

**Problems of implementation of local  
Agenda 21 in Ancona (Italy):  
the case of the “Peter Pan” environmental project\***

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*Riassunto*

*La sostenibilità ha tre dimensioni, economica, ambientale e sociale, che sono distinte ma collegate tra loro, allo stesso livello di rilevanza. La dimensione sociale dà speciale importanza all’occupazione del lavoro, alle reti di sicurezza sociale, all’equità e alla partecipazione democratica nel processo decisionale. Il nostro lavoro mira a descrivere e valutare la rilevanza sociale di un’esperienza di Agenda 21 Locale, di un progetto ambientale, il Peter Pan (Progetto di Ecosviluppo del Territorio della Provincia di Ancona) adottato dalla Provincia di Ancona nelle Marche. A tale scopo abbiamo condotto una ricerca con metodo qualitativo, mediante interviste al personale coinvolto nella pianificazione e realizzazione del progetto. Nel mese di settembre 2010 sono state effettuate interviste ad amministratori pubblici, project manager e facilitatori presso l’ufficio di Agenda 21 Locale di Ancona. I risultati principali della nostra ricerca consistono nella individuazione delle procedure democratiche per la pianificazione ecologica del territorio nella provincia di Ancona e del ruolo tenuto dagli uffici pubblici nell’incoraggiare la popolazione alla coscienza ambientale e alla conseguente partecipazione al piano d’azione di sviluppo locale. Parole chiave: Agenda 21 Locale, ambiente, sviluppo sostenibile, caso studio, provincia di Ancona*

1. *Introduction*

Agenda 21 is the United Nations Action Plan to achieve global

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sustainable development in the 21st century; it calls upon local authorities worldwide to draw up Local Agenda 21 by 1996 to promote sustainable development at the local level. Even theoretically well-defined sustainability criteria have no efficacy without local implementation, so that local authorities have a key role to play on this regard, due to their responsibilities and administrative functions relating to environment, development and planning provision of physical and personal services.

The success of Agenda 21 depends fundamentally on central Governments, but local administrations actually play a decisive role as land use is largely controlled at local level as well as waste disposal and water services and control of these activities and services. Their consequent administration activities have a decisive role in securing environmental protection and socio-economic development.

In order to achieve a balanced planning of human-environment relationship, Agenda 21 states that there are roles for everyone, at any level of commitment, from government to business people, trade unions, researchers, teachers, local inhabitants, men, women, youth and children.

The sustainable development idea does not avoid business but means that balanced development can be the way to turn both poverty and environmental destruction (OECD, 2001). The economic development is usually evaluated by the amount of money the society produces and the wealth of nations at present is measured without accounting the total value of natural resources and the full cost of environmental degradation. Furthermore, following a Pareto efficiency principle, any polluter can support the costs of pollution in the respect of the polluter pays principle (PPP) adopted by international institutions (Pearce-Turner, 1990).

Construction of an environmental policy on the basis of the PPP is not free of costs, because an apparatus has to be built up, supporting costs of monitoring and enforcement instruments and in any case the national and regional economic structure may have to adjust.

To reduce the risk of causing damage, environmental assessment should be carried out before starting projects so that risk adverse impacts

and governments should reduce (or eliminate at all) subsidies that are not consistent with sustainable development. By adopting Agenda 21, industrialized countries recognized that they have a greater role in cleaning up the environment than poor ones, who produce relatively less pollution and calls on governments to adopt national strategies for sustainable development, with wide participation of non-government organizations and the public. The responsibility for change lays on national governments, but they need to work in a large series of partnerships with international organizations, business, regional, state, provincial and local governments, non-governmental and citizens' groups.

This paper aims at reporting local difficulties faced by public administration officers in managing civic forums and assembly meetings during LA 21 procedures of implementation in Ancona (Italy) by the analysis of the Peter Pan project [01] as a case study.

