

FUTURE SMILE

Engaging youth in sustainable development activities

THE CHALLENGE

Sustainable development has been identified by the Belgian government as a critical issue for the country, and even more so for today's youth who will be most affected by society's current actions and practices. Youth have a huge stake in ensuring that Belgian citizens as a whole live sustainable and responsible lives; yet even the most committed youth often lack the knowledge and skills to incorporate sustainable development thinking into their social change activities.

THE PROGRAM

Launched in late 2006, the Future Smile program builds on young people's idealism and desire to contribute, equipping members of youth groups and organizations with valuable skills so that they may carry out their existing activities in more sustainable and responsible ways. Thirty-five youth led groups annually will be supported in redesigning and implementing their projects to integrate sustainable development components. Over the course of three years, 900 youth will benefit from the program and will, in turn, reach roughly 9,000 indirect beneficiaries. Participants will receive training and support at a residential training workshop; work with a network of resource persons who will train, guide, and coach them to upgrade the project; and receive a project grant to help them materialize their goals.



OUTCOMES

The program aims to improve the life skills of targeted youth, while increasing their understanding of sustainable development issues and their ability to translate these skills into practice. Secondary outcomes are strengthened youth participation and tangible social, economic, and environmental benefits to the community as a result of the youth's actions. In the long term, the program hopes to empower young people to become advocates of new ways to live and prosper while ensuring equitable, healthy futures for all people and the planet. Youth organizations are expected to mainstream more sustainable practices and behaviors into their daily activities.

THE PARTNER

An independent non-profit, the Foundation for Future Generations (FFG) was founded in 1998 with an ambitious agenda: to innovate in the field of sustainable development, one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century. FFG seeks to contribute to overcoming the huge imbalances found in our world: between North and South, between rich and poor, between man and nature, and between present and future generations. Its aim is to support or initiate practical and original projects that attempt to solve the emergencies we are confronted with today and the challenges facing us tomorrow.

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RESULTS TO DATE

To be reported in March 2007.

PROGRAM: Future Smile
PARTNER: Foundation for Future Generations (FFG)
PERIOD: 1 October 2006 – 30 September 2009
LOCATION: National
REACH : 900 youth, ages 16-25
MODEL: Volunteerism