyday life, e.g. youth projects in finding routes to education and employment. Some of the strategies were preventive group work and interventions at community level, such as negotiations and discussion about community planning with citizens in residential areas. Some of the strategies reached the level of city politics. Concerning the city politics, social workers made their impacts assessments on the supplementary planning processes of the city of Jyväskylä. In this context, social workers preferred to use the concept of horizontal expertise instead of using the dualistic concepts of top-down or bottom-up. Kati Närhi (2000) presented these projects in a comparative frame of influencing levels as follows:

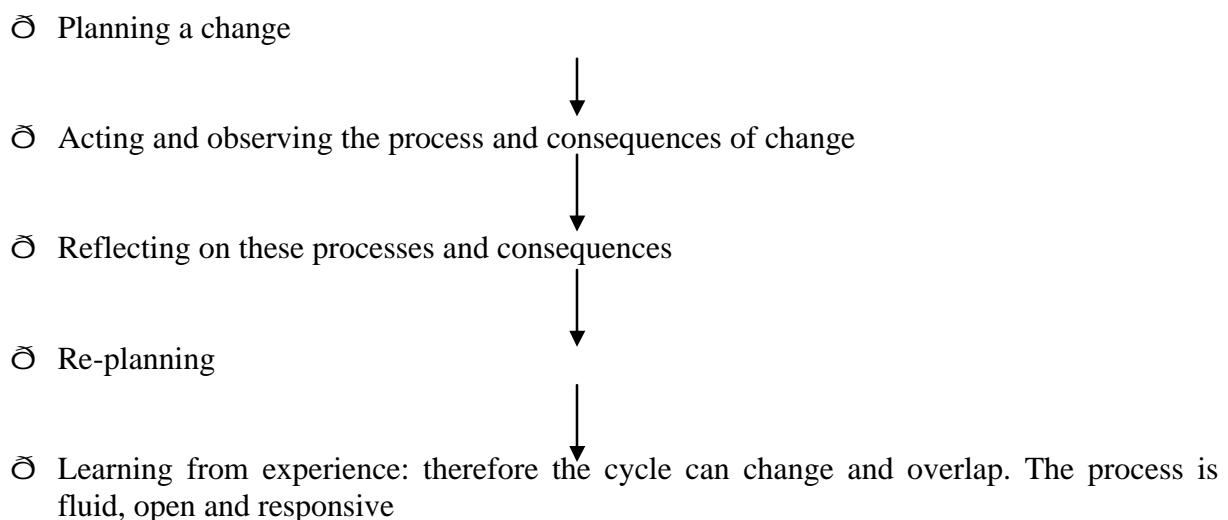
**Figure 2. Action Research Model of Jyväskylä: Variety of Social Workers Field Projects**



### The Empowerment model of Leicester

In the field project of the British research group on Saffron Lane estate the focus was on studying three kinds of processes within the community: the processes underlying social exclusion, the processes of community development in local and public decision making, and the processes of community development. The action research was carried out through two co-operating networks: the "European Planning Group" (EPPG) which consists of local residents, community workers, professionals in the area, representatives from the city council and De Montfort University, and a support group for the research, based at De Montfort University (USG). The main task and result of the field project in Saffron Lane area was to carry out a Social Capital Survey together with the City of Leicester. The British research model was closest to the empowering type of action research. The methodology follows a research process which seeks to empower service users to define the agenda, participate in the research process, and, thus, to contribute to meeting their own needs and shaping their own environment. The action researcher acted within the community, but did not work as a community worker, or a social worker in the field. The role of the researcher was to bring a particular set of expertise to the community and influence processes, but this did not necessarily mean that the researcher set up projects. The particular trait of the research in Leicester was to underline the bottom-up perspective and a kind of cyclic process, which, according to Boeck, allows for constant revisiting, reconsidering and redefining of the research and its outcomes with the different partners and especially within the EPPG. The model follows the cyclic and iterative process as follows:

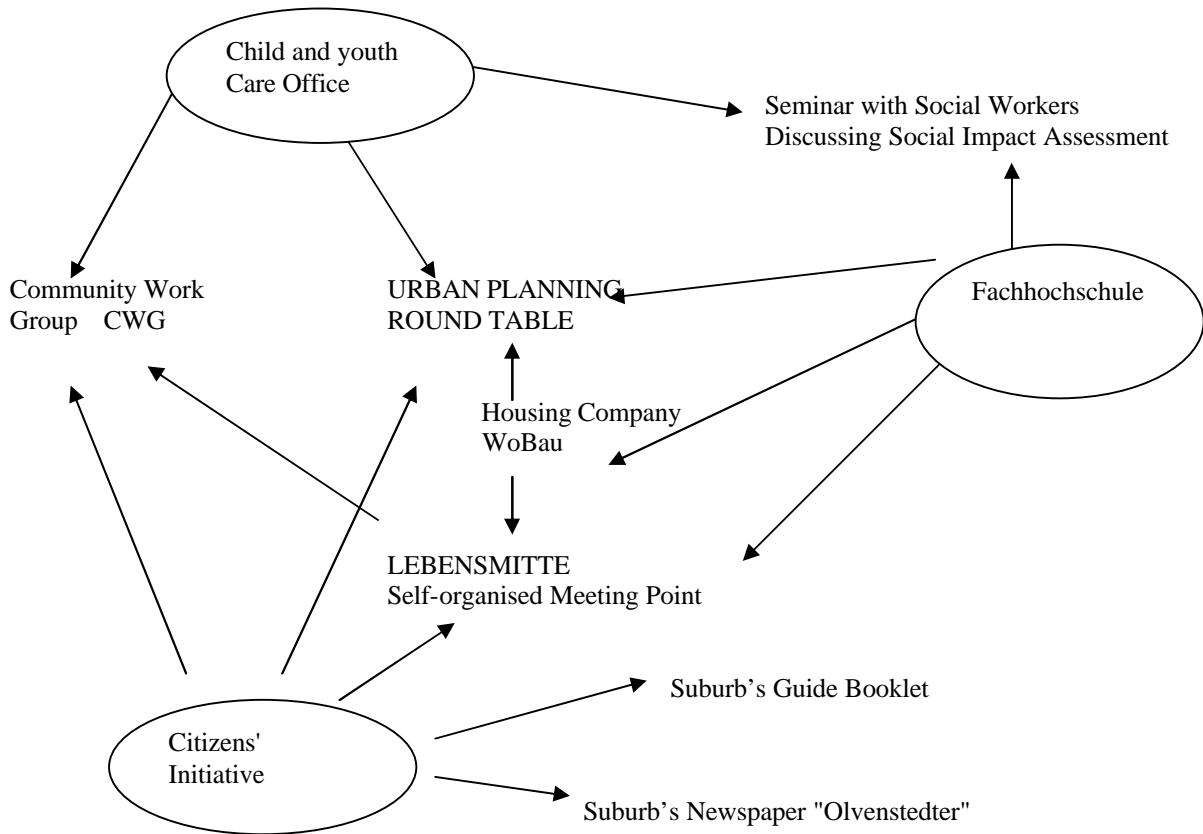
**Figure 3. The Action Research Model of Leicester (Boeck)**



## The experimental Model of Magdeburg

The specific contribution of Magdeburg to the Euro-local exchange was the eco-social thought and the experimental mode of action research, combining research and eco-socially orientated community work of three partners: the Fachhochschule, city partners and citizens. All of them were active partners in gathering knowledge and initiating community development and social action in Neu-Olvenstedt (see further, Albers, 2000, Albers, Ziegler, 2000). This type of community work in Neu-Olvenstedt meant transcending the institutional borderlines of responsibility, networking, co-operating, as well as mobilising new initiatives and resources for reintegration and self-directed citizens activities. First of all, a new type of citizens-directed community centre, called Lebensmitte(l), was created. This initiative differed radically from existing activities of the suburb offering a new perspective on social work and a chance for adult unemployed female and male residents in their every day life. Without hardly any external financial support, mainly based on recycling economy, the Lebensmitte(l) could revitalise both personal and community resources and re-integrate people at risk of social exclusion. It also became a challenge for bureaucratic institutions' (in)ability of dealing with the new type of citizens' grass-roots activity in Neu-Olvenstedt. Another significant impact of the Euro-local exchange in Magdeburg were the new inter-sectoral community groups (GWG), established in 18 suburbs. This action was pushed on by the municipal department for child and youth care. The GWG became a local network which initiated various single actions exploring the problems of the area, promoting the quality of the living environment, creating citizens' forums and organising cultural events. In the Magdeburgian context, it is important to recall that the above mentioned community activities have not been self-evident, merely a new phenomena for promoting direct local democracy within the Eastern-German context.

**Figure 4. The Magdeburgian Action Research Model (Albers and Matthies)**



#### **1.4. Results and Deliverables of the Project "New Local Policies"**

Although the local field projects were very pluralistic and developed various practical models for local policies against social exclusion, several convergent phenomena and advice for local policies could be identified. Concludingly following shared perspectives can be summarised:

#### **Convergent Findings**

\* In each city there were urban development projects, which could be thematically connected to our research (Agenda 21, Huhtasuo Urban development and constructing new living and business area Lutakko in Jyväskylä; The Urban Re-constructing of Neu-Olvenstedt and the URBAN 21 and "Soziale Stadt" in Magdeburg; and Health Action Zone (HAZ), the Educational Action Zone (EAZ), and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) in Saffron Lane

Estate in Leicester), addressing the same types of aims as those of eco-social sustainability and social inclusion presented in our research.

- \* In general one can ask whether there already exists a silent political acceptance of unequal quality of urban living areas. Consequent political will to stop social exclusion is not very clearly expressed on the level of practical decisions.
- \* In all three cities on the top level of the city policies and municipalities was a lack of interested commitment to the research project and fight against social exclusion in general. The challenge of the division of society is not taken seriously enough, but it is seen as a marginal problem in the cities.
- \* In general the residents in the living areas in concern expressed mainly their subjective satisfaction with the area, although the researchers identified an objective disadavantage in several dimensions of the quality of the area.
- \* All partners contributed to the European exchange of discussing eco-social aspects on the living environment and citizens-orientated community practices.
- \* Through the European knowledge exchange and critical co-operation new significant perspectives could be identified in local policies (S. 4. 1 and 4.2). This was very concrete, for example, in the case of applying the British Social Action model in the field project of Magdeburg and in involving citizens in Jyväskylä; identifying the need for a cross-sectoral qualitative analysis of the living areas in Magdeburg and Leicester which was imposed by the SIA-Analysis of Jyväskylä, the deeper understanding of the Eco-social aspects of social exclusion in all the three cities
- \* Social exclusion is a complex phenomenon, which takes place in dynamic processes instead of being status quo, at different levels starting from the micro-level of individual up to the macro-level of societal structures; it has complicated causalities instead of linear explanations.
- \* The local policies against social exclusion have to respond to this complexity: a pluralistic variety of strategies are needed. But they have to be very well co-ordinated to avoid fragmentation. Structural macro-political solutions, urban planning programmes, strategies in small local communities and tailored individual interventions are necessary.
- \* No single strategy can be selected to be the best, but the key issue is that they are planned and maintained from the local contexts and on the basis of identified needs, not on the basis of certain financing programmes.

## **Deliverables:**

The products which are relevant to be disseminated for the politics and European audience in Social and Community Work as well as urban Planning are listed in the following table:

**Table 1. Conceptual Deliverables of the Project "New local Policies" (Matthies)**

Research Partner	New Analyses	Methodological Tools	Social and Community Work Practise Models
Leicester (Univ+City)	Social Capital Survey as Analysed Data	Social Capital Survey, and Social Action Research as Research Concepts	
Jyväskylä (Univ+City)	Social Impact Assessment as Analysed Data	Social Impact Assessment as political and research tool including Indicators of Sustainability	New Individual strategies to stop social exclusion by cross-institutional co-op; Cross-sectoral forums of suburbs
Magdeburg (Univ+City)		Eco-social Approach and Theory of Social sustainability	New cross-institutional Workgroups in suburbs; Model for Community Fund; Model for self-directed Meeting Point of Unemployed

However, the deliverables mentioned above can be amended by a list of models, tested by comprehensive research with all its levels, actions, partners, attempts and experiences, which are highly relevant for end-users and scientists in respective fields:

### **Models developed in the field projects including advise for good practise**

- MODELS OF Exactly targeted individual or for certain group tailored strategies to break up the circle of social exclusion (Women, long-term unemployed, single parents, young people in transition from school to working life)
- MODELS OF Grass-root-level participation: communication centres and residents' and young people's meeting rooms with easy access, self-directed projects with sufficient professional support, managing mutual help in neighbourhood, joint and self-directed concrete care for living environment (renovations, green areas, clubs e.g.)
- MODELS OF Communicative structure in suburbs: better understandable information systems, guide books about available opportunities, local newspaper for information and for discussions, de-centralised counselling, communication centres, suburbs

- MODELS OF Intensive networking and co-ordination between various projects, groups and communities in the living area, cross-sectoral forums and working groups open also for citizens, foundation for activities and needs in local community (suburb) in self-governance
- MODELS OF Identifying the deficits in equality in all significant areas of life: housing, education, mobility, re-creation and free-time
- MODELS OF Mobilisation of capacities and knowledge of those citizens who usually do not have access to local policies and city planning, but who are the most dependent on it (women, single parents, unemployed, young, disabled people, seniors)
- MODELS OF Activating mapping of Social Capital as well as problems and resources in suburb among and with residents, working out together the solutions, taking their proposals seriously; using these data "from bottom up" in local policies and city planning
- MODELS OF New and sustainable employment, which responds to the real needs and market of services and equipment in local economy
- MODELS OF Concretising Social Sustainability as a part of sustainable development in local policies; participatory and negotiating practise in urban planning
- MODELS OF Research co-operation between universities as conventional research partners and cities as well as citizens as a new kind of research partners

#### **Advice for Good Practise in Short:**

- Identify and avoid the ritualisation of urban development and re-construction programmes which are more interested in the means than the goals (misusing the words "social" or "Sustainable" to gain the means while being indifferent concerning the expressed final goals)
- Prefer plenty of well-targeted small and flexible projects instead of using huge finances indifferently for single fixed and standardised macro-projects
- Prefer careful and patient participatory planning from bottom up instead of quick interventions from top down
- Make use of recycling, self help, work parties and shared investment of various groups instead of "money shower"
- Aim to combine long-term structural advance by politics and concrete short-term solutions by participation of people themselves instead of opposing these two strategies

- Participatory projects include a risk to involve underprivileged people in actionism without comprehensive changes, since the projects are not combined with macro-politics.

The reduction of social exclusion is not a single project, programme nor intervention once maintained, but it is a continuous challenge to renew democracy and to open opportunities for all citizens.

### ***1.5. Dissemination of the outcomes during the project life-time***

Due to the particular research methodology—action research with a plurality of field projects—the scientific research and the dissemination and accomplishment of it have not been separated processes but part of shared processes. Neither was there a gap between theory and practise, since—due to the special structure of the research network—it involved end-user partners, like municipal authorities form social, youth care and city planning departments of the cities in concern, professional social and community workers as well as students and finally even residents of the researched suburbs.

Concretely in the research project there were various opportunities to disseminate the follow-up and results of the research project:

- regular and continuous (almost weekly) exchange of knowledge between scientists and end-users in the field projects
- regular more scientifically structured meetings and seminars reflecting each of the theoretical emphasises of the European research project at the local level
- regular presentation of the progress and findings of the project in local media, in the education and further training of professionals
- regular information about and presentation of the research progress and findings, especially those identifying the hindrances and opportunities in local policies in municipal boards, city councils and intern media of the cities
- local and regional media (newspapers, broadcaster, TV) reported broadly about the project in following cases:
  - new concrete progress in the field projects
  - open events of the field projects
  - European or other significant Meetings of the Project
  - New Publications

- Concluding Press Conference presenting the final results

### **1.6. Publications of the Project "New Local Policies"**

(Chronologically)

Turunen, P. (1999) Setting the Context, Comparison of the Three Starting Situations of the TSER-Project "Making New Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities", Magdeburg, Magdeburger Reihe, Schriften der Fachhochschule Magdeburg Bd. 3, Magdeburg

Matthies, A-L, Turunen, P., Albers, S., Boeck, T., Närhi, K. (2000) An Eco-social approach to tackling social exclusion in European Cities: a new comparative research project in progress in *European Journal of Social Work* Vol, 3, No. 1, Oxford University Press, pp. 43-52

Matthies, A-L., Järvelä, M., and Ward, D. (2000) From Social Exclusion to Participation, Explorations across Three European Cities, Action Research in Community Work, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä Printing House

Kojo, Outi; Lummukka, Maija; Määttä, Mervi ja Soininen, Ritva (2000) Näyttämönä Lutakko – sosiaalityöntekijät asuinalueen suunnitteluprosessissa. Sosiaalityöntekijä-lehti/Sosiaalityön tutkimuksen seura. Sosiaalityön tutkimusliite 1/00. S. 27 – 32. (The Finnish Social Work Research Supplement)

Närhi, K. and Hiekka, E. (2000) Sosiaalityö kestävä elinympäristöä kehittämässä. "Uudet paikalliset toimintatavat sosiaalista syrjäytymistä vastaan"-projektiin kokemuksia ja johtopäätöksiä. Jyväskylän opetussosiaalikeskuksen julkaisusarja 2/2000. Jyväskylän kaupunki (City of Jyväskylä)

Hochschule Magdeburg-Stendal (Hg.) Teilhabe im Stadtteil. Bürgerengagement gegen soziale Ausgrenzung. Beiträge des EU-Forschungsprojektes New Local Policies in European Cities. Magdeburger Reihe. Schriften der Hochschule Magdeburg-Stendal. Bd 7. Magdeburg.

