

DRY TOILET 2003

FINAL REPORT



1st International Dry Toilet Conference

Raini Kiukas and Tittiina Repka

October 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ORGANISING A CONFERENCE –A WAY TO BEGIN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CO-OPERATION.....	3
1. ORGANISING THE CONFERENCE.....	3
1.1. Objectives.....	3
1.2. Organising Committee.....	4
1.3. Scientific Committee.....	5
2. THE CONFERENCE.....	5
2.1. The actual event.....	5
2.2. Exhibition.....	7
2.3. Voluntary assistants working at the conference.....	7
2.4. Social program.....	7
3. MARKETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.....	8
4. BUDGET.....	10
5. EVALUATION.....	11
5.1. Questionnaire results.....	11
5.2. Own evaluation.....	11
6. THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE.....	12
QUESTIONNAIRE.....	13

ORGANISING A CONFERENCE –A WAY TO BEGIN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CO-OPERATION

1. Organising the conference

Dry toilet seminars have been organised in Finland already for some years and have been very popular. Participants have been interested in the technical development of dry toilets as well as in the history of toilet culture. Since the beginning of the 21st century increasing attention has been given to wastewater management in sparsely inhabited areas of Finland. New laws on this subject, the general concern for the state of the world's waters, and the high death rate caused by inadequate disposal of human excrements gave the idea of organising a dry toilet conference. An extra push came from a few experts who visited the “World Toilet Seminar” in Singapore in the autumn of 2001. At that seminar the use of drinkable water to flush water closets was strongly promoted.

The first preliminary meeting took place in Tampere, Finland in October 2001 where it was decided that the Ecological Information Association would apply for a grant from the Pirkanmaa Regional Environment Centre for organising a conference. In the beginning of 2002 the Global Sanitet Club of Finland (Käymäläseura Huussi ry) was founded, and one of the functions given to it was to participate in the organising of the conference. The two associations, the Ecological Information Association and the Global Sanitet Club drew up a written mutual contract.

The positive decision regarding the grant application to Pirkanmaa Regional Environment Centre was received in the spring of 2002, and the actual preparations for the conference began. The University of Tampere was chosen as the location and August 2003 as the time. The conference was named **Dry Toilet 2003, the 1st International Dry Toilet Conference**. The two associations founded an organising committee, whose task was to provide the contents of the event and together with a chosen professional conference organiser make all the practical arrangements. TAVI, Tampere Congress Bureau, was chosen to implement practical arrangements.

1.1. Objectives

The objectives of the conference were noted in the grant application and were clarified during the organising process as well as just before the conference when wide international participation was confirmed.

In the 1st Announcement the objectives were:

- To present dry toilets as an equal option to water closets
- To promote the use of human excreta as fertiliser
- To introduce modern dry toilet technology and processes
- To present alternative solutions
- To widen the understanding of the cultural aspects of sanitation
- To present the dry toilet as a method of protecting both ground and surface waters

As the conference was approaching, a few more objectives were set:

- To create a forum for international dry toilet discussions
- To start international co-operation
- To promote Finnish environmental know-how and education

Even though economic factors were not central issues, it still required a lot of work to get the conference budget balanced. Company sponsorships were a necessary requirement for the organising. The aim was to get regional environmental companies to present their products and know-how. Many companies, including a multi-national soft paper company, were contacted with hardly any success.

It was decided to host an exhibition in conjunction with the conference. The exhibition was limited to dry toilet manufacturers and wholesalers. The idea was to give Finnish dry toilet companies a possibility to present themselves to an international audience. Foreign companies were also invited to participate.

1.2. Organising Committee

The organising committee was formed by members chosen by the Ecological Information Association and the Global Sanitet Club. In addition to representatives from both associations, experts on dry toilets and the water and waste management sector were needed. People who had experience from conference organising were also required.

The first meeting of the organising committee was held on the 30th of May, 2002. Conference organising takes a lot of time and as all the members of the committee were already committed to another full-time job, it was decided to employ a secretary for the daily routine work. The practical arrangements (registration, hotel reservations, etc.) were given to an outside company.

