

IN SEARCH OF SUSTAINABILITY

Haarlemmers dialogue with friends



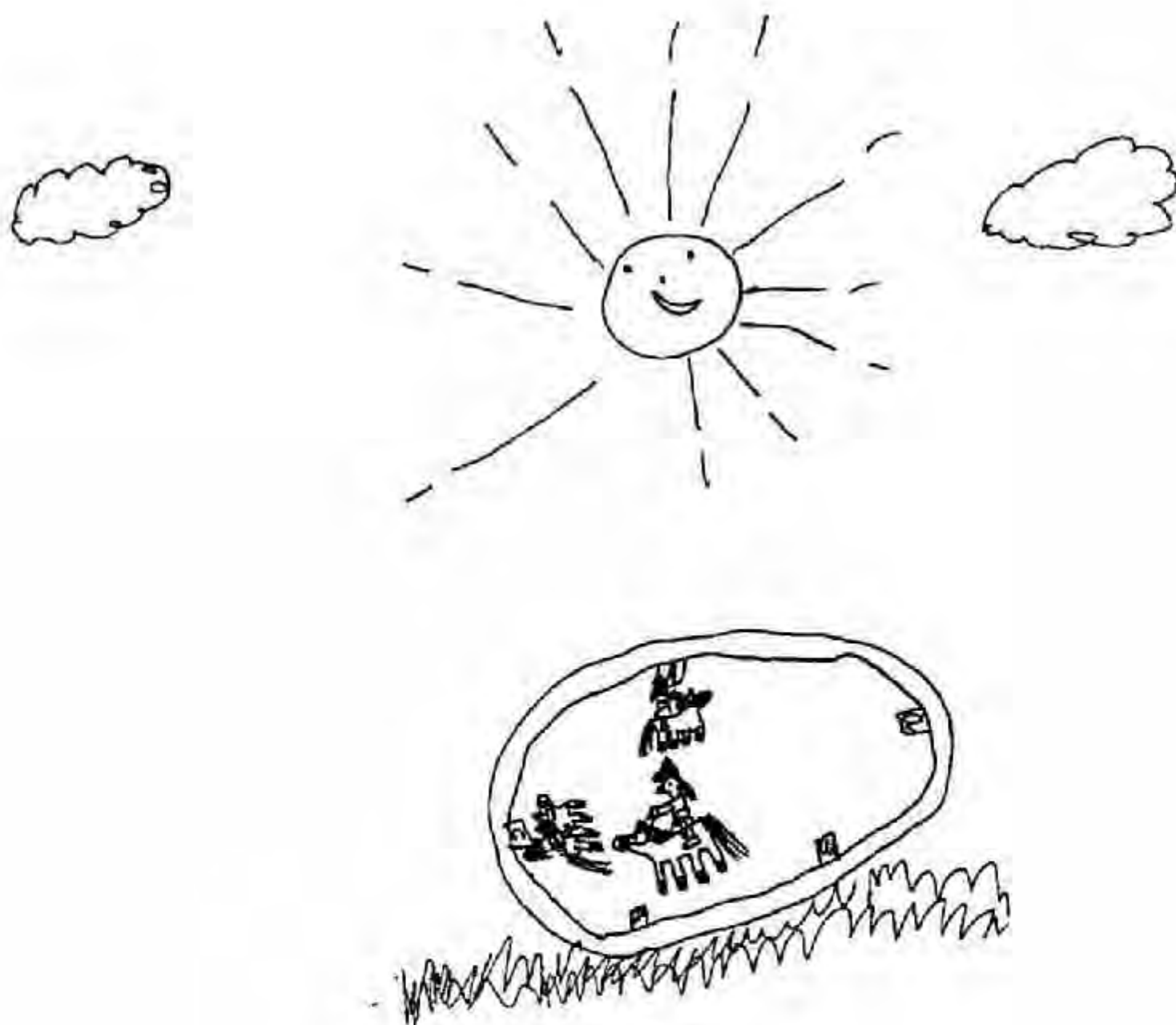
Lokale Agenda

21

Platform
Duurzaam
Haarlem
June 1998

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Preface

It must have been decades ago when someone started to talk about 'sustainable development'. On the high tide of the environmental movements in the Northern Hemisphere and under the enormous pressure from Southern Nations a world conference was convened: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Hundreds of documents were researched and written and thousands of people met, flying around the world, making arguments, making agreements. The conference, which took place in 1992 in Brazil, ended with an impressive document: Agenda 21; the Agenda for the 21st century. The book contains a long list of measures which should be taken in order to take this step into the next century in an environmentally, social and economical sound way. An important chapter of the Agenda 21 refers to sustainable development at the community level: Local Agenda 21. We use the term LA21 for this. Most of the measures proposed or accepted in the documents have to be carried out by people at the local level. People living in their communities, with their own ideas, management structures and ways of living. A lot of work was still to be done to involve them.

