

NET ZERO CITIES



EU MISSION PLATFORM

CLIMATE NEUTRAL AND SMART CITIES



Funded by
the European Union

Design Your City's Net Zero Strategy

Online Planning Lab





Faculty

Scientific Directors



Sabrina Bresciani, Ph.D.



Jaime Moreno

Executive Directors



Angelica Gomez



Beatriz Martínez

Certification and Technical Support



Hamid Yammine

Lecturers

Eugenia Mansutti



Maria Giorda



Alicia Puig



Daniela Amann



Aurora González



Francesco Palmia



Dr. Silvia Gugu



Sean Murray



Dr.-Ing. Mira Conci



Dr. Gabriella Doci



David Brito



Anette Olovborn



Metadel Mengestu



Alex Anghel



Maria Klint



Paul Barton



Nikhil Chaudhary



Carolina García Madruga



Julia Kantorovitch



Mari Hukkalainen



Marzia Mortati



Georgia Cameron



Meline González Piloyan



Nupur Prothi



Vaneshree Naidoo



Cristina Robledano



Apurva Singh



Janne Rinne



Alexandru Buftic



Marcial Silva



Ignatius But





Modules

MODULE 1

WHAT IS AN ACTION PLAN IN THE
CITIES MISSION?
(SYSTEMIC APPROACH)

MODULE 2

TRANSITION TEAM

MODULE 3

GOVERNANCE & POLICY

MODULE 4

PORTFOLIO OF ACTIONS

MODULE 5

TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS &
LEVERS OF CHANGE

MODULE 6

FINANCING THE AMBITION





Module 2

Shaping Climate Narratives

9 Tips for Building Trust and Driving Change





9:15	Welcome & Check-in
9:25	Shaping Climate Narratives – 8 Tips Q & A
9:50	Coffee Break
9:55	Mission Cities share their stories: Julie Folstad (Oslo) & Josep Grau (Valencia)
10:25	Interactive Activity on Building Narratives
10:50	Check-Out & Outlook





Lecturers



Alícia Puig
Democratic Society



Daniela Amann
Democratic Society





8 Tips for Shaping Climate Narratives





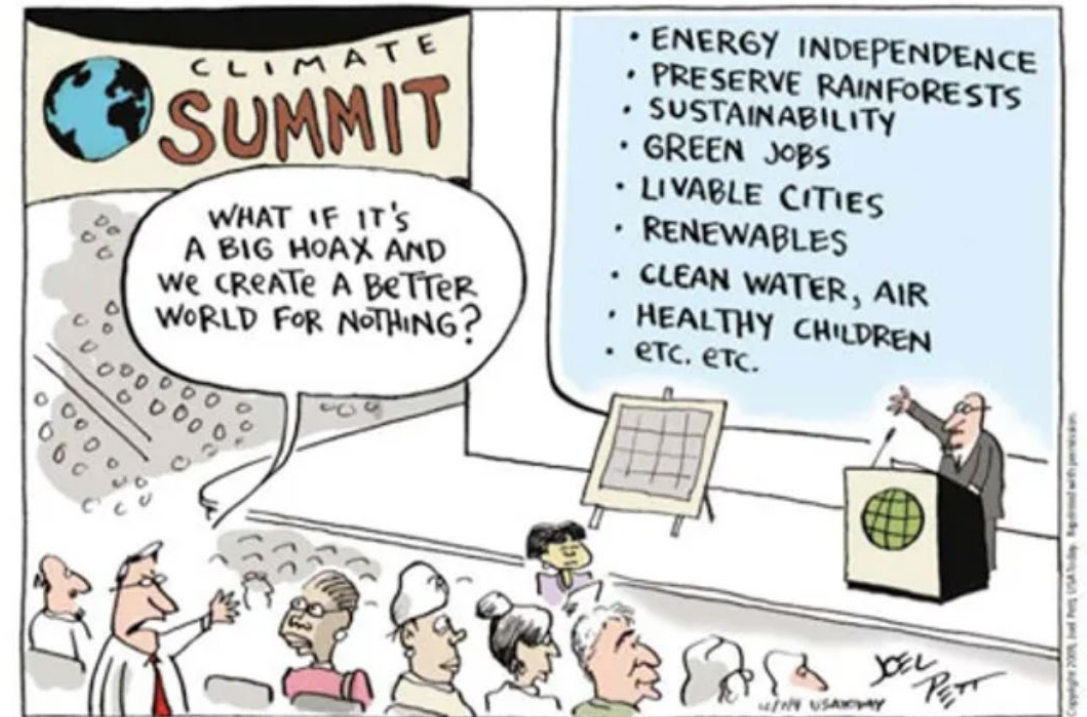
1. Explain the benefits of climate policies

“Given that assumption, it naturally follows that climate action is all about **convincing people to make sacrifices**.

But scholars have criticized sacrifice frames for being bad at motivating action.

