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De bewoners van Molenkouter malen zelf de bonen voor een geurige kop koffie.



Inwoners van Dilsen-Stokkem huren in het project Maasmoossem percelen waar ze hun eigen biologische groenten kweken.



In het Food Smart Cities-netwerk deelt Brugge alle ervaringen over stadstuinieren, voedseloverschotten en educatie over duurzame voeding.



Come and Eat 2.0. inclusive, durable and honest

The second sustainable development goal aims at food security and the eradication of hunger and malnutrition worldwide. At the same time, it aims at promoting sustainable agriculture that focuses on nature and the climate.

Hanne Albers & Karlien Gorissen, advisors VVSG-International

Ecological and inclusive gardening in Stokkem

The Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW) of Dilsen-Stokkem works with other partners and volunteers on the realization of allotments. For this purpose, it has the support of the Flemish Land Company (VLM) which is a public agency of the Flemish government. The sustainable agriculture project was called 'Maasmoosem'. Residents from Dilsen-Stokkem rent plots or use an elevated bin to grow their own organic vegetables. In order to give the participants a boost, the service center organized training on ecological gardening, followed by practical guidance in their own allotment. In addition to responsible agriculture, 'Maasmoosem' devotes much attention to the social aspect. One wants to involve people from the neighborhood and promote social cohesion while at the same time promoting healthy nutrition and movement. The people's garden is in the immediate vicinity of assistant homes and of the Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW)'s residential care center. There is collaboration with many partners such as Velt, Limburg.net, the city, the PXL College and the volunteers, but the non-profit organization, Terra Therapeutica, is also an important partner. This organization connects people and nature to positively influence the well-being of vulnerable persons. For example, the Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW) not only focuses on sustainable gardening, but also on garden therapy. An ecological and inclusive approach, it is possible.

Wichelen combats malnutrition among the elderly

Malnutrition of the elderly is a real problem in our society. Molenkouter which is the assisted living center of the Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW) in the municipality of Wichelen therefore devotes special attention to the nutrition of its residents. In 2014, Molenkouter started a project about taste and memory. The appetite was taken into account when setting up 36 new rooms for residents with dementia. The dining room is equipped with adapted lighting, furniture and colors. The residential assisted living center also offers growth bins with forgotten vegetables used in the meals of the center. The residents can also prepare the vegetables. Residents and relatives can provide recipes of 'old' dishes for the kitchen. Molenkouter received a prize of 1000 Euros from the King Baudouin Foundation in 2014 for this project. Since then, the assisted living center has undertaken additional actions. This allows residents to enjoy a delicious cup of beans that are ground on location with an old coffee mill. Through a suggestion box, residents can also have their favorite menu on their birthday. Molenkouter is now also looking at how to get started with finger food in the assisted living center.

Bruges is 'food smart'

In December 2014, Bruges together with Gent joined the two-year European project Food Smart Cities. The aim was to develop new, local food strategies that are sustainable, fair, inclusive and efficient via a European network tailor-made for the city. Bruges focused on sensitization and participation. For example, the food festival under the name (H)eerlijk Brugge (honest and wonderful Bruges) organized competitions and a fair trade expo to get citizens excited about sustainable, fair food. A Bruges' Food Lab has also been established, a participatory platform that brings together stakeholders and local policy makers around urban agriculture, short chain, fair trade and food loss. The city also attaches great importance to networking. Good practices have been shared through the Food Smart Cities network, and joint guidelines have been made in connection with food surpluses, city gardens and education on sustainable nutrition. Other local governments can use these guidelines to work out or refine a sustainable food strategy. Bruges gained success with the Food Smart Cities project. It received the climate award of the Flemish Government in 2016 and was nominated for the Food Waste Awards. In addition, the city can build on its European network and international contacts.



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De jaarlijkse sport- en cultuurdag van het gemeentepersoneel zet de Herentalse personeelsleden aan tot beweging.