After the geographic profile of the Ancona province, we report a brief literature summary on European and Italian experiences on LA 21, then the issues of Peter Pan and finally we try a valuation of the project following the key informants method, by reporting results of in-depth interviews of officers and local public administrators, professionally involved in the Peter Pan project management.

## *2. Geographic Profile of the Province of Ancona*

The Province of Ancona stretches from the Adriatic Sea to the Apennines of Marches and Umbria and it is mainly a hilly and mountainous territory furrowed by many valleys crossed by several short rivers forming small alluvial coastal plains (see pictures 1 and 2). The mostly sandy seashore runs for about 60 km along a low coastline interrupted by the high and rocky Conero<sup>1</sup> promontory near Ancona, the regional capital of the Marches.

Although the Province of Ancona is mostly hilly and notwithstanding

1. Mount Conero, 572 m high, is the promontory with the highest maritime crags of the Italian Adriatic Sea and it is a Regional Natural Park, covered by a wood on its top.

Pic. 1 - The Marches Region



Source: Different data sources, our processing

**Pic. 2 - Physical Map of the Province of Ancona**



Source: [02]

that only 5 out of the 49 municipalities are mountainous, one third of the territory is classified as mountainous because the actual mountainous municipalities (Arcevia, Cerreto d'Esì, Fabriano, Genga, Sassoferrato) have a very vast surface area (Massimi, 1999). Six Municipalities lay along the seaside and the rest are in the inner hilly territory.

Demographic distribution in the Province of Ancona, that has the highest density of the Marche region, is influenced by its geomorphological variety, coherent with the rest of the region (Bevilacqua, 1972). Population lives mainly in sea-side areas and coastal hills. The highest population density occurs along the coast, near the major cities of Ancona and Senigallia, with the exception of Falconara Marittima where population decreased between 1991 and 2007. Moreover, in the last two decades inhabitants increased in mountain municipalities, contrary to current trend of slow but continuous decreasing in mountain and inner hilly areas of the entire region. This phenomenon is mainly due to the demographic growth in the Fabriano-Sassoferrato-Cerreto d'Esì industrial area (Regione Marche, 2009a).

Asymmetric population density, both in single and clusters of several municipalities, exerts an environmental pressure that, in the entire Province, causes different environmental critical situations along the

coast, in hilly hinterland and in the Apennines (Regione Marche, 2009b). Hence, environmental pressures are caused by demographic density that directly means a higher concentration of buildings, but some territorial “contextualities”, such as concentration of district economic activities, cause big problems as well (Regione Marche, 2006; Cannizzaro-Corinto, 2011).

Economy of the region was traditionally based on agriculture - particularly developed in hilly areas and in the valleys with wine and olive-growing and horticulture - and has flourished also for fishing and fish marketing, thanks to the large fleet in Ancona. Since the 50's of the past Century, economy faced a strong industrialization process and a dimensional growth of main towns<sup>2</sup>, that became in the few decades actual urban areas. These are characterized by strong territorial interdependences and intense connections among adjoining municipalities. A study of the Marches Regional Government, within the province identifies 4 urban agglomerations which characterize economic and social context, since they have considerably increased manufacturing employment and hence modified the past socio-economic rural structure (Regione Marche, 2006).

Such urban agglomerations, “polarized” by the towns of Ancona, Senigallia, Jesi and Fabriano, involve almost all municipalities of the province. Although evenly distributed in the territory, creating a territorial “polycentrism”, urban areas show a higher continuity and complexity on the coast between Ancona and Senigallia, where an actual continuum of buildings encompasses a mix of residential, industrial and infrastructure

2. Ancona, besides being one of the most important centres of the Italian shipbuilding industry, has also developed engineering, chemical, pharmaceutical and food industries. Falconara Marittima has an oil refinery, coke, electric energy, gas, chemical products and synthetic fibres production plants. Castelfidardo produces worldwide reputed musical instruments. Fabriano, well known for its paper mills established in the XII Century, hosts businesses in several production sectors among which appliances household producing factories and typical salami industries. Jesi is known for engineering products and wines (Verdicchio). Senigallia produces mechanical appliances and has food and beverage industries, as well as wood and textile ones.

areas. Furthermore, the overall road system is mainly concentrated along the coasts where one can find not only main cities (Ancona and Senigallia), but also the only highway in the Marche (A14), one of the two long-distance railway lines (Bari-Bologna-Milano), the only airport of the region, the very important commercial and touristic harbor of Ancona and the touristic one of Senigallia.

