

Local Action Plan of co-responsibility in SALASPILS

September 2012

AN URBACT II PROJECT

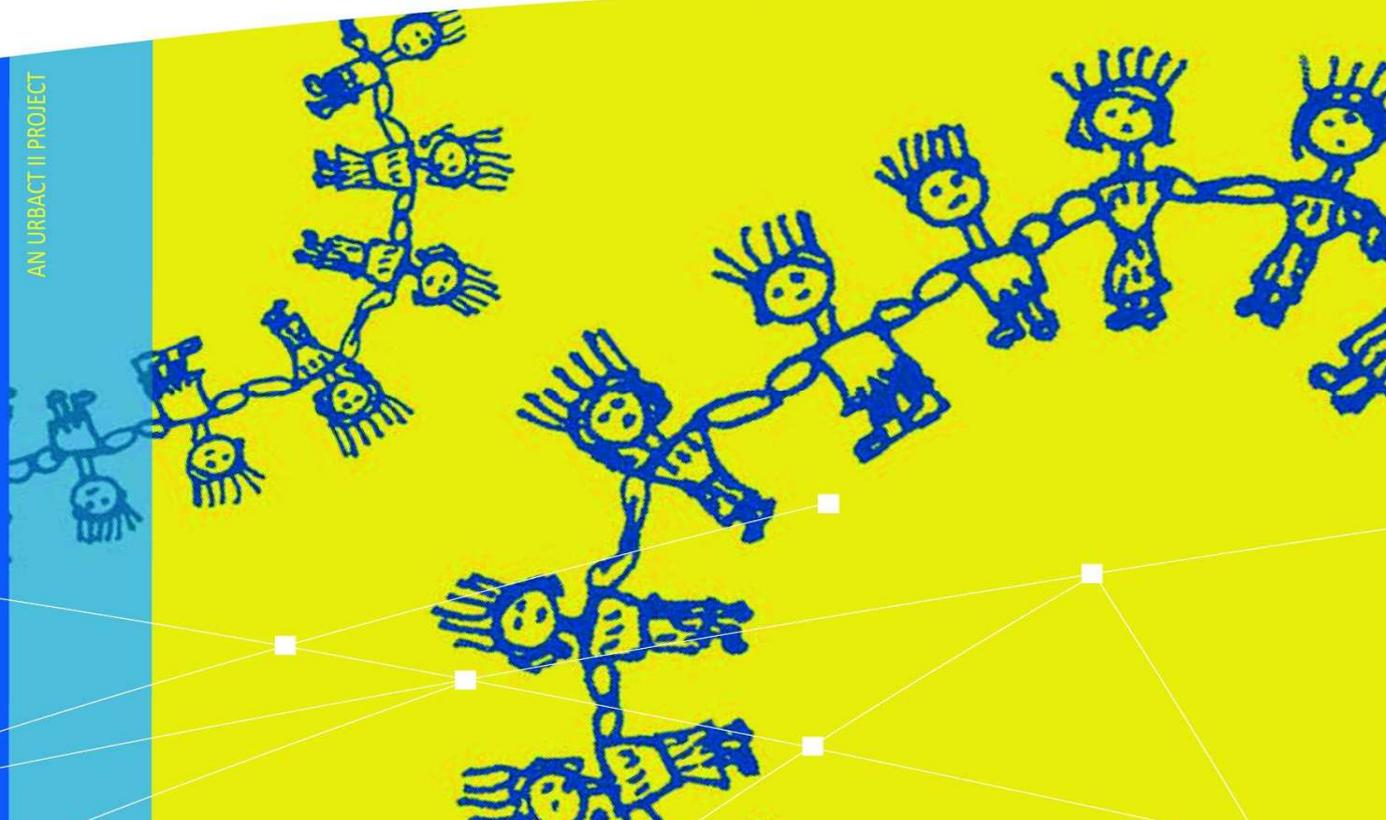


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1. THE BACKGROUND

Historically, discussions of well-being have been situated within, and based on, various religious, spiritual, and philosophical traditions. Among these, Aristotle's discussion of the "good life" as a life of "virtue" has proved to be particularly important especially as it was adopted by the Catholic Church and transmitted to Western civilization. Over the last 100 years, well-being became more and more closely associated with economic performance. In particular, growth in income came to be accepted as a proxy for increasing well-being. In part as a reaction to this "Economic Theory of Well-Being"¹, two broader approaches to well-being were put forward. Needs Theory, developed by Maslow, Max-Neef, Gough, and others², describes a range of human needs relevant to well-being, some but not all of which are related to income. Capabilities & Functionings, developed by Sen, Nussbaum, and others³, stress how one functions - what one manages to be and do - compared to one's range of capabilities, rather than simply the income one has to spend. The elements provide a framework broad enough to accommodate all of these theoretical approaches, but simple enough to be useful in the organization of diverse discussions of well-being.

In asking the public about wellbeing, it becomes clear that people tend to have a good understanding of its various dimensions. Typically they mention practical considerations (such as health and financial issues)⁴ and subjective feelings and emotions (such as a sense of happiness and hope for the future)⁵. They also position their own wellbeing according to their personal experience of family relationships, friendships and community⁶.

But because 'wellbeing' is a term that can be used to mean many different things, there is a risk that it will end up losing its meaning altogether. In view of this it is worth recalling the various existing policy definitions of wellbeing to inform how we should define and improve it in a local government context. They share some key characteristics:

1. Wellbeing is about how people experience their own lives, so for example, people must feel able to achieve things or feel they have a sense of purpose to have wellbeing.

¹ Noel Myers, Joseph Kent. *The New Consumers: The Influence of Affluence on the Environment*. Washington: Island Press, 2004, 286 p.

² Samuel Rayner and, Lionel Malone. *Human Choices and Climate Change: Volume I—The Societal Framework*. Columbus, Ohio: Battelle Press, 2008, 346 p.

³ Michael Nussbaum, Adam Sen. *The Quality of Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 264.

⁴ Norbert Bacon, Milosch Brophy. *The State of Happiness: Can public policy shape people's wellbeing and resilience?* London: The Young Foundation, 2010, 364 p.

⁵ John Aked, Nathaniel Steuer. *Backing the Future: why investing in children is good for us all* London: NEF, 2009, 232 p.

⁶ Thomas Bacon. *The role of local government in promoting well-being*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Vol. 5, No 6, 2009, pp.64-89.

2. Wellbeing is more than the absence of problems or illness. This requires a shift in focus from what can go wrong in people's lives to what makes them go well.

3. Wellbeing is about the personal and the social, so improving the wellbeing of local populations needs to involve a strengthening of local social connections, support networks and the sense of belonging that make up the social fabric of communities.

4. Wellbeing is more than happiness. The aim of local government, therefore, should not be to set out to make people happy, but to create the conditions that enable citizens and communities to do well in life, to flourish⁷.

Christakopoulou, Dawson and Gari (2007) identified⁸ that policy makers need to have the information to understand fully specific areas and to establish comprehensive baselines against which future changes can be measured. If they are to identify appropriate interventions and target resources effectively, they need to have a clear picture of the community's strengths and weaknesses. Equally, a baseline that reflects the range of aspects that affect the community's situation and its prospects is a pre-requisite for tracking change and identifying impacts.