Matthies, A-L., Närhi, K. and Ward, D. (2001) The Eco-social Approach in Social Work. SoPhi. University of Jyväskylä. Department of Social Studies and Philosophy. Jyväskylä

## ***2. Background and objectives of the project***

The main objective of the project was to fight against social exclusion through promoting new and concrete local policies in the field of social work in European cities. The most central and characteristic thesis of our team was that due to the high unemployment rate, the integrative function of the labour market in all European post-industrial societies is seriously weakening. Therefore radically better and new kinds of opportunities for active individual life politics are demanded from the social and ecological living environment outside of the labour market, too. However, the living areas of European cities once built for working people of industrial society, structurally ignore the changed comprehensive social needs of unemployed citizens of today. This key mechanism producing social exclusion in terms of new structural passivity and powerlessness does already contain a ticking time bomb in European societies, especially in areas of rapidly increasing long-term unemployment of young people. But there are simultaneously experiences that acceptable options for being engaged in one's own living environment do prevent social exclusion and ignorance.

All three academic partners were selected for the network due to their particular theoretical strength in one of the central approaches to the research. The cities as end-user partners were selected to be "practical" partners in the field projects and due to the certain socio-economic similarity with the other city partners (disadvantaged living areas, high unemployment, high interest in creating sustainable urban development).

The overall objective of the project was originally planned to be concretised during the three thematic emphases, which can be seen as focussed objectives:

### **1. Social Action**

- To provide and evaluate intensive methods of social work, which enable especially the unemployed citizens to improve their environment through participation in Social Action, Empowerment and Self-employment. As a result of the project we used new activating tools of social work, which would be applicable in different contexts of European cities facing long-time unemployment and risks of social exclusion.

## 2. Social Impact Assessment

- To advance the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) as a qualitative method to influence social sustainability in city planning and local political decision-making by applying the social work specific knowledge (urban (re)construction, welfare services, traffic politics, space utilisation). The concrete result of this detailed objective should not only be the completed and tested frame of SIA-Criteria, but also the results concerning the comparative evaluation of its implementation in different European local political practices. This included new methods giving a voice especially for the marginalized people as well as for the social workers in the city planning processes.

## 3. Eco-social approach to social exclusion in European social work theory and methods

- To give a strong push to European social work's theoretical discussion on the so-called eco-social dimensions of exclusion processes in different urban contexts. Eco-social approach considers a holistic view on living environment in order to gain sustainability (see Matthies and Närhi 2001). In our research this approach was additionally understood as a theoretical and methodological analysis of the interdependence between the quality of living environment and social exclusion/integration. Unemployment and the reduction of services push social workers to seek methods to strengthen social and physical environments that support active and independent life. The empirical evidence for this third detailed objective was planned to be based on the analysis and interpretation of the experience and results of the first two detailed objectives and the whole research project.

The original idea of the project has been to combine various European knowledge of social and community work concerning the question, how to promote citizens participation, especially in areas with high social risks. According to the methodology of action research, the theoretical emphasises were planned to be applied and further developed in a dialectic relation in concrete field projects. The three local networks in Jyväskylä, Leicester and Magdeburg consisted of city and university partners together carrying out the action research in the field projects in the research suburbs. Concerning the means of working, it was planned that during the three years' duration of the project each of the three partners would be for one year responsible for one of the thematic emphasis, which is their special contribution to the European network. This structure and task division is demonstrated in the following table 1:

**Figure 1: EUROPEAN RESEARCH NETWORK “ New Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities. Eco-social Approach and Social Impact Assessment in Social Work”**

### Three Local Networks

#### MAGDEBURG

Fachhochschule, Co-ordinator of the project  
City of Magdeburg

- \*Field Projects in Neu-Olvenstedt
- \*Discussion Forum

THEORY OF ECO-SOCIAL  
APPROACH TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION  
(2000)

INFLUENCING  
LOCAL POLICIES  
(1999)

#### JYVÄSKYLÄ

University of Jyväskylä  
City of Jyväskylä  
\* Field Projects in Huhtasuo, Pupuhuhta,  
Keltinmäki, Lutakko  
\*Discussions Forum

#### European Network

- \* Exchange
- \* Comparison

SOCIAL ACTION (1998)

LEICESTER  
De Montfort University  
City of Leicester

- \*Community Development in Saffron
- \*Discussion Forum

(Table: Matthies 1999)

As seen in the table above, each of the local networks had its special area of competence to be brought into the European exchange. Each network's own thematic emphasis as well as the impacts of European partners were planned to be applied in local field projects. These processes with similar theoretical approaches but different socio-cultural contexts were compared on the European level by an external researcher from Sweden.

However, it occurred already during the first year that it would be unrealistic to expect that so many new theoretical approaches could be applied sufficiently in the field projects in three years. The initiation of new projects, the citizens' engagement and also the networking with the various practical end-users needed more time. We put this aim into perspective so that each partner would have more flexibility to focus the field projects in respect to the local conditions. Nevertheless, all three thematic levels should be discussed and reflected in the field projects and local discussion forums and reported on the European level. As shown in

the chapter 3.2., a lot of field projects finally could be started and all theoretical approaches received empirical evidence in the action research although in modified form.

The original organisational plan was revised so far that the British partners neither involved social workers nor social work students, but wished to involve local residents. Finally, all three local networks then included also individuals representing the local residents, and the Finnish and German end-user partners included social workers and students, too. The British end-user side included community workers. To have residents in the research group was an important aspect for the relevance of the field projects. But social work's theoretical and methodical improvement and the exchange of professional knowledge suffered under the fact that not all partners included comparable end-user partners. The British partners also decided not to initiate new field projects nor to define, which single existing projects will be part of the research, but they preferred to observe and support the entire local community in the suburb in concern.

These decisions changed the structure of the project methodologically so far that the comparison became complicated. One could not compare more similar kinds of new projects in various contexts in order to gain the same objective. Instead the revised methodological set led to a frame, where various field projects in various contexts were observed in order to achieve the same objective: new local models against social exclusion. However, it was surprising to see, how similar problems and observations emerged in each local research group.

Due to the involvement of end-user partners in each of the local networks of the project, there was an immediate possibility to participate and implement the new theoretical and methodological discussions. By using a European research network it was possible to compare the application and development of the eco-social approach in different societies and in different contexts of social work.

The significant benefit of the research set was its structure with pluralistic actors. It was one of the most innovating points to bring not only scientists, but also social and community workers, students and decision makers, citizens and municipal authorities together. One could even regard it as an option for "recovering politics" and a pre-condition for sustainability, discussed, for instance, by Beck, Giddens and Lash (1994). However, it was parallelly a solid

challenge to make optimal use of the plurality on a level of negotiating various substantial interests and not to remain on a level of organisational operation. Local and pluralistic structures are significant in the times of globalisation. We realise that since we could open new channels for citizens in forums combining various levels and institutions, we already have developed some new models against social exclusion in our research set.

The second exceptional dimension of the research is its direct dialectic focus on the practical level of action research, which was obvious. The most concrete work was done in the field projects and in the suburbs of the cities involved in the project. Moving between the academic world and social field is surely highly stimulating for both sides. However, the two different worlds do also have their different logic of acting, which sometimes caused conflicts in the project and with ourselves. The balance between these interests is a general challenge in a action research, but especially concerning social exclusion. We wanted to see positive local development in the practice, but we also had to reflect and analyse the theoretical questions, too, to be able to give answers which are of common legitimacy and significance in European Social Work.

### ***3. Scientific description of the projects' results and methodology***

In this chapter, the three years' research process is described in detail. In the first chapter (3.1), the discussions and findings concerning social exclusion are summarised to draw up the scientific and political context and objective of the entire project. Following it, the paper will describe, how the research was carried out methodologically and how the action research was used in the field projects (3.2). Here we also evaluate the benefits and limits of the methodology. The scientific contents of the research project are described on the basis of the thematic emphasises. Furthermore (3.3.), the concept and practical implication of "Social Action" and "Social Impact Assessment" are described in detail for each research city. This chapter also includes a comparative analysis of the field projects around Social Action and Social Impact Assessment, which is based on a Working Paper of Päivi Turunen (2001a), the comparative researcher of the project. Finally (3.4.), the third thematic emphasis, the Eco-social Approach, is discussed as an own issue, since it considers the most important theoretical findings concerning social exclusion' relation to living environment as well as the new perspectives on social sustainability at local level. In conclusion, the chapter 3.5. will bring the results of all the thematic aspects together.

### **3.1. Social Exclusion as a Concept and as a Phenomenon**

Since there exists a shared vision of an integrated European development, it has been based on attempts to spur economic growth. Consequently the politics in the European Union and in national states are more or less determined by the interests of market economy, accompanied by the leading argument of promoting European chances in global competition. However, there is an increasing consciousness of the other side of the coin, of the vulnerability of the social and ecological development, if exclusively economic reasoning is attended to. In the terms of current European language, some of the negative consequences of the unbalanced social development are discussed under the theoretical concept of "social exclusion". On the macro-level of European politics, it seems to be somehow realised or even accepted, that social exclusion is an unavoidable product of market economy, and that there is a need for special policies in the societies to maintain something for the people in risk of social exclusion or already excluded. While applying to our research project "New Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities", we were very conscious about this contradiction. We asked critically, how far the research as such legitimates the status quo and the immanent structure of social injustice and ecological risk taking.

In our project (Matthies 1997, Turunen 1999) we did not expect to be able to change the policies or market mechanism causing social exclusion nor to overcome the mentioned contradiction. However, we shared a basic thesis that the traditional labour market is losing its ability to integrate all people and to be the only weapon against social exclusion (see Beck 2000, too). We argue that the significance of other areas is increasing, especially that of the living environment in a broader sense. In short, we underline that social work has to promote local policies, which enable the people in risk of social exclusion to influence their living environment and to be active participants in community processes, also during the times out of the labour market.

Within the European Union, the notion of poverty has primarily been focused on distribution issues, while social exclusion merely on relational ones (see Barry, Hallett, 1998, 2). As discussed in our research group, social exclusion expresses a multidimensional dropping-out of sustainable environments, the labour market, social security systems and other social relations, including gender and power relations. We have discussed social exclusion as a state of affairs/existence and as a process in relation to new types of spatial and social

differentiation and diversity processes on different levels in our contemporary society, as summarised in the table 1.

**Table 1. The Multidimensional Understanding of Social Exclusion**

STATE	PROCESS	ASPECTS	LEVELS	EXCLUDER
Poverty	Impoverishment	Macro / Micro	Global	Society
Deprivation	Social	Hierarchical/Vertical	National	Community
Being excluded	Exclusion - elimination - rejection - withdrawal	Objective/Subjective Structural/Interpersonal/ Centre/Periphery Inside/Outside Spatial/Eco-social/Socio- economic/Social- psychological/Cultural/ Political/Power-relational Race/Gender/Age Religion/Way of thinking Classified/Non-classified, etc.	Regional Local Group Individual	Others Oneself

(Turunen)

As shown up above, social exclusion can deal with all aspects of human life (physical, eco-social, socio-economic, political, cultural, psychological, existential etc.). Based on Helne (1990) "elimination" refers to the macro-level based exclusion (e.g. structural unemployment), "rejection" is more a psycho-social process (e.g. discrimination), and "withdrawal" is either seen as incompetence of an individual or as free choice to withdraw oneself from the core of society.

#### Criticism of the Concept Social Exclusion

In our research we had constant difficulties using the concept of Social Exclusion for several reasons:

1. The standpoint of the people in concern: nobody of the residents in the research area would call herself/ himself "socially excluded", neither did they like the concept. It is a scientific concept to categorise projects, but it could not be properly operationalised at the level of everyday life.
2. The risk of stigmatisation while using the concept: urban research has long since stated that by using the concept of "Social Exclusion" research projects can collectively stigmatise entire suburbs. The residents themselves usually saw the problems of their living area more differentiated or even more positive than the research.

3. Problem-oriented view instead of resource-oriented view. While attempting to support residents' own engagement, it is important to use concepts that do not underline the deficits but the options and potentials of the area. During the research project we—particularly the British partners—increasingly started to speak of Social Capital on the side of Social Exclusion, to underline the potentials of the suburbs and residents in concern (Boeck, McCullough, Ward 2001).

Referring to a paper of the comparative researcher of the project, Päivi Turunen (2001), at the general level, the most crucial aspects of social exclusion were locally linked to segregation, marginalisation and polarisation, as well as stigmatisation of a residential area or a sub-area of it. The stigmatisation was mentioned as a factor that tended to accentuate the negative spiral of social exclusion. The residential areas or their sub-areas run the risk of exposing themselves to stigmatisation by outsiders, e.g. the media, especially if following factors exist:

- high unemployment,
- a concentration of rented blocks of flats, and council accommodations,
- people with low income,
- a high number of welfare support recipients,
- ethnic groups,
- a deteriorated and vandalised physical living environment,
- deviant behaviour (criminality, violence, insobriety, drug abuse, new nazism, etc.)

In the stigmatised living environments, a number of people, if not all, tends to bear multi-burdens of social exclusion (elimination, rejection and withdrawal) all at the same time. (Compare Albers, Ziegler, 2000, Närhi, 2000 c, Boeck, 2000)

In Jyväskylä, social exclusion was chiefly discussed as a negative spiral of a number of exclusionary factors (mass unemployment, socio-economic and spatial segregation, and individual incapacity) in a form of an accumulated process of a negative spiral or an abrupt life crisis in residential areas with high unemployment. In spite of the relative good standard of blocks of flats, the physical environment, services and social security systems in Jyväskylä, there are residential sub-areas and living situations in which the most vulnerable groups of adults— youth and children—are exposed to social exclusion. Among persons exposed to social exclusion were particularly mentioned unprivileged groups such as long-term

unemployed, drop-outs from income-based social insurance systems, families and individuals in life crisis, as well as service users of social work. Among the exclusionary factors the lack of education, especially of young people, was also mentioned. Due to the complexity of social exclusion social workers stressed that the combating of social exclusion must encompass all levels (structural, community, group and individual levels) of society from a cross-sectoral perspective with eco-social aims (see further, Närhi, Hiekka, 2000, Närhi, 2000 a, b and c).

Within the Leicester research context (Boeck, 2000, Boeck, Mc Cullough, 2000, Boeck and Ward, 2000, Boeck, Mc Cullough, Ward, 2000), social exclusion pointed to the existence of economic, political and social forces outside the control of the individual. Emphasis was laid on institutional aspects of social exclusion implying that an exclusionary process is taking place as a result of decisions and non-decisions of many institutions. Another aspect was that exclusion relates to groups of people – ethnic minorities, women, elderly people, young people, disabled people, gays and lesbians. Locally, the lack of education and day care as well as local transport were especially mentioned as exclusionary factors. Social exclusion in this context encompassed the processes of discrimination, marginalisation and deprivation. It was regarded as a combination of factors that made it more likely that some people will be socially excluded. The research in Leicester pointed out also that there is another side which the discourse of "exclusion" should be allowed to show: the manifest evidence of strengths, capacities and success revealed and achieved in the most unpromising circumstances, by apparently "excluded" citizens. A number of community activities on Saffron Lane Estate were pointed out as an example for this.

Within the research context of Magdeburg, mass unemployment and other consequences of the Unification in 1990 were considered as factors that contributed to exclusionary processes at the local level in Neu-Olvenstedt. Due to the fundamental changes of society and loss of labour work particularly in the Eastern part of Germany, a number of individuals became excluded from the labour market and consequently from social relationships linked to work during the 1990's. The loss of labour identity and life orientation increased exclusionary life processes in Neu-Olvenstedt, where social isolation was especially mentioned as a new type of poverty in addition to the financial one. Moreover, the international denouncement of Neu-Olvenstedt as a problem suburb has affected the entire suburb negatively, not only those addressed. In 1997, active citizens of the suburb mobilised themselves against the negative image and founded a citizens' initiative (Bürgerinitiative). One of the main tasks of the

Magdeburgian research group was to support this movement; and its members were integrated into the action research from the beginning in 1998.