Tourism is essentially based on bath and seaside model and is becoming an important economic activity, with employment big upgrading (Regione Marche, 2008; [03]; [04]). Main tourist activities are concentrated along the Adriatic coast, that retrieves 80% of arrivals (Gregori-Bolzicco, 2008). Seaside resorts, due to a well consolidated hospitality vocation, are best equipped as accommodation structures and include<sup>3</sup> different kinds of facilities: hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast, camping grounds, villages, and the like. The province offers a very long shoreline from the well reputed “velvet beach” of Senigallia downward to Ancona, where many small sand and pebbles shores are enclosed by picturesque cliffs dropping sheer to the sea, near the Conero promontory. Numana and Sirolo, namely the “two gems of the promontory”, has for many years been rewarded with Blue Flag (see picture 3), an European prize of the Foundation for Environmental Education for selected seaside places that satisfy quality criteria concerning bathing waters and facilities<sup>4</sup>.

Nevertheless, a new type of tourism is recently developing, pertaining to mountainous and hilly zones, characterized by and high degree of geomorphological variety. The provincial territory has a complex

3. Distance from coast and municipality altitude differentiate spatial accommodation facilities distribution. The regional area is well defined by three zones, parallel to the Apennines and the coast, namely Mountain, Inner Hills and Coast Hills, where spatial different distributions of amenities are empirically self evident. One can find a good, in spare some cases poor, number of accommodation in Mountain and Inner Hills zones, even though the greatest number of accommodations is located in Coast Hills zone, and especially along the seaside (Cannizzaro-Corinto, 2011).

4. We mention clean beaches, adequate number of free toilets, accessibility for disabled people, free drinking water fountains and other services, car circulation prohibition and other environmental good practices.

geographical morphology, showing multicolored landscapes, parks and protected areas. Moreover, millenary rural settlements produced beautiful anthropized landscapes, resulting from farming, land tenure, scattered housing and fine architecture in little villages. Well reputed is the town of Loreto, annually visited by thousands of pilgrims, that has strong points of attraction like that epitome of art that is the Basilica and its square.

Arcevia, Cupramontana, Maiolati Spontini and Staffolo, due to integrity of their urban fabric and quality of historical and artistic resources, are actual open air museums, being very closed to Ancona. Here accommodation facilities are more traditional-styled and during last years entrepreneurs run new farm tourism businesses and country houses in secluded rural areas, tied to local traditions and immersed in nature and in an unpolluted environment.

Moreover, the hinterland has several monasteries, encompasses a large number of small towns and medieval villages where one can enjoy many signs of a remote history such as castles, strongholds, medieval quarters, aristocratic buildings, enclosed in ancient walls, that are picturesque characteristics of the landscape. Towns of Osimo and Jesi lay along the lower and mid Esino valley, while Fabriano and Sassoferrato are further uphill.

Among minor centers we must remember Corinaldo, Genga, Ostra and Staffolo that have deserved the Orange Flag, reputed seal of touristic-environmental quality assigned by Italian Touring Club to small inner towns that have distinguished themselves for the excellence of their hospitality culture (TCI, 2005). Corinaldo and Offagna have also deserved the prestigious label “I borghi più belli d’Italia’ (Most Wonderful Italian Villages), prize driven by ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities)<sup>5</sup>. Last but not least, the awarding of 11 Agriculture Green

5. Goal of this prize is to preserve, revitalize and promote small Italian towns, villages and even hamlets of high artistic and historical quality, having a great potential touristic value, although they are far from main traditional tourist routes.