Coming home from a long stay in India the Haarlem environmental and third world groups asked me to get involved in this 'Local Agenda 21'. First Ecozone BV, a local consultancy firm in Haarlem provided the essential support of starting up a project on this issue with the Environment & Society Foundation (Bureau Milieu en Samenleving) taking over the lead. 'Citizens of Haarlem Shape Their Future' was proposed as a campaign to the Haarlem Coalition for Sustainable Development (Platform Duurzaam Haarlem) and became part of the Haarlem Local Agenda 21 process. The concept was to link up with our twin-cities, invite them, involve them, share with them our aspirations and exchange ideas about how we can deal with the future. The idea was a follow-up of a campaign Dutch environmental and developmental NGO's had organised earlier: 'A vision from the South'. This campaign coincided with the UNCED conference. A team of four experts from the South studied the Dutch development strategies for a period of six weeks, bringing a perspective from another culture. This time a group of seven experts, from Mutare (Zimbabwe), Rivas (Nicaragua) and Osijek (Croatia) were invited to study the perspective of the Haarlem society and its citizens. The way the group did this was structured around a participative methodology which has been used mainly in the rural setting of the South. With the help of FMD Consultants the group was trained in methods and tools of Participatory Urban Appraisal which involved structured interviews, mapping, transects and analytical methods analysing the strength, weakness, potentials and obstacles of the Haarlem society.

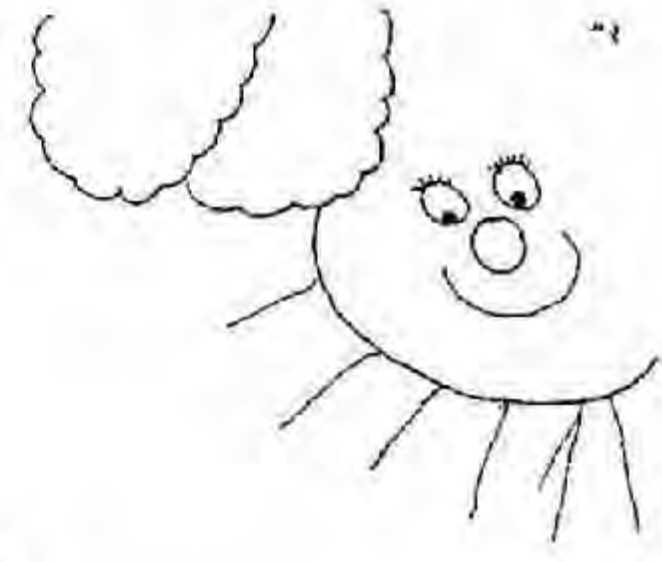
The result is what you find here in this report. It is not the 'final' result. The relationship with twin-cities is a strong one, lasting for many years. The official link 'Haarlem-Mutare' will use this input to strengthen its relationship, making 'sustainable development' the backbone of its common action-plan. We hope that a similar process will take place in Mutare, allowing our partners to step into the same intensive process. So will the other city-links (carried mainly by NGO's) be strengthened.

The process of getting seven people from different parts of the world to study a wealthy and Western city like Haarlem is not simple. The team had to become a team, the city had to be understood, a relationship with its citizens had to be build. The report you have here is maybe not finished. It is rich in its descriptions, observations, understanding. Chapters have been written by different teams from within the group. The report is a common report, written under the responsibility of the whole team. But you will find different cultural identities in the different chapters, different languages... even though all has been written in English.

Haarlem, June 17, 1998,

Thijs de la Court Project co-ordinator





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- ✓ Translators: Richard Koeze, Goof van Dormolen, Adri Bos, Joyce Hogendijk, Karin Snoep, Lino Zepeda Alonzo, Bibiche Hollink, Arno Duivestein, Marijke Verhagen, Mayra Ordoñez, Dorde Matic en Irene Vos
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- ✓ The hosts, the community of the Rosenstock Huessy house
- ✓ Project-assistance: Muriel Nassenstein
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Logistics:

Muriel Nassenstein and Thijs de la Court

Methodology

Marc Lammerink of FMD Consultants

Table 2. Percentage ratings of the different criteria

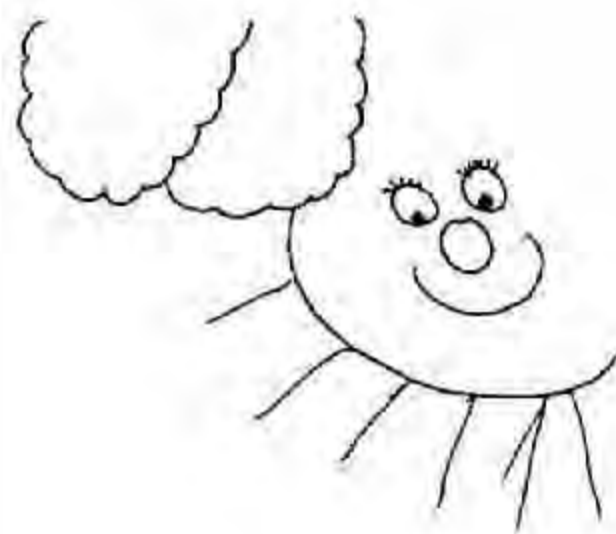
Criteria / Rating (%)	Relevance to Haarlem	Non-traditional issue	Short time to research	Interest of team	Experience of team
	23	17	15	24	21

The criteria established was used to rank the different issues which were identified in the city during the first and second round of focussing and discussion. Table 3 shows the ranking scores for each of the issues and the criteria while Table 4 shows the cumulative ranking of the issues and their percentage ratings.



The group process, involving different cultures, different colours, different believes, involved a strong effort to create a real team. The input of Marc Lammerink of FMD Consultants (third from the left) was essential in guiding the group through this process (see also the appendix on methodology)

Chapter 4 Emancipation, women and minorities



Mariano Salazar and Mayra Ordoñez working in the office at the Rosenstock Huessy house

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN



THEY ARE AFRAID TO TALK, LOSING ECONOMIC SUPPORT
OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOT YET CLEAR
GENDER 'DISCRIMINATION' BARRIERS FOR WOMEN
BUREAUCRACY BLOCKS WOMEN TO GET EKON. SUPPORT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ONLY SUPPORT TEMPORARILY UP TO CHIL. 5Y.
NOT ENOUGH ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR ♀
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CARE FOR FOREIGN AND DUTCH ♀
NO AWARENESS ABOUT VALUE OF CHILDCARE, HOUSEHOLDWORK...
'ASSISTENCIA LIST' ACTIVIST ATTITUDE
♀ ARE NOT ENOUGH INFORMED BECAUSE LOW LEVEL OF EDUCATION
SOCIAL SERVICE OFFICIALS TREATMENT IS VERY HARD
MINORITY GROUPS
LOOKING FOR JOB: CONFRONTED WITH PROBLEMS
WORKING WITH DIVORCED WOMEN & LOW INCOME
CARE FOR CHILDREN TO OLD > AGE
NO ORGANIZATION OF TARGET GROUP
EXPERIENCE + TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE
NETWORK "VROUWEN KNOOPPUNKT" IS WEAKENED
NEED TO EDUCATION TO ANALYZE WHAT HAPPENS
NEED FOR MORE MONEY FOR PUBLICITY
ALL SECRETARY ARE WOMEN
KIND OF PARTICIPATION IS NOT EMPOWERING
LOOKING FOR SOLUTION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ONLY LOOK AT ISOLATED CASES
ORGANIZATIONS ARE WORKING IN ISOLATION INTER-RELATION WITH LOCAL GOVT. NOT "SMOOTH"
INTER-RELATION NOT INTERESTED IN PROCESS

Different angles to observe and understand the situation of women minorities group in the City of Haarlem

The last decades governments, organisations and other organisations are working on 'Development'. A lot of idea's, plans and projects are formulated from the top, aiming to involve the target groups in their own development. Although men and women have been involved the opportunities and barriers confronted by men are very different from those confronted by women.