Tell a person to sacrifice, and they're likely to give you a list of reasons why they shouldn't have to do it.”

[Kian Mintz-Woo, Daniel Steel, C. Tyler DesRoches,](#)
[IIASA Blog, November 2023](#)





1. Explain the benefits of climate policies

	Transport	Construction	Energy	Waste	Compound effect
 PUBLIC HEALTH	Decreased respiratory ailments / deaths from pollution, reduced psycho-emotional issues, improved population fitness.	Reduced conditions resulting from poor energy conditions in homes (humidity, cold or heat).			Healthier urban environments with better air quality and lower heat island effects
 LIFE QUALITY	Reduced noise, improved road safety and inner-city liveability.	Increased comfort for occupants of renovated buildings.			Expansion of space for play and contemplation and incorporation of vegetation improves quality of life.
 SOCIAL JUSTICE	Better access to opportunities and reduction of vulnerabilities at neighbourhood level.	Reduced energy poverty.	Democratisation of energy infrastructure and greater consumer participation.		Expansion of space for social interaction improves cohesion. New production and consumption models allow just energy transition.
 PROSPERITY	Reduced congestion and increased efficiency / productivity.	Generation of local jobs for rehabilitation.	Creation of direct local jobs for installation and maintenance. Promotion of innovation.	Resources and energy savings. Creation of jobs in the circular economy.	New economic opportunities, attractiveness of the city
 INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE		Decreased risks due to poor conditions of buildings.	Increased energy sovereignty, reduced importation of fossil fuels.	Reduced requirements for space occupation, transportation, treatment, incineration of waste.	

©Paula Serra





1. Explain the benefits of climate policies

In Copenhagen 150,000 people cycle each day, representing a modal share of **36% of all trips**.



- 55% say they cycle for speed and convenience
- 46% for exercise
- 26% for low cost
- 16% for environmental awareness

They don't use the bike because of the climate

– they use it because **it's practical**.



1. Explain the benefits of climate policies



-58% injuries
-67% pedestrian crashes
-29% speeding
+49% retail sales

The New York Times

*On Car-Free Streets, Many New York
Restaurants Thrived*

© Janette Sadik-Khan



2. Listen & take citizens' worries seriously

Take into account the worries and needs of citizens to tailor your message.

In 2023, SINUS conducted a study for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung on the perspectives of 1200 German citizens regarding climate issues. 22% of the respondents were from North Rhine-Westphalia.

What % of citizens believe that combating climate change is bad for the economy?





2. Listen & take citizens' worries seriously

38%

of citizens believe that combating climate change is bad for the economy

And what % of citizens prioritize preserving jobs over protecting the climate and environment?





2. Listen & take citizens' worries seriously

46%

of citizens prioritize preserving jobs over protecting the climate and environment

Also, 62% say that the lack of infrastructure makes it impossible to go without a car

Considering that citizens may hold these beliefs, you should reconsider how you explain the policies.





2. Listen & take citizens' worries seriously

In the UK, in 2024, the Social Market Foundation did a nationally representative survey of 1,500 people.

Only 16% of individuals over 45 years old from low-income backgrounds felt included in the green transition.

Aspect of net zero	High Income <45	High Income 45+	Middle Income <45
% Feel part of the transition	51%	27%	34%
What do they think of net zero?	Strong support, thinks will benefit them & economy	Above average support but think it will be tough, sceptical on economic benefits	Above average support, more likely to think net zero will create jobs

Aspect of net zero	Middle Income 45+	Lower Income <45	Lower Income 45+
% Feel part of the transition	25%	24%	16%
What do they think of net zero?	Expects no personal/economic benefit; expects will be expensive	More likely to be climate sceptic, less likely to worry about government cost	Least supportive, sceptic of benefits and worried about costs & unfairness

More information: [Whose energy transition is it anyway?](#) Social Market Foundation





2. Listen & take citizens' worries seriously

The pedestrianization of Mariahilfer Strasse in Vienna is a success. But before it was done, there were fears about it.

The biggest change of opinion was among people aged 55 and over. For them, it was particularly difficult to come to terms with the change before the remodelling.



3. Tell Stories that Move

We like stories. We learn a lot for stories, and we seem to have a particularly good memory for them.