**Pic. 3 - Province of Ancona**



Source: Different data sources, our processing

Flags, assigned almost exclusively to minor towns in the inner zones<sup>6</sup> shows the holding of the essential requirements needed to safeguard, enhance and promote local agriculture, environment, food and wine qualities and typicality (Cannizaro-Corinto, 2011).

The above said “quality indicators” certifies environmental quality, equilibrium between nature and economic activity, efficiency of infrastructures, uniqueness of the provincial territory and local heritage. Furthermore, they confirm the actual possibility to enhance the economy of inner rural zones maintaining all opportunities to protect and preserve the local ecosystem.

The mosaic-like model of the province, made up by diverse strong

6. With the only exception of the sea town of Senigallia, all other towns awarded with the Green Flag belong to the inner hilly area of the province: Belvedere Ostrense, Castelleone di Suasa, Corinaldo, Maiolati Spontini, Montecarotto, Monte San Vito, Morro d'Alba, Serra dei Conti, Staffolo.

local identities, should allow to plan a possible differentiate path of sustainable economic integration between traditional and innovative production models. Thus, integration of different kinds of economic activities-manufacturing, craftwork, tourism - may substantially contribute to social sustainability. This could be an actual opportunity to mitigate too strong human impact in coastal zones and economic asymmetries between coast and inner areas, implementing alternative, socially fair, economically efficient and respectful territorial development, that is to say a sustainable development.

### *3. The Peter Pan project as the local Agenda 21 in Ancona*

Peter Pan is the acronym for “Progetto di Ecosviluppo del TERritorio della Provincia di ANcona” and substantially is the consequence of sustainability request that policy makers tempt to share with all the stakeholders of the province.

For the first time the Province of Ancona joints international program and certification method. First of all by subscribing the Aalborg Chart with an official decision of the Province Government in 2001 and sponsoring diverse activities within the project “Sustainable town for children and girls”. In the same year it jointed the international association Association of ACR+ (Cities and Regions for Recycling and Sustainable Resources Management) and by the 2002 underwent the certification of environmental quality by the international standards UNI EN ISO 14001:96 and UNI EN ISO 9000:2000 the so called Vision 2000 (Lafratta, 2004).

The Province issued the “Relation on State of the Environment” in 2001 in collaboration to Ambiente Italia srl, and the “Environmental Sustainability Analysis” by the Environment Alderman Office of the Province of Ancona under the screening of the University of Siena. Subsequently, in 2003 it started the Agenda 21 process by implementing the Peter Pan Project and in 2004 subscribed the Aalborg Plus 10 Charter. By a public selection, two officers have been selected for the dedicated task, after having attended to a training course in forum simulations and

in management of assemblies and meetings.

The Peter Pan project is actually a program document which defines targets, means and actions to be made in order to consider both environment and development in the decision-making process. A fundamental aim is also the commitment of people in ethics of sustainable development and in understanding that present responsible behaviors are the basis of an acceptable future state of the environment.

In order to publicize the project on March 2003 a public meeting on the general presentation of Peter Pan has been held at the Council Chamber of Ancona Municipality. Public administrators and cultural, economic and environmental agents informed all the stakeholders about sustainable development concepts with particular focus on the Local Agenda 21 process. Afterward, during June and July the Province made a phone survey on 220 families sample in order to achieve a broader information of Agenda 21.

The project has been divided in two parts. The first began March 2003 with the first meeting presentation and ended December 2004 with the issue of the “State of Environment Report”. The second one began February with the Civic Forum and ended April 2005 with the definition of the “Local Action Plan”.

