

The House of Change

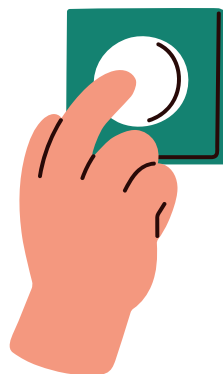
An action-packed story told by CoLAB

Committed to Local Climate Action Building





Welcome to the ‘House of Change’



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The NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme supports European cities to test and implement innovative approaches to rapid decarbonisation over a two-year pilot programme, working across thematic areas to support of systemic transformation, as part of the EU Cities Mission on Climate Neutral & Smart Cities.

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Dear visitors,

are you also concerned about how we can motivate people to make their everyday lives more climate-friendly and sustainable of their own accord and out of their own conviction? Then come with us on a journey of discovery through the 'House of Change'. Everyone is talking about citizen participation and how we can reach those who seem difficult to reach. For us, real change means more than just participation.

We want to create real change and are looking for the opportunities, spaces and structures for change. Or to put it more simply: What really determines why, how and when we change our own consumer behaviour? Take a look through the keyholes into the spaces of change that we need in our cities. Open the doors of knowledge and see who holds the key. In every city, there are many places, both real and symbolic, where we can feel and experience change.

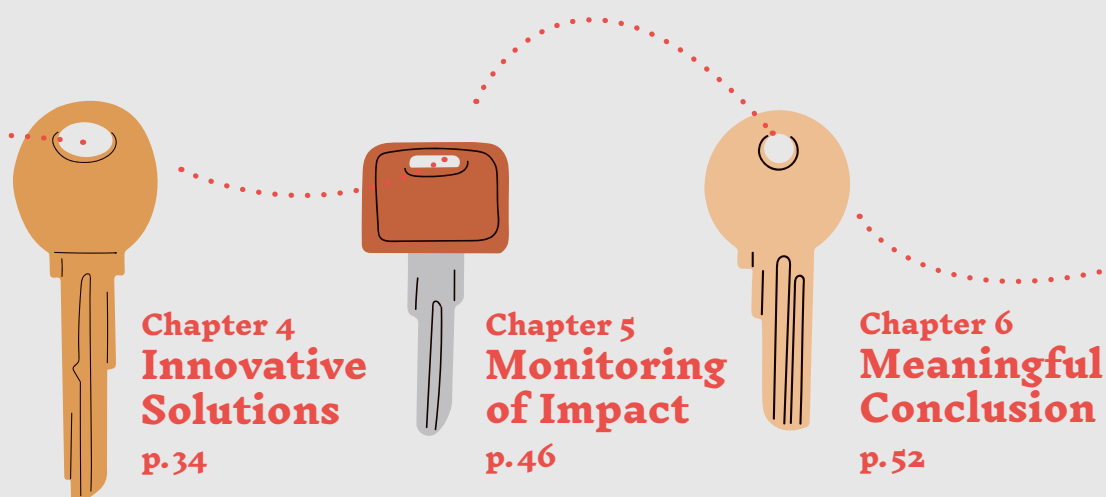
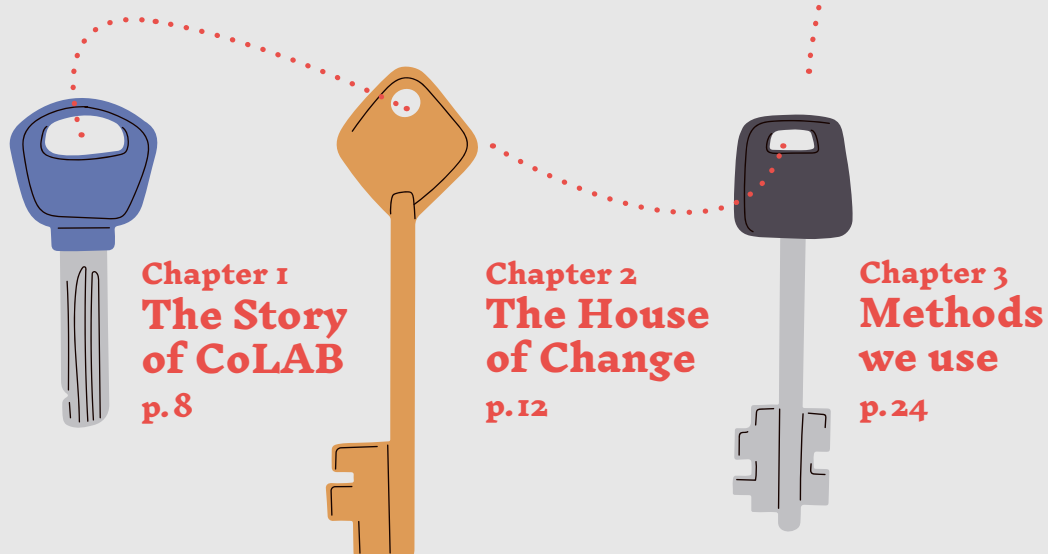
This brochure offers insights into two years of project work with three courageous cities and six power partners, with whom we built the 'House of Change' as part of the EU Mission project CoLAB–Committed to Local Climate Action Building.