Boulding and Wampler (2010) are certain that participatory governance is made to enhance governance, citizens' empowerment, and the quality of democracy, creating a virtuous cycle to improve the well-being of the poor. However, there is limited empirical evidence for this relationship. Research has been done using drawing from an original database of Brazil's 220 largest cities, they assess whether the adoption of a participatory budgeting (PB) program is associated with changes in social spending or changes in several indicators of well-being. We find that PB municipalities spend a slightly higher share of their budget on health and education programs, but there is little evidence that this shift in budget priorities affects measurable outcomes⁹.

Lien and Pettersen (Norway) in their research specify that although it is difficult for local governments to give support for social welfare recipients top political priority, there are huge variations in the support recipients actually receive among Norwegian municipalities. However, local governments representing different party ideologies may prefer to support different dimensions of generosity. Some municipalities could have a liberal attitude to eligibility rules but be strict on time limits and the amount of money provided. Others may be generous regarding time limits or amounts received once one is accepted as a welfare client. Data from the mid 1990s indicate the variation in support is related to different generosity dimensions for different party

⁷ Una Goswami. *Foresight of Mental Capital and Wellbeing*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, Vol.3, No 4, 2008, pp.36-49.

⁸ Silvio Christakopoulou, Jane Dawson, Arnold Gari. The Community Well-Being Questionnaire: Theoretical Context and Initial Assessment of Its Reliability and Validity. *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 56 No. 3, 2007, pp. 321-351.

⁹ Sean Boulding, Boris Wampler. Voice, Votes, and Resources: Evaluating the Effect of Participatory Democracy on Well-being, *World Development*, Volume 38, Issue 1, 2010, pp. 125-135.

groups. While the total number of clients seems unrelated to politics and basically correlates with local social problems, the duration and amount of support are related to the political composition of the municipality assembly. Devoid of any large variation¹⁰, both time limits and the amount of support increase in accordance with socialist leanings, and the total budget used for social welfare support also increases with the proportion of women in the municipality assembly.

The researches of well-being would help science, politicians, people and others answer to questions about differences in level of living standards among the world, about satisfaction or disaffection (even if level of living is the same from economical point of view), about migration, about political instruments that should be used etc. So it is going to be comprehensive assessment but still science needs to control it and make it realistic and possible to evaluate¹¹.

Promoting the wellbeing of individuals and communities is fundamental to the work of local government, and is a strong motivator for local councilors everywhere. It is a particularly opportune moment to explore the role of local government in promoting wellbeing. The recession continues to impact on individuals and on communities, creating the need to bolster the wellbeing and resilience of local populations. Local government today is facing up to the challenge of unprecedented cuts in expenditure and services, and more than ever must demonstrate cost effectiveness and the economic and social value of its services. Looking at outcomes from a wellbeing perspective helps us to demonstrate the value of local government. It has long been recognized that local government is a key player in creating the conditions for material wellbeing. It does this through increasing employment opportunities, regenerating the physical environment and strengthening the local economy. But more recent evidence also highlights the importance of nurturing psycho-social wellbeing in local populations, so that all residents can reach their potential and live a good life.

2. DEMOKRATIC PRACTICES IN CITY

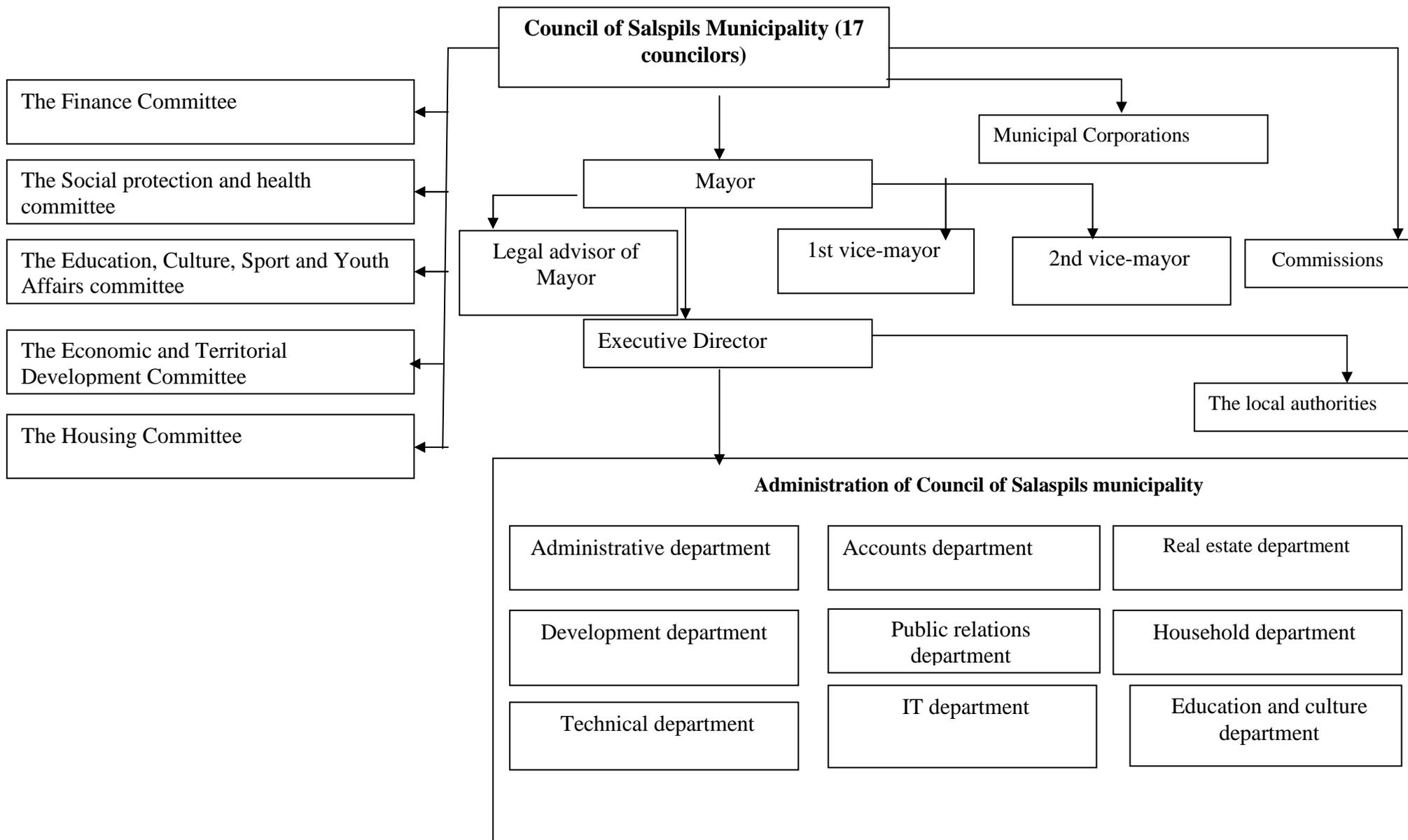
In the figure No. 1, you can see the political structure of Salaspils Municipality. The council of Salaspils Municipality consists of 17 councilors, 9 of them are forming coalition, while other 8 work in opposition. The council has decision-making power, while administration has executive power. Councilors are working in different committees and commissions (recommendatory nature) where they are working on citizens' and administration's suggestions. When some suggestion is examined in committee and supported by majority of councilors, it is directed to council meeting. All supported suggestions should be realised by administration and local authorities. In

¹⁰ Sandra Lien, Peter A. Pettersen. Local Government and Welfare Generosity: Municipality Spending on Social Welfare, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2004, pp. 343-365.

¹¹ Anna J. Johansson, Ingmar Svedung, Rudolf Andersson. Management of risks in societal planning – an analysis of scope and variety of health, safety and security issues in municipality plan documents, *Safety Science*, Vol. 44 Issue 8, 2006, pp. 675-688.