The Civic Forum (CF) is the central pole of the Agenda 21 process because it is an autonomous representative body of local community that establishes rules and puts in charge a coordinating committee. The CF represents interests of stakeholders, the entire community, during any phase of the decision-making process. More than one thousand people among syndicate representatives, private citizens, consumers, sellers and craftsmen, entrepreneurs, public bodies of any kind of sector, including Universities, Hospitals and others of all the province territory have been involved. In total, 528 representatives voluntarily attended the 88 Forum sets, of which 73 in the first part and 15 in the second one have been held.

The workshop “A Sustainable Ancona Province in 2012” was actually the first step of Local Agenda 21 and the large participation of

citizens allowed the definition of scenarios by means of questions such as “how do I imagine the Ancona Province in 2012?”, “How do I wish it will be? And what can I do for this aim?” or “How do I perceive the socio-environmental situation within I live? What do I wish to change?”.

**Tab. 1 - Participation of stakeholders(%) per forum type in the project phase 1 and 2**

Forum	Environment		Pollutions		Economy and territory	
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 1	Phase 2
Territorial Institutions	17	13	19	11	20	16
Public institutions	13	16	14	16	11	9
School and University	7	3	6	5	2	0
Syndicates	11	18	6	8	15	18
Private firms	7	5	21	13	19	14
Associations	23	37	21	21	14	30
Profession representatives	10	0	4	8	5	2
Media	0	0	1	0	1	0
Private citizens	12	8	8	18	13	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: data retrieved from Provincia di Ancona [01], our processing.

Afterward, central point of the first phase were the Civic Forums organized in the four main cities of the province. Seventy three CFS have been held during 2003-04 and they permitted to individuate environmental sensible or weak components and critical factors of pressure originated by human activities by means of selected medium and long run targets and indicators.

Four thematic forums have been held: Economic activities (productive system, commerce, services and tourism); Natural environment (biodiversity, landscape, agriculture, parks); Territory (land use, urban structure, roads, transportations); Pollution (water and air quality, wastes, radio spectrum pollution, noise).

The subregional areas where the traveling forums have been organized

are: Ancona, Osimo, Falconara (17 municipalities), headquarters in Ancona<sup>7</sup>; Valle del Misa, headquarters in Senigallia (10 municipalities)<sup>8</sup>; Media Valle dell'Esino, headquarters in Jesi (13 municipalities)<sup>9</sup>; Comunità Montana Alta Valle dell'Esino, headquarters in Fabriano (10 municipalities)<sup>10</sup>. The percentage of type of stakeholders in the first and second phase are shown in table 1.

In each forum the same issues have been proposed and discussed in order to obtain the larger survey on opinions of involved people and share decision making process in the entire provincial area.

Besides the above mentioned civic forums others, internal to the provincial administrative staff, have been hold. The aim was the information and sensitization of public officers on environmental sustainable planning in every sector of life and production.

The first forum for the province employees has been held the 29 January 2004, with participation of Province managers, executives and municipalities representatives. Everyone has been asked on their home-job time travel, opinion on reduction of energy consumption and on good daily practices to be adopted in offices or departments. The second and third forums have been held June and July 2003 for the report of thematic and traveling forums and of an internal survey.

During the same period, the Province of Ancona made a phone survey of a 220 families sample in the 49 municipalities aiming at evaluating the information degree on Agenda 21, sustainable development and on environmental emergencies in the provincial territory.

7. Municipalities: Agugliano, Ancona, Camerano, Camerata Picena, Castelfidardo, Chiaravalle, Falconara Marittima, Filottrano, Loreto, Monte San Vito, Montemarciano, Offagna, Numana, Sirolo, Osimo, Polverigi.

8. Municipalities: Barbara, Castelcolonna, Castelleone di Suasa, Corinaldo, Monterado, Ostra, Ostra Vetere, Ripe, Senigallia, Serra de' Conti.

9. Municipalities: Belvedere Ostrense, Castellsellino, Castelplanio, Jesi, Maiolati Spontini, Monsano, Monte Roberto, Montecarotto, Morro d'Alba, San Marcello, Poggio San Marcello, Santa Maria Nuova, San Paolo di Jesi.