HERENTALS



DILBEEK



Verpleegkundigen in opleiding trekken voor hun stage van Genk naar Francistown.

LESELY MAES EN STEFANIA D'ANGELO



Good health and well-being: a right for everyone

With 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages' the UN targets less illnesses by 2030, with special attention for both physical and mental well-being. In addition, alcohol and drug abuse need to be combatted and the number of traffic deaths has to drop sharply.

Hanne Albers & Karlien Gorissen, advisors VVSG-International

Healthy employees, healthy council in Herentals

As a participant of the Gezonde Gemeente campaign (healthy municipality campaign) the municipality and the Public Centre of Social Welfare of Herentals are taking care of their employees' health. When civil servants start working they receive a health pass to go swimming or to use the sports centre. At regular times, they can also participate in health walks, Nordic walking, badminton and petanque. Each employee is also given a pedometer and is encouraged to register his or her steps on the online step registration tool of www.10000stappen.be. By rewarding the best 'walkers' and the most active department every year, the personnel is given extra motivation to pursue an active lifestyle. The annual sports and culture day for municipal employees also encourages them to move. During this excursion, no motorised transport is allowed and all locations need to be reached by bike or on foot. And finally, at the annual personnel meeting a healthy and safe work posture and equipment are fixed items on the agenda: experienced speakers explain and discuss topics such as lifting heavy loads, workstation ergonomics, but also how to avoid stress.

Dilbeek aims for less alcohol consumption

Following the amendment to an Act in 2010 which further restricts the alcohol consumption of young people, the town of Dilbeek invested in raising the population's awareness. The youth department, the health department, the police, a number of schools and local organisations in Dilbeek joined forces. In 2011, the 'Nog Tijd Zat' (Plenty of Time) campaign was launched, which dissuades youngsters to drink alcohol at an early age. In the context of this campaign, the town of Dilbeek supports associations to take measures whereby youngsters under the age of 16 are unable to obtain alcohol and youngsters under the age of 18 are unable to obtain spirits. Organisers of events, such as youth clubs, are receiving awareness raising material for free from the youth department. Beer mats, posters, wristbands and stickers which primarily want to draw youngsters' attention to alcohol consumption and its negative effects, are provided. Since 2015, the campaign has also focused on the immediate surroundings of young people. It is proven that when parents or friends use a product, chances are greater young people will follow this example. From 2017, the parents of youngsters will also be able to attend awareness information evenings.

Nursing students from Genk and Francistown learn from one another

In its city-to-city twinning with Francistown in Botswana, Genk focuses on healthcare, in which the support of nursing courses is key. Since 2008 the Nurse Training College at Regina Mundi in Genk and the Institute of Health Sciences in Francistown have worked together. They exchange curriculums, but the main activity is without a doubt the internships that are organised every year. A number of students from Genk work in the district hospitals and the Nyangabwe Referral Hospital in Francistown for four weeks. Due to the lack of doctors in Botswana a nurse's job is very varied which means the students can learn a lot. And in turn the students from Francistown follow an internship at the Wit-Gele Kruis and the Ziekenhuis Oost-Limburg. The years of co-operation between the school in Genk and Francistown have resulted in a positive experience exchange on the level of the students and the school leading to a network of teachers. In addition, students from Genk and Francistown share their experiences during information sessions. The success of the co-operation has meant that in the future nursing students of the University Colleges Leuven Limburg (UCLL) will also go to Francistown for a three-month internship.



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Walk for Water in Peer en Zonhoven.



Ledegemse gebouwen zijn 'waterproof'.

ISABELLE PATEER



Berlare werkt aan toegang tot drinkbaar water in Ecuador.



Every drop counts! Access to clean water and sanitation for all

Sustainable Development Goal 6 addresses the issues relating to access to drinking water and sanitation for all. But it also addresses the quality and sustainability of water resources worldwide. This is possible by reducing pollution, stopping the dumping of chemicals and a good treatment of waste water.