Administration of Council of Salaspils Municipality work 78 employees, divided in 9 different departments. The councilors have been elected by citizens every four years, next elections would be at June, 2013.

The Political Structure of Salaspils Municipality



As Salaspils is suburban of Riga, the capital city of Latvia, city faces with a problem that inhabitants don't feel emotionally close to the city. Since more than 2/3 of all economic activities of Latvia are situated in Region of Riga, during last ten years Salaspils as suburban has expanded, population is growing rapidly – more and more young families choose to live here because of the close location to capital city. As mostly part of inhabitants work, study and rest in capital city, they don't actively participate in social life of Municipality and in decision making process of important challenges faced by the Municipality. Because of the recent history (Latvia was a part of Soviet Union), a lot of employees from different departments (including Social services) of local authorities are used to make decisions without involving needed stakeholders. They don't understand that they work for people and the client's needs are the most important. People feel that there is a great gap between local authorities and inhabitants, especially those who are with low income and don't actively participate in NGOs.

During the last 3 years the work of NGOs has been mobilized – the existed NGOs are more actively participating in social life and public involvement activities. Their attitude has changed – if before the project they were more consumer-like inhabitants then now they are ready to come up with ideas and constructive way how to realise those ideas in co-responsibility approach.

Speaking about social groups which haven't been active before the project (for example, youth organizations), there have been made a lot of effort to activate them. This Project helped us to notice where are the gaps in representativeness of Local Support group and to search the ways how to mobilize them beyond the project. For example, during the realizing pilot actions like Science week or City festival, there was an acute need for youngsters' organizations - not just for helping realizing some events (practical help) but also for finding creative solutions how to perform some activities and for getting the point of view of target audience if some planned actions satisfy their needs. This Project was the platform to hire the youth specialist who now is making the system for youth policy and its realization in Salaspils.

It is sure that one of the key factors of successful realising the democratic principles is awareness of existing situation. That's why meeting with LSG always starts with the short report (usually performed by the Mayor of Salaspils who is also the member of LSG) about actualities in municipality. After this report all members can ask questions and get an instant feedback. This established mechanism is increasing the awareness of citizens about what's happening in municipality which in turn reduces the risk of misinformation, plus its approximates the decision-making power and society.

As one of the homogeneous groups also was Council of Salaspils Municipality, elected councillors could also define their point of view what is well-being/ ill-being of society and that must be done/ could be done to improve the existing situation. As they were also in process of

realising the SPIRAL methodology, their attitude was more understanding to need to implement project's activities. Also this factor helped them to understand the importance of co-responsibility approach – if Project's coordinators just presented the methodology without personal inclusion of councillors; the result wouldn't be so successful. After presentation of all results, the councillors were surprised about results, because they didn't expected that for citizens are so important immaterial things like culture and leisure supply, involvement in public activities, personal development, etc. Councillors were more focused on basic infrastructure, insulation of blockhouses, heat supply. In LSG are actively participating 3 councillors – one of them is Mayor - this fact also encourage citizens to participate in meetings.

3. LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP

The first step was to create Local Support Group (LSG) which is the main working force in the Project since the beginning in the year 2010. LSG is created by representatives/leaders of local homogenous groups representing respective interest/social group. The Municipality of Salaspils started to collect potential participants through communication channels: announcements on the notice-boards in public houses (as cultural houses, municipal council house, schools etc.), also announcements in local newspaper in both languages – Latvian and Russian, announcements and invitations through the e-mail, post and phones. There are many NGO's performing in Salaspils, and they all were also spoken.

The first meeting with the NGO's and Salaspils population was at the 4th of March, 2010, the second meeting with missed social groups at the 18th of March. At the end there were created 25 different homogeneous groups that started work in *URBACT Project*. LSG representatives was made from the leaders of homogenous groups and other individuals; LSG represents all society in Salaspils: pupils, pensioners, entrepreneurs, scientists, parents, dancers, deputies, disabled persons, social workers, athletes, etc., including few minorities groups - pupils, pensioners, parents etc. In each homogeneous group there are 7-12 participants.

Before the project there wasn't established the system to bring together NGOs for dealing with different challenges. The municipality offered them the possibility to participate in several activities but it was more like address the concrete person from concrete NGOs. Mostly the NGOs were operating without any special intervention from municipality.

In the 2nd year of establishing the Local Support group there was situation when in LSG wasn't represented the school youth, because the students who participated in the beginning of the project graduated school and started to study in Riga. It was a challenge to find the new young activists who would like to get in some way completed team. To find a solution, the youngsters were involved in realizing some pilot actions (Science week, City festival), afterwards they felt more confident to come to meetings of LSG and express their point of view.

In table 1 are summarized the composition of LSG.

Table 1

Members of LSG and their role in the project

| Society group | Focus groups | Number of participants | Level of participation | Level of importance | Level of influence |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Youth | The Student Council of Salaspils First High School; The Student Council of Salaspils Second High School | 5 | Medium | Medium | Low |
| Parents | School for mothers and babies; The Board of parents of Salaspils preschool education institutions; Society of large families in Salaspils „Martinsala”; Salaspils Women’s Club “Spiganas” | 8 | High | High | Medium |
| Cultural/ sport/ religion workers | Russian song ensemble „ОТРАДА”; Middle age dance group „Usa” of Salaspils culture house „Rigava”; Education, culture and sport department in Salaspils region council; Sporta klubs „Egoisti”; Lutheran church of Salaspils; The Roman Catholic Church in Salaspils | 8 | High | High | High |
| Science | Technical Universities | 3 | Low | Medium | Low |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|----|------|--------|--------|
| workers | of Riga Institute of Inorganic Chemistry, Universities of Latvia Institute of Physics and Institute of Biology | | | | |
| Municipality workers | Salaspils Social service; The Union of Salaspils Municipality workers; Council of Salaspils region | 3 | High | High | High |
| Disabled people | The association of children and young people with disabilities in Salaspils “Zelta Atsledzina”; Society of disabled persons of Salaspils | 3 | High | Medium | High |
| Seniors | Society of Russians of Salaspils; The Board of Salaspils retired people; Club „Discovering Latvia” of society „ Salaspils’ Pensioners Set” | 3 | High | Medium | Medium |
| Representatives from rural territories | Society „Partnership of Stopini and Salaspils”; Initiative group of citizens of Dole island | 2 | High | High | High |
| Σ | 25 | 35 | | | |

4. FOCUS GROUPS

After scientific literature studies about well-being theory and practice and statistical data analysis about the municipality, its population, social and economical situations, there were defined potential homogeneous (focus) groups which could represent all society. The municipality workers in co-operation with workers from Social Service and Culture establishments defined possible stakeholders who could get involved in project's activities. Afterwards there were notified leaders of those potential groups with who was personally discussed further activities and need of participation in those. Afterwards those leaders spoke with members of NGO or interest group which he/ she represents. In general there were addressed 35 different organizations, 25 of them agreed to make a homogeneous group for realising research.

In figure Nr.1 is showed indicator's synthesis prepared from all 25 homogenous groups in Salaspils municipality.

