

# Climate-Friendly Wekerle

| Budapest, Hungary |



**CONVERGE**

## OVERVIEW

The Climate-Friendly Wekerle initiative is the first Transition initiative in Hungary and is located in a Budapest residential area called the Wekerle estate. As the design of the estate was influenced by the British garden city movement of the late 19th century, Wekerle offers the environment of a small town in the metropolis; a friendly, green area that offers a basis for thriving community life. The initiative was started by a group from the largest local NGO (Wekerle Társaskör Egyesület). Their aim is to inspire local residents to shift towards a more sustainable way of living and to make the local community the foundation of this process. They wish to build on local resources, needs and ideas while adapting the transition model to their ambitions.

## CONTEXT: THE PERCEIVED PROBLEM

The Climate-Friendly Wekerle Initiative was born with the aim of finding and developing community-based solutions to the challenges posed by global climate change and the phenomenon of ‘peak oil’. Through their community initiative they also aim to show and prove that a higher level of well-being does not necessarily require a larger habitat-related footprint and thus a high ecological impact.

## INITIATIVE SOLUTION AND PROCESS

The long-term objective of this initiative is to reduce the food and energy dependency of the Wekerle estate by reducing consumption and by setting up infrastructure for community composting, an organic box scheme, ‘edible gardens’ and a local food market. They also aim to localize services, reduce waste, support direct trade with nearby (within 50 km radius) producers and to promote cycling and modes of community transport. The whole process is designed to be realized with the cooperation of the local community and be based on active citizen participation in decision-making.

The project is intentionally positive, encouraging and solutions-oriented, even though members of the initiative are aware of the severity of the challenges they face. At the moment (2011/12) they are working on catching peoples’ imagination through community events and “clubs” such as Green Saturdays, Energy Brigades, Gardening and Knitting Circles and flea markets.



## CONTRACTION AND CONVERGENCE ELEMENTS

### CONTRACTION:

The long-term aim of Climate-Friendly Wekerle is to reduce consumption and environmental impact. At the moment, they are mostly engaged in carbon-footprint reduction initiatives such as their own Energy Brigades programme which assists people to insulate their homes, or EnergyNeighbourhoods. Thus, a lot of effort has been made towards reduction but concrete reduction targets or carbon quotas have not yet been established.

### CONVERGENCE:

The group experiments with the techniques of participatory democracy, operates with a low level of hierarchy and all members have an equal say in discussions over strategic and/or operational issues. The core group of Climate-Friendly Wekerle has also initiated community planning events in the estate to involve local residents in the renewal and design of public spaces.

The overall aim of the initiative is to improve local resilience and self-sufficiency, which includes strengthening the connection between producers and consumers. Thus, the initiative has an influence at the individual, local and regional level. At the moment, apart from the recognition of global challenges (climate change and peak oil), there is no active focus on global equity and environmental justice issues.

## CURRENT STATUS AND IMPACT

Apart from being active locally, Climate-Friendly Wekerle is a member of several networks of similar communities in Hungary (Alliance of Climate-Friendly Municipalities and KLIKK – or Climate-friendly Small Communities – as well as a member of the international Transition Network). Furthermore, they participate at several festivals, events, networks and take other opportunities to share their experiences with other communities in Hungary. Their impact has grown and they are hoping that their experiences may inspire others in Hungary – just like Transition Town Totnes inspired other Transition initiatives in the UK.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

1. Initiative website: [http://www.wekerle.hu/zold\\_hajtas](http://www.wekerle.hu/zold_hajtas)
2. Blogs related to the initiative: <http://atalakulowekerle.blogspot.com/> and <http://energiahatekonywekerle.blog.hu/>
3. Climate-Friendly Wekerle: introduction to the initiative at the Transition Towns Network website: <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/initiatives/klimabar-t-wekerle>

Scale of activities



Primary theme

CARBON/CLIMATE SPECIFIC