### **3.2. Research methodology: Action Research in field projects in the three Cities**

Due to our particular research interest—to initiate new models of local policies against social exclusion—the research methodology of action research was the most appropriate to be followed. Action research is based on a scientific view on social problems, which can be changed by action research. In general, action research is one of the most typical research in social work but especially in community work and in urban research, where social changes should be achieved and where the practical level is significant. The forms of action research can be categorised in four ideal types: experimental, organisational, professional and empowering action research (Hard, Bond 1995). The comparative researcher of our project, Päivi Turunen (2001) found that those ideal types fit into the three local research sets as follows:

**Table 2. Exchange of knowledge and experiences within the TSER-research project "Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities" (Turunen)**

	Jyväskylä in Finland	Leicester in Great Britain	Magdeburg in Germany
Starting point	Social Impact Approach (SIA) within community-based social work in four residential areas.	Social Action (SA) within community processes on Saffron Lane Estate.	Eco-social theory and community work in Neu-Olvenstedt.
Model	Finnish/Nordic Professionalism	British/Anglo-Saxon Empowerment	Eastern German Experiments
Process	Research co-operation and actions for sustainable development and change in order to study and combat social exclusion in local contexts during 1998-2000.		
Local impacts	Knowledge creation and influence on social and city planning using eco-social thought and SA through community projects.	Social Capital Survey: capacity building within community processes on Saffron Lane Estate using Social Action principles and eco-social ideas.	Community work and social actions within community co-operation in Neu-Olvenstedt using eco-social thought, SIA and SA.
Euro-local Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Euro-local knowledge about various modes of action research within citizen-orientated community strategies against social exclusion:</li> <li>- Advancing an eco-social perspective</li> <li>- Combining ideas from Social Action and Social Impact Assessment</li> <li>- Holistic knowledge and capacity building in everyday practices</li> <li>- learning and process orientated community partnership</li> <li>- making local policies for eco-social sustainability at different levels (macro, meso and micro levels of society)</li> </ul>		

## The Professional Model of Jyväskylä

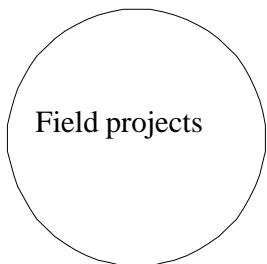
The specific contribution of Jyväskylä to the Euro-local exchange was the Social Impact Assessment, a form of eco-socially orientated social planning. In accordance to this model, action research was focused on a professional type of action research in order to develop a new type of professional expertise for studying and combating social exclusion in a cross-sectoral community partnership between social workers and other local actors (authorities, community organisations, service users and citizens). In this model, social workers gathered data by means of interviewing service users and residents, as well as writing about their own experiences of their field work. The experiences were then reflected in relation to how the eco-social thought and the British type of Social Action could be used in social workers' everyday work. The reflections were carried out in co-operation with researchers at the Social Workers' Discussion Forum. The concrete practices for combating social exclusion encompassed creation of holistic knowledge and skills for participatory activities and eco-socially sustainable planning. Some of the social workers' strategies were "tailored" to and targeted at individual needs of coping and surviving in everyday life, e.g. youth projects in finding routes to education and employment. Some of the strategies were preventive group work and interventions at community level, such as negotiations and discussion about community planning with citizens in residential areas. Some of the strategies reached the level of city politics. Concerning the city politics, social workers made their impacts assessments on the supplementary planning processes of the city of Jyväskylä. In this context, social workers preferred to use the concept of horizontal expertise instead of using the dualistic concepts of top-down or bottom-up. In the following figure, Kati Närhi (1999) described the Jyväskylä action research model:

**Figure 2. Närhi 1999: The Action Research Model of Jyväskylä**

## Expertise of social work

### Influencing as a dimension of eco-social social work

Working methods/models of social work



Action research

Knowledge forming



- Social workers' descriptions/documentation
- Participation of researcher
- Students' studies
- Other documents

- Group interviews

- New ways of working
- New local policies
- "Little stories of eco-social work"
- Transitions
- Locating "success stories"
- New expertise of social work

(Närhi)

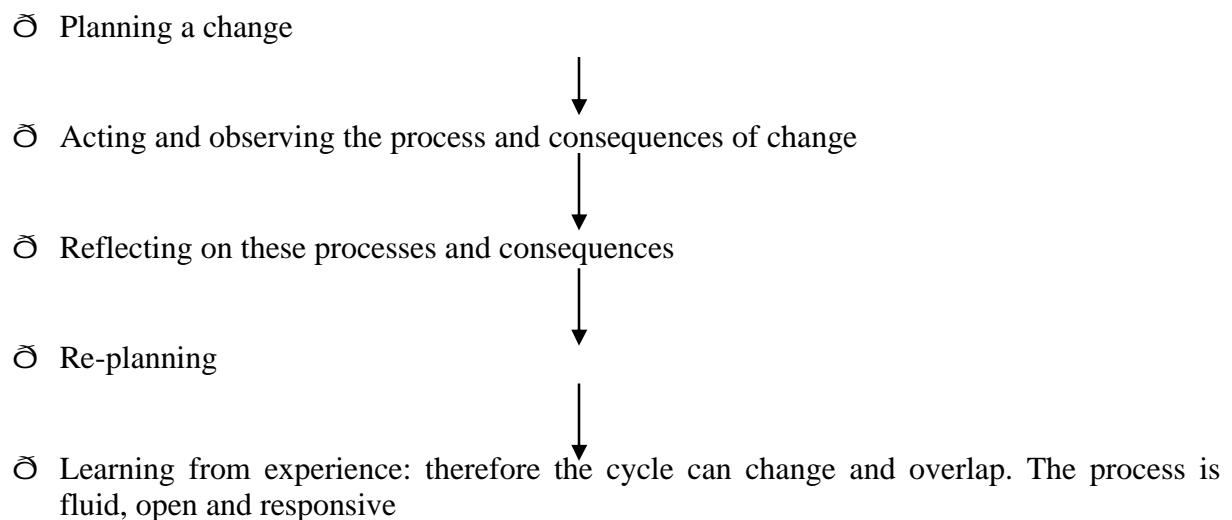
### The Empowerment model of Leicester

In the field project of the British research group on Saffron Lane estate the focus was on studying three kinds of processes within the community: the processes underlying social exclusion, the processes of community development in local and public decision making, and the processes of community development. The action research was carried out through two co-operating networks: the "European Planning Group" (EPPG) which consists of local residents, community workers, professionals in the area, representatives from the city council and De Montfort University, and a support group for the research, based at De Montfort University (USG).

The British research model was closest to the empowering type of action research. The Leicester model incorporates community development and participation. The methodology follows a research process which seeks to empower service users to define the agenda, participate in the research process, and, thus, to contribute to meeting their own needs and shaping their own environment. With this view, the first phase of the research consisted of meeting local residents and local community workers who were offered to articulate the problems and needs of the local community, i.e. the agenda is handed over to the community. The university researcher used qualitative analysis in order to dig beneath the surface appearance and oppressive structures of a community. Action research was described as an open-ended inquiry rather than an attempt to verify researchers ideas. The research will follow a cyclic and iterative process of interplay between research, action and reflection. As instruments for research and analysis, Boeck used focused interviews, participant observation and critical reflection. The action researcher acted within the community, but did not work as a community worker, or a social worker in the field. The role of the researcher was to bring a particular set of expertise to the community and influence processes, but this did not necessarily mean that the researcher sets up projects.

The particular trait of the research in Leicester was to underline the bottom-up perspective and a kind of cyclic process, which, according to Boeck, allows for constant revisiting, reconsidering and redefining of the research and its outcomes with the different partners and especially within the EPPG. The model follows the cyclic and iterative process as follows:

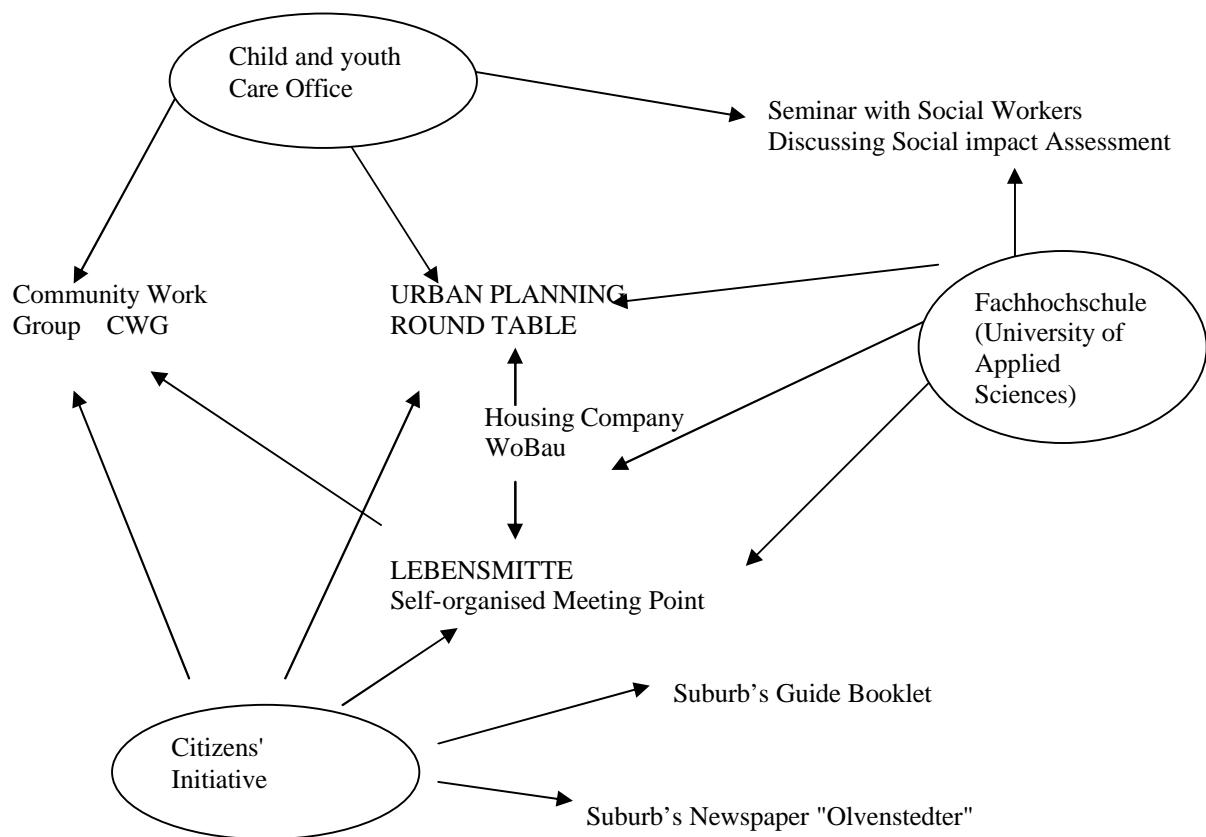
**Figure 3. The Action Research Model of Leicester (Boeck)**



## The experimental Model of Magdeburg

The specific contribution of Magdeburg to the Euro-local exchange was the eco-social thought and the experimental mode of action research, combining research and eco-socially orientated community work of three partners: the Fachhochschule, city partners and citizens. All of them were active partners in gathering knowledge and initiating community development and social action in Neu-Olvenstedt (see further, Albers, 2000, Albers, Ziegler, 2000). This type of community work in Neu-Olvenstedt meant transcending the institutional borderlines of responsibility, networking, co-operating, as well as mobilising new initiatives and resources for reintegration and self-directed citizens activities. The concrete practices came to encompass a number of new local initiatives and projects. First of all, a new type of citizens-directed community centre, called Lebensmitte(l), was created. This initiative differed radically from existing activities of the suburb offering a new perspective on social work and a chance for adult unemployed female and male residents in their every day life. Without hardly any external financial support, mainly based on recycling economy, the Lebensmitte(l) could revitalise both personal and community resources and re-integrate people at risk of social exclusion. In the media, Lebensmitte(l) became a symbol of a new kind of social development in disadvantaged residential areas in Magdeburg. It also became a challenge for bureaucratic institutions' (in)ability of dealing with the new type of citizens' grass-roots activity in Neu-Olvenstedt. Another significant impact of the Euro-local exchange in Magdeburg were the new inter-sectoral community groups (GWG), established in 18 suburbs. This action was pushed on by the municipal department for child and youth care. The GWG became a local network which initiated various single actions exploring the problems of the area, promoting the quality of the living environment, creating citizens' forums and organising cultural events. In the Magdeburgian context, it is important to recall that the above mentioned community activities have not been self-evident, merely a new phenomenon for promoting direct local democracy within the Eastern-German context.

**Figure 4. The Magdeburgian Action Research Model (Albers and Matthies)**

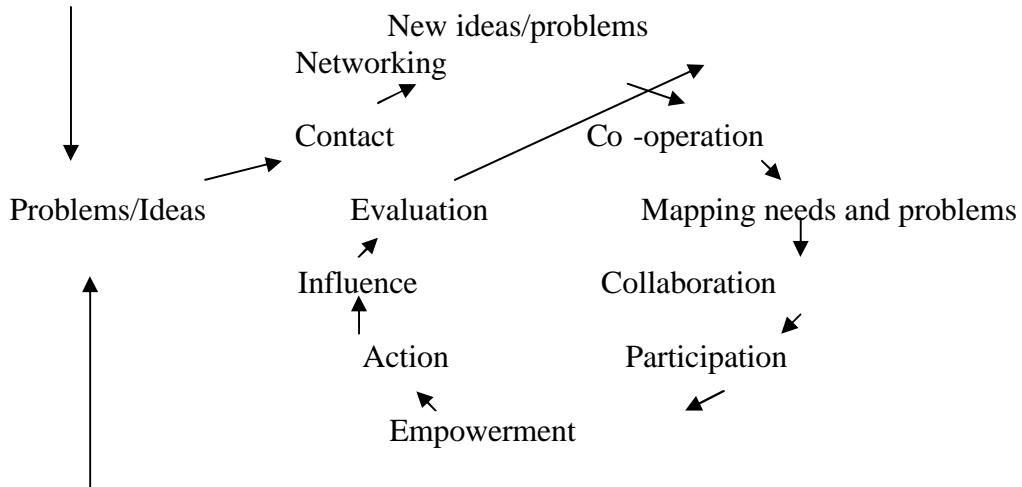


### Concluding methodological Remarks and Evaluation

According to Päivi Turunen (1999) the "Euro-local learning process" we developed in each local context can be illustrated in a form of a hermeneutic circle<sup>1</sup> as follows:

**Figure 5. A process and reciprocal learning orientated action in a community partnership (Turunen)**

From above



From below

According to this conceptualisation, ideas and problems within a learning-orientated community partnership between authorities, citizens, other local actors and researchers, can be addressed both from top-down and bottom-up directions. The working process in itself does not differ from the processes previously described in the literature of community work. What we learned from the practices developed at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was that in order to be able to empower both material and personal resources in a community partnership, a research network must find alliances with authorities, citizens and other local actors by means of collaboration. Nevertheless, the collaboration in itself is not enough, one must also work together on concrete tasks and activities with respect and trust for all partners. This in turn, creates possibilities for participation, Empowerment and action in order to influence local policies for combating social exclusion and promoting eco-socially sustainable living areas.

<sup>1</sup> The same kind of hermeneutic process concerning social work and community work has been described by Harald Swedner (1983).

According to the European research group's internal evaluation, especially the end-user partners, i.e. the municipal authorities, social and community workers and the citizens argued, that an action research was the best one since it was based on the practical needs and aimed to change the practice. It is seen to be the most suitable methodology in this kind of research, which will not only identify social problems but will contribute to their solution. By means of more academic methods, let them either be quantitative or qualitative, the options for practical advances are less obvious. It was very significant that end-user partners could participate in the research project very concretely and not only be objects of it. Additionally to the manifest benefits of action research there were some special challenges from the scientific perspective. The position of the university researchers were not always very clear: between the scientific and practical expectations. The action research process also produced more empirical material and exiting experiences than was possible to use in the analysis and reports. In general, it is also to be criticised that the local policy makers were not very actively committed to the research process.

### ***3.3. Social Action Approach in the field projects in the three Cities***

The objective of the first year's emphasis in the action research was to provide and evaluate the so-called Social Action approach in social and community work. The focused aim was to develop models to enable particularly the unemployed citizens to improve their life quality and living environment by participation "from bottom up".

Päivi Turunen (2000) wrote that, originally, the tradition of Social Action can be traced back to the radical practices and theories developed by Saul Alinsky within American community organising and urban renewal of the 1930' and 1940's, as well as to the radical projects within the Community Action Programs in the United States and the Community Development Projects in Great Britain during the 1960'-1970's (see further Rothman, 1968, Popple, 1996). Compared with the North American umbrella concept of Social Action which covers a range of theoretical thoughts and practices, the mode of Social Action in Leicester has its particular characteristics. The Self-directed Group Work and Social Action Research on Saffron Lane Estate are particular implementations of the Leicester type of Social Action (see further Ward and Boeck, 2000). Both these implementations have their roots in the tradition of community work, especially in the radical forms of Social Action, encompassing emancipatory and

participatory aims of learning, development and change in accordance to critical theories and Empowerment strategies. The focus is put on grass-roots strategies, rather than institutional ones, on the skills and strengths within a community. According to the Leicester-research group, the choice of perspective is influential in local strategies. The choice deals with the questions of from whose perspective the problems/needs are viewed and on whose terms they are solved/met. Accordingly, consciousness raising and learning from the oppressed are crucial principles of Social Action in Leicester.

In our research, Social Action approach particularly helped to clarify the value bases of the project and to underline the special innovative position of marginalized people's own capacity. The models of Social Action were already experienced by the British partners. The theoretical and empirical knowledge transformation on Social Action to the other European partners took place especially in the first European Summer School in Leicester in 1998. The intention was that each research partner should apply Social Action approach in its local field projects and discuss it in its Discussion Forum during the period until to the next European Summer School. These process on the local level ought to be reported in the Summer School 1999 in Jyväskylä. The European comparison of the implementation of Social Action maintained by the comparative researcher followed on behalf of these reports. However, the initiated field projects were continued throughout the comprehensive research project, even though the thematic emphasis and the object of evaluation shifted according to the steps of the work packages. During the first year, possibilities of participation, ways of reaching and activating residents in risk of social exclusion, aspects of bottom-up-strategies as well as the real involvement of citizens has been evaluated by various methods in following field projects:

Magdeburg: the university researcher was directly involved in two field projects: activating especially the parents and adult residents in regard of meeting points as well as supporting the Citizens' initiative as forms of Social Action in the area of Neu-Olvenstedt. A group of social work students of the Fachhochschule Magdeburg was directly involved in these projects in their field studies. Trials to establish a parents' cafeteria in a child day-care centre and a women's meeting together with the residents were the main task as well as preparing a socio-cultural guide book for the area. However, the university researcher was analysing the whole process of community building and Social Action through and on behalf of these field projects. The city researcher started in January 1999, and she was especially supporting the

community work approach of social work in the form of new co-ordinating and documenting networks of various actors in the area of Neu-Olvenstedt, so called Community Work Groups (CWG). The CWGs became later a forum, where not only various professional actors but also residents could discuss their interests and problems. It organised also various events in the living environment.

The scientific partners participated in meetings of the local actors in community work in Neu-Olvenstedt, thematic working groups of the Citizens' Initiative as well as the "Lenkungsrunde", the Round Table consisting of city authorities and city planners, enterprises and housing companies and citizens' representatives of the suburb.