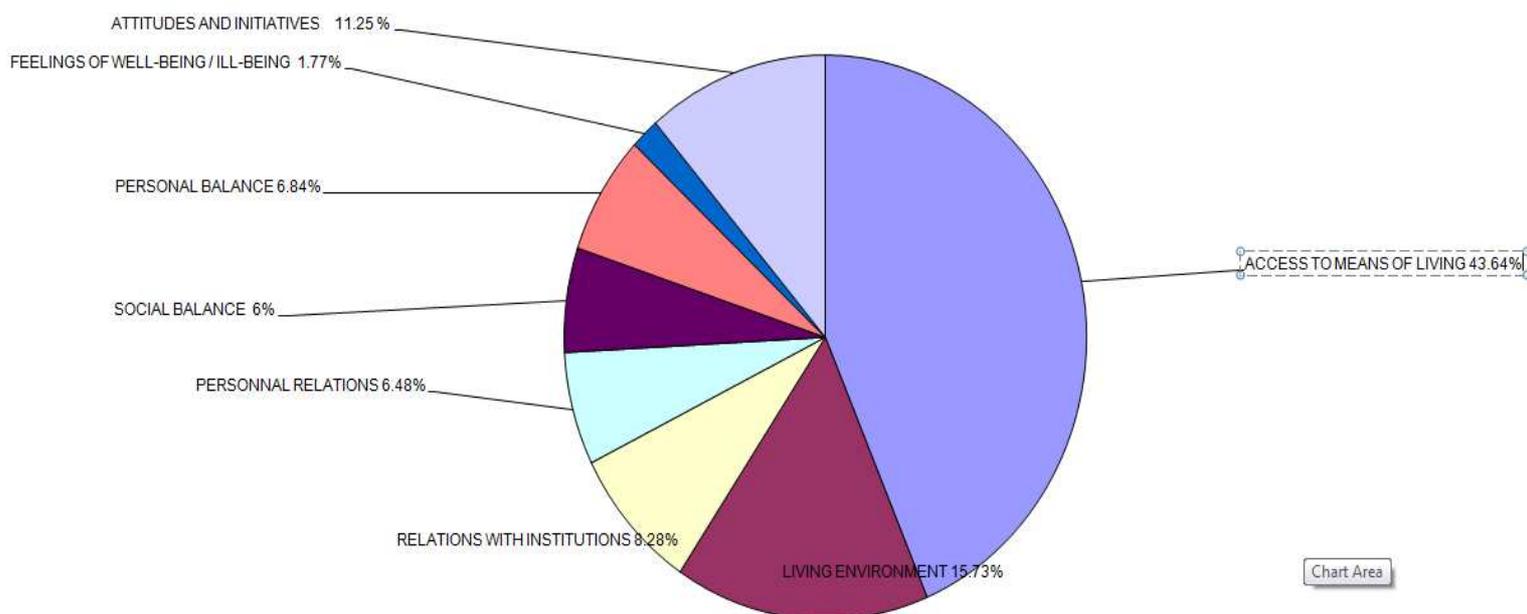


Figure Nr.1. Indicators Synthesis in Salaspils (all groups) in 2011, %

Source: Results of Salaspils 25 homogenous groups – results gained from 3 meetings September, 2010 until May 2011 (from 2867 answers)

43.64% from all answers were included in A block – *Access to means of living*. The most popular indicators were:

- **Education/training** (249 answers),
- **Health** (234),
- **Employment/economic activities** (216) and
- **Leisure/culture/sports** (177).

The reason why *Education/training* indicator is so popular is due to the fact that in Salaspils there are just 2 schools and a lot of parents send their children to Riga (in a very close distance from Salaspils) because in capital of Latvia there are wider possibilities to get good education. But in the next following years it is decided to build new school in Salaspils. Although there are different support from the municipality for out – school and free time activities (sport groups, dancing group, singing groups, etc.). Homogenous group representatives noticed that in Salaspils also adult persons do not have very many opportunities to improve their skills, education and spend free time in educational/cultural activities (circles, lifelong learning programs). A lot of representatives from the homogenous groups mentioned that medical care should be improved – this is pressing concern in Latvia, especially in rural territories. The same situation is with *Employment* – during the meeting the unemployment rate was 17% (average in Latvia). Also in Salaspils there are problems with visiting (not organizing) sports, culture events because municipality is very close to Riga where there are wide possibilities to spend free time. The biggest part of the Salaspils population just stay overnight in Salaspils but the active life is focused in processes in schools or work as well as free time activities in Riga (capital city of Latvia).

Second most popular block in Salaspils is B - *Living environment* with 15.73%. The most mentioned indicators were:

- **Basic infrastructures** (178 answers),
- **Environmental equilibrium** (67),
- **Facilities for physical security** (60).

There was often mentioned bad quality of roads (especially after winter), lack of proper sidewalks, bicycle paths, benches, and public toilets. Also citizens are not satisfied with environment – water bodies are polluted (especially river Daugava), due to the factory in Saulkalne (rural territory of Salaspils), Salaspils inhabitants are concerned about air pollution. Plus the waste collection issue is not solved. People are worried about physical security, there is not enough lightening.

Third most popular block is H - *Attitude and Initiatives* (11.25%). The most mentioned indicators were:

- **Private activities and initiatives** (122 answers),
- **Engagement in civic life** (62),
- **Responsibility** (46).

People in Salaspils showed that they want to participate in decision making to improve level of well-being. That's why they make different organizations to join forces.

Other blocks (*Relations with institutions, Personal relations, Social balance, Personal balance and Feelings of well-being/ill-being*) were mentioned rarely.

The Most Problematic Areas in Salaspils

Analysis of the indicators showed that people in Salaspils have two different groups of problems:

1. Problems that are common in Latvia,
2. Problems that apply to inhabitants of Salaspils.

In **first group** we can include like as:

- Access to means of living,
- Alimentation,
- Employment/economic activities,
- Basic infrastructure,
- Economic balance,
- Demographic balance.

Due to the economic crisis in whole Latvia access to means of living is major problem, there are not enough workplaces (it leads to emigration), there is great inequality between incomes. Also economic crisis exacerbated birth rates.

In **second group** (most characteristic problems in Salaspils) there are included such concerns like:

- Health,
- Personal development.

In Salaspils there is rather poor medical care – the doctors are not in sufficient amount, plus doctors' visits are unreasonably expensive. There are no pharmacies in sufficient numbers in rural territories, long waiting lists for visits to doctors.

The inhabitants of Salaspils are concerned also about so-called "Dog's issue". After winter all parks and sidewalks are fool with dog's feces. That's why it is needed to organize educational measures for dog's owners.

Salaspils citizens often mentioned the unreasonable price of utilities, especially for heating. This problem is already in process of solving.

In rural territories of Salaspils Municipality aren't enough possibilities for qualitative free time activities. Salaspils provides wide possibilities for free time activities (theatre performances, concerts, hobby groups, etc.) but it is quite difficult to visit events from rural territories (transport issue, extra expenditures). The most concerned in it are families with children and retired persons

During the meetings there were some individual problems that have risen. For example, some groups (parents of large families, disable persons) mentioned that they need some place where they can meet and organize some events. In culture house "Rigava" interest groups can book place but they find it too expensive. Also understandable is fact that every group talks more about issues that are more relevant to their identity, for, example, disabled people about infrastructure and mobility, retired persons about more events for old people and organizing interest groups, pupils about free time spending etc. But the most important that thanks to the different homogenous groups that represents all society, all other society participants can be acquainted with problems of other social/interest groups in Salaspils and as a result they can talk about all problems that is common to all population in Salaspils, to evaluate the priorities and prepare proposals for decision making.

Further are main findings from each homogeneous group.