And to come straight to the point: we have not reinvented the wheel. Our 'House of Change' is, so to speak, an upcycling project, and we use insights from behavioural and decision research and from projects that address the 1.5 degree lifestyle. We will tell you the story of the foundations on which we built our house, how we learned from our mistakes and what successes we have celebrated with our residents. We are telling you the story of the 'House of Change' so that you can continue living it in your city.

Prepare to be surprised, because the house is not a real 'house made of stone'. It is more of a symbol for the changes we are all going through and for the general conditions. And maybe you will go outside inspired and a little enchanted, as if you could move mountains (or houses). Then we have achieved the goal of our house tour.

What's in there?



The CoLAB Cities

Architects of the 'House of Change' introduce themselves:

Mannheim

• The City of Mannheim is one of the German model cities of the EU Mission for climate neutrality by 2030 with the pilot initiative of the Local Green Deal. The vision for Mannheim's Local Green Deal is to create the ideal city for everyone. The idea of the 'House of Change' transformation platform was born here and the motto 'iDEAL for Mannheim' (= I deal) says it all. Every deal counts. www.mannheim.de/local-green-deal



Aachen

As a city at the heart of Europe, Aachen is decisively moving towards climate neutrality by 2030. Under the motto of the climate campaign 'Us.Now', politics, administration, civil society and partners of the Climate City Contract are working hand in hand to achieve this goal. One important step: the new climate agency, which has opened in May 2025. It will further strengthen citizen participation and contribute to continuing to reduce emissions with its services. www.klimaneutrales-aachen-2030.de

Muenster

'Muenster is becoming a climate-positive city' – with this message all stakeholders in Muenster society are called upon to pull whatever levers are available to them to maximum effect to support the EU Mission City. Beyond city group and companies, citizens and civil society organisations have also contributed commitments to the first draft of the Climate City Contract – 'Because it takes all of us!' www.klimastadt.ms

The CoLAB Partners



www.klima-ma.de



www.ifeu.de



www.wechange.coop



www.creativeclimatecities.org



www.scaling4good.com



www.climateview.global

Klimaschutzagentur Mannheim

offers as non-profit Climate Action Agency information, advice, campaigns on energy efficiency, climate awareness, greening of buildings and sustainable lifestyle, energy checks, funding programmes, workshops for schools and companies. Special task: citizen engagement, strategic experiments, communication, networking.

ifeu

contributes with scientific expertise to the development of CO₂ scenario tools, develops methods for climate-conscious action, expert in citizen CO₂ calculators, sufficiency and compensation methods. Special task: citizen actions and impacts; options for action by cities; measurability of citizen actions.

wechange

develops and operates an online platform solution for the common good based on open source software, which is currently widely used in civil society and in the field of citizen participation. Special task: development of tools for the transformation platform 'House of Change'; citizen-friendly decision-making tool 'Deal-O-Mat'.

Creative Climate Cities

operates at the intersection of urban development, digitalisation, design, research, and visual communication to drive urban transformation. Special task: as part of the project, Creative Climate Cities developed a serious game to accelerate strategic projects, moderate multi-stakeholder dialogues and position cities as climate protection pioneers.

scaling4good

is a think-and-do-tank, which through participatory processes helps identifying how to grow, connect, and replicate initiatives contributing to a shift of paradigm and systems change. Special task: guidance on all measures from a behavioural science perspective, facilitation of the tension-based collaboration format.