Finally, the main effort and success of Social Action in Magdeburg was a new kind of self-organised community centre Lebensmitte(l), a community centre in Neu-Olvenstedt, created together with the local people, mainly by the unemployed women. The very first initiative was taken by Olvenstedt Women's Group (Olvenstedter Frauentreff). This network was built up by the local research group for the interests of women. Step by step, an independent gathering of women transformed into a self-empowering action group, who together with other residents and authorities reconstructed a deteriorated day care centre to a meeting point for local people. During 2000, Lebensmitte(l) became a concrete example of eco-social reconstruction, demonstrating both the combating of social exclusion and increasing social integration on the principles of Social Action and the goals of eco-social sustainability. The agenda was handed over to the citizens, women were heard, people lacking power acted collectively, the co-operative and non-elitist working methods were developed mutually, and the day care centre and its yard were rebuilt. In this way, Lebensmitte(l) became a concrete place and a value-loaded symbol for mobilisation of inhabitants, recycling of goods, and promoting eco-social sustainability of a neglected residential sub-area of Neu-Olvenstedt (see further Albers, 1999, 2000 a).

Jyväskylä: The research approach of the university researcher in Jyväskylä was focused on the question, how social workers integrate the eco-social approach against social exclusion in their professional work. Thus, the researcher herself was not running the field projects directly, but was evaluating the social workers' field projects together with the city researcher. The social workers in the social services of the city of Jyväskylä were connected to the European research and they initiated six field projects of action research with various

groups of residents in four living areas. Two of the field projects are related to processes of construction or reconstruction of suburbs and are run in co-operation with the city planners. Other projects are addressed to unemployed young people and parents. Finally, two projects consist of new forms of co-operation between various actors in a suburb.

Furthermore, there was a regular Discussion Forum for social workers at the university of Jyväskylä. The issues discussed are directly part of the theoretical themes and practical implementation of the European research project. The university researcher evaluated especially the professional social workers' knowledge creating process ("Eco-social expertise") concerning the interdependence of social exclusion and living environment, their strategies against social exclusion in local policy making. The city researcher is assisting social workers in documenting their field projects and supporting the data collection. Various actors were co-operating in the project very concretely: social and youth workers, students, city planners, citizens' groups, social welfare and child welfare associations as well as the local office of the National Institute of Social Insurance (KeLa).

Concrete implementations resulted in the development of more citizen and service-user orientated ways of viewing and working. This meant increased reciprocal communication and participatory practices with service users of social work, citizens and other local actors (varying from school teachers to city planners and third sector associations) in co-operative and comprehensive city planning of a new residential area of Lutakko, in co-operation with the third sector and youth in Keltinmäki, in the Huhtasuo-Forum and projects of Huhtasuo<sup>2</sup>, as well as in critical evaluations of a community work project of Pupuhuhta. In the case of Jyväskylä, it is important to recall that most of the social workers' contribution has consisted of traditional social work (social benefit work and counselling) with limited time resources for developmental work. In spite of this limitation, a number of community-efforts were made by means of co-operation, interviewing service users and citizens, acting and planning together for improved services concerning social work, rehabilitation, education, employment and housing. At the same time, researchers, social workers and students were also engaged in improving the criteria for eco-socially orientated community and city planning, i.e. the Social Impact Assessment (see further Närhi, ibid, Hiekka, Närhi, 2000).

**Leicester:** The local research group of Leicester decided not to define separate project(s) to be evaluated, but the action research approach covered an overall community process against social exclusion including various activities in the residential area of Saffron in Leicester. The university researcher participated and analysed the processes of community involvement and community development in general. The city researcher assisted the university researcher, especially in establishing a data base of the social activities and networks in the area.

During the first stage of the action research in the selected area the project group formulated a list of questions concerning social exclusion from the residents' point of view. The questions discussed in the community were used to evaluate, how far the existing community activities are successful in tackling social exclusion in the area of Saffron. On the second stage of the research, these questions were enlarged and deepened to a framework focusing on the differentiation of the processes of social exclusion from a macro-, meso- and micro-perspective. The role of the action researcher was to reflect the policies, to help workers to evaluate the possible benefits or risks of the program "from above", as well as to set up meaningful projects.

New initiatives were taken and new interlinks connected to a number of community projects and processes, where community members are actively participating. Voluntary services and the use of them on the estate were investigated and a newsletter, "Saffron's Euro-News", was started. Later the Euro-news was enlarged into a more comprehensive "Saffron-News", published in co-operation with the Saffron Lane Neighbourhood Council, the Single Regeneration Budget Programme and the Leicester research network. The idea of a local Credit Union was introduced and youngsters were supported in the designing of a bike track.

One of the main outcomes of the Social Action Research was indeed the Social Capital Survey. It focused on empowering questioning about community life on Saffron Lane, as well as participation and influence on three major policy initiatives within health, education and community development (see further Boeck, McCullough, 2000, McCullough, 2000).

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<sup>2</sup> One of these projects is the "Huhtasuo 2000", initiated by local people. It is one of the European Social Capital projects comprising citizens activities, support for employment, multicultural work, a local sports club, and the Huhtasuo newsletter.

## Renewed Aspects of Social Action

The achievements of the Social Action-approach in the project on the European level took mainly place in the Summer School in 1999 on the basis of the papers of the local research groups. The evaluation and comparison was documented by the comparative researcher Päivi Turunen (2000) and the following summary of results refers directly to her paper.

Concerning the "Euro-local" exchange impacts in our research project, the British Social Action ideas and principles were understood and implemented in each research network locally (Albers, 1999, 2000 a, Boeck and Ward, *ibid.*, Närhi, 2000 a). Even if the perspectives and actor group altered, the common aim for all three types of Social Action implementations were efforts to share authority, knowledge and power for empowering activities by means of more reciprocal ways of meeting needs, solving problems, initiating new community activities, enhancing the quality of human life, and in some cases even correcting injustice. More reciprocal communication and participatory activities were carried out in partnership with communities. The groups reached were local authorities, associations, companies and residents in general, as well as youth, children, single mothers, parents and service users of social work in particular. The degree of citizens participation altered, but in all cases both public and civic resources were mobilised for a developmental or a change-orientated process within the "small welfare" in local societies and communities. Although the ultimate goals of "eco-social sustainability", or "social integration", or "social justice" were not reached, the efforts made resulted in ongoing local processes towards these commonly accepted human goals (see further *ibid.*).

Päivi Turunen (2001) summarised the final evaluation of Social Action emphasis in the field projects of the research. She wrote that—keeping in mind that community centres and voluntary organisations are playing an important role for promoting well-being and fighting social exclusion on Saffron Lane Estate, that the Local Centres for Social and Health Services in Jyväskylä are legally responsible for promoting the welfare of both local communities and citizens, and that the western type of community strategies were not common in the eastern part of Germany during the GDR-period in Magdeburg—it was amazing to see that the exchange resulted in renewed and new practical implementations.

### **3.4. Social Impact Assessment – Influencing local policies**

The second substantial objective of the whole research project was directed to the models which could influence local policies and it was in focus especially in 1999. The aim was to promote eco-social sustainability of the living environment concretely by using the process of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), especially the dimension of Social Impact Assessment (SIA). We saw that it could be possible to develop SIA as an analytical tool of preventive social work and political tool of marginalized citizens. The previous eco-social project group in Jyväskylä already had applied SIA and started to develop a systematic list of indicators as criteria for an eco-socially sustainable living environment from the point of view of social work. It contented features that at least should be taken into account when talking about sustainability in planning and community development. The original idea in the research project was to systematically advance the criteria and to evaluate the local political practices to fight against social exclusion in different contexts of European cities.

The European research network agreed in 1999 that the Implementation of the Social Impact Assessment will take place in a modified form. We recognised that there are similar but not that advanced attempts in each city to co-operate with city planners or to discuss the city development in general. Therefore, we agreed that the theoretical emphasis "Social Impact Assessment" should be understood in a broader sense as an object of evaluation at the local level of the research. We agreed to extend the perception to the comprehensive chances of influencing local policies. Continuing the field projects and the local discussions, the local research groups should particularly pay attention to the aspect of influencing policies and participation in city development. This should also consist the local researchers' frame of documenting local progress for the European comparison. We set up a shared frame for the data collection and for the European Comparison of the item "Influencing local policies":

All the researchers used the "Grounded Theory" analysis method in analysing their various empirical documents. The issues given in the frame correspond to the *themes* explored in the documents according to the methodology of Grounded Theory. On behalf of this common frame we wished to reach a better comparability of the three very different research methods given below in the picture without changing the original research designs of the researchers. Each researcher should follow the same list of questions concerning policy influencing and participation given on the right in the picture, but they would do it on different levels. We

wanted to identify what kind of citizens are engaged in the projects, whom we reach (gender, age, occupation, status) and which kind of issues do create movement. Similarly it is to be observed, in what kind of issues of the living areas it is possible to create changes, and in which not. All the changes in the local policies, in the atmosphere and in the form of co-operation should be documented. Furthermore, the local researchers should still continue to clarify the context issues given on the left in the picture and which was already stated in the first comparison of the three cities.

### Influencing local policies by the field projects in the three cities

In Jyväskylä the field projects were closest to the original idea of social workers' direct interventions in the urban planning and city policies observing. In Jyväskylä, they also continued to advance methodically the Social Impact Assessment in the form of action research. In Magdeburg, the intervention in urban planning took place indirectly through the participation at the Round Table of Planning in Neu-Olvenstedt (Lenkungsrunde), through the Community Work Groups and through the modification of the indicators of Social Impact Assessment for the use of social workers. In Leicester the project did not include aspects of Urban planning, but the results of the Social Capital Survey can surely be used in city planning and in local policies.

In Magdeburg, the local research group continued the three main field projects. However, the very intensive support for the new initiated self-organised Meeting Point "Lebensmitte(l)" of the mainly unemployed residents demanded the main attention of the researchers. Secondly, the co-ordination and documentation of the Community Work Group reached an intensive and interesting phase, too. The activities of the Citizens' Initiative were reduced due to individual changes in the association. However, the issues of urban planning were still in focus in all of the three field projects. The research questions concerning "Influencing Local Policies" were used as a frame to analyse the work of the Community work Groups and to evaluate the impact of the citizens' engagement in general. Further, the model Social Impact Assessment was translated into German and discussed with the social workers of the area. On behalf of this frame they analysed their working area. The results of all these analyses and processes were gathered for the European comparison.

During this phase the Leicester Research Group changed their agenda so far that a Social Capital Survey was started in the Saffron Lane area in co-operation with the City Leicester. To some extend, it was made applicable to the European comparison by the means of shared research questions. The results of the Social Capital Survey were reported to the European comparison in a way that they corresponded to the agreed question frame of "influencing Local Policies".

The special research strategy in Jyväskylä is based on the very close collaboration with social workers running and documenting the field projects assisted by the city researcher, and the university researcher analysing the data and making her own collection of data, too.

#### I Activities and action networks in the suburb

1. Huhtasuo forum from the perspective of social work
2. Community means of supporting parenthood
3. Renovation project of Pupuhuhta and its effects from the perspective of social work

#### II Locating new routes to education and work (especially young people)

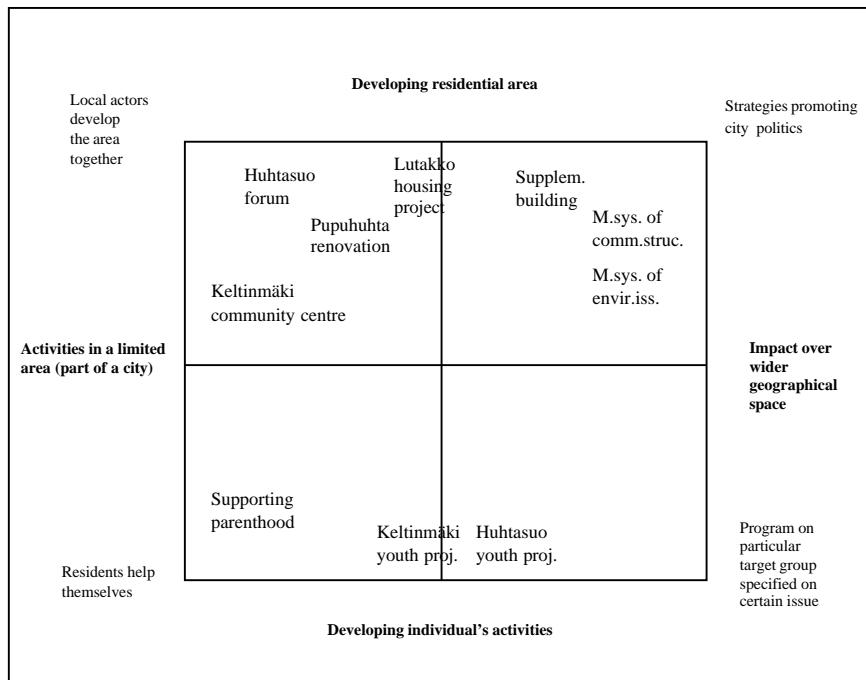
4. The co-operation of the public sector and the "third sector" in Keltinmäki – locating new routes for young people
5. The development of the co-operation between the social insurance institution (KELA) and (community based) social work in Huhtasuo – individual social work for young people

#### III Development of SIA criteria / Social work in planning processes

6. The resident perspective in housing project of Lutakko

Kati Närhi (2000) presented these projects in a comparative frame of influencing levels as follows:

**Figure 7. Action Research field Projects in Jyväskylä (Närhi 2000)**



### Results and Evaluation of the Influence of the field Projects on Local Policies

The progresses and variety new initiated activities in the field projects in each of the three cities already during the first two years of our research project had a significant and visible positive impact on the local communities, which are in various risks of social exclusion. In this sense, our research project has highly achieved a character, which is close to a development project.

The challenge of the European discussion and comparison is, in deed, to generate applicable models for a broader use of the single action research cases.

Päivi Turunen (2000) followed in the European comparison of the local projects the agreed frame of research questions in the following (direct quotation from Turunen):

One can find both commonly shared as well as specific aims and interests in various types of community strategies for influencing local policies amongst research sites. In focus for all partners, has been the same aim: to grasp the multidimensionality of social exclusion, as well as to create new chances for social action, city politics and local policy making, above all, at

the community level (meso-level), between the society (macro-level) and individuals and families (micro-level). The main goal, to combat social exclusion and to promote eco-socially sustainable living areas has been the same, though the practical means of researching and developing methods and policies have varied. In fact, it is in the diversity of aspects in both differences and similarities, where the "new" Euro-local aspects of social work and community work have emerged.

In each city, the item of influencing local policies included aims of participation and influence, but the degrees, forms, levels, meanings and practical implementations altered. The discussions about participation and influence were addressed to power, more particularly to the question of who has the access and the power to control decision making and resources in local societies and communities, i.e. who are the policy makers and takers.

Within the whole of the research network participation has meant taking part and becoming involved in local policies through local projects and forums aimed at preventing social exclusion and promoting social inclusion and eco-socially sustainable living areas (see further Matthies, Järvelä, Ward, *ibid.*). Both participation and influence have encompassed the idea of revitalising an active citizenship within community partnership in local communities. Based on Albers (2000 b), Närhi (2000 b), Boeck and McCullough (2000), McCullough, (2000), participation was understood as both a value and a process of encouraging and engaging people to take shared responsibility for their living area and their lives, but also as a tool for increasing local people's access to power to decide, initiate and shape local plans, projects and services. Researchers could also find both positive and negative aspects in local projects, in terms of how participation was carried out. Among the positive impacts, were mentioned the kind of participatory co-operation that allowed real participation, involvement and engagement. Top-down steering, lack of real possibilities and support for citizen activities, domination, tokenism, and hindrances for engaging the most vulnerable groups were highlighted as the negative impacts.

Influence involved the question of access to power and local decision making around improvements of the infrastructure in a residential area, the image of that, life conditions, social relations, communication, as well as the control of one's own life. It referred to everyday life, tolerance, co-operation, resources allocation, equality and freedom of expression, i.e. everyone's right to speak and present her/his viewpoint in a partnership and

group work. It was also experienced that the needs and interests concerning influence varied between various actor groups and individuals in local projects. Some wanted to influence the municipal decision making, while others were concerned with coping in every day life. Therefore, the scale of influence varied from influencing the realisation of an idea to self determination, citizen participation and self-government.

In summary, participation and influence were highlighted as the most crucial aspects of becoming involved in local policies against social exclusion. The connotations of participation and influence altered, according to the perspectives from which they have been observed and studied, but in each community, partners worked towards expanding the possibilities for participation and influence. Within the Jyväskylä-research network, the emphasis was on consensus-strategies, while in Leicester on more critical ones and in Magdeburg on a mixture of these two sorts.

During 1998-2000, each city received national and local resources for urban renewal and diverse local projects. The most visible changes in Jyväskylä and Magdeburg during the research period were improvements within infrastructure (houses, apartments and yards) as a result of the city and community planning. However, researchers in these two cities stated that physical planning has higher status than social planning. They also pointed out that the physical renewal did not succeed in eliminating unemployment or social exclusion in vulnerable suburbs in late modernism. The problems are much more complicated. They are "global", a combination of both global and local causes.

In addition there existed the classic tension between the principles of representative and direct democracy, in other words, the question of to what degree citizens in fact are allowed to participate in and influence the local policies in each context. There is a subtle interaction between national, municipal and local power structures, where a number of power alliances (companies, land owners, political parties, authorities, pressure groups) are struggling for influence, resources and power. Among concrete problems, which can be regarded as trivial, but in practice are real challenges, were mentioned differences in power positions and status, as well as contradictions and conflicts in attitudes, perspectives, responsibilities, roles, and values between various actor groups. Governmental and local authoritarianism including tokenism and paternalism were also mentioned among problems, as well as the problems of delegating power and the fear of losing it. Nevertheless, the problems were acknowledged for

more than their negative impact. They also were regarded as an important learning experience and foci for further work.