1. Club „Discovering Latvia” of society „ Salaspils’ Pensioners Set” (Biedrības „Salaspils Pensionāru kopa” klubs „Iepazīstam Latviju”)

- Dissatisfied with the infrastructure (roads, traffic to Riga, street lighting).
- Trying to take care of the people’s culture and their own health.

2. Society „Partnership of Stopini and Salaspils” (Biedrība „Stopiņu un Salaspils partnerība”)

- Key issue is the environment - infrastructure, as well as environmental safety (criminal environment).
- Health care is a topical issue.
- What's important is child and adult leisure (interest education, culture, sport).

3. Initiavive group of citizens of Dole island (Doles salas iedzīvotāju iniciatīvas grupa)

- Concerns about health and wealth, environment, its cleanliness and orderliness.
- Worrying about infrastructure of Dole island, including public transport.
- Actively involved in environmental clean-up work, taking care of cleaner environment and ecology.

4. Russian song ensemble „ОТРАДА” (Krievu dziesmu ansamblis „ОТРАДА”)

- Very unsatisfied with the pension system (retirement, pension, etc.), benefits and wages.
- Suffers from very high utility charges in Salaspils.
- Trying to live very sparingly.

5. The association of children and young people with disabilities in Salaspils “Zelta Atsledzina” (Salaspils Bērnu un jauniešu invalīdu biedrība „Zelta atslēdzina”)

- Without material values emphasizes medical services, as well as self-development.
- Feelings of social exclusion.
- Trying to help each other, live in harmony with themselves, improve themselves.

6. Society of large families in Salaspils „Martinsala” (Salaspils daudzbērnu ģimeņu biedrība „Mārtiņšala”)

- Important is children's education, leisure and health issue.
- Worrying about child safety (in a criminal environment).
- Try to live sparingly, take care of healthy food and healthy lifestyle for the whole family.

7. Society of disabled persons of Salaspils (Salaspils invalīdu biedrība)

- In addition to material means the highest value is health.
- Worry about social tensions caused by drug addiction, alcoholism, violence, low cultural level of society.
- Work and educate, also think about the economical and efficient way of life.

8. Society of Russians of Salaspils (Salaspils Krievu biedrība)

- Try to be socially active and responsible people (participating in the renovation of the house, looking for sponsors, seeking information about EU projects).
- Expressed their disappointment about lack of sports complex (including swimming pool).

9. Middle age dance group „Usa” of Salaspils culture house „Rīgava” (Salaspils kultūras nama „Rīgava” vidējās paaudzes deju kolektīvs „Ūsa”)

- It is important to have a developed infrastructure, jobs, access to health care.
- Worry about public safety, ineffectiveness of municipal actions, the quality of education, material security, free time filling options.
- Try to take participation in government work, participate in local cultural life and environmental cleanup, to pay taxes.

10. Lutheran church of Salaspils (Salaspils Luterāņu draudze)

- Basic needs are important - social security and a favorable social environment.

- It is important to realize Christian values.
- Emphasis on charity.

11. Council of Salaspils region (Salaspils novada dome)

- It is important to have a job that provides satisfaction, qualitative health care, access to training, organized environment, infrastructure.
- Concerns about the lack of permanent income, poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructure, lack of access to medical services.
- They are actively involved in parliamentary work, also they organize cultural and sports activities.

12. Education, culture and sport department in Salaspils region council (Salaspils novada domes Izglītības, kultūras un sporta nodaļa)

- The most important is work.
- Important aspects are finance and civic responsibility.

13. The Union of Salaspils Municipality workers (Salaspils pašvaldības darbinieku arodbiedrība)

- Important are relationships among people, positive emotions, and education, including, life-long learning opportunities and possibility to work in acquired profession.
- Actual are credit obligations, debts, higher salary in work, possibility to have personal freedom, travelling, relaxing.
- Need for better quality of life – personal car, house and recreation facilities.

14. The Board of Salaspils retired people (Salaspils Pensionāru kopas padome)

- Besides the unsatisfaction of material needs, a large emphasis on the cultural needs and social assistance from the municipality.
- It is important to have social security and health care.
- People in this group are trying to help others and live frugally.

15. The Board of parents of Salaspils preschool education institution “Jantarpins” (Salaspils pirmsskolas izglītības iestādes „Jāņtārpiņš” vecāku padome)

- Very important is the security on the streets, there is lack of pedestrian crossing and cambers on the streets (near to the schools and kinder garden, there was one next to the “Jāņtarpins” but it is liquidated now), the streets are not illuminated enough.
- There is no area, where mothers can go with children or where to leave pre-school age child for hour or two.

- Parents are worried because of negative attitude of municipality social worker in benefit giving cases, as well as disordered ministration system in municipality.

16. The Board of parents of Salaspils preschool education institution “Saulite” (Salaspils pirmsskolas izglītības iestādes „Saulīte” vecāku padome)

- It is important to spend more time with their families.
- Indicated the lack of sport complex in Salaspils.
- Adds that there are many poor quality and dark streets in Salaspils.

17. The Roman Catholic Church in Salaspils (Salaspils Romas Katoļu draudze)

- Relationships are important, they consider that people don't have enough understanding about Christian values and there is need to invest more in children upbringing.

- They consider that low level of culture and education is caused by small financial investments (percent from budget is not enough).

- Are worried about low temperature in church.

- Mentioned that there is high level in corruption and the control of economical crime is weak and ineffective, there are problems with illegal alcohol trading.

18. Salaspils Women's Club “Spiganas” (Salaspils sieviešu klubs „Spīganas”)

- The main actualities are health care problems and opportunities to work.

- Accents different problems in society, as well as, bad infrastructure.

- Trying to live in harmony with themselves and others, to do civic activities and to do the environment.

19. Salaspils Social service (Salaspils Sociālais dienests)

- It is important to have adequate financial security, qualitative education, stable families, state guarantees, available place of abode, accessibility of recreation and culture opportunities, accessible public transport, and safety.

- Worrying about lack of material provision, unemployment, social risks, mental degradation, uncertainty about the future, state inability.

- Trying to participate in charity, to take responsibility, be optimistic and social active.

20. The Student Council of Salaspils First High School (Salaspils 1. vidusskolas Skolēnu padome)

- The most important are relationships with each others.

- Consider that it is important to help others.

- Indicates the necessary of favourable political environment.

21. The Student Council of Salaspils Second High School (Salaspils 2. vidusskolas Skolēnu padome)

- The most important is to reduce the level of unemployment.
- There are too few places where to do sport activities.
- To promote the well-being are trying to learn better how to escape from conflict situations.

22. School for mothers and babies (Skoliņa bēbīšiem un māmiņām)

- It is important that both parents have job, qualitative medical care is accessible for everybody.
- Actuality is the opportunities how and where to spend the leisure time.
- Wish to have more kindergartens and hobby groups.
- Worrying about less work opportunities, unemployment, decay of society (drugs, alcoholism, and violence in families), lack of education institution and kinder gardens.
- To prove the well-being they are paying taxes, raising children, helping others who have more difficult situations, caring up the environment, improving their education.

23. Sport club „Egoisti”

- It is important to have snug infrastructure, state of health.
- Would like to have more support from government and state in sports and culture.
- Are working in more than one workplace, improves themselves mentally and physically.