10. Arcevia, Cerreto d'Esì, Cupramontana, Fabriano, Genga, Mergo, Rosora, Sassoferrato, Serra San Quirico, Staffolo.

From February to May 2004, dedicated forums have been held in any degree educational provincial institutions such as the Baby Forum, the Scenario Forum and the Laboratory Forum for elementary, middle and high schools respectively, involving 4 elementary, 2 middle and 2 high schools for a total number of 40 classes and 26 forums.

Furthermore, from September 2003 a newsletter have been sent to each family of the Province with information purpose, and from December 2003 an on-line forum have been opened.

#### *4. Literature review on Local Agenda 21*

A pivotal point in Agenda 21 is the active participation of the main part of representative local social stakeholders in the planning proceeding process (Avanzi, 1992). People participation is a fundamental basis of Agenda 21 and it is necessary for the enhancement of social conscience, for the community identity and responsibility foundation and for actual achievement of sustainable targets [05]. Furthermore, participation causes shared decision and long term success of the project. In this sense, by implementing people participation, LA 21 is an innovative tool for its capability of increasing local perception of the importance of the decision making procedures in territorial policy.

According to Evans and Theobald (2003) the focus in the policy literature has largely been on how to do LA 21, with comparatively little time spent on reflecting on the process of LA 21 across Europe, in a range of national, regional, political and socio-economic contexts. In the UK regular surveys of LA 21 progress have been carried out and also in Italy similar exercises have been undertaken (Avanzi, 1999).

Several researches indicated there should be a correct balance among social, economic and environmental sustainability aspects, but also recognized inevitable local tensions, particularly where economic pressures might compromise environmental objectives (Dietz-Stern, 2008). That is the appearing of a high level of understanding at the conceptual level of the interrelationship between the three components of sustainability, yet

also an acute awareness of the problems and conflicts inherent (Evans - Theobald, 2003). So that the practical implementation of these principles was less clear.

A broad Italian research signaled difficulties encountered by public administrators in implementing LA 21, stating that it is largely perceived as a tool of environmental intervention, but paradoxically it isn't considered a valid tool for resolution of local conflicts in environmentally degraded areas (Cnel, 2002). Many local authorities fear a long lasting and "tiring" period of policy making process and the necessity of dedicated officers training, with subsequent increasing costs. Nevertheless, the public management became the principal promoter of the LA2I innovation and many officers play the role of real supporters of the initiative, while aldermen and majors considered the LA2I as a government tool, fit for obtain development, environmental protection and personal visibility (Avanzi, 1999).

##### *5. Materials and Method*

In order to carry out the monitoring of LA2I implementation, together with the above reported collection of secondary data and statistics on Peter Pan project, a study has been performed through the key informant technique. This technique pertains to the use of expert sources of information (Marshall, 1996). According to Kvale (1996) the qualitative research interview can enucleate the meanings of central themes of the subjects and cover both a factual and a meaning level, thus following Tremblay (1982) the key informants interview is almost right to gather informations and data with less difficulties and less time spent as well as face-to-face in depth interview can joint great time saving and high quality data collection (Berry, 1999). Thus a small group of four key informants have been selected and interviewed: # 1. the present environmental alderman in Ancona Province; # 2. the responsible officers of city planning office of Fabriano Municipality; # 3. project facilitator n. 1, a provincial officer specifically selected and dedicate to the Peter Pan project; # 4. project facilitator n. 2, as above.

The interviews has been recorded at the provincial office of Peter Pan in Ancona and in Fabriano Municipality. We used a semi-structured questionnaire jointly to focused questions about three central issues: a) process of the LA 21 in Ancona, b) difficulties of implementation, d) satisfaction of project facilitators and public persons in charge.

