

Workshop Report: Climate Fresk and Local Territory Identification


Location: Science-tehnology park Čačak, Serbia

Date: 23.01.2025

Facilitators: Nevena Savić, Ružica Janjić

Participants: 12 participants

Event schedule




CLIMATE AWARENESS

workshop


23 JAN 2025 SCIENCE
TEHNOLOGY PARK CACAK
SERBIA

09:00 AM - 15:30 PM


09:00-09:30	Introduction
09:30-11:00	Climate Fresk
11:00-11:30	Break
11:30-12:30	Identification of the territory
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-14:00	Making connections
14:00-14:30	Break
14:30-15:30	Conclusions & Solutions



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Action, Mediation, Formation
Association internationale pour le développement de l'agroenvironnement



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Workshop Context and Objectives

This workshop combined the interactive **Climate Fresk** activity in the first part with **local territory identification** in the afternoon to engage participants in understanding the complex connections between human activities and climate change and also a session dedicated to solutions and challenges.

The sessions aimed to:

- Build awareness of the global and local impact of human activities on climate systems.
- Facilitate a participatory diagnosis of local territories to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for sustainability.
- Encourage participants to propose actionable steps for improving resilience and environmental stewardship in their communities.
- Facilitate networking, collective actions and solidarity

Our local hosts were representatives from Local Action Group (LAG) Čačak. Their activities are focused on creating local strategies and facilitate action between local stakeholders (private sector, NGO sector and local decision makers). Some of their results is Moravski Market- a market from local producers, organization of food fairs, creating workshops on declaration of products, working with small farmers, etc.

The target audience primarily consisted of local stakeholders, mainly civil society representatives from cooperatives and organizations, along with university professors specializing in biology, geography, and agriculture. Their expertise enriched the Climate Fresk and other sessions. Most participants have been actively engaged in activism, awareness-raising, regional promotion, and local initiatives for over 20 years, fostering strong group cohesion from the outset due to their long-standing collaboration. Invitations were extended to local institutional representatives, but no response was received. Participants expressed that communication with institutions remains challenging and limited due to not enough interest from local decision makers.





Climate Fresk Session

The workshop commenced with an interactive "Climate Fresk" session designed to provide participants with a deeper understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships inherent in climate change. Through collaborative group work, participants connected various factors and consequences of climate change, culminating in a visual representation of the climate system's complexity. This approach enabled participants to collectively explore and discuss scientific facts in an engaging manner.

Among the participants were representatives of civil society, as well as high school and university professors specializing in biology, geography, and agriculture. Their expertise enriched the session by providing deeper explanations of the concepts addressed. The participants were highly engaged and creative, contributing to a dynamic and productive atmosphere throughout the workshop.

Local Context

We must say that in Serbia, we have a student-led protest triggered by the fall of the recently reconstructed railway station in Novi Sad, where 01. November 2024. 15 people lost their lives. The protest started a few weeks later when students were attacked on the streets by local representatives and members of the ruling party. We now have almost all universities under blockade, supported by professors, teachers, agriculturists and receiving wider and wider support from the citizens, resulting in more than 150 cities that protested. Students are using direct democracy in making

decisions, organising as a community they are, protesting non-violently and voicing out our need for justice, solidarity and free institutions. This whole situation is affecting us daily and it impacted this workshop since the situation is changing very fast.

At the beginning of the session, participants were introduced to locally available data, where we had some great input from one of the participants since one of them is following statistical data through work in Social service while others are well informed through the work they do in the local community.

- **Social/economical context** The Moravički region comprises 55% urban and 45% rural settlements, with a notable migration of youth and working-age individuals to cities, leading to depopulation and an aging demographic in rural areas with small initiatives of young people to the countryside. The economy is diversified, relying on machine manufacturing, agriculture and food industries, wood and paper production, tourism development, and the establishment of logistic centers facilitated by new highway infrastructure.
- **Geography**
Geographically, the region features a blend of the West Morava River valley and hilly-mountainous areas with mountains such Ovčar(985m), Kablar (885m), Vujan (857m), and Jelica (929m) making it suitable for both agriculture and tourism. While official data indicates forest coverage at 33%, participants have reported that due to illegal and corrupt deforestation, the actual percentage may be around 20%.



- **Energy**

In terms of energy, the majority is sourced from the national grid, with fossil fuels predominantly used for heating and transportation. Renewable energy comes from hydropower plants, with solar systems under development; geothermal energy is present, but not developed. In Ovčar Banja and Banja Trepča thermal water sources are not used at full potential. There is also significant potential for biomass utilization.