Hanne Albers & Karlien Gorissen, advisors VVSG-International

Buildings in Ledegem are 'waterproof'

In the context of a pilot project with the Province of West-Vlaanderen, the Flemish Water Knowledge Centre (Vlakwa) studied the water consumption of five municipalities in Flanders, Belgium. Using relatively simple procedures, it was possible to reduce the water consumption in municipal buildings up to 30%. Municipalities were able to save hundreds of thousands of euros on their drinking water bill. Ledegem has pursued a sustainable energy policy since 2008 and took part in the pilot project. Following a tour of the municipal buildings with a checklist, Ledegem was given an inventory of all the water consumption points in their buildings. Every problem and all the leaks were brought to light. Ledegem replaced the conventional taps with push-buttons in the sports hall and installed more economical shower heads. This measure alone already reduced the water consumption by more than 20%. In co-operation with VVSG, Vlakwa will roll out this project to all 308 Flemish municipalities.

Walk for Water in Peer and Zonhoven

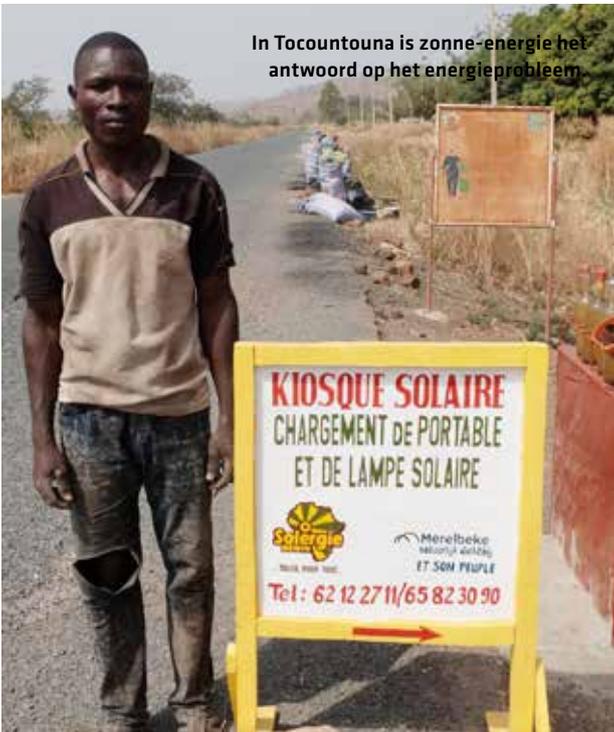
Many towns and cities organise events for World Water Day in Flanders, Belgium. Peer and Zonhoven supported the Walk for Water in March 2015. Worldwide, millions of people, often young girls, have to walk more than 6 kilometres every day to obtain drinking water. To show their support, about 800 students from Peer and Zonhoven put on their walking shoes. Each student also carried a litre of water. In Peer the city reused this water to water the plants in the city. In Zonhoven the aldermen of environment and development co-operation publicly signed a charter which commits the municipality to reducing its water consumption with 20% by 2020. The students were shocked by some of the ordeals many people their age have to undergo worldwide. Walking with water for miles and miles is quite something. Following the World Water Day, Peer also worked out a tourist water walk through the city. This walk takes you along different water spots in Peer and creates awareness about the water problem.

Berlare is working on access to drinking water in Ecuador

In many countries, clean drinking water is not self-evident. This is why the municipality of Berlare in the Flemish region of Belgium engaged in a 'waterschap' (town twinning 'light') with the municipality of Rio Verde in Ecuador. In collaboration with the Province of Oost-Vlaanderen, the Belgian non-governmental organisation PROTOS and CEFODI, an organisation in Ecuador itself, Berlare offers financial support to different projects, such as the construction and maintenance of water installations and water pumps. In addition, Berlare places great importance on raising the awareness of its population about the 'waterschap' and the access to drinking water. With a water walk, the water situation in Berlare and Ecuador are explained. Berlare also organises so-called water days for the children in the fourth grade of primary school. They go on a water walk adapted to children and follow a workshop about Ecuador. There are also photograph exhibitions and lectures and the municipalities of Berlare and Rio Verde exchange letters and films. In the future, Berlare will continue to focus on this 'waterschap' aiming to tackle the most pressing needs.