### *6. Results and discussion*

Implementation of Local Agenda 21 seems to encounter some evident difficulties due to local comprehension of LA21 tasks and subsequent people participation in the democratic decision-making process for the environment planning use. This may affect relationship between private citizens, firms and policy makers.

The first phase of the project ended with the publication of the “2° State of the Environment Report” edited the 12 December 2004 with the assistance of Nier Ingegneria s.p.a. and Professional Service srl. The report used the DPSIR (acronym by first letters of the following list) framework developed by the European Environment Agency to assess and manage environmental problems by adopting indicators on:

- Driving forces, the socio-economic and socio-cultural forces driving human activities, which increase or mitigate pressures on the environment;
- Pressures, the stresses that human activities place on the environment;
- State, or state of the environment, the condition of the environment;
- Impacts, the effects of environmental degradation;
- Responses, the responses by society to the environmental situation.

The second phase of the project started 16 February 2005 following the guide-lines emerged during the preceding civic forums and aiming at adopting an environmental Local Action Plan. The main task is the improvement of public awareness on environment, responsible behavior diffusion and active participation of people in the planning process.

As in the first phase, many CFS have been held as well as forums of Province administrative personnel, school forums, newsletter and final writing of the environmental report. In comparison to first phase, the

fundamental difference is that the forums discussed results and conclusions of first phase, so that analysis have been oriented to focus preceding proposals. After the discussion in the second phase civic forums, selected proposals will be the basis for policy makers' choices.

The democratic process selected these main priorities: waste management, urban roads, air pollution, radio spectrum pollution, noise, natural environment, sustainable agriculture, fishing, renewable energies, productive activities and firms, civic society, public administration, employment, tourism.

The financial cost of the project sustained by the Province of Ancona has been equal to 300 thousands euros, of which 50 thousands for communication, 135 thousands for consultancies and near 130 thousands for facilitators and web-mastering.

Both Informant # 3 and # 4, the project facilitators, report difficulties within the public officers themselves because they found not easy to explain the internal personnel what A21 actually is and the subsequent importance of the Peter Pan project as a the LA2 I implementation. Besides this, they faced great difficulties in clearly tell to citizens the importance of participative and democratic process and engage very different stakeholders in mutual commitment. Initially the participants did not really understand the role of assemblies and public forums, instead considering it as a place of exposing their private necessities and find solutions. After the beginning of the program they found organizing difficulties, such as lacking of dedicated personnel, lacking of competencies, logistic issues for the request of a new office. Actually, the main problem was the sectoral approach of the project with a specific attention paid to the environment and a lack of attention on social and cultural issue and a low attention on feedback and monitoring.

The positive notes pertains the citizens' general answer, tested by high level of participation and voluntary and free participation. Many people said their own opinion on future initiatives and this has been very useful for public choice. The environmental alderman (informant #1) paid sound attention on the Civic Forums' results.

The training course has been considered useful by both the facilitator 1 and 2 (key-informants # 3 and # 4), but they declared the personal disposition in learning and training is far more important than the course quality as well as than the actual practice of what learned during the training period. They do value in a quite positive manner the general results of the Peter Pan implementation.

The past alderman has been elected President of the Ancona Province and maintained the LA2I responsibility. Thus the key informant # 1 declares his impossibility in concluding a yet begun process of policy decisions. He decided to adopt the “Millegiorni” (one thousand days program) strictly deciding and implementing any action only if compatible with the Local Action Plan previously adopted. After a 1000 days period the feedback stated a substantial compliance between Millegiorni and LAP, yet the actual feedback has been made after the dead-time scheduled by the LA2I process.

This stimulated the idea of adopting a “participatory budget” in a real way of doing, actually consulting people and not only persons in public charge or institutions. This instrument is really more flexible than any other one also in comparison to the Peter Pan project, a multi-annual program. Yet, the LA2I is a very useful tools for the public administration because policy makers can consider the public opinion as a sound benchmark and people can trust in the public. Due to lack of finance resources the participatory budget is strong substitute of LA2I, also considering the possibility of using online resources. The LA2I is not the complaints board but a long-term program tool and both public and people have to understand this better.