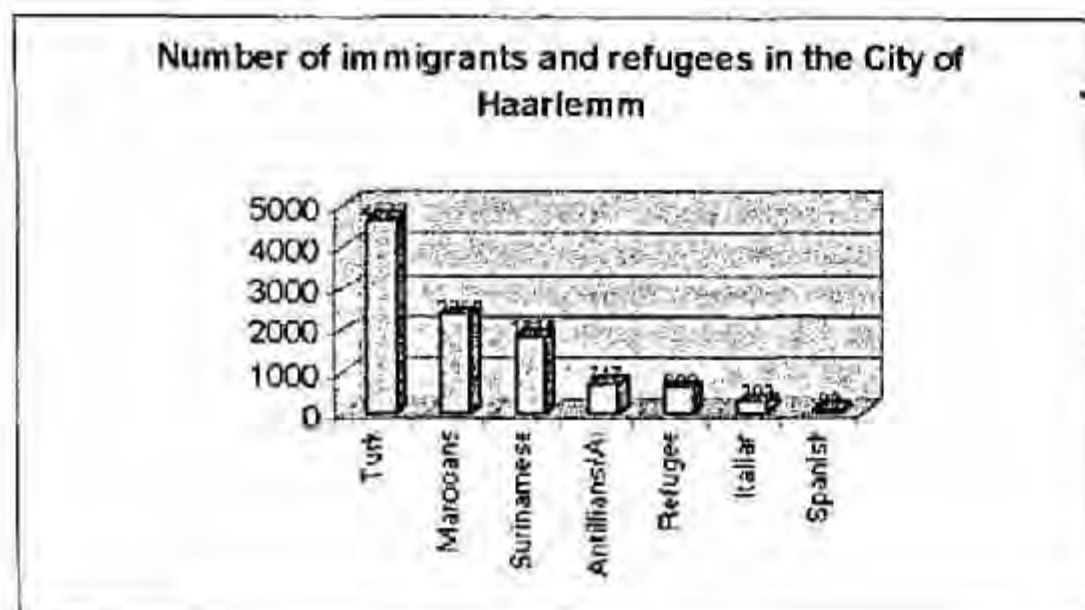
We are using the Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA) methodology to look from different angles at the issue of woman's participation. We focussed our work on women who belong to minority groups. In this way we proceeded to meet some official from the Local Government and their institutions, non governmental organisations (NGO's),

minorities leaders, citizens concerned with this issue and women from the groups involved.

We discussed with those people about the main features of women from the minority groups who face the challenge of integration as citizens in the Haarlem society. During those discussions we exchanged idea's about the strength, weakness, potentialities and obstacles which influence the daily life of those women. We also explored their visions, perception and feelings about the future of this issue in the city, trying to find out the main conflict, surprises and dreams. Using this qualitative material and secondary data we were looking for a better understanding of this issue in the city from our point of view.

Are there problems related to housing and employment ?

We know now that the immigrants represent more of less 8.5% (12.000) ¹ of the total of the inhabitants of Haarlem (150.000). We estimate the number of women and girls about 5.500. That means that in the city of Haarlem more than five thousands women who belong to a different culture. Women who deal in their daily life with the dilemma of maintaining their own cultural heritage at the same time trying to get involved in the Dutch society. The graphic shows the different countries of origin of immigrants and refugee living in Haarlem.