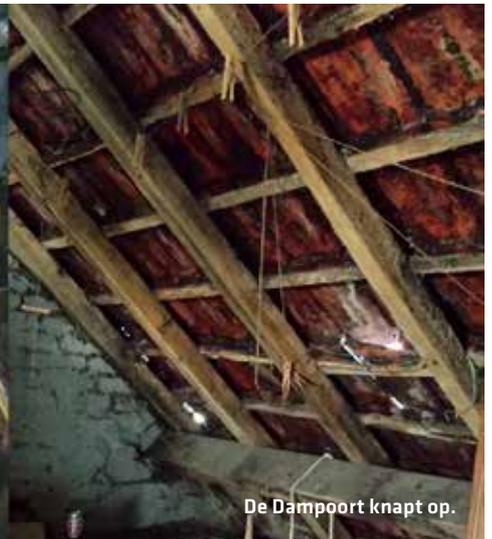
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In Tocountouna is zonne-energie het antwoord op het energieprobleem.



Eeklo zet in op duurzaam energiebeleid.



De Dampoort knapt op.



Switching to affordable and sustainable energy for all

Sustainable Development Goal 7 ensures access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. We need to combat energy poverty and produce and use our energy more efficiently. In addition, renewable sources of energy are becoming increasingly important.

Hanne Albers & Karlien Gorissen, advisors VVSG-International

Eeklo on land and in the air

The city of Eeklo already decided on a sustainable energy policy around the turn of the century. It opted for wind energy as the engine for its renewable energy projects. A visit of the inhabitants of Eeklo to the wind turbine of Middelkerke in the Netherlands and clear communication about the project helped to convince the population to opt for renewable energy. The citizens could also make a direct financial investment. This option raised the involvement of the participants who consider the wind turbines their property, and it prompted them to reconsider their use of energy.

Over the years, Eeklo has broadened its view of sustainable energy continuously. The city targeted solar power, the production of rapeseed oil and the use of wood residues. Making the buildings more sustainable was also very important. Eeklo installed solar panels on the municipal buildings, invested in renewable energy and energy saving techniques in the municipal offices, and is currently working on a heat grid using residual heat, e.g. of an incinerator, to heat buildings. Energy which is otherwise lost is thus reused sustainably. Also for this project the city is offering the possibility for direct financial participation of their citizens.

Dampoort renovates!

