# CLIMATE CAPACITORS

## BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE

### ATTENTION

Campaigns aimed at affecting socio-cultural change are competing with a wide range of messages from a large variety of sources. Many communicative strategies are aimed at affecting behaviour – e.g. making receivers buy more products, change brands, or reinforce their loyalty. Having an important message and being a credible sender is not enough to get the attention of your target group.

The somewhat unexciting 'brand' of many public authorities might also prove to be an obstacle to getting the attention of the public, who tends to filter out messages from public senders as irrelevant or uninteresting. This suggests that novel ways of attracting attention are needed in public campaigns.



Illustration of screen and speakers connected to a "Co2nfession-booth" in Ridehuset, Aarhus. Part of the CO2030-project, 2009. Source: Digital Urban Living, www.digitalurbanliving.dk.

Promoting 'facts' about climate change aimed at citizens have not caused any major changes in relation to CO2-emissions in a Danish context in recent years. Emissions have been rising over the last 15 years despite an increasing focus on the relation between CO2-emissions and climate change. Campaigns such as "1-ton-less" have received widespread attention, but so far to little avail. Recent surveys show that most Danes still do not know how to save efficiently on CO2-emissions.

### EXPERIENCE

While many public campaigns are aimed at relaying 'facts', the opposite is often true of commercial advertising, which tends to target the 'values' and feelings of consumers. In an experience economy this makes it hard to keep citizens interested in public campaigns and participatory processes. Consequently we need to give citizens a novel experience to keep them interested in participating.

One way to do this is through the use of e.g. interactive installations, provocative scenarios, and engaging exhibitions. While novel experiences in themselves help attract attention they can also create a positive spin on a process or an event that will make citizens more inclined to participate in the long run.



Illustration of interactive media facade. Part of the CO2030-project, 2009. Source: Digital Urban Living, www.digitalurbanliving.dk.

This poster describes a 'value-based' approach using the AELIA-model to affect socio-cultural change. The illustrations are from a case in progress, the CO2030-project, aimed at making Aarhus a CO2-neutal municipality in 2030.

### LEARNING

In participatory processes the element of learning is the key to success. We need to build capacity among all participants to create a foundation on which we can discuss behaviour change and possible goals. Learning in this context should be seen as a two-way process in which an exchange of 'facts' and 'values' facilitates a common understanding among participants.

To do this we need to create tools, or 'capacitors', that stores and discharges the information needed to engage participants in dialogue or support deliberative debate among the participants. These could be interactive installations, games, and workshop formats etc. depending on the target group of specific parts of the campaign or participatory process.
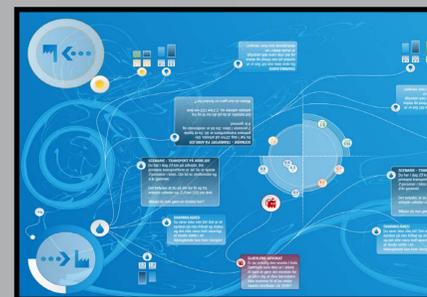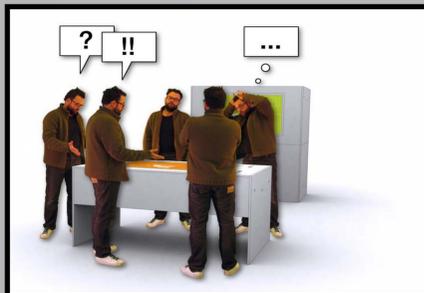


Mock-up of interface of the CO2030-game. Part of the CO2030-project, 2009. Source: Kollision. www.kollision.dk/?co2.

### INFLUENCE

In campaigns and participatory processes with a long-term perspective we need to give participants real influence on the communicative strategy and the process as well as the ultimate goals. When participants have sufficient knowledge of the challenges, constraints and possibilities, empowering them will keep them engaged and create ownership in the long run.

It is important to document all input, quantitative as well as qualitative. It is also imperative that it is transparent which contributions influences decision making throughout the process. To do this data-collection tools and data visualisations targeted at participants must be an integral part of participatory processes.



Dummy of the CO2030-game in Ridehuset. Part of the CO2030-project, 2009. Source: Kollision. www.kollision.dk/?co2.

### ACTION

In campaigns and participatory processes it is easy to loose sight of the goal – or maybe the goals shift along the way. It is difficult to foresee actions needed twenty years from now. Consequently it is important to constantly reconsider expected outcomes, adjust to changes, and clearly link actions to results from previous steps of the process.

While it is difficult to measure the long-term success of campaigns and participation based on incremental behaviour change, keeping participants in the loop provides feedback along the way. Iterative processes with many touch-points help adjust the goals and expectations and empower actors to take the necessary action over time.



Scenario from the CO2030-project description. Part of the CO2030-project, 2009. Source: Kollision. www.kollision.dk/?co2.

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