As to the three research networks, the most crucial change took place in the learning about the processes of Social Action and Social Impact Assessment for influencing local policies in a process-orientated Euro-local partnership. Concerning the development of methods social work, a variety of community practices against social exclusion were to be found in each city. What the three research networks hitherto have primarily achieved is creating more substantial knowledge of the above practices by investigating and conceptualising the existing and renewed methods and strategies. In addition to the more traditional conceptual work, the research groups have also supported concrete developmental work and new initiatives in community partnership. In fact, in each research city, one can find similar types, both top-down and bottom-up efforts, for influencing local policies against social exclusion, even if not in exactly the same forms.

The crucial question during the whole of the research process has been, how to learn to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies, in other words how to integrate institutionalised expertise and civic activism into an empowering eco-social community approach for combating social exclusion and promoting ecologically and socially sustainable environments. In the light of this, we have made an attempt to learn something from the Euro-local exchange between the three settings. It has not been easy to free one self from the national and local stereotypes. Where able to transcend them, it has, indeed, been possible to learn reciprocally. During the whole of the research period, the eco-social thought has been the umbrella concept, under which social exclusion and diverse forms of influencing local policies have been discussed "Euro-locally". (End of direct Quotation of Päivi Turunen)

The impact of the shared Euro-local learning process during the first two research years can be described as in the following table. It shows that the three very different contexts of research with varying research sets had significant benefits through the European exchange of knowledge, critics and perspectives. The Leicester research groups originally expressed to have the most "bottom up"- approach. But they discovered that crucial part of exclusion in the research area took place due to structural discrimination and, in comparison to the two other cities, poor systems of public services in education, housing, child day care and traffics. These structural hindrances of social integration cannot be changed without interventions "from above"

and without co-operation with local authorities. There existed an assumption that the local community in the research suburb would be very active and involve the residents broadly in local policies. However, the Social Capital Survey discovered that there are large groups of residents who never had heard about the available activities. Therefore in Leicester there occurred a certain shift to co-operate with top down -strategies instead of radically insisting on residents own activities.

In comparison to Leicester, in Jyväskylä and in Magdeburg there are still relatively well built public services available for all citizens. But especially in Jyväskylä social workers discovered that there are increasing groups of citizens who are no more reached and integrated by the universal public services. Those who are really in need, are most difficult to be reached by general services. Therefore the social workers started a variety of new tailored and more participatory strategies, too. Further, by the means of Social Impact Assessment a good stage of acceptance could be reached. A certain convergence was developed between the interest in sustainability in the concepts of city planners and social workers. But the real conflict was identified in relation of sustainability to the short term interests of maximal profit, which conducted the decision making of investors and landowners. This means that the profitable significance of social and ecological sustainability still needs to be clarified, not only among social workers and city planners but especially among the politicians and the most anonymous makers of financial decisions. This conflict, however, is not so clearly named and discussed in the Finnish political culture, which is mostly characterised by consensus.

The research orientation in Magdeburg was strongly based on the specific situation in Eastern Germany and on the knowledge transmitted through the European research project. The field project which initiated the new cross-institutional networks (Community Work Groups, CWG), was mainly run by the city partners and was influenced also by the Finnish and British models of decentralised decision making and networking in local communities. The CWG could promote several cultural and social projects in the suburb. The support of unemployed citizens' self-organisation in the field project Lebensmitte(l), was mainly the issue of the Fachhochschule and was directly influenced by the Social Action-approach of the British partners. During the project the co-operation and co-ordination between these two field projects became better and uncomplicated. In the suburb Neu-Olvenstedt there emerged an intensive and concrete network. However, there also emerged the impression of so called "powerless democracy", i.e. that the issues which could be influenced by the local network

were limited, and the "real" politics could not be influenced. Therefore, a better contact from the local community building in the suburbs to the central politics of the city is needed. The development in local action research groups discussed above can be summarised in following table (Matthies 1999):

**Table 3. "New Local Policies" interval Summary and Progress of the Research**

<b>Local Net and European Contribution</b>	<b>Characteristics of Research Design in Action Research</b>	<b>Social Exclusion in Focus</b>	<b>Changes and Questions in European Learning Process</b>
Leicester, GB: Social Action, The Citizens Action Level of the Community Work	Central Role of Citizens, Distance to Social Workers and Authorities	- Saffron Suburb and Community - Structural Dimensions like Housing, Education and Transport	- Are and which citizens really involved? - Shift to "from above" to be able to change structural exclusion: "realistic radicalism"
Jyväskylä, FIN: Influencing Local Policies (SIA) The Planning and City Policy Level of Community Work	Social Workers Eco-social Knowledge Base and Models concerning Social Exclusion in Suburbs	- Tailored Projects in several Areas - Individual Dropping out of Services Structures - Preventive Influencing of (Re)Constructing of Suburbs	- Are we reaching the individuals in real need? - Role of Social Work in Community? - Open conflict between eco-social sustainability and economic interests in (Re)Constructing
Magdeburg, GER; Developement of Eco-Social Theory and Methods, Community Building and Networking – Level of Community Work	Mixing "Bottom up" and "From Above", Mixed Network of Actors and Strategies (Activating Citizens, Systematic Area based Networking, City Planning)	- Neu-Olvenstedt Area and its most disadvantaged corner - Collective Dimension of SocEx - Social Isolation of adult unemployed lacking Opportunities of Communication	- Success in involving citizens after applying strict "bottom up" - Networking and combining resources in area instead of new resources - need for better co-operation between "bottom" and "above"

(Matthies 1999 based on Turunen 1999a, b, Albers 1998, 1999, Boeck 1998, 1999, Närhi 1998, 1999)

### **3.5. Eco-social Approach in social work – attacking Social Exclusion in Living Environment**

The overall theoretical objective of the research project was to develop so called eco-social approach in order to gain sustainability and to deepen social work's knowledge about the relation between social exclusion processes and the factors of living environment. This was not a single item of field projects, but an issue that was discussed and analysed during the whole project in various contexts. As a result of the three years action research during 1998-2000 we would like to conclude that combating social exclusion locally requires new kinds of holistic, contextual and citizen-orientated approaches that are adequate for each societal context.

#### Eco-social Approach as a Holistic Perspective on Living Environment in Social Work

According to Aila-Leena Matthies (2000) the eco-social approach means studying and promoting eco-social sustainability in ecological and social aims from a holistic perspective. In our research, the most crucial eco-social aspect seemed to be the aim of developing a cross-sectoral perspective on social work from which the participants can study the relationship between living environment and practices from a holistic perspective crossing the ecological, economic, existential, cultural, historical, political, psycho-social and aesthetic aspects of it. The demand of forming a holistic and an environmental view in social work is not new. What we want to stress is that this is still, if not more than before, a challenge for social workers in urban environments. The complex problems and needs of our time require a holistic perspective on knowledge and cross-sectoral strategies for both social policy and city politics in urban environments. What we also found during our research is that the image of a living environment and the role of media in reporting current social problems of living environments in decline have a strong impact on social exclusion. This phenomenon has not been studied enough. It is also obvious that more inquiries than we could achieve in our research, are required in the future.

#### Citizen-orientated Community Models for Combating Social exclusion

Concerning the development of social work methods for combating social exclusion and promoting social inclusion, a variety of community practices were found in each city. In

general, the method development included following types of community-approaches with various labels:

- action research
- community work
- community social work
- city and community planning
- multi-agency co-operation
- decentralised social services and social work
- community-based forums, planning groups and teams
- neighbourhood work
- self-help groups and self-mobilisation of citizens
- self-directed community and action groups

All these practices were conducted cross-sectorially in co-operation with local actors to various degrees and under the national and local circumstances that existed during 1998-2000. Common for the action research in each city was the aim of combining research and actions for development and change in a close co-operation with local actors. In focus for all researchers was to study the interrelationship between social exclusion and combating it in urban living environments. At the European level, the local experiences of social exclusion and social inclusion were exchanged in a learning process-orientated partnership.

#### Factors that increase risks for social exclusion in living environment

Within the three research contexts, the physical environment itself was not regarded as an exclusionary factor, but in combination with high unemployment, concentration of rented blocks of flats/council accommodations and unprivileged populations groups, it was a factor that increased exclusion. The exclusionary picture of a physical environment was strengthened by abandoned shops and flats as well as a degenerated or vandalised environment. The non-aesthetic aspects of a living environment, too, contributed indirectly to increased segregation since people with better resources are able to leave the area.

The psycho-social and existential aspects of social exclusion dealt with well-being and social security, more explicitly feelings of boredom, dissatisfaction, frustration, isolation,

meaninglessness, mistrust, unsafety, powerlessness, and fear. The factors that increased the sense of unsafety were appearance of deviant behaviour in forms of crime, violence, burglaries, drug and alcohol misuse, and rapes as in Leicester (Boeck, 2000). Even if the entire suburb was not an unsafe place to live, there were sub-areas pointed out as being so. An unsafe sub-area could also be a playground gathered by drunken adults, which resulted in parents hindering their children from going outdoors as in one of the studied areas of Jyväskylä (Närhi, 2000 c).

On the Saffron Lane in Leicester, women and elderly seemed to feel more unsafe than men. In the case of Leicester, even racism was mentioned among causes to social exclusion. In Magdeburg, the appearance of new-nazism was recognised as a stigmatising problem that had increased social exclusion. Among vulnerable groups for social isolation were especially mentioned new-comers, unemployed, elderly, disabled people, and young mothers. Friends and family connection were very high on Saffron Lane Estate in Leicester, while data from Jyväskylä told that family relations were not that important. Finns laid more importance on connections to friends and acquaintances, obviously, because the relatives do not usually live in the same suburbs. In Neu-Olvenstedt, the loss of labour work after the unification had meant even loss of social relationships and consequently increased isolation. In this context, it is also important to recall that Saffron Lane Estate is a residential area with a history from the 1920´s, while the studied suburbs of Jyväskylä were built in the late 1960´s, 1970´s and 1990´s and Neu-Olvenstedt in Magdeburg was built in the beginning of the 1980´s during the GDR-period.

#### Factors that promote eco-social sustainability and social inclusion

In accordance with our research results, among more structural factors that promoted the eco-social stability we could observe that following factors were promoting sustainability and social inclusion in living environments:

- diverse residential areas with population from various income levels
- access to social rights and services
- flats and houses with good standard and low rent
- possibilities for jobs with good salary
- access to transport, cultural activities, shopping opportunities

- community membership and activities
- possibilities for participation and influence
- healthy, comfortable, safe and tolerant environments
- strong community sense

A strong community sense did not only mean contacts with neighbours. Additionally, it encompassed the following phenomena:

- possibilities for identifying a local identity,
- interest for the local living environment and its development,
- recognising the neighbours,
- ability to rely on mutual connections,
- access to community building and activities,
- social networks embodying social control and mutual help,
- self-help, involvement, and participation.

Diversity also meant comprehensive planning of a residential area taking into account the specific needs of families with children, disabled people and elderly. It even meant tolerance of difference (interculturalism) free from racism or other forms of discrimination. In all research contexts, a good living environment was regarded as a crucial factor that provides also a feeling of safety and security. In summary, eco-social perspective on social work requires a holistic and multidimensional perspective on the relationship between human well-being and the living environment in discussing the relationship between social exclusion and social inclusion. The eco-social perspective transcends a number of areas of politics within contemporary welfare states including building, housing, labour, social and health policy, culture and leisure, as well as the aspects of ecology and the role of media. Consequently, this diversity of aspects makes demands on cross-sectoral co-operation and citizen-orientated practices. The eco-social perspective on social work raises questions not only about the material side of life, but also the personal one.

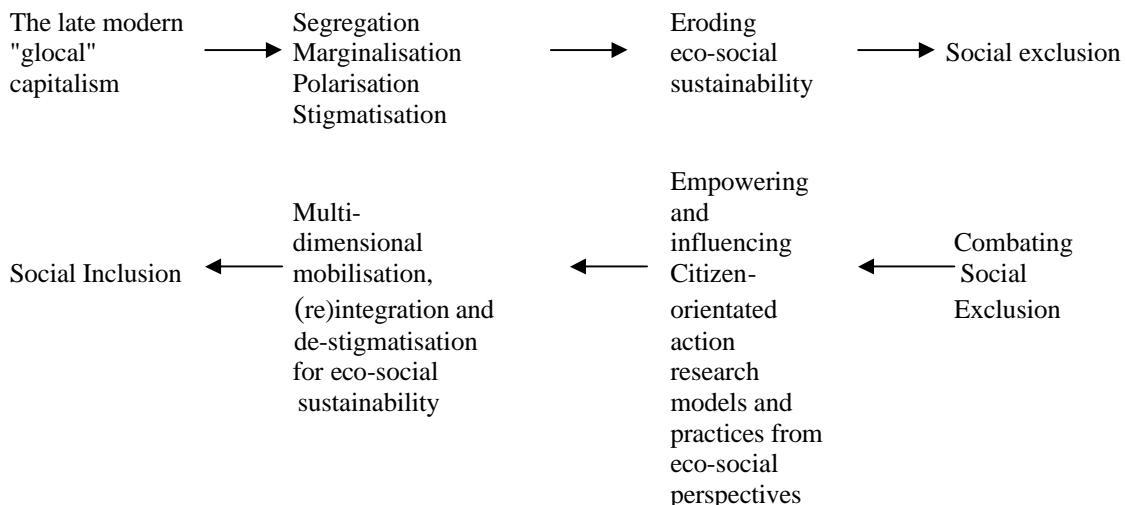
### The Dynamic Interdependence between Living Environment and Quality of Life

All partners contributed to the European exchange of discussing eco-social aspects on the living environment and citizens-orientated community practices from their perspectives

between university researchers, city partners and citizens. In each city, the local interlinks were also established to the Agenda 21 and City Politics in Jyväskylä, the URBAN 21 and "Soziale Stadt" (a Social City) in Magdeburg, and Health Action Zone (HAZ), the Educational Action Zone (EAZ), and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) in Leicester, addressing the same types of aims as those of eco-social sustainability and social inclusion presented in our research.

Based on the aforementioned action research projects, the relationship between social exclusion and social inclusion described above can be summarised in the following figure:

**Figure 8: The relationship between social exclusion and social inclusion (Turunen)**



With the word "glocal" capitalism we mean transcending processes for profit making between global and local interactions on the markets and in everyday life. The eroding eco-social sustainability in the above figure encompasses segregation, marginalisation and polarisation of living environments and clusters of populations. It also means eroding ecological processes of nature. The downwards development of a living environment is strengthened through stigmatisation, mediated by outsiders, especially by the media. In our case, combating social exclusion from the eco-social perspectives has encompassed a creation of a holistic type of knowledge and skills by means of action-research in a process-orientated and reciprocal community partnership between university researchers, city partners and citizens. The action research from eco-social perspectives on social work aims to study social exclusion from a holistic perspective on the living environment on the one side and increase quality of life by

mobilising both material and personal resources for social (re)integration on the other side. However, there is no "grand model" to give, because in each local context, there are specific national and local circumstances to take into account in renewing social work. Each local society or group must therefore create the models of their own. Our contribution to the further European discussions about social exclusion and social inclusion is to give some concrete examples of how exclusion can be combated by researchers in co-operation with other professionals and citizens.

There is no doubt that combating social exclusion refers to political aims. Nevertheless, we do not want to create new utopians of believing that social workers and community workers are able to solve the "glocal" causes of social exclusion by themselves. Acknowledging that, our experience tells, indeed that social and community workers can make their contribution to start reversing the negative spiral of social exclusion in a learning and reciprocal community partnership in local contexts. We also can conclude that the Euro-local exchange of knowledge and experiences in a form of comparative action research is a recommendable way of renewing social work in order to create more empowering, influencing and eco-socially orientated practices for combating social exclusion, where citizen participation and influence are in focus for development and change.

#### ***4. Conclusions and Policy Implications***

Social and ecological problems—connected to the economic ones—are demanding challenges also for the sustainability of European cities. Issues like opportunities for participation in the living area, quality of suburbs or access to political decisions are increasingly important for citizens' social inclusion, especially in the case of unemployment. While exploring social sustainability of societies, the entire and multidimensional living environment has to be taken into account, not only employment or other economic aspects.

The strategies of social inclusion, which we developed in the action research project, are more or less related to the living environment. The intention of our action research project was to develop new models of social and community work through various field projects. The relevance of eco-social approach can be interpreted in the findings of these empirical experiences. On the one hand our findings are of theoretical character and to be discussed in

the more professional contexts of social work. The theoretical findings contribute to the social work's understanding about the interrelationship of environment and social exclusion as well as about the perspectives of ecological and social sustainability—what they could mean in social work. The entire concluding results of our research which ought to be implacable in local policies project aims to give ideas for concrete attempts to gain socially sustainable urban development, which would be able to reduce and avoid social exclusion processes. This includes also to interpret critically, which factors hinder ecologically and socially sustainable urban development. We underline that the criteria of sustainability are finally not given by the environment itself nor by any experts as such, but produced by the society, in social, cultural and political negotiation processes (Gestring & al 1997, 10).

#### ***4.1. Theoretical Findings: Thesis about Eco-Social Approach in Social Work***

##### **1. Living environment and social exclusion are interconnected**

As Martin O'Brien and Sue Penna (1998, 183) state, environment is not something existing somewhere beyond the bounds of human life and only having effects on people's experiences. The changes in environment are part of society and its political-ecological processes, where risks and benefits are re-distributed. People with greater capacity to use power have more influence on these processes and on their environment, while others suffer more from the decisions causing risks and the hazards. The quality of living environment, whether as natural environment or more in the sense of social and built environment, is highly on social and political issue.