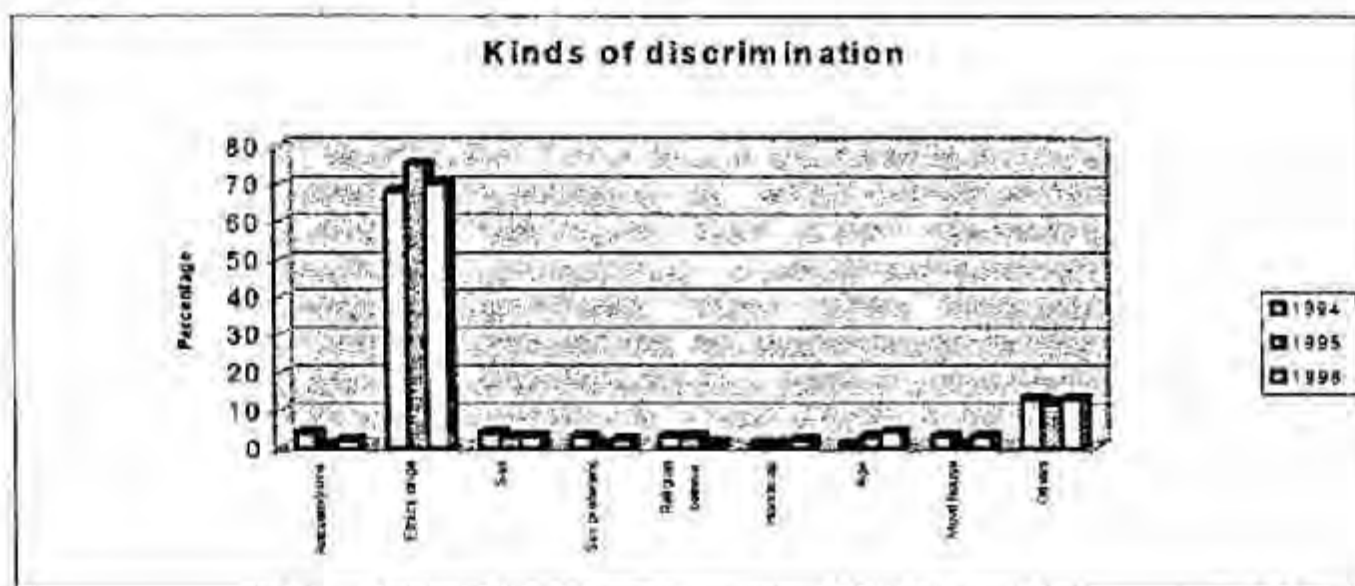
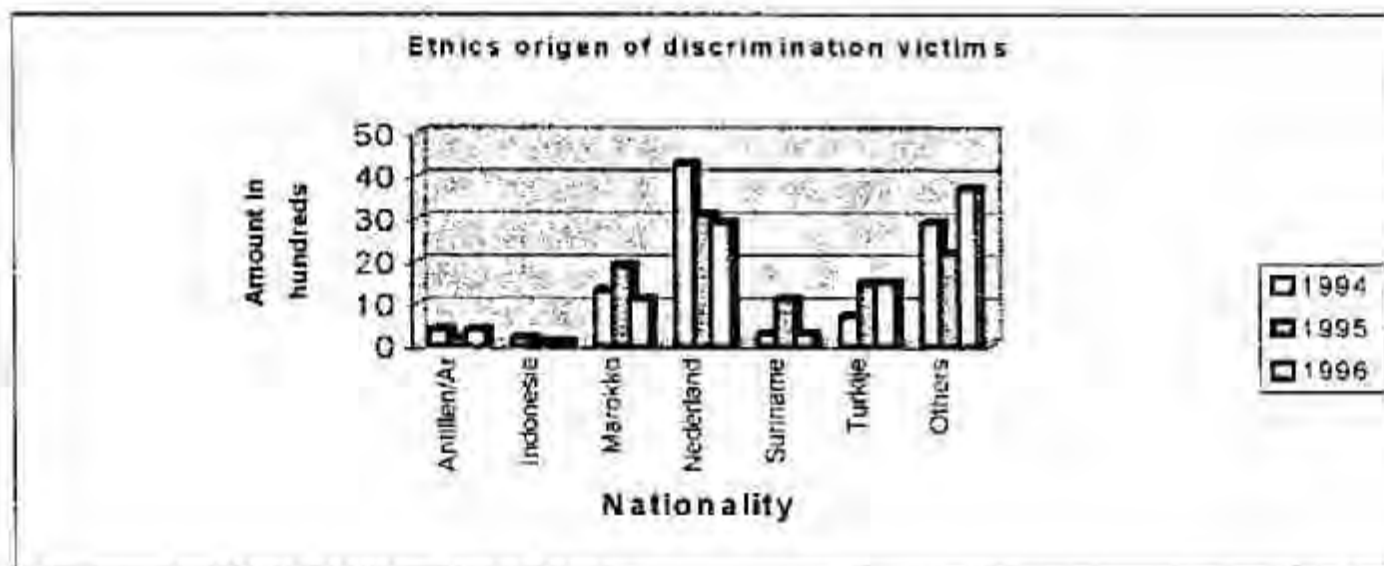


Source: M.v.d. Bijl Lecture about the local immigrant policy in Haarlem.

According to these data, immigrants and refugees have two main problems: housing and unemployment. Relating to housing, the main trend in the last years has been a shift from the city centre to the outskirts (Schalkwijk) and the North part of the City. The unemployment percentage in the Region of Haarlem is three times higher among immigrants (21) than the locals (7), although the local percentage for Turks (20.4) and Moroccans (25) is better than national percentages ranking for both (31 and 35.9).

Does discrimination exist in Haarlem?

Reviewing the situation of immigrants and refugees from a different angle is having a look to discrimination statistics in the Region of Haarlem. We will use data coming from the Anti-discrimination Office in Haarlem related to ethnicity discrimination. The next tables will show the situation of those people.



Source: Antidiscrimination bureau of Haarlem, blueprint, not official

This tables suggest that in the city of Haarlem discrimination is a fact which affect minorities group and, we infer, that women suffer discrimination as well.

¹ M.v.d. Bijl Lecture about the local immigrant policy in Haarlem.