One of our participants is using it in his cooperative biomass for heating and recently installed a solar system in his cooperative.

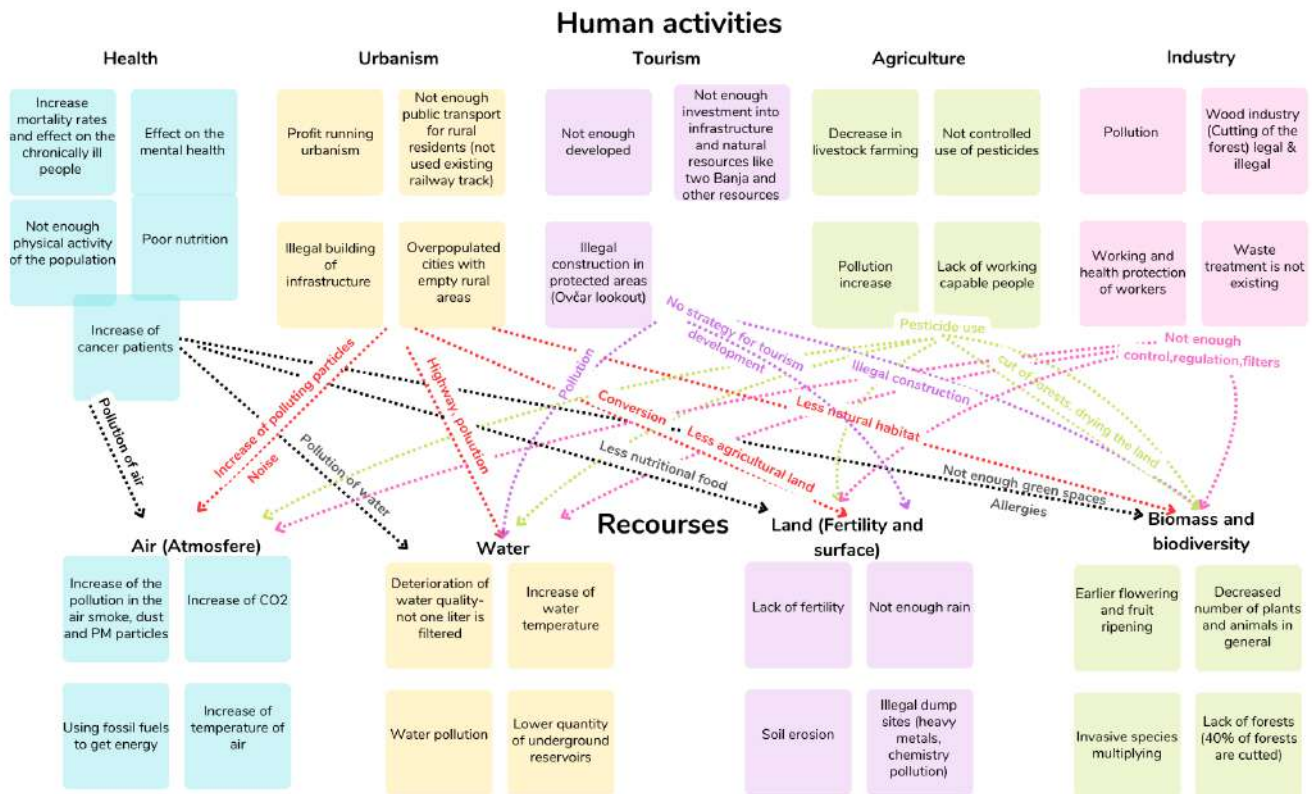
- **Climate**

The region experiences a moderately continental climate, characterized by dry summers and cold, snowy winters. There is a trend of increasing temperatures by 0.5–1°C, with extreme temperatures reaching 42°C in 2022. Although annual precipitation levels remain consistent, the region has faced longer dry periods and more intense rainfall events, leading to serious flooding in 2022.

After going through official data, the participants were divided into two groups and they were answering a question: Which human activities are affecting health, urbanism, tourism, agriculture and industry, while the other group was discussing the available resources in their area and how are they affected by human activities.