24. Technical Universities of Riga Institute of Inorganic Chemistry, Universities of Latvia Institute of Physics and Institute of Biology (Rīgas Tehniskās universitātes Neorganiskās ķīmijas institūts, Latvijas Universitātes Fizikas institūts un Latvijas Universitātes Bioloģijas institūts)

- Actuality is to have integrated environment, usage of Latvian language; access to health care, education, orderly infrastructure and environment, recreation facilities, comfort, access to culture, social security, work, safety, support to families, affective government and public administration.
- Worrying about health care, poverty, intolerance, disorganized infrastructure, unfavourable environment, natural disasters, unemployment, ineffective governance, crime, public degradation.

- Trying to take care of health, honestly doing their job, carry up the environment, collaborates with municipality, participates in cultural life, looks after the family, are social responsible.

25. The entrepreneurs of Salaspils (Salaspils Uzņēmēju biedrība)

- It is important to encourage all needed infrastructure for business
- Worrying about unemployment, especially youth employment problems
- Trying to make new work places, pay taxes, be democratic responsible

5. PILOT ACTIONS ON CO-RESPONSIBILITY

In the third meeting with homogenous groups they were asked to define pilot actions:

1. Firstly pilot actions that the homogenous group can do by themselves (2 actions for year 2011, 2 for year 2012);
2. Secondly action that should come with help from municipality (also 2 for year 2011 and 2 for year 2012).

Team from University of Latvia summarized all possible actions from homogeneous groups in three main groups:

1. Actions that could be realized in context of *Urbact II* project;
2. Actions that could be included in Development Program of Salaspils;
3. Actions that could be easily implemented (outside the *URBACT II* project).

All possible pilot-actions from the third meeting were discussed in the 7th of June, 2011, during the joint meeting with Local Support Group. At first the findings from previous meetings were presented in order to view the main problems in municipality. Also it was stated that pilot-actions should promote coordination between municipality of Salaspils, clubbable/social organizations and population to prepare reasonable proposals for joint activities and problem solution.

Afterwards all actions were presented and everyone was encouraged to express his/her views about actions (grouping, priority of implementation, possible coordination between clubbable/social (civil) organizations in implementation). During discussion coordinators (team from University of Latvia and Salaspils Municipality) promoted discussion and wrote down findings.

At the end of the meeting there were discussed results of Local Support Group and were concluded 2 main issues:

1. strengthening the informative links in Salaspils;
2. public involvement activities.

For every pilot action was organized work group where were representatives of different NGOs and Council of Municipality who are usually responsible for actions like these. But it was

stated that leader of work group must represent the NGOs or interest groups (not Municipality). In this way Municipality demonstrated in very considered way that opinion of inhabitants is very important to them and municipality is open to hear it and take it into account.

The work group is meeting at least once per two weeks to discuss the progress of activity. In the beginning the coordinator of the project had to communicate with each of member of work group to promote meetings and discussions, after few meeting members were enough motivated to organize meeting by themselves and more often than it was planned before. Some of the groups were more active than others – it depends on the activity, leader of work group and other factors.

So far (the pilot actions were stated in June, 2011) the most active work group is working on society information about science development in Salaspils. It is quite surprisingly that in the begging the group was formed to inform society about environmental problems, but participants realized that they don't know anything about 5 different science establishments that take place in Salaspils and also working on environmental issues. That's why it is important to inform society about their activities and then cooperate with them to solve different problems (like pollution). Now work group has expanded - there are even several sub-groups who are working on concrete activities. As a result of those groups would be Science week in Salaspils (in a future it could be even Science month). This action is fully supported by Council of Salaspils Municipality, because in Development program for 2012-2018 was stated that strengthening the concept "Salaspils – science city" is medium and long term priority. In addition to that this work group was also involved in preparing application for different project where would be possible to attract finances for further researches in cooperation possibilities between science, education and entrepreneurship.

1. Coordination centre for NGOs

How is it being developed? What is the partnership?

During the meetings with homogeneous groups participants often mentioned that they don't have place where to meet, discuss different questions. In Salaspils is already Social centre but there are difficulties with organizing places for NGOs. That's why reorganization of existing Social centre would improve communication between citizens, as a result NGOs could take initiatives in improving well-being of Municipality.

Working group: representatives from society of large families, society of Russians, the board of retired people, school for mothers and babies + Council of Salaspils

Action/ results

The working group got a vision how Coordination centre for NGOs should look like (December, 2011).

In budget of Salaspils Municipality was separated the certain amount of money for renovation existing Social centre (January, 2012).

The schedule for NGOs meetings was prepared (January, 2012).

Renovation of existing Social centre (February, 2012).

The regular meetings for NGOs (since February, 2012).

Problems

It was problem to make a schedule when NGOs could come together (some wanted at the same time). Also it was realised that in existing Socials centre is not enough space for all groups.

Plans for future

Continue to attract NGOs attention to go to the centre, to provide creative programme for NGOs. Also make a research of usefulness making 2nd NGO coordination centre in different part of Salaspils.

2. Creating blog for “TOGETHER” participants

How is it being developed? What is the partnership?

Many groups mentioned that only official website and local paper offer any kind of information but those media don't give an opportunity to publish personal or group opinion, news. In this blog NGOs could publish information that is topical for them (events, offered opportunities, etc.). That's why it is needed to create blog for NGOs – in this case for those groups who participate in “TOGETHER” project where would be possible to publish all news concerned the NGOs and the project. It is expected that this blog will improve dialogue/respect of others, satisfaction, plus we hope that this pilot-action would promote private initiatives and collective organization.

Working group: initiative group of citizens of Dole island, the student council, association of entrepreneurs + Council of Salaspils

Action/ results

The structure of blob was created (November, 2011)

Identifying all target audience and trainings - visualization how to use it (December, 2012)

Problems

People don't actively use the blog – they find it too time consuming. Also they say that there are other communication channels (official web site, e-mail, etc.)

Plans for future

As blog is not too actively used, LSG decided that the further progress in improving communication channels would be the creating a new official website of Salaspils Municipality. This working group could be as an experts how new website should look like and function. The preparation of new official website of municipality would continue until the end of 2012.

3. Improvement of local newspaper „Salaspils Vēstis”

How is it being developed? What is the partnership?

A lot of people complain that local newspaper is very formal – there is just “dry” information about

municipality (realized projects, decisions of Council, laws and regulations) but citizens would like to read news about NGOs, public and private institutions, also they want to see advertisements, greetings. Also citizens complain that circulation is not enough and distribution to rural territories is insufficient. We believe that this pilot-action will improve information exchange, transparency and communication, also institutional relationship with citizens.

Working group: society of large families, society „Partnership of Stopini and Salaspils”, the board of Salaspils retired people, initiative group of citizens of Dole island + Council of Salaspils

Action/ results

In budget of Municipality was separated certain amount for circulation increase of paper, improving the distribution and paper's thickness.

Problems

Still the thickness of paper is not enough for all news – some articles can not be published. Not all NGOs are using this new possibility to publish articles.

Plans for the future

Promote using possibility to publish articles concerning NGOs. To attract professional journalist/ politologist who could work on existing all material and make the publications more attractive to society.

4. Strengthening cooperation between science and education

How is it being developed? What is the partnership?

At first the group discussed environment issues where the key player would be science institutes. But during first meeting we realized that actually citizens don't know anything about science development in Salaspils (there are 5 science institutes) and at first we need to popularize concept that Salaspils is science city and only then we could think about how to improve environment situation. We believe that strengthening the cooperation between education and science could help us improve information exchange, social inclusion, dialogue and respect of others.

Working group: science institutes, middle age dance group, the student councils, society „Partnership of Stopini and Salaspils”, society of large families, association of entrepreneurs + Council of Salaspils + different experts (artists, science communicators, entertainers, ect.)