Why stories seem to stick in our memories:

- Stories are accessible
- Stories have characters
- Stories create suspense
- Stories are emotional
- Stories aren't boring



3. Tell Stories that Move

Storytelling can be a tool towards a net zero cities by

- Creating a strong story that the city and its people can identify with
- Using linguistics, numbers and visuals to communicate the story
- Enable the people to experience the future (car-free days, temporary installations)



3. Tell Stories that Move

Copenhagen build a city identity around cycling

- Consistent and conscious storytelling to reduce car use
- Branding of the cycling city since 2017
- New brand for the city regarding cycling
- Cycling as becoming part of the identity of a lot of Copenhageners



© Febiyan on Unsplash

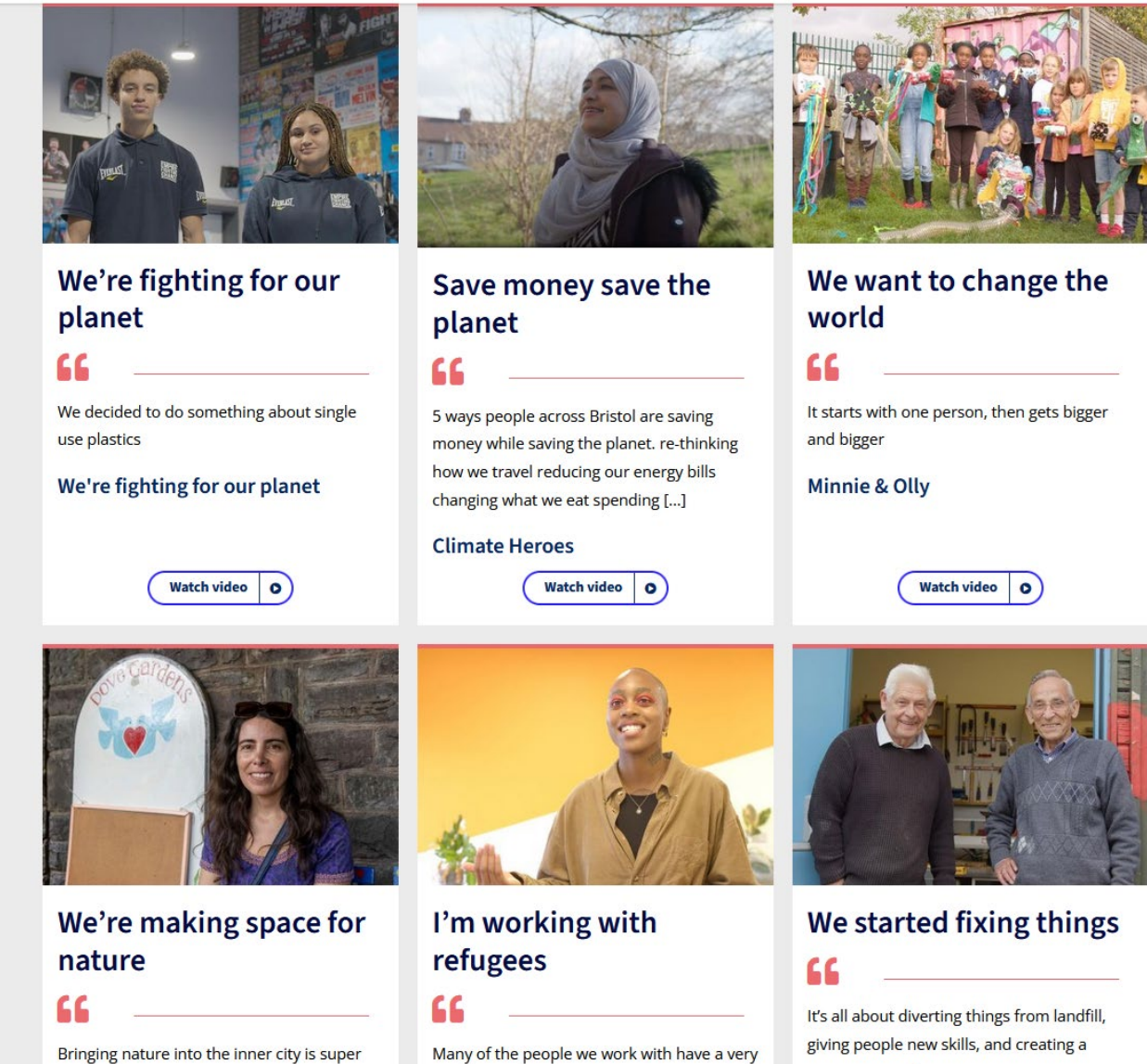


Funded by
the European Union

3. Tell Stories that Move

Bristol tells stories about local heroes

- Created a series of 30 short climate action story videos telling stories about Bristolians doing things they enjoy which are also good for the climate
- Films were used in social media campaigns, shown on big screens during COP26 and summer 2022, and in a local museum as part of an exhibition



We're fighting for our planet

“ We decided to do something about single use plastics

We're fighting for our planet

[Watch video](#)

Save money save the planet

“ 5 ways people across Bristol are saving money while saving the planet. re-thinking how we travel reducing our energy bills changing what we eat spending [...]

