

Limiting energy consumption using different methodologies: carbon clubs, EnergyNeighbourhoods and Living Labs. A comparison of methods and results

Kristóf Vadovics, GreenDependent Institute, Hungary

Edina Vadovics, GreenDependent Institute, Hungary

This presentation introduces and analyzes three sustainable energy initiatives implemented in Hungary, all focusing on limiting household energy consumption. They all started as a part of larger European research or action projects: a local carbon club called the Gödöllő Climate Club initiated as a pilot project in the Changing Behaviour project (FP7), a small groups based energy saving programme called EnergyNeighbourhoods (IEE), and the ENERGISE (Energy) Living Labs (H2020). The first two of these have been implemented for many years, beyond their originally planned project timelines, while the Living Labs are recent, and have been conceived to be short-term.

The presentation first describes and compares the theories of change and problem framings underlying the three initiatives (theory of interpersonal behaviour, group-based behaviour change, social practice theory), with particular attention to similarities and differences between them. Resulting methodologies, including intervention strategies and tools, individual vs. group methodology elements, communication tools, etc., are also compared.

Following this, the results and outcomes of the three initiatives are analyzed. All initiatives applied a mix of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods such as interviews with participants, pre- and post-intervention surveys, energy and carbon saving calculations, etc..The outcomes of these are synthesized with the objective of drawing out success and challenge factors, including those that are specific to all three initiatives. It is also be examined how the methodologies applied in the three initiatives could be combined to create more effective sustainable energy projects in terms of limiting energy consumption and creating long-term change.

Finally, the authors reflect on more systemic factors that need to be present or to change in order to create more favourable conditions for the change in everyday behaviour and practices achieved through similar initiatives to persist in the long run.