Members of the organising committee:

Mrs Raini Kiukas – Global Sanitet Club of Finland
Mr Jukka Lindroos - Global Sanitet Club of Finland
Mr Juha Pulkkila – Global Sanitet Club of Finland
Mr Raimo Flink – Ecological Information Association
Mr Matti Lehtomäki – Ecological Information Association
Mr Antero Luonsi – Pirkanmaa Regional Environment Centre
Dr Tapio Katko – Tampere University of Technology
Mr Harri Mattila – Häme Polytechnic
Mrs Anja Hakkarainen – TAVI Congress Bureau
Secretary Ms Tittiina Repka

Mrs Raini Kiukas was elected chairperson, Mr Matti Lehtomäki vice chairperson and Ms Tittiina Repka secretary. The committee met 18 times and each meeting lasted at least three hours.

The committee worked well together with great efficiency. Mrs Anja Hakkarainen from TAVI Congress Bureau proved to be a valuable asset by giving a lot of practical advice in conference organising and schedules. The only employed member, Ms Tittiina Repka, worked as secretary and implemented the decisions made by the committee. Mr Antero Luonsi, Dr Tapio Katko and Mr Harri Mattila gave the needed and necessary expert advice. Mr Jukka Lindroos did not participate in the actual work of the committee but worked in the back-ground helping the committees with advice regarding commercial dry toilet marketing. Without the effort put in by

Mrs Raini Kiukas in arranging contacts, etc. the conference would not have taken place. Two members of the scientific committee, professor Tuula Tuhkanen and principal lecturer Marjukka Dyer participated a few times in the committee meetings. A student from Tampere Polytechnic, Ms Sini Torsti, also participated in the meetings as her task was to co-ordinate the work of student assistants.

The work of the committee was separate from that of TAVI Congress Bureau personnel. Ms Repka implemented the committee's decisions. The members worked hundreds of hours for free on their own time.

1.3. Scientific Committee

The task of the scientific committee was to choose lecturers for the conference based on submitted abstracts as well as to schedule them in suitable order for the conference program. After the conference the committee will choose the papers suited for the IWA (International Water Association) "Water, Science & Technology" publication. Mr Harri Mattila acted as the secretary of the scientific committee.

Members of the scientific committee:

Prof. Tuula Tuhkanen –
Tampere University of Technology, Finland
Prof. Yrjö Haila – University of Tampere, Finland
Prof. Enn Loigu – Tallinn Technical University, Estonia
Dr. Tapio Katko – Tampere University of Technology, Finland
Principal Lecturer Marjukka Dyer –
Tampere Polytechnic, Finland
Senior Consultant Mr Juhani Efraimsson –
Plancenter Ltd, Finland
Mr Kalle Löövi – International Red Cross, Switzerland
Dr Ralf Otterpohl – Hamburg-Harburg
Technical University, Germany
Associate Professor Jan-Olof Drangert –
University of Linköping, Sweden
Mr Harri Mattila – Häme Polytechnic, Finland

2. The Conference

As all big events, this one also had a patron. Mr Kaj Bärlund, the Director of the Environment and Human Settlements Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, was happy to accept this honour. In his opening speech Mr Bärlund dealt with the challenges created by the need for clean water and sanitation in Europe, noting that there are still many problems to be solved. His greetings and speech can be read on the conference website www.drytoilet.org

2.1. The actual event

The conference was opened by Director General of the Environmental Protection Department of the Ministry of the Environment, Pekka Jalkanen, who brought greetings from the Finnish Environment Administration. Member of parliament and former member of the EU parliament, Ms Heidi Hautala, spoke of the environment policies of EU today and in the future.

In the early stages of the planning of the conference the committee contemplated the main issues and key-note speakers. The conference was divided into four main topics, and for each topic a key-note speaker of international repute was chosen.