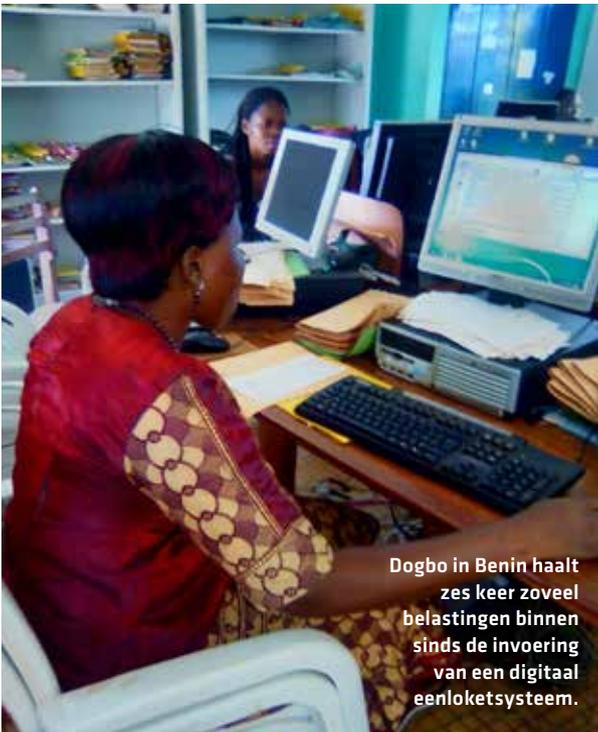
Owners of qualitatively inferior housing do not always have the financial leeway and knowledge to carry out renovation works. Bad insulation and loss of energy have a negative effect on the monthly energy invoice, which in the long term can cause energy poverty. To find a structural solution for these problems vulnerable households are facing, the Public Centre of Social Welfare of Ghent launched the 'Dampoort knapt op' project. It started with a pilot phase: ten houses in the Dampoort area each received EUR 30,000 for renovation works such as the repair or the replacement of leaking or non-insulated roofs, external woodwork and unsafe electricity. The owners received intensive social and technical support to manage the renovations. The emphasis is on energy savings, as a result of which average power consumption of the houses was already halved to 243.6 kWh/m²/year. When the owners sell their renovated house, they repay the renovation grant, in most cases with a little extra to the Public Centre of Social Welfare. This approach allows the Public Centre of Social Welfare to help other families to undertake renovations.

Merelbeke shines its light on Toucountouna

For us it is quite normal to cook, charge our mobiles and switch on the light at any time of day. In a low-income country such as Benin access to energy is not quite so self-evident. In Toucountouna, the town twinning partner of Merelbeke since 2014, only the centre is connected to the electricity grid. In the countryside, the light of an oil lamp is often the only light source to study, cook and even give birth. An expansion of the existing network would be too time-consuming and too expensive. This is why last year Merelbeke, in joint consultation with the Toucountouna town council, joined forces with the non-governmental organisation Solar Without Boundaries to install a solar kiosk. Solar power is an ideal solution for the energy problems in sunny Benin. The kiosk is managed by a local self-employed person who has been trained by Solar Without Boundaries. The population can go there to rent and recharge rechargeable lamps. Other batteries, e.g. of mobiles, can be charged on payment of a small fee. The solar kiosk is a massive success, in just one week all the lamps were rented. Merelbeke is looking at the possibilities to expand this initiative in the future.



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Dogbo in Benin haalt zes keer zoveel belastingen binnen sinds de invoering van een digitaal eenloketsysteem.



De app van Sint-Truiden brengt iedereen met elkaar in contact.



Het bedrijventerrein Itterbeek kiest op alle vlakken voor duurzaamheid.



Innovation and industrialization can also be sustainable

The ninth Sustainable-Development Goal focuses on reliable and sustainable infrastructure, inclusive and sustainable industrialization and promotion of innovation. This is the foundation for a strong economy with social welfare. Access to ICT and the Internet for all is also essential.

Hanne Albers & Karlien Gorissen, advisors VVSG-International

Sint-Truiden apps

The city of Sint-Truiden strongly believes in the digital future. It therefore developed an innovative city app which was launched on February 1, 2017. Through this app, the city council, residents, traders and associations are now much more closely connected. For example, you can easily book a table at a restaurant or stay informed of what happens in your youth club. Communication with the city council is now much more fluid. Citizens can report and apply for documents such as a certificate of cohabitation or a birth certificate to city services. The app also simplifies the work of city officials. They can immediately follow up and respond to reports or respond quickly when a problem occurs. For example, electricity recently broke down in a number of Sint-Truiden neighborhoods. Via the app, the communications service was able to inform people immediately about this situation and to inform them about the state of affairs. In the future, the city wants to expand the app to areas such as mobility and tourism. In other domains, Sint-Truiden is also accelerating digitalization. For example, there is wifi available everywhere in the marketplace and the business areas are fitted with fiber optic to maximize internet access.