What do the people dream and feel? ...Strength, weakness, opportunities and threats in the City

Strengths:	Weakness
<p>Local Government: The interest manifested by the Local Government in trying to integrate minority groups in the Haarlem society is clear. There is a local policy which is related to participation of those minority groups. There are also specific projects oriented to those people. We observed that the city of Haarlem has an institutional network which deals with different social issues addressed to all the citizens of Haarlem, whether they are migrants or Dutch nationals.</p> <p>NGO's There are different NGO's with are supported from the Local Government many of them are trying to support women from minority groups.</p> <p>Minority groups It self: There are organisations which represent minority groups. There are possibilities to receive funding and attention if they are able to get their wishes communicated to the government. They develop activities in order to be in touch with their own culture.</p> <p>Women: Women from those minority groups have a rich cultural background, knowledge, creativity and professional capacities/skills. There are many examples of women who succeeded in Dutch society.</p> <p>The young people in the minority groups It seems to be that the new generation is better integrated than the first and second generation.</p> <p>The city in itself: Haarlem is a small and nice city. In general its inhabitants and the police are friendly. Most of the people speak English and it is evident in daily life that Haarlem is a multicultural city. The integration and tolerance has been increased during the last time.</p>	<p>Local Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Local Agenda 21 is waiting to be fully included in the Local Politic Agenda - Most of the time the implementation of policy in offering opportunities for women is limited to the economic field, but the support it gives is not enough to open business or reach high education. - Most of those projects addressing women are oriented to solve child care. Many of them do not take into account the male side and successful and unsuccessful experiences from those projects are not analysed enough for improvement. - There exists limited contact from the Local Government with the target groups itself. <p>Culture and integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is clear that the Dutch language is one of the main fact of discrimination. The skill to talk, write and read fluently in the Dutch language and ability to communicate ideas without accent is a strong barrier to be accepted in the Haarlem society. The period to learn the Dutch language is not enough in many of the cases. - Prejudices about the native language, skin colour, clothes wearing, religions believe and others habits and costumes practiced by women influence their opportunities to get a job and to develop themselves. In addition to that the way to feed children, relationship with men and features about their social interaction placed them in a disadvantageous position; furthermore they have few chances to practice their religion believe without social pressure. Religion believe is the central point of this issue. - In general Dutch people have a lack of knowledge about the culture of those women coming from different countries, and it seems not to be a social interest in knowing more about that wealth. <p>Gender aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A relevant issue confronting women who try to develop themselves is that they have a low self-esteem. Within the family, the relationship between men and women is very hierarchical. The man decides on what his wife or daughter(s) have to do. Most of the time women coming from the countryside have more difficulty to be integrated in the Dutch society. Here again the religion believe is a central point of this issue. - Women are limited to the house. <p>NGO's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It seems that the NGO's are working hard with women belonging to minority groups but we perceived that there is little interaction between them to learn about their concrete experiences related to those target groups. - On the other side they do not have always enough directly contact with the target groups.

Opportunities:

Her own development and her family

- In relation to their family they can take profit from the Local Government to get modest housing, appropriated clothes according to the weather, education for their children until the age of 16 years, and other public services including social support if their husbands are unemployed. They have the possibility to bring their child to the crèche. They have the chance to teach their children their own language.
- In relation to their own development, they have in Haarlem the chance to learn the Dutch language, they also have the opportunity to integrate in the world market, at the same time they have also the possibility to get education and training, it becomes easy if they have access to crèche services.
- Women coming from the same background are more stimulated to meet each other than when they come from other cultures.
- There are projects directly oriented to them.

Reflection: Women have the chance to be integrated in the world market. IF they feel confident and they know how the Haarlem system functions.

In relation the city in general:

- The city has the possibility to enrich its culture (meals, dances, sport, sense of community and other) and strengthen vision about the world as a common village.
- Haarlem can use those foreign skills, knowledge and experiences to develop its economy and its culture.
- The citizens have the chance to practice a social approach about a multicultural society.

Threats:

Culture and integration:

- The strong feeling experienced by those women is to be afraid in losing their own culture if they have to adapt themselves to the Dutch society.
- On the other hand men are afraid to lose the control they have over the woman. This kind of control is a part of the system of their cultural values which decide about the role man and woman have in society.
- One more threat is the fact that racist parties and its allied take more space in the city of Haarlem.
- The women have a feeling of insecurity in the city, they do not feel confident walking, cycling or using the public areas when they are alone.
- That the interest from the Local Government, concerned citizens and civil organisations related to those minority groups decrease.
- The difference between poor and rich increase provoking more social tension affecting women from the minority groups.
- If the attention given to women from the minority groups decrease it would deteriorate the traditional Holland policy of consensus.

Our main surprises...our main questions...