In all of the three cities where we carried out the research, ongoing social segregation of living areas could be identified as a factor that deepens marginalisation processes (Albers 2000a, Boeck and Ward 2000, Närhi 2000a). The local authorities, social workers and researchers in the field projects could observe this phenomenon, which is intensively discussed in the social sciences in Europe (see e.g. Häußermann 2000, 13 – 15). Mainly unemployed people, single parents, immigrants, old people with low pensions and young families are concentrated in certain tenements, while people with higher regular income can choose to move to other living areas. This leads to stigmatisation of entire large living areas. But in all research cities there was still evidence of a particular type of segregation, a smaller

"island of problems within an estate" (Boeck 2000, 11): a concentrated microstructure of deprivation, which stigmatised the whole suburb.

Not only the reached quality of living environment as such reflects the process of social inclusion and exclusion, but already the possibility to have or not to have influence on one's living environment. The Western ideal of personal freedom and independence typically includes also citizens' free choice of their living environment. For an increasing number of people in risk of marginalisation, there are no real alternatives for a place of living. It is self-evident that the person's relationship and attitude to his/her environment is basically determined by whether she/he is living there voluntarily or involuntarily. In all three cities, we could observe that a significant part of the residents of the research areas had not been allowed to choose their living area according to their individual priorities, but that the decisions were based on other criteria (finances) and were made by other bodies (e.g. municipal authorities). However, the phenomenon cannot be simplified and only described as involuntary placements because there were always a lot of people, too, who liked their living area for different reasons.

As Kati Närhi states (2000b), there are also theories arguing that, in the post modern society of mobility and virtual connections, space has lost its significance. In a critical discussion of community work, there have been arguments which say that it would be better to enable a frequent movement in and out of the stigmatised area than to try to bind the people to their locality with community work (Roivainen 1998).

But as our research shows, especially for those who are for various reasons not very mobile, the concrete environment of daily life has high importance. Similarly, it seems that, for example, young residents living in single households are more independent of their living environment than families with children, old and disabled people. For the less mobile people the dimensions of living environment like safety, space for activities, contacts as well as social atmosphere become significant. For instance, in all three cities the field researchers were confronted with groups of children and young people who have no place for their own activities, something that seems to be a constant problem in urban living areas. Therefore, the option of mobility in the form of a frequent and low-priced public traffic network is crucial.

As Thilo Boeck (2000, 4) found out, it is finally the reputation, which is a key aspect of people's relation to the living area. However, the reputation can be seen very differently, and it depends a lot on the individual experiences. Although people can be quite satisfied with their living area, they experience negative reactions, when they give someone their address (Albers 2000a, 2000b, 12). All local researchers underline the aspect of feeling safe (e.g. crime rate, insufficient illumination). It was the significant issue mentioned in the Social Capital survey done in the Leicester research area (Boeck 2000b). In the Magdeburgian research area it is even typical that especially female residents say that they cannot go outside in the dark (Albers 2000b). This hinders also the participation in various meetings, which usually take place in the evening. In Jyväskylä, safety has also a very high value for the residents (Närhi 2000b). Feeling safe is a good example for a dimension of living environment, which consists both of physical and social elements. (see also Leinonen 1998).

All three local researchers (Albers 2000b, Boeck 2000 and Närhi 2000b) state that it is mainly the social environment, which primarily counts for social integration, while the physical dimensions of the environment have secondary impact. The residents of disadvantaged living areas can see their area quite positively due to the social contacts to neighbours, friends and relatives in the area. Others say that the social contacts help them to survive despite the bad state of the physical environment. Several residents, remarked that their friends and relatives are the reason why they did not move away to a better area. One consequence is that if the new local policies aim to stop the social segregation and the residents' escape from certain areas, a variety of policies for improving the social conditions have to be extended and expanded.

The connection between social exclusion and living area is certainly verified also in this research. There are clear tendencies of social marginalisation, which are concentrated to certain geographically limited areas in each city. However, the connection is a rather complicated mixture of physical elements (e.g. quality of buildings and yards, traffic, level of housing, access to services and to nature) and of social environment (economics, image, social networks, activities, atmosphere) than a linear causality. All three cities have started various programmes against marginalisation, which take the spatial dimension of social exclusion into account. But our impression is that exactly due to the complexity of the process of social exclusion, the strategies have to be better targeted and have to be based on a better knowledge of the microstructure of the areas in concern.

It is self-evident that in a pluralistic society also the types of housing are variable according to the life situation and values of the citizens. However, the current increasing segregation and social differentiation of living areas especially in the cities create deepening inequality, which must not be accepted. Then, in most of the Western societies the national constitution commits the state and communities to guarantee the equal quality – not similarity – of living conditions for all citizens (e.g. Dangchat 1998, 178). So far, the segregation is not a "natural" but a political process.

Also we could consider that the social work projects against social exclusion can hardly fight the real reasons for exclusion, but only try to correct the symptoms. However, in Jyväskylä new tools of social work for intervening in urban planning processes and for structural problems of living areas were developed and applied with success. This is significant since usually the means of social and community work are limited and are not in congruence with the object to be changed. In Magdeburg, it is quite an achievement that models for a new kind of employment and enlargement of the concept of meaningful activity were developed in the self-organised meeting-point "Lebensmitte(l)". Also the new networking of institutions and citizens' groups in 18 living areas of Magdeburg, which was initiated by this project, is an option to fight the more structural problems of living areas. The Social Action Research of Leicester (Ward and Boeck 2000), too, has been a constructive base for the identification of structurally caused problems of the area in concern.

## 2. Sustainable Development includes also Social Sustainability instead of Ritualisation of Corrections

There is no exact definition of social sustainability, but it is mostly seen as an aspect of a ecological or holistic sustainability. We understand that the concept of sustainability contents a two-fold chance for social work, an external an internal one. Externally, social work has a legalised chance to demand that social aspects are taken seriously in the overall development of communities. Secondly, by applying to criteria of sustainability social work can internally reflect its own influence on social environment of human beings.

The question of sustainability has become significant and concrete in our project, especially while being involved in various urban development projects<sup>3</sup>. In all three cities in concern—Magdeburg in Germany, Jyväskylä in Finland and Leicester in Great Britain—there are currently various programmes of urban development. The key challenge for us was to find out how social work's knowledge and the residents' voice can be brought together in the planning and development processes. A basic tool of social work regarding the promotion of sustainability, *Social Impact Assessment*, has been developed and tested. We argue that social dimensions, like sufficient services, a balanced structure of inhabitants and a settled atmosphere are essential elements of sustainable suburbs.

In the Finnish part of the research, social workers have developed an analytical list of criteria for a sustainability of a living area on the basis of their experiences of working in the communities (Närhi 2000b). They underline mainly social aspects which are often connected to natural and physical aspects. Diversity of community structure, easy access to services, well functioning traffic and built environment are framework of physical environment which determine the frame of social aspects. The aspects of social environment like social and age diversity of population, social stability and social control and a sense of community (e.g. neighbourhood help, local co-operation, commitment to the area) are not independent of the manner in which the area is planned and built (ibid.). It is exactly the own dynamic in the interdependence of social and physical environment which is not sufficiently taken into account in local policies.

But the residents' opportunities to influence the re-construction, to realise their ideas and to participate in local decision making is as important as other criteria of sustainability. This factor finally makes the area one's own and enables improvements of the living area. Then participation promotes identification with the area, encourages taking more responsibility and prevents migration. It was critically discovered that "the residents in need" were not really involved. Women, old people, disabled, children, unemployed who know the area the best, who spend a lot of time there, and who do not leave the area very often are usually excluded from the planning processes. Those people and those problems, which usually seem to be the "disturbing factors", very often are also the key for the necessary changes if their demands are

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<sup>3</sup> Urban-Project of the EU, Soziale Stadt and Re-construction of Olvenstedt in Magdeburg: Sustainable Saffron in Leicester; Building the new area of Lutakko, Re-construction of Pupuhuhta, and the Community Development Project of Huhtasuo in Jyväskylä.

taken seriously. According to our experiences, social sustainability can be achieved only through maximisation of the negotiation processes with as large a variety of partners as possible.

In the course of the research project, in all three cities, we constantly discovered the significance of connecting various political sectors with each other (business, social, health, culture, technical) in order to achieve sustainability. The interdependence of physical, economic, social and cultural deficits or resources becomes very concrete while observing community work in a limited geographic area with various problems.

However, in almost all urban development projects in the three cities, we quickly discovered that the purpose of including social dimension was often misused to legitimate the re-building projects, and was not genuinely developed. In some cases one can even set up the thesis that social discrimination is not seriously combated, but rhetorically misused to legitimise (reconstruction) projects. Social action and community projects were accompanied by urban development projects. But no or little financial resources were available for social purposes, although there were millions for the projects of reconstructing the physical environment. Secondly, it is typical that "social impacts" and demands are heard, the citizens and social workers are allowed to speak up, but their suggestions are not incorporated. They only legitimise the epithet "social" in the description of projects, since it was required by the source of finances. These experiences indicate a *ritualisation* of urban development projects (see Merton 1979). Ritualisation means—according to Merton—a discrepancy between the goal and means. In the case of ritualisation, the goal is not achieved, nor really accepted, and has lost its importance. Applied to several urban development programmes, ritualisation means that the attribute "social" or sustainable development is used as an expressed goal in order to gain finances, but is actually not pursued.

Due to these kinds of observations it is understandable, too that the real meaning of the concept of sustainability suffers under inflation and misuse. But our experience is also that—step by step during the years of intensive co-operation—the planning authorities show a growing sensibility to the social dimensions of urban development. They are really curious to hear more about social aspects in the areas of concern. Especially in Jyväskylä the research project could effect a new orientation, and the city planners are even going to continue the SIA-development in their own project ( Närhi 2000b). From an European perspective, the

established co-operation between social workers and city planners in Jyväskylä is a significant step forward towards sustainability. However, it is still very difficult to convince the investment companies to take sustainability into account. It is not often that they see the need to take time for continuous negotiation processes with residents and social workers.

### 3. Social exclusion is to be politicised like environmental problems

The eco-social approach is not only about the analogy of social and ecological problems but also about the models of political actions of environmental groups and movements which can be also used in social work and social policy. The key question is how to use action and media to bring urgent issues to the public and to politics. We would even assume that the theories of social movements dating back to the 70ies have become relevant again in the current contexts of social exclusion at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There is an increasing need and acceptance of action groups and movements outside political parties and parliamentary structures. This tradition is especially established in environmental issues, but increasingly also in emerging social issues. While speaking about social exclusion in an urban environment, politicians themselves very often mention the importance of the citizens' own engagement. On the other hand, we have also very often experienced that political parties and local authorities only start to act under the pressure of the public and local activity groups (see e.g. Bourdieu 1999).

Trust in traditional politics and local authorities is reducing rapidly in ecological conflicts as well as concerning social exclusion and urban development. Citizens direct participation, local groups and initiatives, publicity, a new culture of expertise are the answers we tried to develop in the field project in each city. Until now we were delighted to see that several decision-makers were honestly interested in supporting new activities. However, new forms of democratic influence are needed. With these observations we stay in connection with the larger European scientific discussion about new forms of democracy, active citizenship and global civil society (see for example Evers 1999, Roth 2000). Instead of a condition of "static citizenship", where one receives something from the state and can insist on one's achieved rights, an ecological citizenship is a dynamic concept (according to Steward in O'Brian and Penna 1998, 178). It implies that people have an active role and an ethic of care for nature. The profile and demands of several non-governmental and non-profit organisations demonstrate the co-existence and interdependence of social and environmental aspects at the

local and global level. O'Brian and Penna (1998, 179) report that environmental activism is overwhelmingly conducted by women. Environmental issues are often connected to women's work, i.e. to the areas where women have the responsibility for their families and communities (food, housing, energy, consuming, community management).

The title of our research project, "New Local Policies", emphasised especially the new forms of direct participation developed in the field projects. We also could very concretely determine that without engaged citizens, interested media and small active groups only few issues can really be changed in local policies. However, neither pressure from the bottom up nor from the media alone is sufficient, but interested authorities and politicians are needed. They have power and can decide to support the new ideas. Consequently, personal engagement and responsibility among professionals and local authorities are becoming more important than their formal position. Social work also must take a clear position because it is a well-known fact that citizens' own engagement hardly springs out of strongly deprived living areas, but needs external support.

Throughout the European research project, we have constantly discussed the moral legitimacy of activating citizens in the field projects. The Finnish social workers started this discussion by themselves, asking whether they have the right to push the residents to be active if those do not want it by themselves (Haikola and Hiekka 2000). The German students also scrutinised the ideal picture of active citizens as a demand in deprived area (Selig, Franzelius, Reimann 2000). The British researchers criticised this kind of "top down" strategy, too (Boeck 2000). But since we have discussed this continuously during the project, we have learned from each other and from our own experiences that there are various ways of opening opportunities with respect to residents autonomy and their own interests. In Leicester the researchers found out that people are willing to participate, but the lack of information about opportunities hindered them (Boeck 2000). In all of the three research areas the significance of local grass root level newspapers and other information channels were recognised. Surely it is no accident that all of the three local projects contributed to the information policies about the local opportunities for activity, mainly by promoting the suburb's own newspaper and co-operating with it. Even the local residents were encouraged to participate in the completion of the editions of the suburb's papers.

It is also very important to recognise that regardless whether the goal of the action can be reached immediately or not, the action as such has a significance for the participants. Social exclusion can be reduced step by step, when actions open chances of participation. The field project of Magdeburg demonstrated it very clearly. In the scope of the research we could find active unemployed residents, who established a self-organised meeting point in their living area and still run it by themselves daily (Albers 2000b). During the establishing process the participation was very concrete and made personal experiences political. It was for many of the residents the first time in their life that they discussed with local politicians, with higher authorities and with the press. The small success achieved (room for the meeting point, donations for reconstructing it, positive press, job creation) awoke new hopeful attitudes towards democracy, too. But shared activities and learning processes as such are important, too. On the other hand, if decision makers are brought into direct dialogue with unemployed people with practical ideas for their own engagement, there is a changed view that also politics can be changed by citizens' involvement. However, there is still the question left, whether citizens' activation is legitimate, and whether it is limited only to the marginal issues of symptoms instead of structural changes.

This classic dilemma of social work described above should not hinder the new attempts, but inspire continuous self-reflection. Hence, there is a constant discrepancy between the risk of professionals' tendency to "over-activate", especially the unemployed people, and the people's lack of opportunities of participation including lack of information about them. It could also be stated that people usually participate under very specific conditions, which should be respected: if they are personally invited, if they can have maximum autonomy in their activities and if they have the realistic hope that the activity will advance their living conditions. For example, in Magdeburg, the more we got involved in direct co-operation with activated residents, the more we learned to value their knowledge and their own achievements. In social work we perhaps have neglected the significance of clients' participation as such. The experiences of the field project should be developed further to make a contribution to social work's methodological models to combat isolation and to support citizens' involvement.

It is necessary to add in this context that different kinds of citizens' movements are currently emerging, but not all are in accordance with social work goals. At the same time as the legal democratic structure continues to lose its legitimacy, there are not only positive and harmless

social work groups, but also, for instance, extreme antidemocratic political groups, who seek new ways of action. In almost all of the East-German field studies, we quite clearly detected the connection between people's sympathy for anti-democratic groups and their lack of positive experiences with democratic structures in deprived living areas. These phenomena already belong to the "environmental risks", which need new concepts of action to be tackled. In short, there are no simple solutions for the social and environmental problems, but already the way of making them political creates a new negotiation culture in local policies, which creates new options for marginalised people.

#### 4. "Person-in-Environment" means Holistic Environment Analysis and Enabling Participation

While combating social exclusion, the old advice of professional social work starting from Mary Richmond and systems theories is still relevant: to look at the person in his/her environment (see Payne 1997, Närhi and Matthies 2001). However, there are different ways, how ecological and eco-social approaches of social work have implicated the demand "person-in-environment". In our research project the slogan mentioned above actually means to understand the impact of the living environment while supporting people. Secondly, it includes the aspect of participation: human beings become part of their environment through participation and while achieving influence on their environment. Thirdly, we see that "person-in-environment" implies a commitment to a better networking between various actors. (See Närhi and Matthies 2001).

The precondition for understanding the residents' environment is to be aware of what the area is about. In accordance to this principle, the main shared dimension of the field projects in the three cities has been the various elements of community work and community based social work. Within the scope of the research, various holistic analyses of the living areas were undertaken and developed.

It was discovered in each city that without these actions, neither the professionals nor the residents do exactly know, which kind of services, groups and activities are available in the area. Through this eco-social approach embedded within the field research, it has been shown that it is possible to increase the awareness and sensitivity of local actors for the conditions in living areas. "Person-in-Environment" means that a new multidimensional and holistic way of

working can build reconnections between service users, decisions and politics in a given living area.

However, the slogan “Person-in-Environment” does not only mean a particular method of analysing peoples living context. The means of intervention must also respect the authentic cultural circumstances of people. "To take the people like they are and where they are" (Albers 2000) became a deciding new orientation for the field project in Magdeburg, while supporting the citizens in constructing and running their new self-directed communication centre. "Person-in-environment" is a principle of creating conditions where people themselves can become part of their environment in the sense of identifying themselves through active participation.

In the frame of the European research network we also were discussing the balance between self-help on the one hand and providing good social services for the citizens on the other hand. Several programs in each country show that social exclusion can undoubtedly be prevented with well-organised services for suburbs' inhabitants. However, especially in the societies where public services are still maintained on a large scale, we as professionals are often unable to see that the key question is not only the access to the services, but the feeling of achieving improvements by yourself and together with others. There is a significant qualitative difference in personal well-being between “receiving” services and being able to do something by oneself. One can be user of several services and still feel excluded.