Duffel sustains business parks

On behalf of the municipality of Duffel, the intermunicipal cooperation for regional development, IMEGO, has undertaken many initiatives to ensure a sustainable business park for SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) in Itterbeek. Enterprises that want to gain a certificate must demonstrate that sustainability is essential to them, including mobility, buildings, waste management and energy use. Enterprises can take small sustainability measures, such as good insulation, re-use of rainwater and the use of energy saving lamps and fair trade products. SMEs can also go one step further. They can install solar panels or install a green roof. IGEMO also provides its own contribution through the construction of a separate sewage system and a small-scale water treatment plant. In addition, it has provided the business park with energy-efficient public lighting and underground water reservoirs for fire-fighting purposes. Another distinctive feature of Itterbeek is the emphasis on green spaces. Despite the stringent sustainability standards, the reactions of the entrepreneurs are very positive. IGEMO continues to follow its course in relation to sustainability in the future. In Berlaar and Puerus, two municipalities that belong to the intermunicipal cooperation, IMEGO is constructing two new sustainable SME business parks in consultation with the municipalities concerned.

Benin municipal income transparent

A few years ago, Dogbo, the Benin city which is the partner of Roeselare, introduced a system that increases transparency in municipal revenue. Like most local governments in Benin, the various municipal services in Dogbo arranged their income separately. There was no central overview of the income market stall-holders received, the proceeds from issuing deeds (e.g. driving licenses) and other tax revenues for the city. Dogbo therefore installed a digital single-slot system. Thus, all municipal revenue from taxation comes through the municipal organization through one digital office and is managed with one software program. The mayor of Dogbo can therefore review the municipal income at any time and follow the planned expenses. This increases the transparency of resources, reduces corruption and leads to better management of municipal resources. According to the mayor, municipal income has even increased to six times since Dogbo introduced the system. Dogbo is the pioneer for the system in Benin, but also the Benin partner cities of Zoersel, Merelbeke and Hoogstraten have plans to develop this digital one-stop system in the coming years.



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In de Edegemse partnergemeente San Jeronimo zorgt het verwerken van lege plastic flessen nu ook voor inkomens.



Om overstromingen te voorkomen wordt het Hertog Hendrik I-plein in Baarle-Hertog bij felle regens een vijver

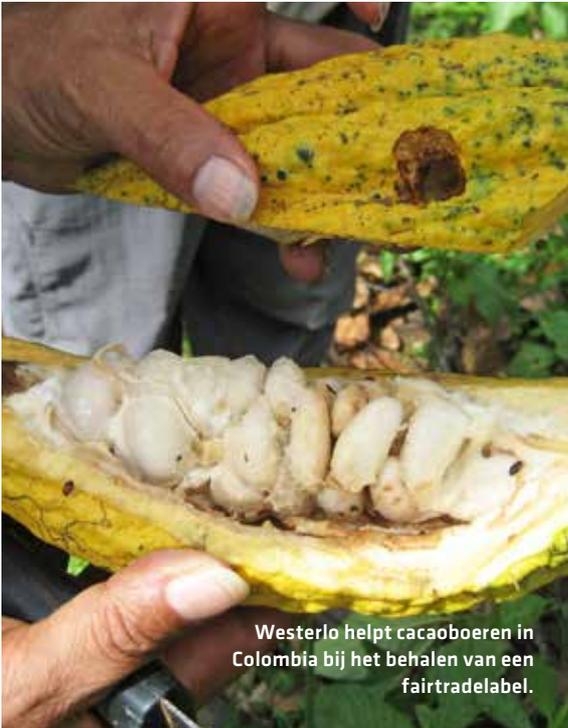


In Oostende is het lege postgebouw een bruisend cultuurcentrum geworden.





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Westerlo helpt cacaoboeren in Colombia bij het behalen van een fairtradelabel.



De politiezone van Sint-Pieters-Leeuw (nu Zennevallei) stelde als eerste een duurzaamheidsrapport op.