The key informant # 2 recognizes the importance of LA2I also for his Municipality, but its implementation has overlapped the Strategic Municipality Plan. This assigned the city a fundamental role of being the towing pole of its economy and of a broader territory and appears as a fundamental tool. Notwithstanding, he/she declared a substantial compliance between LA2I and SMP. The Municipality of Fabriano

joined the Aalborg Charter in order to achieve people participation in public choices but they faced lots of practical problems in implementing people participation both in LA2 I and in SMP.

### *7. Conclusions*

The paper investigated the actual difficulties encountered by local political representatives, public administrators and officers involved in managing the democratic process of LA2 I. The interviews show that overall results are to be considered quite satisfactory, mainly considering the very innovative proposal and the absolute novelty and unusual decision making process that requires both public officers formation and common people participation. Lack of financial budget threatens the future repetition of a positive experience which showed people willing to accept the democratic process of public choices in the environmental issues and in sustainable development.

In sum, the innovative strong point of Agenda 21 is the people participation, that is to say the broader commitment of citizens, but this is “the actual critical point” because it is the precise moment within which the local community focuses its vision of future and sustainable development.

Thus, for policy makers and local public administrators it is very difficult to point out which are the stakeholders to be involved in order to be actually social representative. Indeed, too often stakeholders are represented by traditional associations such as environmentalists, schools, labour unions and entrepreneurs syndicates with lacking of young, old people and migrants representatives.

Furthermore it is clear that the Civic Forums and the Assemblies are more efficient in the proposing phase than in the implementing one and in any case the management of a Civic Forum is a very fatiguing job.

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### *Résumé*

*Notre travail vise à décrire et évaluer la valeur sociale d'une expérience relevant d'«Agenda 21 Local»: il s'agit d'un projet pour l'environnement dénommé «Peter Pan» (Projet pour le Développement économique de la Province d'Ancône) et adopté par la Province d'Ancône dans la région des Marches (Italie). À cette fin nous avons mené une recherche basée sur la méthode qualitative, à travers des interviews auprès du personnel engagé dans la planification et la réalisation du projet. Pendant le mois de septembre 2010, nous avons interviewé des administrateurs publics, des chefs de projets et des facilitateurs du bureau d'«Agenda 21 Local». Les principaux résultats ont été de mettre en évidence les procédures démocratiques pour la planification écologique dans la province d'Ancône ainsi que le rôle joué par les administrations publiques travaillant à développer la conscience de la population autour des questions de l'environnement, pour que celle-ci participe davantage au plan d'action pour le développement local.*

*Mots-clés: Agenda 21 local, environnement, développement durable, étude de cas, Province d'Ancône*

### *Resumen*

*En este trabajo nuestro interés es describir y evaluar la relevancia social de una experiencia de Agenda 21 Local, un proyecto ambiental, Peter Pan (Progetto di Ecosviluppo del Territorio della Provincia di Ancona) que ha adoptado la Provincia de Ancona en las Marcas (Italia). Con esta intención hemos llevado a cabo una investigación a partir del método cualitativo, mediante entrevistas al personal que participa en la planificación y realización del proyecto. Durante el mes de septiembre de 2010, se efectuaron una serie de entrevistas dirigidas a los administradores públicos, project manager y facilitadores, en la oficina de Agencia 21 Locale di Ancona. Los resultados principales de nuestra investigación consistieron en individualizar los procedimientos democráticos para la planificación ecológica del territorio en la provincia de Ancona y del papel representado por las oficinas públicas en la concienciación ambiental de la población y en su consiguiente participación en el plano de acción de desarrollo local.*

*Palabras clave: Agenda 21 Locale, ambiente, desarrollo sostenible, caso estudio, provincia de Ancona.*