Climate Heroes

[Watch video](#)

We want to change the world

“ It starts with one person, then gets bigger and bigger

Minnie & Olly

[Watch video](#)

We're making space for nature

“ Bringing nature into the inner city is super

I'm working with refugees

“ Many of the people we work with have a very

We started fixing things

“ It's all about diverting things from landfill, giving people new skills, and creating a

4. Learn from Success Stories

School Streets in London

- 500 schools
- 23% reduction in emissions around schools due to School Streets in London

School staff and parents all agreed that having a School Street was a positive step towards safer, calmer, cleaner, and more healthy local areas and offered:

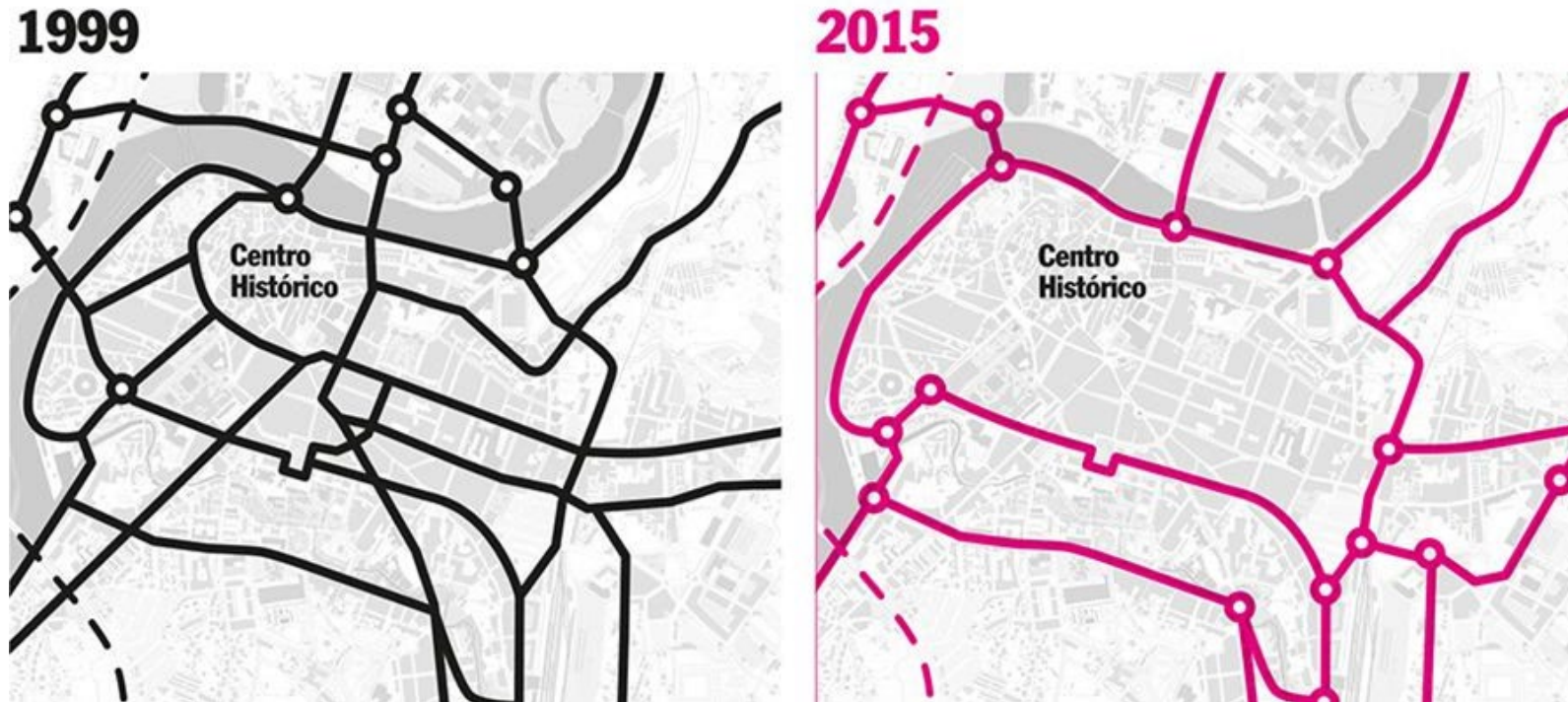
- Educational opportunities to engage and motivate children
- Increasing appeal of the school and whole area
- Social interaction and convivial pleasant atmosphere at school gates
- Growing sense of “neighbourhood”



©Gary Manhine



4. Learn from Success Stories



Primary road network in Pontevedra, Spain (population: 84,454) - 85% reduction in city traffic resulted in zero car accidents during the 2010s and a 67% decrease in emissions.



4. Learn from Success Stories

But it is not only important to explain the examples of other cities and their climate policies, but also to **learn from the strategies they followed**.

How did London manage to implement its Low-Emission Neighbourhoods? How did Paris achieve social acceptance for reducing traffic?

Make use of city networks and exchange platforms to draw inspiration from the successful strategies of other cities.



5. Provide Clear, transparent and accessible data

In the context of climate change, **transparency** refers to the reliable measurement, accessible reporting, and expert review of the progress.

Also, being transparent with investments done in climate policies allows to show the benefits of those.