Climate View

helps cities monitor the progress of each transition using KPIs, a technical transition or a consumer-based shift, transparently showing progress and potential shortfalls in the city's climate dashboard. Special task: mapping actions of citizens and businesses on the monitoring dashboard; monitoring measures using the back-casting method.

Chapter I



The Story of CoLAB



At the right time,

Mannheim, Aachen and Muenster were selected by the EU for the group of '100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030'. This meant that they were obliged to draw up a Climate City Contract in which the climate plan is linked to an investment plan, which is preceded by a commitment plan. This was a perfect fit for the three of them, because they are united by the ambition to achieve the goal of climate neutrality as a sustainable, cooperative and socially just city together with the entire urban community. No sooner said than done, they set to work and were able to win the first call for pilot projects of the EU Mission. The joint CoLAB project 'Committed to Local Climate Action Building' was born. Knowing that they can only achieve climate neutrality with the support of everyone, the project relies on new causal chains to activate the urban community. CoLAB addresses the complexity of capacities, skills, culture, participation and social innovation, as well as governance, policy and regulation for climate neutrality. The prize as pilot cities therefore comes at just the right time to anchor joint agreements on specific measures in the Climate City Contracts. This makes the agreement an integral part of the CoLAB project with a special focus on the binding commitment of citizens. The cities are also already working with the companies on the basis of contracts and are documenting the agreed obligations for the Climate City Contract. It is not surprising that they all received the Mission Label for their Climate City Contracts during the project period. CoLAB has thus become the Mission high-flyer.



Stronger together:

The CoLAB cities agree that cooperation at all levels is necessary on the road to climate neutrality. In addition to the three cities known for their transformation successes, the cooperation project has attracted renowned scientific partners that combine expertise in the fields of social sciences, environmental and climate research, communication and participation, project design, digitalisation, and monitoring and visualisation. Together, the consortium is analysing the stakeholder landscape for an effective city-wide team, researching tipping points for behavioural change and testing innovative offers that lead to concrete measures. With this concentrated partner power, CoLAB is looking for ways to reduce emissions resulting from entrenched consumption patterns. It is not an easy task that cities have set themselves with consumer patterns, because the city administration has no direct influence on the behaviour of its citizens. The greenhouse gas emissions caused by consumption behaviour are highly relevant. The effects of behavioural changes in relation to consumption and nutrition have not yet been sufficiently researched, but they play a significant role in non-energy-related emissions. CoLAB aims to provide new insights and success indicators here.



Inspiring sustainability,

that is the approach of CoLAB. The project therefore investigates the influence of social behaviour and norms in these consumption-oriented areas of life. They want to know how people make decisions, why they participate in processes and how they develop solutions to improve individual and collective well-being. The aim is to close the gap between changing knowledge and actual action in everyday life. At the heart of the project is a platform that connects all actors in the urban society – from city administration and politics to businesses and citizens – inspiring and mobilising them to take sustainable action. This is the 'House of Change'. The platform is the entry point for local actions and actors to visualise and connect their spheres of influence and action. Muenster, Aachen and Mannheim are participating in various pilot activities by setting up different spheres of influence in their cities within the framework of the platform. Aachen is planning to set up a sustainability and climate agency as an access point to the 'House of Change'. All cities intend to implement a digital tool to support climate-friendly, sustainable lifestyles that shows citizens how they can act consciously in their everyday lives and that visualises and makes tangible the goal of climate neutrality as a community task.

The House of Change

The ‘House of Change’ can be built in any city and is usually already there. To make sure it has a solid foundation, is safe and stable, it needs a host that pays attention to integrated goals, builds management and ensures partnerships. This way, great actions can emerge throughout the city, in which everyone can participate.

Trade & Services
Associations Companies
Science Industry NGOs



Integrated Goals

One city – many plans. A city-wide target helps to create integrated plans.

Governance

Strong political support for the climate target and enabling structures are needed.



Initiatives Citizens
Communities Utilities
Administration

Partnership

The shared vision can only be realised with committed and reliable partners.

Action

It is about taking true responsibility and efficacy for one's actions.