Main topics and key-note speakers:

1. **Controlled rural and urban environmental management** – Key-note speaker Ms **Kaarin Taipale**, the Chair of ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives). Ms Taipales speech "What is the colour of sustainable development?" was due to other commitments reduced to half and presented at the get-together on Wednesday evening.
2. **Re-use of human excreta as fertiliser** – Key-note speaker from the University of Linköping, Sweden, Associate Professor **Jan-Olof Drangert** "A history of mental views on the re-use of nutrients."
3. **Technical development of dry toilets** – Key-note speaker Dr **Martin Oldenburg** from Otterwasser GmbH in Germany, which is a consulting company specialised in sanitation issues. His speech was titled "Toilets for the re-use of natural resources - examples and applications"
4. **Toilet culture** – Key-note speaker Mr **Ron Sawyer**, an expert in sanitation issues, from SARAR Transformacion in Mexico. His title was "Sanitation as if it really mattered: Getting toilets out of the (water) closet and into the loop."

Other speakers were chosen from over 40 submitted abstracts. Altogether 16 lecturers from 12 countries were given an opportunity to present their research or projects. Each had 15 minutes for oral presentation and could submit a paper of eight pages. Only one lecturer was from Finland, the others came from Asia, Africa and the rest of Europe.

Those not chosen for oral presentations were given an opportunity to present their research or projects in poster format at the conference. Their final papers were limited to four pages. posters could be viewed during the event, and some time was allocated for a special poster session. Posters covering the three excursion sites were also made .

A final panel discussion was arranged at the conclusion of the conference on Friday afternoon. The leader of the discussion was Associate Professor Jan-Olof Drangert. Mr Harri Mattila, who is writing his doctoral thesis on wastewater management in sparsely inhabited areas, brought the discussion to a conclusion and delivered a thank you to the active conference guests. One major conclusion was that the use of dry toilets is not only a technical issue, but in many places its introduction requires doing away with familiar norms and habits. Toilet issues are not a common subject of discussion – the openness in Finland was a surprise for many.

Altogether 163 delegates from 30 countries took part in the conference. Generally this was thought to be the right number as it gave certain intimacy and allowed the guests to get acquainted with each other. Sixty-four foreigners from a wide variety of organisations were present. The delegates came from the following countries:

Finland	99	France	2	Latvia	1
Sweden	8	Kenya	2	Niger	1
Japan	6	Mexico	2	Nigeria	1
Germany	6	UK	2	Pakistan	1
The Netherlands	5	USA	2	South Africa	1
Nepal	3	Zimbabwe	2	Switzerland	1
India	3	Cameroon	1	Taiwan	1
Denmark	3	Egypt	1	Tanzania	1
Austria	2	Estonia	1	Uganda	1
China	2	Israel	1	Australia	1

2.2. Exhibition

A dry toilet exhibition was organised in conjunction with the conference at the conference venue. The exhibitors were: Antti Salo Ky, Berger Biotechnik GmbH, Biolan Oy, Clivus Multrum Int. AB, Europlast Muovitekniikka Oy, Lassila & Tikanoja Oyj, Malk Oy, Oy Paltermo AB, Pellos Marin Oy, PikkuVihreä Oy, Oy Raita Environment, Separett AB, Suomen Veneilyliitto ry, Wost Man Ecology AB.

The public had free entry and approximately 300 people in addition to the conference guests visited the exhibition, including school groups and companies. The exhibition was marketed only just before the event in local newspapers and radio stations.

2.3. Voluntary assistants working at the conference

Thirteen students from the environmental engineering course at Tampere Polytechnic worked as conference assistants. Their tasks included session hall assisting, cloakroom, poster and exhibition set up assisting, running small errands and helping to put the conference bags together. Gareth James, a student, was in charge of the technical side on Thursday 21st of August and on Friday 22nd August that duty fell on another student, Jarno Laitinen.

In order for things to run smoothly during the conference many different skills were required. In addition to students and organising committee members a few outsiders helped out. Three employees of TAVI Congress Bureau worked at the information and registration desk assisting the delegates in different matters.

A professional photographer was also present. Pictures were developed over night in order for delegates to be able to purchase them.