Principles

- Simplicity & relevance
- Transparency & accessibility
- Consistency
- Accuracy



© Photo by Anna Shvets



5. Provide Clear, transparent and accessible data

Helsinki: Climate Watch

- Comprehensive online platform for communicating and monitoring the city's progress towards carbon neutrality by 2035
- Purpose: Provides information on 147 actions
- Open Source and accessible to other cities on github.com

<https://ilmasto.hel.fi/en/>

- Accessible to other cities on github.com
-

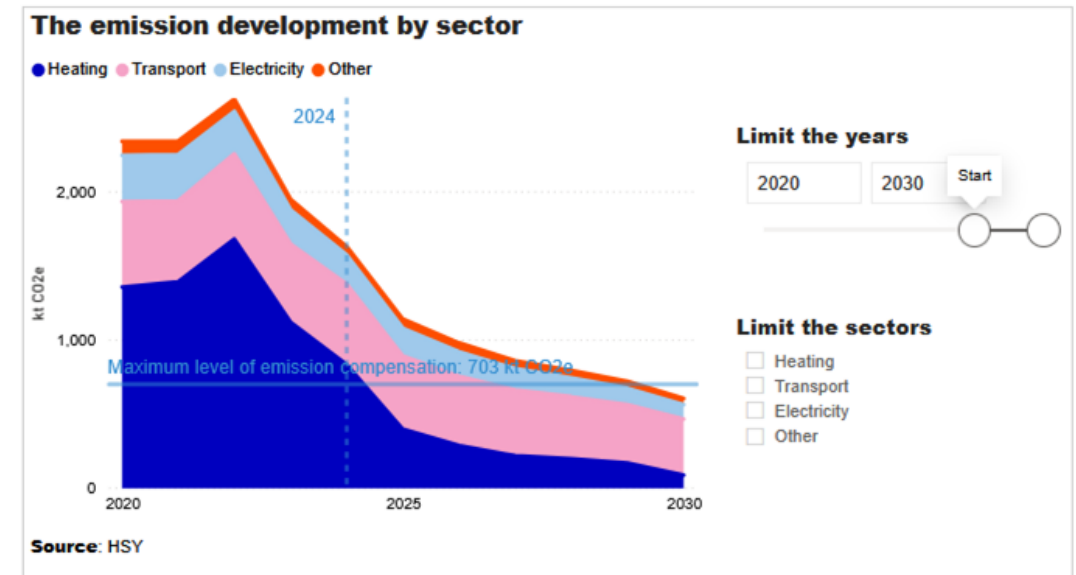
Monitoring of the Carbon-neutral Helsinki Action Plan

Helsinki's emission reduction target applies to the city's direct emissions, i.e. emissions generated within the city's geographical boundary, but emission reduction actions are also targeted at indirect (so-called Scope 3) emissions, especially emissions from construction. Emissions in 1990 totalled 3,514 kt CO₂e, which means that in order to reach the goal of carbon neutrality, at least 2,812 kt CO₂e must be reduced from the 1990 level and a maximum of 20 per cent, i.e. 703 kt CO₂e can be compensated.

The charts below can also be read in [plain text format](#).

Total emissions

Helsinki's total direct emissions (kt CO₂e) by sector in the years 1990 and 2000–2023 and the forecast for the years 2024–2030 and the total emissions compensation target of maximum 20 per cent for the year 2030. The sectors are heating, which includes oil and electric heating, electricity consumption, transport and the other sector, which includes industrial and work machines, waste and agriculture.



Espoo Climate Watch

The Climate Watch compiles the city's climate actions, monitors their progress and evaluates their impact.

Espoo's total emissions

Espoo's goal is to be carbon neutral by 2030. [Read more about the goal.](#)



[Espoo's total emissions](#)