Action/ results

The definition of programme for all Science week and distribution responsibility.

In budget of Salaspils Municipality is certain amount of money for event.

During the last week of April there was organized week of Science in Salaspils.

Problems

It is the first experience when so people from so many different groups come together and organize such big measure event, it is not easy to coordinate them. Also scientists are not quite ready for such big attention from all society. Also it is challenge to prepare great event with such limited budget, plus it must be creative and innovative.

Plans for the future

To ensure that Science week would become a tradition of Salaspils. To prepare the research of possible cooperation between science, educational institutions and entrepreneurs in Salaspils.

5. Organisation of Salaspils City festival

How is it being developed? What is the partnership?

City festival is highly attended events when all citizens come together, that's why it must be organized properly taking into account interest of different social groups of Salaspils. It would be a great opportunity to gather different interest groups which could collectively develop event program. In this way would be strengthened links between municipality, civil organizations and population, positioning Salaspils as a municipality where population gets involved in decision making. This pilot-actions would improve dialogue, respect of others, balance in the relations with the society, attitudes and initiatives, also engagement in civic life and collective organization.

Working group: society „Partnership of Stopini and Salaspils”, initiative group of citizens of Dole island, Russian song ensemble, society of large families, society of Russians of Salaspils, middle age dance group, lutheran church, the board of Salaspils retired people, sport club, school for mothers and babies + Council of Salaspils.

Action/ results

During regular meetings, the general programme has been developed. There are clear some events which is responsibility of LSG.

The organization of City festival in end of May.

Problems

A lot of people admitted that they agree to express their point of view but they are not ready to realize them. Plus the City festival would be in the end of May, when a lot of possible participants are busy and cannot take active participation. For some possible actions municipality cannot provide financing.

Plans for the future

To continue established cooperation in organized City festival every year.

6. Family day

How is it being developed? What is the partnership?

At first Family day was planned and organized in context of City festival, but working group decided to separate those two events because otherwise Family day would be in the shadow of City festival and society would not pay needed attention to it.

Working group: society „Partnership of Stopini and Salaspils”, initiative group of citizens of Dole island, society of large families, school for mothers and babies, the association of children and young people with disabilities + Council of Salaspils

Action/ results

There is prepared and confirmed by Council of Municipality the regulation of Family day when Council of Salaspils Municipality would honour families in different nominations (formal part). For informal part (2 days camping) the society of large families in cooperation with others prepared project to get co-financing from Municipalities budget.

There was organized the questionnaire for different nominations (“Best Mum”, “Best Dad”, etc.).

The formal event organized to dignify families at 15th of May, 2012.

Also there was prepared project application for informal part (2 days camping) and got support.

Problems

There was a problem about who would be responsible for formal part (for dignifying families in different nominations). Finally it was decided that Council of Salaspils Municipality would led this event and it could be the tradition for next years. Concerning this – there was a problem to get money from Municipality budget, because it was too late to plan certain amount in budget.

Plans for future

To organize the informal part of Family day (September, 2012). Also to make this event as a tradition in Salaspils.

6. Organization of International Day of Disabled Persons

How is it being developed? What is the partnership?

In Salaspils are two active societies for disabled people who are trying to decrease social exclusion and inequality problem. Also other homogeneous groups admitted that there must be paid more attention to integration of disabled persons in civil life. There would be organized events that gather society, emphasizing social inequality problem and disabled persons involving in social life. This pilot-action will improve dialogue, respect of others, also engagement in civic life, collective organization and social inclusion.

Working group: social service, the student council, the roman catholic church, society of Russians, society of large families, the association of children and young people with disabilities + Council of Salaspils

Action/ results

The organization of International day for disabled persons (from 29th of November until 3rd of December, 2011).

Any early problems?

This activity was a pleasant surprise for persons with disabilities, but actually they were quite shy and reserved, because they don't feel too comfortable in the situation when they are in spotlight.

Plans for future

To make sure that in organizing other events there would be taken into account the needs of persons with special needs.

Evaluating the results of pilot actions, (the pilot actions were stated in June, 2011) the most active work group is working on society information about science development in Salaspils. It is quite surprisingly that in the begging the group was formed to inform society about environmental problems, but participants realized that they don't know anything about 5 different science establishments that take place in Salaspils and also working on environmental issues. That's why it is important to inform society about their activities and then cooperate with them to solve different problems (like pollution). Now work group has expanded - there are even several sub-groups who are working on concrete activities. As a result of those groups would be Science week in Salaspils (in a future it could be even Science month). This action is fully supported by Council of Salaspils Municipality, because in Development program for 2012-2018 was stated that strengthening the concept "Salaspils – science city" is medium and long term priority. In addition to that this work group was also involved in preparing application for different project where would be possible to attract finances for further researches in cooperation possibilities between science, education and entrepreneurship.

Evaluating depth of citizen engagement by 7 point scale, LSG decided that that they have reached 3rd level "An engaged partnership", because there is real influence of LSG to decision making process. But still employees of municipality play dominating role in the process. However in working groups the leader was noted from NGOs but in reality the employee from municipality managed most part of activities (for example, organizing City Festival, Science week). In other working groups (like Family day) member of LSG took all responsibility as a leader. There are also some features from higher level, for example, making plan for combating poverty in municipality – in process were involved citizens, they formulated all actions and terms, employees of municipality participated in this process equally with others. Formulation of this plan was a good example of 4th level "Co-governance", because LSG made strategic planning how to include social issues in Development programme of Salaspils for 2012-2018. They created additional plan to working plan for administration of Council of Salaspils Municipality and local authorities involving also social

activities. The organization of Science week was an example of “Co-management” (5th level), when science establishments, municipality, schools worked together for one purpose – to ensure the realization of concept “Salaspils – Science City”.

6. SPREADING THE CO-RESPONSIBILITY APPROACH

“TOGETHER” project ends in December, 2012. There are scheduled activities until the end of the project that are financed and supported by the Lead Partner. But as it was found that this methodology works very well and shows real evidence that society involvement has been reached in significant level, it is stated from politicians that Municipality will use this model of decision making and problem solving in level of its operative work.

Council of Salaspils Municipality with experts from European Council already has organized trainings for other municipalities of Latvia and Estonia (2-3 of February, 2012) to share with experience and good practice in realizing SPIRAL methodology. As this was pioneer Project in Latvia in using this methodology, it is expected that Salaspils case would promote using it across all country.

Already there are ongoing negotiations with Council of Riga for implementing SPIRAL methodology in specific areas, for example in organizing citizens’ forum for certain region of city, making social policy for large families, etc.

The co-responsibility approach had been incorporating in several planning and working documents, like Development program of Salaspils municipality for 2012-2018 (to define the current situation and main challenges in future), in Action Plan against Poverty (there were organized several meeting when LSG described the poverty situation in Salaspils, defined activities in different fields how to improve situation; the outputs of these meetings were approved by executives – employees of Municipality Council, Social Services, Culture Houses, Municipal police, ect.). Also in some regulations like Regulation about co-financing the NGOs project contest, were mentioned that in evaluating commission must be representative from LSG. It is planned that in future in developing each planning and working document there would be examine whether there is possibility to include the principles of co-responsibility approach.

To ensure the sustainability of established pilot activities like Family day, International day for disabled persons and Science week, in budget of Municipality for 2013 would be ensured certain amount of finances. As in Latvia is not too widely spread the movement of charity, this factor – ensured budget and support from local authorities - is very important to ensure that activities would be realized. Of course there is a limitation in budget for all those events but certain amount of money would be assigned. Also NGOs would try to attract additional money from different external financing programmes (LEADER, Youth in Action).