In the field projects networking became a central question, especially concerning inter-institutional co-operation with the purpose of improving living conditions in the area. Research groups were connected to various local planning groups, forums and working groups. In all of the three research areas there were also other projects connected with. On the one hand, the working groups were experienced as new elements of local democracy from bottom up. They gave hope and enabled solutions for small-scale issues and brought small-scale improvement of living conditions. (enabling better information exchange, shared use of resources and equipment, organising activities, rooms for young people, e.g. Ziegler 2000). On the other hand, the attempts to network various partners and projects in a living area also showed that there are a lot of obstacles, too. Competition and envious disposition concerning finances and ideas, limited interest and bureaucratisation of co-operation were identified. Each system is working on its own, pushing problems to other systems. However, one can

conclude that in the field projects we could collect important evidence for the thesis that social exclusion really can be reduced with attempts, which use a holistic view and which bring various resources together in a shared living environment. The best aspects of a new local policy against social exclusion is, perhaps, to enable meaningful participation in one's living environment and to improve it by oneself. This needs not only political will, but also finances, carefully reflecting support and tolerance of a variety of cultures and life styles.

## 5. Significance of nature in living environment

The eco-social approach can also be understood as a "greening of social work" in the sense of implementing ideas of the ecological movement like nature protection, recycling and small scale projects. However, the significance of nature as such becomes a new perspective, when analysed from the view of poor living areas. One can even cynically state that poor people without a car, without opportunities to travel and with a low consumption level are very close to an ecological sustainable life style. Therefore, it is surely important to carefully distinguish between ecological consciousness and poverty. The basic ecological elements of life, like water, food and housing are increasingly issues of societal and political decision making, where people with minor capacity are not included.

The significance of nature as a part of living environment differs according to the culture of living and according to the priority of various needs. Nature as such has an important meaning as a place for resting and for leisure time activities. Although nature is not directly connected to social exclusion, it is self-evident that the access to the natural environment is not equal for all citizens in urban life of Europe.

In all research cities, there appeared small projects and initiatives related to ecological thinking and to nature as a resource of recreation and as a space for new activities, especially for young people. Cleaning the park together with children and other activities of environmental pedagogy, we have already mentioned (Ziegler 2000b). In Leicester the local researchers supported a group of young people in seeking to build a bike track and to get connected to the political process around it (Boeck 2000). In the field projects of Jyväskylä, for example, space for outdoor activities, play grounds were important and the residents anxiety of loosing the green areas in urban planning processes (Närhi 2000b). Also various forms of recycling are very often connected to community work projects (flea market, re-

using furniture and other equipment, repairing bikes). While seeking options for creating some kind of local economy, projects usually start with recycling, handicrafts, services and other small facilities lacking in the area. Although those examples of improving the living area are only minor aspects of social exclusion, the indifference and vandalism against the new re-constructed environment, like play grounds, green areas and house yards increase the depressive feeling in the area. It also promotes families' decisions to move away from the area (Albers 1999, Närhi 2000b).

The environmental movements have promoted a thinking that small is beautiful and that big and expensive interventions not always bring big positive effects. What could this mean in regard of projects against social exclusion? It was quite clear that the idea of "bottom up" activities goes hand in hand with the idea of "small is beautiful". Small local initiative groups, recycling projects, and step-by-step advance in residents' life circumstances were not only a consciously chosen strategy, but for most the only possibility, since the project usually did not have finances for something big. It is important to reach a street level entrance in projects. For example, in Magdeburg we could compare the small success of our recycling-based self-organised meeting point with expensive centres without frequent visitors. Furthermore, we could demonstrate that it is possible to do something even without money, while the city had calculated that a new meeting point for residents in a former child day care centre would cost 2.2 million German marks (Albers 2000a). Also in other field projects it could be demonstrated that a significant improvement of quality of life can be achieved with small financial support if it is well targeted and if the people can take it into their own hands (targeted training projects, handicraft equipment, sport facilities, small travels). On the other hand, we could see that mainstream politics values only projects with budgets of millions. But there is also a real risk of misusing modesty: unpaid work and recycling conditions can be used as legitimisation to cut the financial means of other social projects.

## 6. Perspectives on the Eco-social Approach as Sustainability

Surprisingly many of the characteristics of sustainable forms of action (Brand 1997, 15) which have been identified during the various experiments of sustainable development are also relevant in eco-social approach of social work. Many of them correspond exactly with the experiences in the community field projects. Women's engagement in social living environment, the benefits of integrative and cross-institutional working patterns, networking

as well as a communicative processing of decisions are some examples. On the institutional side, however, the inability of administration to combine resources of various budgets or to trust on citizens engagement strongly hinder the usage of sustainable strategies.

The interdependence and need of co-ordination between social and environmental aspects could be verified quite self-evidently in the ongoing deep social segregation of urban space. However, this linkage is very complicated. It varies according to individual factors, and the microstructure of deprived living environment has to be acknowledged. This is not accounted very well in the various urban development and re-construction projects. The plans are usually designed on large scale macro-level, with large-scale finances, but with a too short time-perspective. If one really tries to reconstruct social sustainability in urban areas, a lot of time should be invested, especially in the details and in a patient negotiation with local residents. Those who are most dependent on the area—women, children, unemployed, old and disabled people—very often have the key questions and solutions, since they usually know best the risks and resources of the area.

Our particular learning process concerns the significant positive effect of participation of the marginalised residents themselves. Solely those projects and attempts (individual or collective) are sustainable in long run, which are accepted and carried by the people themselves. Being aware of the critical concerns about "organising participation from above," we still believe that enabling participation improves the quality of life of the participants, but it also contributes to the living environment as such. However, the main achievement of strategies which enable real participation is their impact on a new democratisation from bottom up. In this case, participation is not only limited to compensatory voluntary activities—which surely are also important. However at the moment we cannot see any other realistic means for opening access to big political and economic issues, than to start to deal with them on the very concrete local level, for example in a question of youth' space or new workshop for unemployed residents in the suburb. If the experiences of action are empowering for the participants, the hope of improvement by democratic means can become a bit more credible.

But on the other hand, also several critical findings were discovered—not only in the way other actors like political decision makers or the non-personal "economical interest" work. Regarding social work methods, for example, we still lack practicable methods for the support of citizens' engagement in a coherent way. Neither do the professionals optimally use the

chances of their linking position between citizens and institutions. During the project it became clear that the tasks of professionals are increasingly focussed on the inter-mediation between the issues of citizens' living environment and the complicated institutions.

#### ***4.2. Concluding Policy Implications – Designing Good Practise***

In this chapter, the concluding results of our project are presented by the terms of "Good Practise" according to the structure of the central theoretical concepts of the entire research. All the concepts share Social Action's idea of Empowerment and citizen-oriented practise. Social Impact Assessment is seen as a tool in realising those ideas and implementing in bringing citizens' voices forward in issues concerning their local living environments and also emphasising social aspects in a general framework of sustainable development. In this context eco-social approach in social work is then seen as "an umbrella concept" which includes both Social Impact Assessment and Social Action and which is a general framework that emphasises the significance of both ecological and social sustainability in creating sustainable social work practices and sustainable living environments.

#### Transnational Benefits and Challenges of European co-operation for the Local Progress

In the European comparative context the reflections of the politics in each local research network correspond the specific character of the welfare state systems of the societies in concern. It is exactly the benefit of the European comparison and exchange of knowledge through the research network that facilitated us to recognise the particular strengths, deficits and challenges of each local context. For the Finns it became clear—again—that the well established network of professional public services of high quality in deed protect against marginalisation and inequality on a macro level. However the Finnish social workers could identify that due to the abolishment and cuts of services and social security transfers as well as due to the standardised orientation of the services, an increasing number of individuals are dropped out of the service system. In all the three cities we could discover that the objective available opportunities are for several reasons not taken into account by the citizens in need. Creative individual ways are needed to motivate and to reach these people. Very often the situation is interpreted by the professionals as citizens' free choice not to enter to the available options nor to take use of their rights (education, employment, social benefits, counselling services), which is to be respected by the professionals. However, citizens in difficult

situations very often have lost the hope for positive change due to frustrating experiences. Social work needs new kinds of methodical approach, which in the same time respect the independence of the citizens without leaving them on their own in need. The powerful and independent role of Finnish social work, acting on the city policy level, urban planning and in cross-institutional networks in local service system surely was a valuable model for the two other countries, where the professional standard and position of social work is less advanced. What the Finnish research group appreciated at the British partners and later in the field project of Magdeburg, too, was the strong participatory emphasis. Then in the Finnish idea of participation is one reached on a formal level of local policies very well but it is not constantly developed for all service-users.

The very expressive demand of citizens' direct participation, radical bottom up-models and constant re-questioning of values of social work were approaches of the British partners, which constructively challenged and promoted the self-reflection of the partners of the two other countries. The British partners even insisted on changing the set of the action research, where later on also citizens were integrated in all three cities in concern. The approach of the British partners opened the eyes of the Finns and Germans to identify the need for radically new thinking in social work and, on the other side, promoted and encouraged to give better opportunities for citizens' own engagement. The service-users significant role is surely an issue which can be introduced in all type of local policies. For the British partners there was a learning process showing that the commitment of the macro- and meso-level politics is indispensable and that the self-direction and "bottom-up" actions alone are not sufficient to achieve sustainable improvements. The still quite strong characteristics of class-society and inequality were surprising for the partners from the two other countries. Through the European action research the British partners also discovered some kind of myths of "bottom up"-approach in their local community: the people speaking in the name of local people were not always the residents in deed but workers of various projects in the area. The real participation of residents has to be constantly reflected in all types of welfare states.

The situation of the German local research context can be characterised by the attempt to stabilise the own structure and profile of social work and citizens' engagement with their particular historical challenges at the phase of "post-unification" on the one hand, and the chance of learning from the experiences of the local policies in other Western welfare states on the other hand. The challenges in Magdeburg were very different due to some objective

factors like high unemployment, low level of social work professionalisation and the limited experiences with participatory models in local policies. However, in European comparison there is still a relative large offer of standardised services like child day care, youth work and education. Nor could the physical level of living environment in Magdeburg be seen as being less advanced or poorer than in the other countries. Already a lot of investments have been done in re-constructing and the service structure as well as the idea of co-operative planning process were worth acknowledging. However, what the German research group wanted to learn from the partners were qualitative improvements of citizens' participation in more radical direction, a better professional autonomy of "street-level" social workers and the tools of intervening in urban planning from the social work's point of view. Both of the initiated field projects in Magdeburg, the unemployed residents' self-organised meeting point Lebensmitte(l) and the covering network of community work, were perhaps the ones with the best visible successes in the whole research network, since they were directly developed in the research context. However, since there were a variety of local actors (Scientists, city partners, social workers, citizens' initiative, students) the co-ordination between the field projects was neglected in the beginning.

Direct and indirect hindrances for Empowerment transnational comparison—  
both standardised equal services and tailored individual programmes are needed

In the frame of the Empowerment approach Barbara Solomon (according to Payne 1997) has identified two different types of hindrances of individuals to reach sufficient life, which are also applicable to interpret our research results. The objective directs barriers mean unequal chances and lacking access to opportunities which would enable a satisfactory life and well-being. The indirect barriers imply subjective experiences of discrimination, frustration and neglecting that discourage individuals to take use of the available opportunities. On the base of our comparative research we can identify that in Finland and in Eastern Germany there are still quite well covering objective equal opportunities to reach acceptable life standards. But in spite of that increasing number of various groups of people actually are not able to take use of them for various reasons. What these societies especially need, are new types of flexible and non-standardised forms of participation and inclusion. The task of professional social work is, in our opinion, to develop mediating structures and programmes, which are able to open accesses, to encourage and to go to the people there were they are and to respect them like they are. The gap between the available opportunities in the sense of equal services and

the individual life difficulties – often connected to a culture of withdrawal – in these countries must be bridged over to avoid further exclusion. Here we see one of the significant structural factors of social exclusion. On the other hand we experienced that careful encouragement and support of self-organisation even can lead to political participation and active engagement in the living environment.

Great Britain, as found in our research case in comparison, has still a great deal of direct barriers for equal life standards (lacking public day care services, access to labour for women, and equal system of education) although there is a better developed culture of activities from bottom up. We have got the impression that on the micro-level of local communities people have to organise a lot of activities and needs-satisfaction themselves concerning issues which are basic rights in the two other countries. For this reason people have to create social networks which surely have impacts of Empowerment. However, this kind of network from bottom up seems not to be able to gain changes of the macrostructure of the society but only in their closest community.

#### Convergent phenomena and advice for local polices

In conclusion following shared perspectives can be summarised:

- in all of the three European cities in concern one can ask whether there already exists a political acceptance of unequal quality of urban living areas. In the local policies and public investments there seems to be a trend to divided cities in three parts: to gain a) exclusive areas provided with luxurious standards and representing an attractive image of the city, b) well-standardised living areas for middle-class families and tax-payers provided with professional services and good environment, finally c) so called "third cities" ( Oelschläger 1997) a poor area for various marginalised groups and for unattractive and riskful institutions. Services hardly exist or have a low unprofessional level and therefore citizens' own engagement is expected. Consequent political will to stop social exclusion is not expressed very clearly on the level of practical decisions.

- In general the residents in the living areas in concern expressed mainly their subjective satisfaction with the area, although the researchers identified an objective disadavantage in several dimensions of the quality of the area.

- There is a real risk of additional collective stigmatisation of certain living areas through researches and programmes which is directed "against social exclusion". The question is, whether these programmes in deed promote a positive development for the residents in the area or whether they are useful only in the sense of short time job and project financing.
- In all the three cities on the top level of the city policies and municipalities there was a lack of interested commitment to the research project and fight against social exclusion in general. The challenge of the division of society is not taken seriously enough but as a marginal problem in the cities.
- Through the European knowledge exchange and critical co-operation new significant perspectives could be identified in local policies (S. 4. 1 and 4.2). This was very concrete for example in the case of applying the British Social Action model in the field project of Magdeburg and in involving citizens in Jyväskylä; identifying the need for an cross-sectoral qualitative analyse of the living areas in Magdeburg and Leicester which was imposed by the SIA-Analyse of Jyväskylä, the deeper understanding for the Eco-social aspects of social exclusion in all the three cities
- Due to the fact that each local research group experimented with different field projects surely caused confusion concerning the cross-national comparability in the beginning. However, it became clear that in action research in social sciences one can never reach identical "laboratories". The comparison of variety and not of similarity became the interesting leading idea. We could collect experiences of different sets and different approaches against social exclusion.
- On the base of the comparison of variety we could find one of our central findings: social exclusion is a complex phenomenon, which takes place in dynamic processes instead of being status quo, at different levels starting from micro-level of individual until to macro-level of societal structures, it has complicated causalities instead of linear explanations.
- As seen in the variety of the issues in the field projects and due to the complexity of social exclusion processes we argue that the local policies against social exclusion have to respond to this complexity: a pluralistic variety of strategies are needed. However, these must not be positioned against each other but very well co-ordinated. Structural macro-political solutions, urban planning programmes, strategies in small local communities and tailored individual interventions are necessary. None of the strategies can be selected to be the best, but the key issue is that they are planned and maintained from the local contexts and on the base of identified needs, not on the base of certain financing programmes.

## Best practices

In this chapter, the results of the final evaluation among the research partners are summarised according the idea of identifying "The best practise". The concrete examples are rooted to a certain local research group but the same "good practise" is shred by all the research partners.

### *Participation of citizens is a value as such.*

The research group has tested and evaluated how far people are enabled to engage with these structures and improve their environments and conditions. Through the Social Action and action research the gap in the policy delivery between the meso-level (local government/city authorities) and the micro level (the local community/suburb) became visible. Through the Social Action and research process local people have been able to express their needs and have started to organise new networks. The involvement of local residents and their participation in the process of the research at all the levels has provided a sense of the research retaining its "feet on the ground".

### *Co-ordination and networks: well functioning vertical connections between citizens' groups and municipal authorities as well as horizontal working networks between social workers, city planners and citizens are significant.*

A particular application of the British Social Action approach into the Finnish context of social work took place mainly in the reflection of social workers involved. Direct actions with the citizens were not in focus of this more professional orientated action research in Jyväskylä. However, several groups of residents could be activated to engage themselves for their living environment. A new level of concrete and direct co-operation between street-level social workers and residents could be achieved in some of the areas. The best practise seem to occur, if the citizens themselves can be empowered to get involved and since solid support from the local authorities and professionals. Social workers tried a variety of options for citizens' participation in order to stop the circles of social exclusion processes. Eco-social sustainability is able to be gained by an equal negotiation and co-action between various actors. In Leicester the research group started to speak about "realistic radicalism" in order to demonstrate that one can still be critical although promoting structural changes instead of only trusting citizens' self-help.

*Concrete steps and hope for better environment encourage the citizens to participate.*

Due to the fact that in Magdeburg the whole culture of civic associations, democratic local policies and various co-operation networks is still in progress in the new society after the German unification, all kind of activities promoting these processes were welcome. On the level of professionals and authorities as well as existing associations, the new initiated Community Work Groups brought a significant opportunity to get to know each other and to push various issues in the suburb forwards. But for the engagement of residents very concrete actions which embody realistic hope for better conditions are needed. Moreover, the citizens are in many cases sceptical about politics as well as not very used to "take issues in their hands". The key for the success of the field project Lebensmitte(l) (self-organised meeting point of unemployed residents) was that the residents themselves could define the problem that they became subjects in solving it very concretely by renewing the rooms themselves, and that a collective feeling of Empowerment was achieved. Money was an important factor for motivation, even if the amounts were quite tiny, but as a new foundation for Community work it practically motivated various people to get engaged in the local activities.