Funded by
the European Union

Klimaschutzplan für **Private Haushalte**

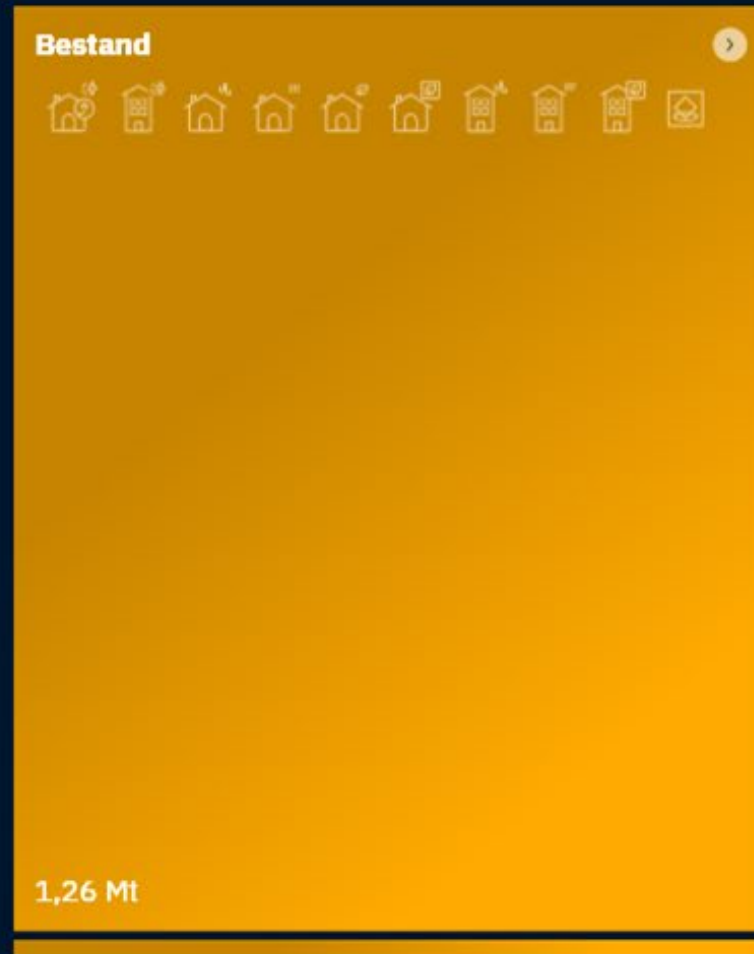
Emissionen 2018

4,05 Mt



Benötigte Emissionsreduzierungen

1,26 Mt



Reduktionspfad 2018-2030

Die Emissionen sollen laut Plan von 1,26 Mt (2018) auf 575 kt (2030) reduziert werden.

■ Emissionen - - Emissionsminderung laut Plan





6. Engage Unexpected Allies

Valladolid and Porto engaging their football teams



Real Valladolid F.C. joins the Valladolid Climate Mission

The Football Club, through its President Ronaldo Nazario, confirms their commitment to sustainability, thus being the first sports entity in the city to join the Valladolid Mission, Smart and Climate Neutral City in 2030.

January 2024





6. Engage Unusual Suspects

Dj's for Climate Action aim to **harness the cultural influence of Dance Music and DJ culture to generate climate actions and solutions**, by giving musical artists opportunities to use their skill and engage in climate dialogue

Earth Night, which is celebrated after Earth Day and seeks to harness the creative power of nightlife to bring people together and generate climate solutions in the field of culture and the creative industries.



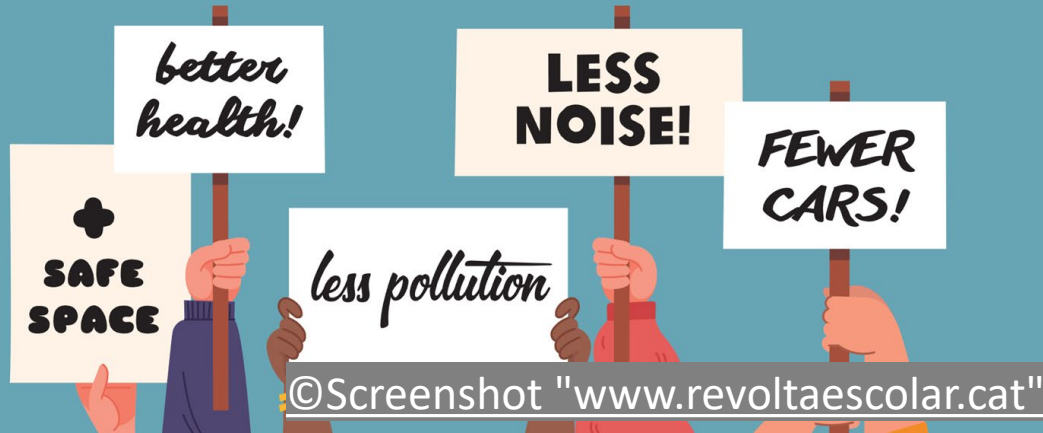
©Screenshot "<https://www.djs4ca.com/earth-night>"