Met een onlinetool peilde Zedelgem bij de inwoners naar hun mobiliteitsbehoeften.



Sustainable development relies on peaceful, inclusive societies

Peace, security and legal certainty are essential for promoting sustainable development. In addition, we think of combating crime, corruption and violence, also against children, but also of a strong constitutional state in which fundamental freedoms are protected. Furthermore, effective and transparent institutions with attention to citizenship participation and inclusive decision making are indispensable.

Hanne Albers & Karlien Gorissen, advisors VVSG-International; Tom De Schepper, advisor VVSG-security

Police zones accountable for social responsibility

More and more police zones in Belgium publish a social report with their annual accounts or include this in the service report of the past year. They account for the extent to which the organization takes into account its impact on sustainability (buildings), ecology (vehicles), residential traffic or purchases of copy paper and consumables. In the Belgian federal parliament on April 26, 2017 an amendment to the rules on the operation and organization of the police councils was approved. The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) proposed that more police zones be allowed to publish a social report. It may be sufficient to include a brief overview of sustainable initiatives in the annual report. The police zone Sint-Pieters-Leeuw (today police zone Zennevallei) was a pioneer in the preparation of a sustainability report a few years ago. With this it won the Award for Best Belgian Sustainability Report in 2013. Since 2006, the Brussels municipalities are obliged to draw up a report on the extent to which they consider social, ethical and environmental aspects in their financial policies.

Everyone mobile in Zedelgem

Increase the mobility of people with a disability by promoting sustainable mobility for all, which is the goal of the 'Everyone Mobile' project in Zedelgem, starting in 2017. The project builds on a project by two organizations, Oranje and Vzw Curando, "Together for talent", but can count on the support of the social housing and the municipal council. Sustainability is interpreted and approached broadly. It is about transport options and solutions that are safe, easy, social, environmentally friendly and energy efficient. What characterizes the project further is civic co-creation. With the help of Createlli, the residents of Zedelgem were asked via an online tool about their mobility needs. Based on the results, project ideas were developed in May, including cycling streets, mobility for vulnerable groups, car and bicycle parts, and a digital platform that brings together supply and demand. A number of municipal officials have taken an active part and now put their shoulders under the elaboration of these ideas. To check which projects are feasible, they will be tested with citizens this summer. The created citizens' initiatives will be spread through local neighborhood events and social media. Thus, "Everyone Mobile" remains committed to civic co-creation.

Westerlo's alliance for peace

Colombia has been involved in an armed conflict for decades, which the recent fragile peace agreement is trying to end. Westerlo was not blind to this issue and in December 2006 joined an alliance for peace with the Colombian peace community of San José de Apartado. The municipality did this together with the federation of Herselt, Hulshout and Westerlo parishes. The Municipal Council of Westerlo offers practical support to the peace community. It promotes education, provides financial support to improve the homes and committed itself to acquiring a fair-trade label for cocoa and bananas. In addition, Westerlo also acts as an advocate to protect the interests of the peace community. Together with its partners it denounced the conflict and human rights violations to the Colombian authorities and the United Nations. In addition to direct support to the peace community, the municipality of Westerlo also regularly organizes information for its own inhabitants. Following the ten-year existence of the Alliance, two representatives of San José de Apartado were received at the town hall. This direct contact between the peace community and the Westerlo policy makers keeps the topic very much in the news within the municipality.



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In Lommel krijgen bedrijven begeleiding bij de aanleg van tuinen met streekeigen planten en diervriendelijke flora.



In Torhout werken stad en OCMW sinds 1 september samen in een nieuwe gemeenschappelijke organisatiecultuur.



Fietsgemeente Wevelgem zamelt oude fietsen in om ze te laten herstellen in opleidingscentra. Daarna worden ze goedkoop verkocht aan scholieren of gezondheidswerkers in Oeganda.