2.4. Social program

The conference began on Wednesday 20th of August at 7pm with a “get-together”. On behalf of the organising committee, chairperson Mrs Raini Kiukas greeted the guests followed by a speech by the chair of ICLEI, Ms Kaarin Taipale. She finally also opened the event and the exhibition. Approximately 100 guests participated in the “get-together”.

On Thursday evening there was a visit to the Centre for Urban Environment, Moreenia followed by a reception by the City of Tampere at the Old City Hall. The Deputy Mayor, Mr Kalevi Lammi, with Mrs Marjukka Dyer as translator wished all the delegates warmly welcome to Tampere. The five man chorus “The Bouncers” livened up the atmosphere.

On Friday evening the delegates had the possibility to enjoy the final conference dinner on the Island of Viikinsaari. The boat trip, the “kyykkä” competition, the preparation of salmon, the tasty dinner, the musical performances, the pancakes and the relaxed feeling all received a lot of praise. Tampere City Water and Mr Matti Lehtomäki hosted the evening.

On Saturday it was time for an excursion during which 65 delegates in four hours completed a bus tour of the following places:

1. **Environment Know-how Park at Ahlman Institute for Agriculture and Home Economics.** The park hosts a permanent exhibition of composts, dry toilets and other environmentally friendly inventions.
2. **Kangasala ecovillage.** This ten-house community has no water closets – each house has its own dry toilet system. The excursionists were able to see and learn of four different systems and even visit one during the coffee break. For many this was the first and only visit inside the home of a Finnish family.
3. **Tarastenjärvi waste management site,** where the guides from Pirkanmaa Jätehuolto Ltd. explained waste collection and management in the Pirkanmaa region and gave a more detailed account of bio-waste and the composting fields.

During the tour two travel guides from Kangasala gave general information on Tampere, Kangasala and the rest of Finland.

3. Marketing and announcements

Marketing strategies were decided at organising committee meetings: who, where and how to inform of the upcoming conference. The experienced employees of TAVI Congress Bureau gave many useful tips. On the other hand, the members of the committee were acquainted with a wide variety of people especially in the water sector.

1. WWW – site. The conference homepages www.drytoilet.org were designed in co-operation with Mr Niklas Vainio right in the beginning of the organising process. Most search engines on the internet gave a first hit to this site with the word “dry toilet”. The number of visitors to these pages increased as the conference was approaching. The information was regularly updated. Many other sites had a link to this site, and the conference was listed on many event lists on the Internet.
2. The 1st Announcement was a three-fold A4 leaflet printed in 1000 copies in Finnish and 3000 copies in English. The leaflet gave a short description of the conference and contact information. It was mailed during the summer of 2002 to Finnish embassies, foreign embassies in Finland, universities, polytechnics, Finnish municipalities, environment centres, to the water, sanitation and waste management sector, to development aid organisations and to many companies, associations, private individuals, etc. having an interest in dry toilets, both in Finland and abroad. The leaflet was also distributed at many events.

3. 2nd Announcement and call for papers – This was a 16 page prospectus, which contained instructions regarding papers, information on the conference program, social events, excursions, accommodation, Tampere and Finland as well as registration procedures. A registration form was added to the prospectus. The registration form was also available for down-loading from the website. The first printing was 2000 copies, which was mailed to different parties worldwide. Later, an extra printing of 1000 was made for distribution both at the Kyoto 3WWF and the Lübeck ECOSAN seminar.
4. Call for papers: A request for abstracts from experts and instructions on their delivery were also sent as a separate e-mail announcement worldwide.
5. E-mail lists – The secretary gathered a good-sized e-mail list of contact addresses provided by committee members and from all the relevant sites on the Internet. Part of the marketing was fully electronic.
6. The Third World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan in March 2003 – The Global Sanitet Club of Finland took part in the water-action contest for NGOs. Of all the applicants, 150 NGOs were given the possibility to travel to Kyoto, Japan to attend the forum and in poster format present their projects. The Global Sanitet Club was one of them and Mrs Raini Kiukas and Mr Juha Pulkkila participated as representatives of the association. During eight days, as part of the official Finnish delegation, they had an excellent opportunity to market the conference to the world's water and sanitation experts. Contacts made in Kyoto played an important role in the success of the conference.
7. Media coverage:
Before the conference: Press coverage began already in May, 2002 as "Aamulehti"- the main daily of Tampere announced the grants given by the Pirkanmaa Regional Environment Centre. The first press release by the conference was issued on World Environment Day, the 5th of June, 2002. Many articles during the organising process, which dealt with wastewater management and/or dry toilets, mentioned the conference. The dry toilet seminar in the autumn of 2002 received wide publicity and also promoted the conference.