Funded by
the European Union



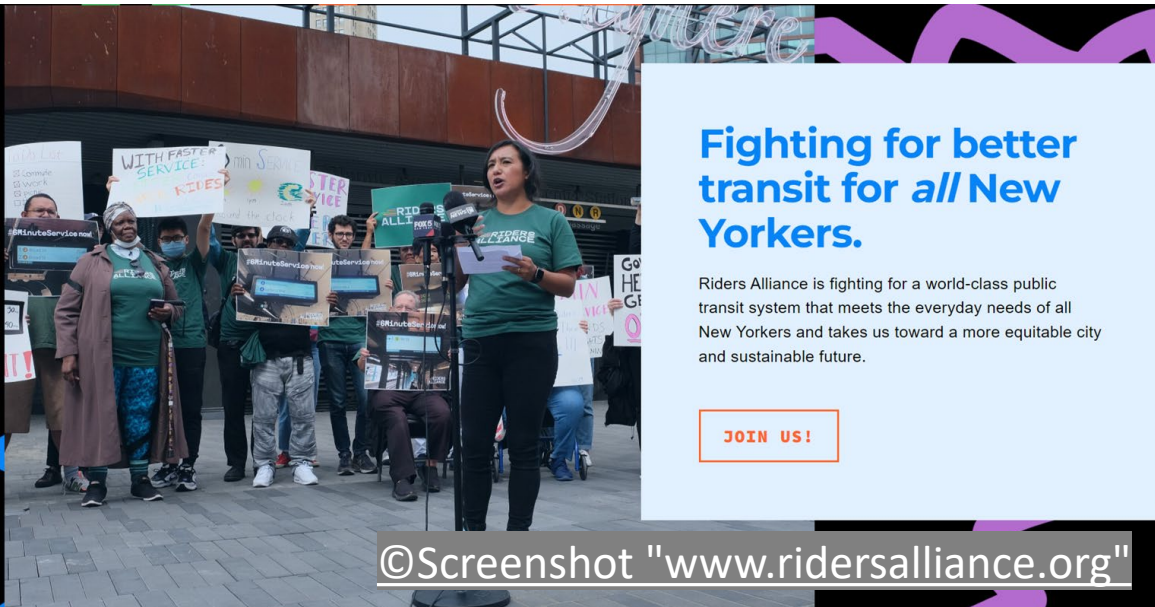
FOR SAFE AND PEACEFUL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS!



7. Give a voice to Changemakers and promote their alliances and platforms

There are agents of change in the civil society that municipalities should give a voice to.

Associations that defend climate policies that can also speak in sessions with citizens





8. Listen and Co-Create Solutions with the Community

Communication is not participation.

Climate policy should not only be explained, but also discussed. The experiences and contributions of citizens play an important role in change processes. They are experts on the reality of their lives and only they know what is needed to ensure that the new measures can actually be implemented effectively.

For politically sensitive issues such as a new pedestrian zone, the discussion could focus on practical solutions. Instead of simply asking whether people agree with the pedestrian zone, it is possible to discuss which aspects of the pedestrian zone need to be improved so that people can agree to it.





8. Listen and Co-Create Solutions with the Community

Superblock participation process in Barcelona



Participation is not only explaining



It's also co-creating





8. Listen and Co-Create Solutions with the Community

Scenario 1

- 40% less car traffic



Scenario 2

- 75% less car traffic



Copenhagen offering scenarios



A final thought...

It will always be difficult to explain a climate policy if it is not fair.

- If the sole advantage of a climate policy is a reduction in emissions, then it is not sufficient.
- If it only imposes burdens on vulnerable groups, it is not adequate.



**MADRID'S LOW EMISSION
ZONE IS ANNULLED AFTER
COURT RULES IT IS UNFAIR
TO FORCE LOW-INCOME
RESIDENTS TO BUY GREENER
VEHICLES**





A final thought...

Climate change will compel us to alter our way of life, but not necessarily for the worse.

- While there may be objections to pedestrianizing a street, the advantages are evident: more space for walking, sitting, and playing.
- However, some climate policies such as Low Emission Zones (LEZ) and waste management may not be perceived as having clear benefits by some people.

Environment

Would you ditch your old banger for free public transport?