Chapter 2



The House of Change

Where Collaboration is at Home

In order to bring the EU Mission to the local level and create a shared vision of it, the CoLAB cities are striving to build the ‘House of Change’. Cities are the architects and designers and have strong partners as outfitters. The architecture and design are based entirely on the ideas and needs of residents and visitors.

With the metaphor of a ‘House of Change’, where change is literally at home, we try to explain the complex social interrelationships with the help of images. It stands for transformation, the change of social values, new forms of partnership and collective action. Change needs space, structures and communication that do justice to change. Often, due to its complexity, this is considered separately, and the necessary changes in our behaviour lack credibility and explainability. The idea of the ‘House of Change’ tries new perspectives. The desired development should not be understood as renouncing the familiar, but also as an opportunity and desire for something new and as a collective responsibility. A sense of unity.

In our house, we inspire and mobilise the urban community to take real sustainable action and commitment, bridging the gap between raising awareness and finding the tipping point for practical changes in daily life. We want to move from ‘negative’ footprint thinking to ‘positive’ handprint thinking. Therefore, we need a ‘House of Change’ with spaces for co-creation and partnerships. It combines online and offline onboarding activities and is an open house with access for all. With such a transformation platform, we show that the stakeholders of the cities are not alone. The cities are both enablers and facilitators in the neighbourhoods. The citizens are the true owners of the change. Let’s make room for new ideas, let’s create space for real collaboration and let’s give it a home.



Change needs Space

What happens in the rooms of the ‘House of Change’? Let’s take a look inside the windows and be inspired. Six beautifully decorated rooms encourage you to get involved, take action, meet like-minded people to join in with and celebrate success together.

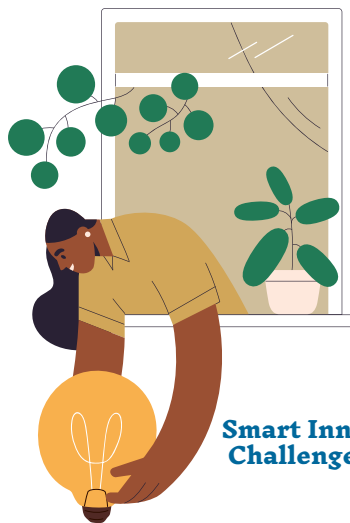
Have you ever mapped spaces and opportunities for actors in your city, rather than just capturing the stakeholders? So-called spaces for encounter? We have done this in CoLAB and found numerous examples of places for interaction, discussion and collaboration, that enable people to find solutions and take action in their familiar environment. Curious? Take a look behind the scenes of the six ‘Rooms of Change’ we have identified. The Municipal Project Participation Room is a well-known place where citizens can get information and participate. Here you can find out everything about the city government’s projects and plans. If you don’t know what’s going on in the city, you can’t get involved. Shared knowledge is power and gained experiences serve as inspiration for everyone who enters the Knowledge and Inspiring Experiences Room.

The Smart Innovation Challenge Room is where the action is. This is where the best ideas come to the table. No challenge is too big, no competition too tough, no hackathon too wild. In the Bottom-up Matching Idea Room, people tinker with the most fantastic future plans. A single thought can quickly become a huge grassroots movement. Culture has always been and will remain a driving force for change. It is therefore not surprising that the Cultural Change and Creative Room plays an important role in our house. Here, art, music and everything beautiful are in harmony with sustainability. The Success Room houses the hall of fame, where all achievements are celebrated with applause. Every action counts and is appreciated.

The ‘House of Change’ brings together citizens with different perspectives and life experiences to use the collective imagination and creativity of the people. By using the rooms, citizens recharge their batteries and develop a sense of community action and participation. They feel less powerless in the face of major global problems and crises. What a great atmosphere!



Municipal Project Participation Room



Smart Innovation Challenges Room



Success Room



Knowledge and Experience Inspiring Room



Bottom up Matching Ideas Room



Cultural Change and Creative Room

Take a look at the Cities' Rooms of Change ...