Various articles in several Finnish magazines such as "Suomen Kuvalehti", "Mökkilehti" and "Puutarhalehti", "Y&T lehti" covered the upcoming conference.

Also, many electronic newsletters published the conference announcements. Press releases were sent to STT (Finnish Information Agency), the larger newspapers and environmental journalists on the following dates: 25.11.2002, 24.2.2003, 17.4.2003, 5.6.2003, 14.8.2003. The last press release included an invitation to the press conference, which took place on Thursday 21st of August, 2003 at 9am at the conference venue, the University of Tampere.

During the conference: At the press conference Director Mr Kaj Bärlund from UNECE, member of parliament Ms Heidi Hautala, Mr Eero Kontula from the Department for Development Policy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and representatives of the organising committee, Mrs Raini Kiukas, Mr Harri Mattila and Mr Juha Pulkkila answered questions. The attached press release, which came out in Finnish and English, was distributed to over 20 media representatives during the conference. The English press release was also posted on the conference homepage on the Internet.

TV and radio people were well represented. Information and interviews from the conference were broadcast all day Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday 20th of August a live interview of Mr Harri Mattila and Mr Jukka Lindroos was broadcast on YLE TV1 morning program. The conference was also mentioned on the evening main news broadcasts on channel TV2 and MTV3. Many Finnish radio stations broadcast live from the venue interviewing both the organisers, exhibitors and delegates. Many newspapers including Finland's largest paper "Helsingin Sanomat" reported about the conference.

After the conference: Finland's Swedish speaking FST Obs program covered the main points of the conference very well on 26th August.

Many magazines and newspapers ran articles about the conference including "Vihreä Lanka", "Tausta ja Uutiset", "Turun Sanomat", "Aamulehti". A few foreign journalists were present. Ms Anu Könnusaar from the Estonian nature fund wrote an article for "Eesti Terviseleht" and Mr Christophe Elain for a French environmental magazine.

The committee is not informed of all writings or other publicity, but so far the publicity has been mainly positive. A year earlier the media was amused, but as the conference turned out to be a success their attitude changed. The only negative publicity came from the American Internet news site www.CNSnews.com, which was totally against dry toilets. Their article, even after having interviewed a committee member and one delegate, was very aggressive, but created a lot of discussion. Their first article came out in June 2003 and the second one right after the conference.

8. Paid advertisements: The only paid adverts concerned the exhibition and appeared in the local newspaper just before the conference.

4. Budget

The total cost of the conference was estimated to be 140,000 EURO. Half of the income derived from registration fees, 50,000 EURO from grants and the rest from exhibition space rental and visitors. The original budget was based on 220 delegates and 30 accompanying persons. The registration fee could be kept reasonable as wage and rental expenses were minimised.

The final conference profits amount to about 10,000 EUR. They are to be divided between the two associations according to agreement. Most will go to cover the expenses of the voluntary work done by the members. A total of 1300 hours of recorded voluntary work was done, of which half was done by the chairperson, Mrs Raini Kiukas.

The contribution from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs towards sponsoring ten delegates from developing countries contributed to the positive result. The income from the exhibitors came close to the estimate, but visitors were not charged an entrance fee as planned.

The organisers wish to thank the sponsors, without whom this event could not have taken place. The sponsors include: Lassila & Tikanoja Oyj, Biolan Oy, Kangasalan Osuuspankki, Vapo Oy, City of Tampere, Tampere Water, Tampere Polytechnic, Tampere University of Technology, Natural Heritage Services, Molok Oy and Kopli Oy. Grants were received from Pirkanmaa Regional Environment Centre, Maa- ja vesiteknikan tukiry and the Academy of Finland.