Discount on the waste collection tax for users of the door-to-door service





Stories from Mission Cities

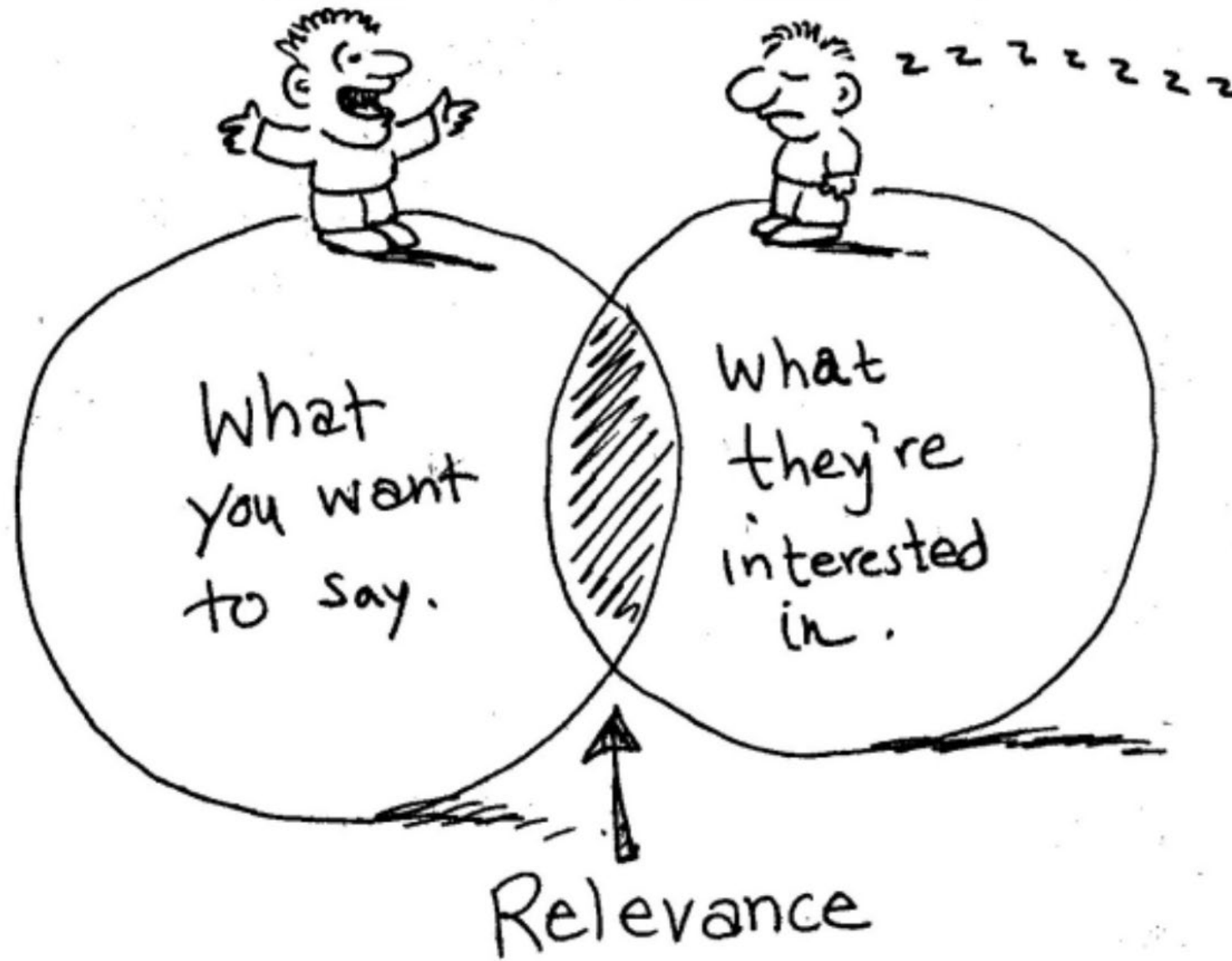




Interactive Activity

Tailored communication & activation







Know your target audience

Who is she?

What matters to her?

How does she like to get information?

Who else is she listening to/does she trust?

What power does she have to change things?

How much does she know about the topic?

What are her assumptions?

What are her misconceptions?





Interactive activity

- You are working for the city of Where-ville.
- Your task: Put yourself in the shoes of one of the residents of Where-Ville. How might their fears, hopes and wishes have an input on your climate narrative?
- 20' interactive activity in small groups



Interactive activity

- You will work in a small group of 4 people.
- You will receive your instructions via zoom message:
 - 15' What might be the hopes, fears and wishes of the resident allocated to you?
 - 5' How might this influence your narrative?
- Visual of Whereville, providing more information on residents.
- We will be “walking” from room to room, to see if you need support!



Welcome to Where-Ville!

Participants are currently working in small breakout groups.

If you would like to join an activity, please let us know via the chat or by raising your hand.

If you prefer not to join, that's fine too. The activity will run until 10:50.

Stay on the call to hear their reflections, get an overview of interesting resources on Climate Narratives, and learn about what's next in the Online Planning Lab.





Wrap up & Outlook

Target group communication





Key take aways

Focus on Benefits, Not Sacrifice

Emphasize the practical advantages of climate policies - health, convenience, savings, and quality of life - rather than restrictions. People engage more when policies feel relevant to their daily lives.

Use Stories and Engage Allies

Storytelling and partnering with diverse allies make climate challenges relatable and actionable, helping communities see how solutions connect to their lives.

Listen, Involve, and Co-Create

Effective climate narratives listens to concerns, involves citizens in decisions, and co-creates solutions, building trust, ownership, and policies that address real needs.



Interesting Resources

- Tool: [Persona Template](#) - A step-by-step guide to creating personas tailored to your specific context and challenges.
- Tool: [Shaping Climate Narratives & Activation Canvas](#) – A canvas to support you develop key messages and identify effective channels and formats for engaging diverse target audiences
- Video: [How can storytelling be a key tool towards car-free cities? The case of Copenhagen.](#)
- [Disinformation in the City: Response Playbook](#)



Related Projects

- [Green in Cities](#) - for urban regeneration: participatory and sustainable greening solutions for all



Thank you and see you soon!

Do you have any question or do you want
to learn more about this? Don't hesitate to
get in touch with us!

alicia@demsoc.eu

daniela@demsoc.eu



Get in touch with NetZeroCities!



@NetZeroCitiesEU



NetZeroCities



NetZeroCitiesEU



NetZeroCities EU



www.netzerocities.eu



hello@netzerocities.eu



Funded by
the European Union