Examples of **Municipal Project Participation Rooms**



Mannheim

Citizen Participation Platform:

www.mannheim-gemeinsam-gestalten.de/beteiligen

Heat Planning Map:

www.mannheim.de/waermeplanung

Children & Youth Summit *Postcode 68Yours* (Picture):

<https://68deins.majo.de>



Aachen

Aachen packt die Zukunft an Climate Campaigns (Picture):

www.aachenklima.de

Aachen Clever Mobil Mobility Programme for local Companies:

www.go-clever-mobil.de

Active for future Sustainability Programme for Schools:

www.aachen.de/activeforfuture



Muenster

CCC Commitments by Citizens, Companies and Institutions (Picture):

www.stadt-muenster.de/klimastadt/klimastadtvertrag

Monitoring Municipal Climate Mitigation Process:

www.stadt-muenster.de/klimastadt/das-ist-die-klimastadt

Digital Participation Platform:

<https://beteiligung.nrw.de/portal/muenster/startseite>

Examples of **Knowledge and Experience Inspiring Rooms**



Mannheim

Inspiring *Model Flat of Sustainability* (Picture):

www.klima-ma.de/nachhaltig-wohnen

Reskilling at the *Heat Transition Academy*:

www.waermewende-akademie.de

School Programme *Climate Heroes*:

www.klima-ma.de/klimahelden



Aachen

Oecher Lab Public Space for Digital Innovation (Picture):

<https://oecherlab.de>

KNAC Climate Neutral Aachen 2030 Office:

<https://klimaneutrales-aachen-2030.de>

Klima plus Climate Agency:

<https://altbauplus.info>



Muenster

Climate City Week *Klimastadt-Woche* (Picture):

www.stadt-muenster.de/klimastadt/bisherige-meilensteine

House of Sustainability *Haus der Nachhaltigkeit*:

www.stadt-muenster.de/haus-der-nachhaltigkeit

Newsletter *Unser Klima 2030*:

www.stadt-muenster.de/klima/service-beratung



Examples of **Smart Innovation Challenges Rooms**



Mannheim

Hackathon EU Project **UPPER** for better mobility:

www.y4pt.org/upper/mannheim

Challenges per App ***2Zero***:

www.2zero.earth/dashboard/mannheim

Competition ***Stadtradeln*** (City Cycling) (Picture):

www.stadtradeln.de/mannheim



Aachen

Smart Mobility Dashboard (Picture):

<https://verkehr.aachen.de>

Visable Innovation ***Future Lab Aachen***:

<https://futurelab-aachen.de>

Smart City Idea Contest:

<https://smart.aachen.digital/de>



Muenster

Climate Dashboard (Picture):

www.klimadashboard.ms

Students' projects - Master Course ***Sustainable Transformation***:

<https://beteiligung.nrw.de/portal/muenster/beteiligung/themen/1010919>

Open Data Portal:

<https://opendata.stadt-muenster.de>

Examples of **Bottom-up Matching Ideas Rooms**



Mannheim

Tool ***Mitwirk-o-Mat*** for voluntary citizen engagement:

<https://mitwirk-o-mat.de/mannheim>

***Clean your City* week:**

www.mannheim.de/de/nachrichten/die-reinigungswoche-geht-wieder-los

Lab ***City Factory* Project FutuRAUM** (Picture):

<https://futuraum-mannheim.de/city-factory>



Aachen

Cycling Initiative ***Radentscheid***:

<https://radentscheid-aachen.de>

Energy Community ***KlimaRegionAachen***:

<https://klima-region.de>

Climate Referendum ***Klimaentscheid*** (Picture):

<https://klimaentscheid-aachen.de>



Muenster

Climate Course ***Klimatraining*** (Picture):

www.stadt-muenster.de/klima/klimafreundlich-leben/klimatraining

Offers for a Sustainable Lifestyle:

<https://awm.stadt-muenster.de/abfallfrei-so-gehts>

Repair Cafes locations:

<https://repaircafe-muenster.de>





Mannheim

Local Green Deal Success Board (Picture):

<https://mannheim-gemeinsam-gestalten.de/ideal>

Monitoring Dashboard *Climate View*:

www.mannheim.de/klimaschutzmonitoring

iDEAL Environmental Award:

www.mannheim.de/de/stadt-gestalten/local-green-deal/ideal-umweltpreis/ideal-umweltpreis-2025



