

## Abstract

This paper describes the Transition Initiative and presents the importance of community activity on sustainability at the grass roots level. It presents a vision of urban sustainability from a bottom-up viewpoint as seen by citizens and a model of local organization for promoting sustainability. It needs support from institutional structures but differs from the more commonly accepted top-down approach.

The Transition Initiative, sometimes called Transition Towns, refers to citizens who organize local community activities to cope with environmental or non-environmental crises and changes. It started in 2006 and spread rapidly to over 1000 communities around the world, to which Israel recently joined, connected in a common network for cooperation and the exchange of information.

Transition refers to the process of change or transformation. The context for the process is the search for a better future with a reduction in dependence on fossil fuels and in the damage to human wellbeing and natural resources. It refers to a gradual process as opposed to a sudden change following a crisis.

It is a dynamic model which has developed through the experiences gathered from transition communities around the world.

Principles and concepts of transition initiatives:

1. Local - preference and support for products, enterprises and services generated in the local vicinity or in its close surroundings
2. Community resilience - strengthening the networks, resources and the capabilities in the community for adaptation in response to a crisis. Transition may include re-thinking about the systems on which a community depends and on finding local solutions to strengthen and improve its independent coping capacity.
3. Community scale – Transition initiatives are based on close geographic communities, and is suited more to a neighborhood level than to a whole town.
4. Positive future vision – Transition initiatives start out from a vision for a better future for man and the environment in an adaptive context. Activists seek opportunities for creating a better future, combining hope with action to generate change in a pro-active way.
5. Bottom-up partnership and engagement – Transition initiatives are generated by active citizens taking responsibility for their own lives. They encourage partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders to create and promote joint activities.

This paper presents the theoretical framework for a bottom-up approach and the main principles for its successful implementation. It also recommends how transition initiatives could be used for promoting urban sustainability.