Our first surprise was find out that the Local Agenda 21 was waiting to become the central point of the local politics agenda. Why? We asked ourselves... We reflected that perhaps the city has its own logical way or route to develop which perhaps is preceding the proposal of LA21. This is very common fact when we are talking about an international concept like Local Agenda 21... On the other hand, we kept the feeling that the politicians – a really different kind of human being – who know very well how to reach the formal power and getting the citizens support, not yet perceived the LA21 as a main issue for the elections. Consequently we guess... is Local Agenda 21 only an issue of a selected group of people who work really hardly but in a marginal position? How we can find ways that put the LA21 in the interest of the average citizens? How we can put it close to the people daily life? Is the concept of LA21 about the women and development really in the interest of the women and men of Haarlem? Is it a relevant issue for the women who belong to minorities group? Is the LA21 useful to develop the city and within that the women minorities group or is only one more fashion which comes during the spring and goes out in the next season?

When interviewing people working in organisations and at the Local Government we discovered that the approach to women's development is more centred on solving the daily life of the traditional women's task, which Mosser calls: 'practical gender needs'. For instance, new projects in Haarlem are oriented to teach women how to play with their children, also to improve child health. Those are important aspects in women's life, they become more confident about their role as mothers.

Another aspect is that there is a lot of effort being put into trying to bring women in the labour market, while in many cases they are not yet prepared to be make this step. May women having (or not) a husband and small children are responsible for the household. This demands a lot of energy, There is little room for participation which provides them the opportunity to analyse their subordinated condition related to men and to enhance them to look for alternatives more related to they demands as women, which Mosser calls: 'strategic gender needs'. This picture was a surprise because we have a prejudice expecting that the approach to work with and for women in Holland could be more sustainable.

Sustainable development means development of the people, where men and women from minority and majority groups are involved and working together in the development of Haarlem society. This means to enter into a process which requires the use of a participatory methodology which take into account the women minority groups at the individual and collective levels, using their own experience as point of departure. This process requires time, evaluation and systematisation on what has been done, in order to improve this work. There is the need to create indicators to measure the quality of this process. Furthermore, while 'Vrouwenknooppunt' (network of women organisations in Haarlem) had been supporting a lot of women, nowadays it is difficult to find a strategic organisation or network to support women in organising themselves for their development.

Another surprise for us was find out that the development is an important aspect of being

a human being It does not resolve the constant fight for the quality of life, above all for women. Remember, we come from a country formally named as undeveloped country - unfortunately it is partially true at least - where the discussion about women quality of life started many years ago and where the quality of the live of women remains poor in general. However, when we come here in Holland – a well known developed country – we had hoped we could find maybe the women paradise. On the contrary, we found many similar worries, including those related to the sphere of survival! ...and when we witnessed a well educated women from Asia crying telling about her efforts to get involved in Haarlem's society our heart broke and our illusions about the easy way for foreigner women in the city to become Haarlemmers broke down. What happened with the women movement? Has it been exhausted now? Are the women of Haarlem worried about the women who belong to minorities groups? In what way can the city of Haarlem support these women, taking advantage of their knowledge, experience, education, skills and creativity to develop the city? Is it necessary for a key organisation to support the women movement including the worries about foreigners women ?

We know now that the city of Haarlem has several projects addressing involvement of the minorities groups and the women as well. Some of them are more or less successful and others unsuccessful. We would like to ask if there is a mechanism to analyse the process itself in a deeper way in order to find out the main features which explain its success or failure? Also, we would like to know if you have regularly meetings to share experiences? Perhaps most important, do the so-called 'target' groups know the results of their participation? Are

indicators available to monitor if the reality of integration and participation is improved ? Are these indicators useful for the people or only for the technicians ? Maybe these kind of questions have to be put forward during the interviews we made. We know this, please excuse our delay to ask these questions in a final report. By the way, one thing that really surprise us was that most of the project addressed to women do not take in account the male side. It is an intriguing statement, isn't it?...but when you have hierarchical relations between man and women as a big barrier perhaps this sort of approach could be important...

We were surprised as well about the interest this kind of issue provokes in the city. The Local Government has its policies, invests resources, there are NGO's working and everything seems to indicate that they are hard workers, the foreigner people is encouraged to organise themselves and to become in charge of their own interest and life, including women of course. The city has good social services and they are open for everybody without – in principle – exclusion. Discrimination is seen to be more an isolated issue. The multicultural daily life is a fact that every can recognise. Voluntaries workers devoted part of their time to work with women belonging to different cultures. The city has good examples about successful foreigners women. Almost all the people interviewed think that the trend is to increase the levels of tolerance and integration and they foresee a positive future. In addition, the new generation of newcomers are much more involved in Haarlem than the old generation. We admire your patience to deal with this kind of issue and how most of the citizens respect different ways to dressing and different religions.