*To bring social dimensions in the city planning has to be based on relevant social knowledge.*

In any of the city it was automatically not self-evident that the social dimensions would be central in urban planning although all the three cities suffered of strong social segregation and destructive urban development. Our thesis was that the knowledge of social workers could be brought to political decision making and urban planning to promote a better social sustainability. However, the social impacts are not easy to be demonstrated in the (mainly quantitative and technical) language of planning and policies. What we learned is that long and patient information distribution is needed until changes in local policies will take place – but it *can* take place. In all the cities we experienced that politicians and city planning professional really want to learn more and to use the relevant knowledge of social work, but this processes do not happen immediately. Concrete examples are useful as well as the pressure from the citizens and the media. If social work wants to gain changes, it has to advance its own methods of knowledge production concerning social exclusion and living environment. Based on the experiences and knowledge building in Jyväskylä, the list of indicators for social sustainability of suburbs developed by social workers was an important tool in local policies. This Social Impact Assessment, but also Social Capital Survey and cross-sectoral networking were good examples for new strategies. However, the most

important is even the attendance of social workers and citizens at political forums at local level.

*Eco-social approach facilitates to identify the contextual conditions of social exclusion and to establish the strategies of integration in local communities.*

Social exclusion has material, psycho-social and political aspects. The multidimensional structure of social exclusion requires complicated and comprehensive cross-institutional models of solutions. Eco-social approach demonstrated this holistic view concretely. Financial investments to renew living environment alone are not sufficient but the active participation of residents on their living environment is to be reached. Eco-social sustainability is parallelly based on physical-ecological and social-political and cultural aspects. The frame is given by the nature and the buildings, which strongly enable or hinder social identity, cohesion, social capital and competence building, social control, tolerance and stability of the community. But these cannot be produced only with material tools. They depend also on the diversity of community structure, access to services, and of course, on the general socio-economic level of the society.

Advice for Good Practise in Short:

- Identify and avoid the ritualisation of urban development and re-construction programmes which are more interested in the means than the goals (misusing the words "social" or "sustainable" to gain the means while being indifferent concerning the expressed final goals)
- Prefer plenty of well-targeted small and flexible projects instead of using huge finances indifferently for single fixed and standardised macro-projects
- Prefer careful and patient participatory planning from bottom up instead of quick interventions from top down
- Take use of recycling, self help, work parties and shared investment of various groups instead of "money shower"
- Aim to combine long-term structural advance by politics and concrete short-term solutions by participation of people themselves instead of opposing these two strategies
- Participatory projects include a risk to involve underprivileged people in actionism without comprehensive changes since the projects are not combined with macro-politics.

- To reduce social exclusion is not a single project, programme nor intervention once maintained but it means a continuous challenge to renewal democracy and to open opportunities for all citizens.

### Evaluative Perspectives

From the point of end-user partners the chosen action research methodology is the only meaningful one since it parallelly promotes changes in the practise. The trans-national nature of the project required the project partners to take a more objective approach to the observation and examination of their individual field projects. The chance to be part of the European research project activated the residents also in a more general level to interest themselves for the issues in their living environment. This also opened for the social workers new and less formal opportunities to meet and co-operate with the residents. The research project directly enabled social workers to initiate unconventional ways of working through the field projects. Sensibility and understanding of the different cultures of European municipalities was promoted. Programmes to tackle social exclusion will be wasted if they cannot meet the needs of local people and promote real participation.

### **5. Dissemination and exploitation results**

Due to the particular research methodology – action research with a plurality of field projects– the scientific research and the dissemination and accomplishment of it have not been separated processes but part of a shared process. Neither was there a gap between theory and practise since due to the special structure of the research network it involved end-user partners, like municipal authorities from social, youth care and city planning departments of the cities in concern, professional social and community workers as well as students and finally even residents of the researched suburbs.

Concretely in the research project there were various opportunities to disseminate the follow-up and results of the research project:

- regular and continuous (almost weekly) exchange of knowledge between scientists and end-users in the field projects
- regular more scientifically structured meetings and seminars reflecting each of the theoretical emphasises of the European research project at the local level

- regular presentation of the progress and findings of the project in local media, in the education and further training of professionals
- regular information and presentation about the research progress and findings, especially those identifying the hindrances and opportunities in local policies in municipal boards, city councils and intern media of the cities
- local and regional media (Newspapers, broadcaster, TV) reported broadly about the project in following cases:
  - new concrete progress in the field projects
  - open events of the field projects
  - European or other significant Meetings of the Project
  - New Publications
  - Concluding Press Conference presenting the final results (see also the Table in Annex)

### **5.1. Deliverables:**

The products to be able to disseminate for the politics and European Audience in Social and Community Work as well as urban Planning

**Table 4. Table of Conceptual Deliverables**

Research Partner	New Analyses	Methodological Tools	Social and Community Work Practise Models
Leicester (Univ+City)	Social Capital Survey as Analysed Data	Social Capital Survey, and Social Action Research as Research Concepts	
Jyväskylä (Univ+City)	Social Impact Assessment as Analysed Data	Social Impact Assessment as political and research tool including Indicators of Sustainability	New Individual strategies to stop social exclusion by cross-institutional co-op; Cross-sectoral forums of suburbs
Magdeburg (Univ+City)	Eco-social Approach and Theory of Social sustainability		New cross-institutional Workgroups in suburbs; Model for Community Fund; Model for self-directed Meeting Point of Unemployed

However, the deliverables mentioned above can be enlarged with a long list of models experimented through the comprehensive research with all its levels, actions, partners, attempts and experiences, which are highly relevant for end-users and scientists in respective fields:

**Models developed in the field projects including advise for good practise**

- MODELS OF Exactly targeted individual or for certain group tailored strategies to break up the circle of social exclusion (Women, long-term unemployed, single parents, young people in transition from school to working life)
- MODELS OF Grass-root-level participation: communication centres and residents' and young people's meeting rooms with easy and access, self-directed projects with sufficient professional support, managing mutual help in neighbourhood, joint and self-directed concrete care for living environment (renovations, green areas, clubs e.g.)
- MODELS OF Communicative structure in suburbs: better understandable information systems, guide books about available opportunities, local newspaper for information and for discussions, de-centralised counselling, communication centres, suburbs
- MODELS OF Intensive networking and co-ordination between various projects, groups and communities in the living area, cross-sectoral forums and working groups open also for citizens, foundation for activities and needs in local community (suburb) in self-governance
- MODELS OF Identifying the deficits in equality in all significant areas of life: housing, education, mobility, re-creation and free-time
- MODELS OF Mobilisation of capacities and knowledge of those citizens who usually do not have access to local policies and city planning but who are the most dependent on it (women, single parents, unemployed, young , disabled people, seniors)
- MODELS OF Activating mapping of Social Capital as well as problems and resources in suburb among and with residents, working out together the solutions, taking their proposals seriously; using these data "from bottom up" in local policies and city planning
- MODELS OF New and sustainable employment, which respond to the real needs and market of services and equipment in local economy
- MODELS OF Concretising Social Sustainability as a part of sustainable development in local policies; participatory and negotiating practise in urban planning

- MODELS OF Research co-operation between universities as conventional research partners and cities as well as citizens as new kind of research partners

## **5.2. List of the Publications of the Project "New Local Policies"**

(Chronologically)

1. Turunen, P. (1999) *Setting the Context, Comparison of the Three Starting Situations of the TSER-Project "Making New Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities"*, Magdeburg, Magdeburger Reihe, Schriften der Fachhochschule Magdeburg Bd. 3, Magdeburg (In Co-operation with Albers, S., Boeck, Th. and Närhi, K.)
2. Matthies, Aila-Leena (1999) *Gegen soziale Ausgrenzung mit Neuentdeckung des ökosozialen Ansatzes? Theoretische Ausgangspunkte eines europäischen Forschungsprojektes*. In: Lissner, C./Matthies, A-L./Rothermel, L./Simon, T. (Hg.) *Theorieansätze und Reflexionen ausgewählter Praxisfelder. Beiträge aus dem Sozial- und Gesundheitswesen*. Magdeburger Reihe. Schriften der Fachhochschule Magdeburg. P. 31 – 48
3. Matthies, A-L., Turunen, P., Albers, S., Boeck, T., Närhi, K. (2000) An Eco-social approach to tackling social exclusion in European Cities: a new comparative research project in progress in *European Journal of Social Work* Vol. 3, No. 1, Oxford University Press, pp. 43-52
4. Matthies, A-L., Järvelä, M., and Ward, D. (2000) *From Social Exclusion to Participation, Explorations across Three European Cities, Action Research in Community Work*, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä Printing House.

**Contenting following contributions:**

- Aila-Leena Matthies: From Social Exclusion to Participation in Social Environment
- Roland Roth: Chances of New Local Policies in European Cities – Time of Civil Society?
- Dave Ward and Thilo Boeck: Addressing Social Exclusion. The Social Action Research Contribution to Local Development
- Marja Järvelä: Ecosocial social policy – a Finnish perspective
- Malcolm Payne: Power structures, social exclusion and the local welfare state.
- Päivi Turunen: Three Action Research Designs from a Comparative Perspective
- Steffi Albers: Experiences with the Social Action approach against Social exclusion in Magdeburg
- Thilo Boeck: Social Exclusion in Theory and Research.
- Kati Närhi: Processes in Jyväskylä
- Teresa Spilsbury: What Social Exclusion Means To Me
- Elke Stechbarth and Claudia Ziegler: Decentralised Social work and Attempts to Community Work in Olvenstedt
- Alexander Selig, Monique Franzelius and Beatrice Reimann: Experiences of Students in the Project Eco-social community work in Neu-Olvenstedt
- Uwe Ahlers: The fist two years of the Citizen's Initiative "Olvenstedt"
- Kristiina Heinonen-Kuusela: Social and health services as a part of the welfare programme in Jyväskylä
- Tuija Mäkinen-Kanerva: Social Impact Assessment (SIA) in building plans

- Ansa Leinonen: SIA in the Case of Huhtasuo
- Johanna Haikola and Eija Hiekka: Youth' views about living in Huhtasuo
- Juha Luomala: Experiences in a project about suburb promoting in Pupuhuhta
- Minna Malkamäki and Minna Mattila: Does the Renovation of suburb create welfare?

**5. Kojo, Outi; Lummukka, Maija; Määttä, Mervi ja Soininen, Ritva (2000) Näyttämönä Lutakko – sosiaalityöntekijät asuinalueen suunnitteluprosessissa. *Sosiaalityöntekijä-lehti/Sosiaalityön tutkimuksen seura. Sosiaalityön tutkimusliite 1/00.* S. 27 – 32. (The Finnish Social Work Research Supplement)**

**6. Närhi, K. and Hiekka, E. (2000) *Sosiaalityö kestävää elinympäristöä kehittämässä. „Uudet paikalliset toimintatavat sosiaalista syrjäytymistä vastaan”-projektiin kokemuksia ja johtopäätöksiä. Jyväskylän opetussosiaalikeskuksen julkaisusarja 2/2000. Jyväskylän kaupunki (City of Jyväskylä)***

**7. Hochschule Magdeburg-Stendal (Hg.) *Teilhabe im Stadtteil. Bürgerengagement gegen soziale Ausgrenzung.* Beiträge des EU-Forschungsprojektes New Local Policies in European Cities. Magdeburger Reihe. Schriften der Hochschule Magdeburg-Stendal. Bd 7. Magdeburg.**

**Contenting following Contributions:**

- Steffi Albers: Magdeburger Forschungsdesign des EU-Forschungsprojektes "Making new local policies against social exclusion in European Cities.
- Steffi Albers: Soziale Ausgrenzung und Möglichkeiten der Sozialen Aktion
- Steffi Albers: Das Projekt Lebensmitte(l) Konzeption. (together with a group of residents from Neu-Olvenstedt)
- Steffi Albers (together with Claudia Ziegler): Chancen der Partizipation und lokaler Politik
- Aila-Leena Matthies: Der lange Marsch durch die Bürokratien. Bilanz des Projektes Lebensmitte(l)
- Aila-Leena Matthies: Was bringt ein ökosozialer Ansatz in der Bekämpfung der sozialen Ausgrenzung
- Steffi Albers (together with Claudia Ziegler): Der Zusammenhang zwischen Umwelt und sozialer Lebensqualität
- Aila-Leena Matthies: Kritische Prüfung von städtebaulichen Programmen aus der Sicht der Sozialen Arbeit
- Aila-Leena Matthies: Perspektiven des Stadtteiltreffpunkts "Lebensmitte(l)" aus der Sicht der neuen Lokalen Ökonomie

**8. Matthies, A-L., Närhi, K. and Ward, D. (2001) *The Eco-social Approach in Social Work. SoPhi. University of Jyväskylä. Department of Social Studies and Philosophy. Jyväskylä***

**- Contenting following contributions:**

- Aila-Leena Matthies, Kati Närhi, Dave Ward: Taking an Eco-social Approach to Social Work. Reflections of three European Countries
- Kati Närhi and Aila-Leena Matthies: Ecological (self-)consciousness of social work? Perspectives on the relationship between social work and ecology
- Kati Närhi: Social impact assessment. New Challenge for Social Work?
- Thilo Boeck, Patrick McCullough and Dave Ward: Increasing Social Capital to Combat Social Exclusion: The Social Action Contribution

- Päivi Turunen Aila-Leena Matthies, Kati Närhi, Thilo Boeck and Steffi Albers: Practical Models and Theoretical findings in Combating Social Exclusion in three European Cities
- Aila-Leena Matthies: Perspectives of Eco-social Sustainability in Social Work

### ***5.3. Working Papers of the project:***

#### Working Papers Presented at the first European Meeting in January 1998 in Magdeburg

- Päivi Turunen (1998a) Reconstructing Community Work in Social Work. 17 Pages
- Päivi Turunen (1998b) Comparative Research and Criteria for Comparison. 21 Pages
- Kati Närhi (1998a) Social Impact Assessment - What could it mean for Social and Community Work? - Practical Implications of Social Work in Jyväskylä. 17 Pages

#### Local reports for the First European Comparison

(Analysing the National, and local and residential area contexts as well as conceptualising the planned local research activities) delivered by the local researchers:

- Steffi Albers (1998a) Arbeitspapier zur Beschreibung der Ausgangssituation in Magdeburg im Rahmen des Forschungsprojektes "Making new local Policies". 12 Pages
- Steffi Albers (1998b) Local Projects in Magdeburg 4 Pages
- Steffi Albers (1998c) Ergänzendes Arbeitspapier zur Beschreibung der Ausgangssituation in Magdeburg im Rahmen des Forschungsprojektes "Making new local Policies". 19 Pages
- Thilo Boeck (1998a) The Analyse of Great Britain. Working paper. 12 Pages
- Thilo Boeck (1998b) Supplementary Paper about Great Britain and Leicester. 11 Pages
- Kati Närhi 1998a) Missä Suomi makaa? Lyhyt katsaus Suomen taloudellisesta ja sosiopoliittisesta tilanteesta. Paper No 1. 14 Pages
- Kati Närhi 1998a) Sosiaalityön ja yhdyskuntatyön sosiaalis-oikeudellinen viitekehys Suomessa. Paper No 2. 8 Pages
- Kati Närhi 1998b) Sosiaalinen syrjäytyminen suomalaisesta ja jyväskyläläisestä näkökulmasta. Paper No 3. 14 Pages
- Kati Närhi 1998c) The Local projects in Jyväskylä. Paper No 4. 12 Pages
- Kati Närhi 1998d) Summaries on the National, municipal and local district context, on the social exclusion concept and on the local project context. 19 Pages

#### Papers on European Comparison in the Research Project

- Päivi Turunen (1998c) Preliminary Comparison of the Research Project „Making New Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities. 39 Pages. Delivered on 22. 06. 1998.
- Päivi Turunen (1998d) Setting the Context. Comparison of the starting situation of the TSER-project “Making New Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities”. Delivered to the Co-ordinator on the 31.12.1998 to be published at the Fachhochschule Magdeburg in April 1999.

#### Working Papers for the Summer School in Leicester October 1998

- Kati Närhi 1998e) Summary about the project process New Local policies against Social Exclusion. Jyväskylä January –September 1998. 12 Pages
- Steffi Albers (1998d) Research design in the Project New Local Policies” Working paper to be presented at the European Project Meeting in Leicester. 6 Pages

Thilo Boeck (1998c) TSER-Project New Local Policies. Working Paper to be presented at the Autumn School in Leicester 1.10.1998. 23 Pages

### Local reports for the European Comparison 1999

- Albers, Steffi (1999a) Research Assignment of Magdeburg. Contribution to the Project "New local Policies". Fachhochschule Magdeburg. January 1999
- Boeck, Thilo (1999a) Methodology and Processes. TSER-Project "New local Policies". Leicester, De Montfort University, January 1999
- Närhi, Kati (1999a) Research Design "From the silent "knower" to the social worker who influences? Social Workers' experiences and views about the knowledge forming process of eco-social social work". Jyväskylä University, January 1999

### Working Papers presented at the European Summer School in June 1999 in Jyväskylä

- Ahlers, Uwe (1999) Activities of the Citizens' Initiative Pro Olvenstedt. Citizens' Initiative of Olvenstedt. Magdeburg
- Albers, Steffi (1999b) TSER-Project "Making new Local Policies against Social Exclusion in European Cities". Progress Report II. Fachhochschule Magdeburg
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## **7. *Table of Dissemination and Exploitation***

The Publications, Working Papers and conference Presentations of the Project are given in details in chapter 5. 2 and 5.3. The table in annex 1 therefore only gives a reference to complete list of papers and publications in Chapter 5. Further conferences, deliverables and events are given in this table, too.