

Training for Estonian NGOs

17th January 2008, Tallinn

Report

Summary:

Nowadays NGOs play an important role in the democratic society - they inform and represent society and influence policy makers, industry representatives and other interest groups. However Estonian are not able fully to take this role yet. It applies also to the consumers' education field, especially what relates to the chemical substances in the goods. In our daily life we use many different products and services to make our life more comfortable. All products and services consist or use chemicals, which are surrounding us; however some chemicals or groups of chemicals are known and suspected to cause negative effects towards human health and environment. Current training was aiming to help to increase capacity of Estonian NGOs in consumer's education, as well as to increase their capacities on chemicals risks arising to human health and environment from use of different goods.

Trainers:

Kitty Kislenko – chemicals and environmental expert, Baltic Environmental Forum Estonia;

Katrin Juhanson – assistant, Baltic Environmental Forum Estonia.

Target group: representatives from Estonian consumer protection NGOs, state authorities related with consumer/environmental protection.

Participants:

- Helena Hansen, Consumer Protection Board (state)
- Hildi Jürine, Viljandimaa Consumer Protection Association (NGO)
- Evelin Koppel, Consumer Protection Board (state)
- Peeter Kruus, Tartu Consumer Protection Association (NGO)
- Aime Linke, Consumer Protection Board (state)
- Aado Luik, Tallinn Consumer Protection Advisory Centre (NGO)
- Varje Ojamets, Pärnu Consumer Protection Association (NGO)
- Erika Paloveer, Consumer Protection Association Ugandi (NGO)
- Maie Pihelpuu, Saaremaa Consumer Protection Association (NGO)
- Angela Priks, Consumer Protection Board (state)
- Jaan Roots, Rakvere Consumer Protection Association (NGO)
- Kairi Sepp, Environmental Centre (NGO)
- Õilme Tsikina, Viljandi Consumer Protection Association (NGO)
- Irma Tüüts, Viljandi Consumer Protection Association (NGO)
- Piret Võlli, Consumer Protection Board (state)

Goals of the training:

- To introduce of the project aims and activities
- To give overview of chemicals risk raising from everyday products
- To introduce information collection tool

- To provide NGOs with practical knowledge on understanding knowledge raising possibilities and communication tools and how to use them
- To create contacts between NGOs for cooperation on similar actions.

Content of the training:

1. Opening and introduction to the meeting:

- Financer of the project
- Actions of the project
- Results achieved
- Agenda for the training
- Introduction of participants

2. Presentation: Introduction to chemicals issues

Kitty Kislenko gave an overview on chemicals inside consumer products, their potential effects to human health and environment, examples on researches and screening projects on chemicals.

3. Presentation: Tool or information collection

Katrin Juhanson introduced different tools to collect information on chemicals: testing, screening/research, opinion polls, ecolabels, and lists of substances, available information sources.

4. Presentation: Tools for consumer education I

Kitty Kislenko introduced tools for consumer's awareness raising and public communication: campaigning, lobbying.

5. Discussion in small groups

The participants were divided into small groups (3-4 persons in group) to work out their own campaign on determined topic. Topics were provided by organisers: Allergenic chemicals in cosmetics; Awareness raising campaign for the ecolabels; Problematic chemicals in baby care products; Brominated flame retardants in consumer electronics.

After each group presented their campaign in plenary and other groups were able to comment and give advice.

6. Presentation: Tools for consumer education II

Kitty Kislenko introduced tools for consumer's awareness raising and public communication: universities, scientists, cooperation between NGOs, events, media, press releases.

7. Discussion in groups

The participants were divided into same groups as earlier to work out press release to open their campaign what they have developed earlier during day.

After each group presented their press release text in plenary and other groups were able to comment and give advice.

Evaluation of the training

In order to evaluate the training the feedback was asked from the participated people

- Training was evaluated as useful for everyday work:
 - ⇒ 77%- completely useful
 - ⇒ 23% - partly useful

- Most valuable topics were mentioned next:
 - ⇒ Overview on chemicals in everyday products
 - ⇒ Information on brominated flame retardants in consumer products
 - ⇒ Allergic chemicals in products
 - ⇒ Hazard labelling
 - ⇒ Writing on press release
 - ⇒ Organisation of campaign

- Issues to learn in future:
 - ⇒ More deeply on consumer products such as cosmetics, electronic devices, household chemicals, toys,
 - ⇒ Labelling of products
 - ⇒ Plant protection products
 - ⇒ All what concerns consumer safety, rights and education

Report by Kitty Kislenko