As there had been established strong informative links with NGOs and interest groups and project managers of municipality are giving information and consultations about possibilities of topical project and programs, it is forecasted that the activity in submitting project's proposals would be increased – the attracted financing would also positively affect the well-being of society.

As Salaspils was the pilot territory in using SPIRAL methodology in national level and in realizing it and the team of experts from University of Latvia was attracted, there have been prepared some scientific publications which were also presented in some international conferences (*Municipality and inhabitants cooperation for well-being: Salaspils district case*, New Challenges of Economic and Business Development – 2012, May 10-12, 2012, Riga, University of Latvia; *Creation of Local Support Group on Path to Well Being in Municipality: Salaspils Municipality Case*, New Socio-economic Challenges of Development in Europe – 2010; October 7-9, 2010, Riga, University of Latvia). It is planned that also in future the experts of University of Latvia would assist in activities of LSG to give independent opinion and suggestions how successfully continue the cooperation. Plus all these researches would be displayed in scientific publications and conferences to spread new approaches further.

7. LINKING WITH OTHER METHODS

As during the project activities there had been developed strong relationship with citizens, is planned to develop it further using other methods, like creating a Foundation of Salaspils. As the Project ends in end of 2012, there must be created some mechanism to ensure that still people come together to discuss actual problems and collectively find a solutions to them. Since beginning of 2012, the meeting with LSG have been organized in following way: 1st part – LSG are discussing Project' s current events (realizing pilot actions), 2nd part – the Mayor (or other person who represents Local Authorities) is speaking about topical issues of municipality, then Local Support group is discussing certain parts of Action plan against poverty. It is planned that each year LSG would prepare Action plan that would consist of certain activities which Council of Salaspils Municipality would approve taking into account the distribution of responsibility, certain terms and performance indicators to control and evaluate its performance.

Municipality is trying to motivate NGOs to collectively organize activities by NGOs' projects co-financing contest where municipality provides certain amount of money for NGOs projects. As this year the activeness of NGOs was higher than expected (some of NGOs got co-financing), it is planned that every next year there would be increased the financial support for this activity. In this way NGOs would learn how to prepare projects – the situation with competition element is also motivating to prepare more advanced project application.

There is quite serious risk concerning using co-responsibility approach and linking it with other methods – political situation in municipality. In 2013 are elections, that means if outweighs opposition then there is possibility that they wouldn't promote established system in making dialog with society and involve them into decision making processes. It would be very difficult to work from the beginning with politicians trying to explain the approach.

In the level of administration of council of Salaspils Municipality, there also must be done serious work with employees of municipality to explain them the sense of co-responsibility approach. To ensure that there must be organized trainings and experience exchange trip to other municipalities there are strong link with society. In this way there would be promoted linking process with other methods.

8. THE LSG

To continue successful cooperation between municipality and NGOs, the main partner in decision making - Local Support Group - will regularly come together (around once a month/ two months) to discuss topical problems Salaspils Municipality. During the meeting politicians and other responsible personnel will report about actualities in Municipality, listen to citizens' opinions and answer to their questions. The aim of Council of Salaspils Municipality is to ensure that all citizens of Salaspils would feel free to express their point of view about topical issues in Municipality and the most important – to take actions to solve the resulting situation. This also refers to the main target of this Project. In addition to that there is planned to include LSG in other further projects where LSG would play a certain role. Those possible projects would give an impulse to come together and participate in well-being activities. Like in this case - to be a pilot territory to approbate new methodology (at least in national level) Salaspils would continue to search new possibilities how to include LSG and implement new methodologies.

To ensure the permanent representativeness of LSG there would be reviewed its composition, in case of certain gaps there would be looking for possibilities to improve the situation (like filling the gap in youth sector, described above).

To get fresh ideas and creative solutions how to continue cooperation, there would be organized questionnaire and brainstorming to find out what are the weaknesses of organization of LSG, in which way to continue operating, also the forms of co-responsibility.

There is also idea to repeat the methodology after around 5 years to compare the well-being level in municipality and see if better situation is reached.

9. CONCLUSIONS

In a context of economic crisis, the solutions that are needed cannot only be based on economic resources but should also take into account the citizens themselves for innovative solutions based on local needs. Academic research as well as practical research in Salaspils municipality has proved that great importance for decision making on municipality level has discussions in homogenous groups on understanding issues important for all in municipality. Discussions in homogenous or focus groups help to lead for preparation of joint plans for municipality development and society involvement and it makes need to think also about other interest and social groups in the municipality.

One of the case that is obvious, we cannot evaluate the well-being in society without asking people questions about their own opinions. So all around the world questionnaires are one of the most widely used method in social and also economical science to make estimations about society, level of living, institution work, purchasing power etc.

It is justly to assume that level of inhabitants trust to municipality has been increased. At the beginning there were opinion from participants that municipality deputies only give promises but do not do it, so “there is no point to try for change something” (thought people) but during the realization of the *URBACT II project* more and more citizens found it possible for things to change. What is very important - the main gain is that people are becoming united in groups with common purposes and aims, participants are working and developing Salaspils together with the municipality. Also people understood that many things could be changed by themselves without great municipality involvement.

Meetings with homogeneous groups showed that there are particular needs for each group and these needs should be respected, groups discussed problems together so every social group could be informed about situation in other groups that helped to range problems by priorities. During the meetings of homogenous groups became known main guidelines for Development Program of Salaspils. In this way municipality ensures that the most part of citizen needs will be taken into account and Municipality will develop those sectors where people are really interested in, not those sectors which are usually developed in municipalities. It is important to introduce small aims which are possible to reach by people, it makes satisfaction in population and pride about the city, aims that are too big and could not be reached by 100 percent makes negative feeling about local parliament – talks are more than works.

In the future Salaspils' Municipality has decided to continue to involve society in decision making and cooperate with it in organizing different events. The *URBACT II project* showed that society wants to participate in different activities to increase well-being in municipality but very important is to see the practicable results of people work, to notice that real changes are coming.

Representatives of local community joint work together with municipality makes people and politicians feel as one team working together in the interests of all Salaspils. But of course, there is a risk concerning political stability – the actual coalition support using the co-responsibility approach, but there is uncertainty about what would be the result of next elections.

However there are a lot of challenges to face with like to involve persons with low income and from bad neighborhood, also persons who represent minorities (respecting national composition) to ensure that society is represented fully.

During the meetings with other partners representatives of Salaspils saw a lot of good ideas how to work, live and help to each other using co-responsibility approach. As to all meetings went one member of LSG and representative of Council of Salaspils municipality, it was ensured that good practice would be spread further to society. As in Latvia because of the historical background the co-responsibility approach is not developed, it was a great possibility to see how this approach has been using in other countries where established traditions are. It is more effective when not only Project's coordinators are speaking about co-responsibility and active citizens' inclusion but also members of LSG and councilors because they are spreading those ideas further – to NGOs, policy makers/ planners, media, etc.

To summarize all work that have been done, the citizen and community participation in the end of the project could be evaluated as “An engaged partnership” (3rd level). As in Salaspils before the project wasn't practice to use co-responsibility approach, a lot of efforts had been made by project coordinators to persuade NGOs to participate in LSG, express their point of view, also to realize their initiatives. But it is believed that in 2013 using created system situation in Salaspils would be improved – as proof there are already some features of higher levels in separate actions.