Why did we choose this topic?

Mariano and Mayra, man and woman from Nicaragua, with different personal and professional experiences, together we selected the issue: 'Opportunities and barriers for women from the minority groups in Haarlem. The selection of this issue is related to the amalgam of our internal world, constructed in the daily life in Nicaragua and in Holland.

Mariano: The world of women was always mysterious to me. It was easy to discover the common interest. Making love – so much love in my life ! – it was less easy to live and work together during the revolution –so many pains and conflicts on my life !... But, my true school was the family and the love. I know a bit about the women world, but which I know has been taught by Marina, Rosa, Silvia, Fidelia, Maria Pia, Adriana, Marilena, Sonia, Ana Sonia, Marta, Martita . . . mother, uncle, fellows, wife, mother in love, daughter. All of them helped me to deal with the “macho” that every men of my generation on Nicaragua got inside.



Today I can state – and may be it will sound old-fashioned to my Dutch friends – the women world is different . . . but it is my first feeling about it. It is my point of view, I do not want to say this on behalf of another men. The feminine vision of the cosmos has been in touch with me. It has become of my feeling. In addition, it has been a really sensitive and beautiful feeling, full of details and colours. The women world has something which - in my own experience – enriched my own live, as a man, to a great extend.

As you can see, I focussed on this topic because of personnel deeper roots and for my – deeper too –feeling of justice. During the time which I spend meeting men and women I was surprised to find how strong the role of women has been the man who I am today. Furthermore, I have the feeling that maybe all my life I have shared with women the dream to make the world a better place to live and enjoy.

Without any title or diploma in this topic, only with my own feeling and personnel life experience I have chosen to know more about the women in Holland, but not about the women in general. I would rather know more about the women who have a different cultural background because I thought that perhaps they have barriers and opportunities to develop fully themselves, although this country offers nice welfare conditions. Maybe I am also curious being a tourist in this city? May be . . . but it was a good excuse to brake the apparently perfect surface of the City of Haarlem and go a little more deeper in the truth daily life. This is my modest contribution to shape the future of the city – together with Mayra - since my history and my heart tells me that men and women in Holland – and also in Nicaragua – go on to modelling the main history of all. The history about how it is possible to build wonderful days and night together empowering ourselves.

Why did we choose this topic?

Mayra: 'My personal experiences specially those from my childhood have provoked enormous changes in my life. Those direct and indirect experiences are invisible witness of my anger, happiness, frustrations and challenges got in a society where inequality and injustice affect those from a disadvantageous position. Those experiences (vivencias) maintain in my mind as dynamic pictures with women's faces who walk resolute to the future. I see the faces of my ante, mother, sisters, women from my neighbourhood, women from the market and many other unknown women. For me they are an example of power, wisdom and persistence, stimulating to continue looking for a better day. In this way and in my work in Nicaragua, I came across many people specially women with children living and working in the settlements. In creating survival strategies these women developed dreams, ideas, knowledge, creativity.



The experience in the settlement stimulated myself to improve my knowledge in the field of 'gender', them to be able to work in a better way; at the same time my husband needed to return to Holland. I wanted not to come, I was feeling well in my own country with which I did not want a relationship with an ocean in between. It was a conflict. The challenge was to combine my work and my relationship with Marc and our daughter. We discussed a lot about this. Marc proposed that I would study here in Holland. We decided to combine both projects.

Just, when we came in Holland, I felled myself walking with one foot in the North (Holland) and the other in the South (Nicaragua), I was trying to adapt myself as: Mayra, woman, mother, wife, professional and neighbour. I was not able to communicate in my own language, I had lost my job; I had to start my social contacts realising that my field for interaction was enormous reduced. In this difficult situation I started looking in my environment for strength able to support me. I got a great surprise, I developed with some of the Dutch women and (puras) friendship which gave me more confidence and helped me to put the distance with my family in Nicaragua in perspective. It provided me peace and stimulated to improve my plans and develop new strategies to adapt myself to a world so different and so similar to mine. Thinking about this faces of more women phases appear in my mind. This time white, coloured, some of them with veils. Watching them, seeing them, I think there is a lot of experience which we can share, we can learn from each other and to look together for alternative more related to our present day live. I believe in Haarlem there is for me a potential to continue working for the same goal. This believe makes me happy.