This is the result of local collage session:



If we look at the **health** aspect of human activities, pollution is affecting all the resources due to corruption and lack of institutional control. It affects life expectancy, less nutritional healthy foods, allergies, and not enough green spaces. When we look into **urbanism**, it affects the air by contaminating it with polluting particles, it creates noise, taking into consideration the downsides of the new highway which affects a lot of homesteads and it is built on very fertile land. Conversion from agricultural to construction land is creating less and less possibility for agriculture and it is polluted permanently and creates less habitat for wild species. **Tourism** is not developed strategically and it pollutes water, some of the sightseeing spots are built illegally which affects natural habitats for wild animals. **Agriculture** is affecting all the resources with not enough control of pesticide use, and also illegal cutting of forests and drying out landscapes without any inspection from the institutions. Regarding **industry**, there is not enough control. If there are regulations, this is not respected enough, not enough filters for gas emissions, and water treatment systems.



Upon reviewing the **resources** of the county, it is evident that the region holds significant natural potential. The fertile plains surrounding the Morava River are conducive to agricultural activities, while the many scenic mountains offer considerable opportunities for livestock farming and tourism. However, a closer examination reveals that these resources are significantly impacted by illegal activities, and there is a lack of adequate institutional regulation and enforcement to ensure compliance with existing policies. Climate change is having big effect on the resources and agriculture production, and emergent action is needed with:

- Implement already existing strategies and policies focused on sustainability, energy efficiency and renewables while conserving natural resources
- Support more collaboration between local actors both NGO and decision makers
- Create a strategy plan for sustainable development of Moravicki Okrug and advocate for its implementation on all levels of society.

Solutions and challenges session

As a conclusion of the day, participants had a session named “Solution and Challenges” where they went through three levels of solutions marking them on the level from easy implementation towards harder implementation and smaller and bigger impact.

- On the **personal level** participants shared what they could implement easier was to use reusable bags, make a family garden, plant more trees, use traditional methods for pest and disease control, educate more, buy at more local stores, do better time management, use more ecological products.
- **Local level** means solutions which can be implemented with local community, family, co-workers, friends. Participants shared that they could start at a local level to start composting, separate waste, start community gardens, have nature cleaning days, and have more walking and cycling paths.

- On the **institutional** level plan more cycling tracks in urban planning, advocate for sustainable transport strategies, advocate for institutions to support local development, use more railway transportation that exists, apply the law for social entrepreneurship, and create more space for education regarding sustainability in schools, kindergartens, and institutions, reserved public procurement which are focused on local development.
- **Importance of the work before**
Participants shared that the city of Čačak had compost centers, waste separation centres, and many projects that were there to improve the infrastructure of the region and the city before 2010. With the influence of corruption and not enough institutional support, many projects are shot down and citizens are now facing issues with waste system treatment, water and land pollution etc.



Key Moments

The workshop's standout moments reflected both the participants' engagement and the effectiveness of the methods employed:

- **High Engagement and Positive Feedback** – Most participants rated the workshop 5/5, highlighting its engaging and well-structured format.
- **Climate Collage Exercise** – A particularly impactful segment where participants gained a deeper understanding of climate-related challenges.
- **Local Problem-Solving Discussions** – Many found value in brainstorming and proposing solutions for sustainability issues in their communities.
- **Practical Application of Knowledge** – Several participants planned to apply what they learned, whether through scientific research, organizing discussions, or integrating new practices into their organizations.
- **Immediate Knowledge Sharing** – A few participants had already started discussing workshop insights with colleagues and planned follow-up initiatives.

Methodology Commentary

The workshop methodology combined structured activities with open dialogue, fostering both learning and collaboration.

Strengths

- **Interactive Approach:** Activities like the Climate Fresk engaged participants in collaborative problem-solving. The tactile and visual elements made abstract concepts tangible.
- **Local Relevance:** Bridging Decision-Makers and Civil Society – The workshop was seen as a step toward improving cooperation between policymakers and the public sector.

Areas for Enhancement

- While the workshop was highly rated, some suggested shortening its duration and focusing on the most impactful topics.

Dissemination

We shared about the workshop through our website, newsletter and social media as well we had local television and a portal which documented the workshop and shared it through their channel.

At the end we visited [Moravski Market](#), a great result of LAG Cacak where we bought local foods and handcrafts.



Conclusion

The Climate Fresk and Local Territory Identification workshop successfully engaged participants in understanding climate challenges and identifying sustainable solutions within their local context. Through interactive exercises and discussions, they explored environmental, social, and economic issues while proposing actionable steps at personal, community, and institutional levels. The workshop fostered strong collaboration, inspiring participants to apply their knowledge, think how to advocate for systemic changes, and continue spreading awareness on sustainability and local resilience. This workshop also helped us network on organisational level and we are already considering possible collaboration.