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W Y B O R C Z A

SWITCH learning in Łódź



Stopping the floods: impressions from international visitors

●●Certain areas of Łódź flood regularly. The victims feel frustrated. But this collection of impressions from visitors at the SWITCH Process Documentation for Learning Alliances (LA) and Action Research training course shows that there is some hope that their situation may improve soon.

These impressions are not professional articles, but are work in progress as ongoing documentation by 12 SWITCH workshop participants and 2 facilitators.

We would like to thank all the people interviewed, the workshop organizers, and especially Joanna Grabowska and Gazeta Wyborcza for the tremendous support in producing this output. ●

DICK DE JONG



Writing & Voice Group

●●Leaders of the group are: Dick de Jong, Ewen Le Borgne from IRC in Holland and Monika Dziegielewska-Geitz the SWITCH Łódź LA facilitator. The participants of the workshop: Patrick Vanderhulst and Laurence Gillot (Belgium), Nadia Manning

(Barbados) and Simret Yasabu (Ethiopia), Phil Sharp and Alistair Sutherland (Great Britain), Martin Rivera (Honduras), Jochen Eckart (Germany), Baker Yiga and Alex Mbaguta (Uganda), Rania Anwar Zoubi (Jordan) and Berta Darteh (Ghana). ●

Building bridges over the Sokolowka river

Łódź is by nature a proud and hard working city in the south west of Poland



PHIL SHARP

With almost a million inhabitants, a former hub for the textile industry, ruined mills and deserted palaces stand as a testament to Łódź's industrial and wealthy past. Since then time and the changing politics of this part of the world have now combined to propel Łódź into a future that le-

aves behind it's industrial beginnings, exchanging this certain past for a bright but in some ways uncertain future and the new opportunities of the West and Europe.

For the most part the good citizens of Łódź, going about their daily lives, hurrying to work or shopping in the city's busy streets will know nothing of the rivers that flow beneath their feet, encased in their concrete straight-jackets. Rivers that once provided a haunt to otters, a haven to darting fish and power for the water wheels on long gone flour mills along their grassy banks have now been condemned by indu-

stry and urban growth to a life in perpetual darkness below the highways and footpaths of the city.

Like so many modern cities, the Łódź of today is developing and expanding to meet the future needs and aspirations of its inhabitants and all around there is evidence of growth and regeneration providing brave new uses for these once bustling mills. There is real sense of the benefits that revitalising these neglected areas of the city can contribute but at the same time

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SWITCH on



Professor Maciej Zalewski

●●SWITCH (Sustainable Water Management Improves Tomorrow Cities Health) is a 5-year EUR 22 million Project (2006-2011) financed by the European Commission. It is developing, applying and demonstrating a range of so-

lutions for sustainable urban water management in 9 demonstration cities in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.

Ecohydrology, the scientific concept developed within the UNESCO IHP Programme, is an integral part of SWITCH activities in Łódź. Dual regulation of hydrological of biological processes is applied for rehabilitation and a municipal river (Sokolowka) and improved stormwater management in the city. This approach will contribute to improved environment and quality of life in Łódź. The project is

coordinated by prof. Maciej Zalewski and dr Iwona Wagner (Department of Applied Ecology, University of Łódź, European Regional Centre for Ecohydrology under the auspices of UNESCO) and the City of Łódź Office.

A workshop "Process documentation for Learning Alliances and action research" organized in Łódź between the 1st and 5th July 2007, attracted over 40 participants from all over the World. It was organized together with the IRC - International Water and Sanitation Centre and the EMPOWERS Partnership. ●