5. Evaluation

Whatever the event, it is always good to evaluate it by different measures or criteria. The arranging of a new event, especially an international one, is always a great challenge, and afterwards it is good to record the plusses and minuses. It is even better to pass out a questionnaire to the participants and to make an evaluation based on it. The two organisations which arranged DRY TOILET 2003 rely solely on voluntary work. A firm commitment to organise an event is the first and main precondition for success. In this case, when some people became passive, others became more active.

Financial profits are often the only measure of success. In this case, the goal was to cover expenses. This goal was achieved, but many hours of voluntary work were needed. The questionnaire filled out by delegates proved a good way to get ideas for future actions

5.1. Questionnaire results

On Friday a questionnaire was distributed among the delegates (see attachment). Altogether 47 filled out forms were returned.

The answers provided many good suggestions and ideas. When questioned about the need to organise another Dry Toilet conference, almost everybody answered yes 34 thought it was important to keep it as a separate event. Over 50% felt that one should be held every two years .

Most of the forms included a thank you for a job well done, so all the organisers should be satisfied with their efforts.

5.2. Own evaluation

In the final meeting of the organising committee two weeks after the conference, the members evaluated the event and organisation. The preparation work had lasted one and a half years and none of the association representatives had had any former experience of organising such a big event. It was a pleasure to hear all the positive feedback given directly to TAVI personnel and committee members during the event and right after.

According to the committee members, the best result of the conference was that dry toilets or dry sanitation was clearly defined as part of the world sanitation program . The broad insight and various experiences of the delegates support the necessity of developing dry sanitation. The atmosphere and expertise of delegates were also noted as highlights of the conference. A positive note came from the participation of many officials.

Another new positive experience was that media representatives actually listened to the subject without the slight laughter heard before. Wide media coverage is also an important factor towards the general acceptance of dry toilets.

The lectures presented new ideas and the committee members also became more convinced of the possibilities of dry toilets.

The only really negative feedback both in questionnaires and by own evaluation was the acoustics of the session hall. The organisers could not anticipate any problems in that respect. Next time the acoustics and lights will be properly tested.

In the future the Finnish word "huussi" (privy) should become history – instead the Finnish word "kuivakäymälä" (dry toilet) and DT technology is to be used. All material related to an international conference should go through a professional translator. Also the introduction of organising committee members should be included in the program.

6. Thoughts for the future

Contacts both in Finland and abroad were established during the conference. These contacts should be maintained and further co-operation developed. The participants of this conference establish a base for dry toilet implementation and for the development of dry toilet technology. Contacts with media representatives and IWA (International Water Association) should also not be forgotten.

It is important to continue organising international conferences; maybe next time the emphasis could be more on the sociological side. An annual conference is not recommended, one every two years seems better. One suggestion is to alternate with the ECOSAN-seminar, which is organised every two years.

The organisers should not forget their own country, Finland. Local events are an excellent method of collecting and distributing information. The experiences from dry toilet users are a base for development of dry toilets as well as a base for future exports.

Attachment

1st International Dry Toilet Conference 20th – 23rd August 2003, Tampere, Finland

QUESTIONNAIRE

What was in your opinion the most important issue brought up in the conference?

Which topics got in your opinion too little attention?

What do you really think is the future of the dry toilets?

Do you think that the Dry Toilet Conference should be organized also in the future?

YES NO

If yes

in a year in two years in three years

Should the Dry Toilet Conference be organized in the future

as an own event in connection with another conference

Do you have any message to the Organising Committee?

Please leave this questionnaire to the conference assistants or at the information desk.

Thank you for your co-operation!



***1st International
Dry Toilet Conference***
20-23 August 2003
University of Tampere
FINLAND

More information:

Global Sanitet Club of Finland
POST BOX 225
FIN – 33101 TAMPERE, FINLAND
secretary@drytoilet.org

www.huussi.net www.drytoilet.org