Aachen

Celebrating Climate City Contract Event (Picture):

www.aachenklima.de/eu-mission-klimastadtvertrag

Climate Agency Co-Creation Workshop:

www.aachenklima.de/workshop-agentur-fuer-aachen

Tool *Klima Match*:

<https://klimastadtvertrag.de/aachen/klimamatch>



Muenster

***Klimastadt-Wand* Wall of Commitments** (Picture):

www.stadt-muenster.de/klimastadt/klimastadtvertrag

Public Event *The Award of the EU Mission Label*:

www.stadt-muenster.de/klimastadt/bisherige-meilensteine/verleihung-eu-mission-label

A local Newspaper Series about *Klimastadt*:

<https://stadt-muenster.de/klimastadt>



Examples of **Cultural Change and Creative Rooms**



Mannheim

National Theater as *Orchestra of Change*:

www.orchester-des-wandels.de/unsere-orchester

Art Hall with *1.5 Degree Exhibition*:

www.kuma.art/de/ausstellungen/15-grad

Blue Shoes *Art meets Climate* Action (Picture):

www.klima-ma.de/earth-hour-2025-kunst-trifft-klima



Aachen

***Kimiko Festival* Music Festival** (Picture):

<https://kimiko-festival.de>

Sustainability Day:

www.aachenklima.de/aachener-nachhaltigkeitstag

Holiday Games *Ferienspiele*:

www.unser-ferienprogramm.de/aachen



Muenster

KlimaBarCamp (Picture):

<https://stadt-muenster.de/klimastadt/bisherige-meilensteine>

***Münsteraner Klimagespräche* Climate Talk Society and Culture:**

<https://kurse.vhs-muenster.de/p/gesellschaft-und-kultur-558-C-9766160>

***Münster Nachhaltig* – Climate-friendly Lifestyle:**

www.stadt-muenster.de/tourismus/service-und-informationen/muenster-nachhaltig

The Structures of Change ...

After discussing the rooms of the ‘House of Change’, we come back to the stable foundation that is absolutely essential for any change. By this we mean the transition team mentioned in the EU Mission, which ensures integrated objectives, builds management and ensures partnerships with the urban community. We then speak of a well-run house.

Governance is the magic word, behind which lies so much more than just structures. Structures have to be lived and are based on many networks. The task of the ‘House of Change’ is to uncover these and weave them into a well-functioning ecosystem for the city. This was the incredible task facing the three CoLAB cities when they drew up their Climate City Contract. They sought and found those responsible for the structures of change in the administration, in the urban societies, in the companies and in civil society.

To make decisions in favour of a sustainable lifestyle, we need a stable environment, strong political will and a city administration that really thinks beyond the boundaries of its own department. And it needs strong partnerships with companies that ultimately help shape the offers for citizens and enable access to sustainable services.

The ‘House of Change’ is designed to help ensure that dialogue with citizens, initiatives and businesses leads to policy change. It is not only regulated from top to bottom, but also from bottom to top, and they influence each other. The CoLAB cities reflected on how to coordinate the many necessary actions, on how structures, processes and methods serve to connect different people and efforts, and on the mindsets and values on which they are based.

To put it bluntly: no credible and transparent transformation of urban society can be achieved without a well-managed transition team, regardless of the model used. Change starts here, and we should all look at ourselves before demanding change from our citizens. The art of leading the transition team lies in successfully developing a shared vision despite all the members having different ones, recognising that it is more effective to work towards this than to continuously discuss without acting.

There is a ‘Transition Team Playbook’ from NetZeroCities that CoLAB used to design a model for all stakeholders in the city to work together. Ultimately, each city has to figure out for itself what the rules of transformation are, because the book itself only offers a selection of theoretical models, but not instructions on how to successfully lead the team to a shared vision. That was the reason why CoLAB placed the leadership of the transition team at the very beginning of the story.

All three CoLAB cities have opted for the model of a ‘mission group and networked partnerships’. This means that a local core team works closely with a mission group of committed CCC partners and networks with the local coalition and the regional, national and EU Mission coalition. The cities have developed strong relationships with the business community and improved knowledge sharing. The hope is that by collaborating, participating organisations will create a sustainable impact in the community.





Let's take a look at the formats that cities have developed in their transition teams:

Local Green Deal office ‘iDEAL for Mannheim’:

The Local Green Deal initiates, activates and bundles specific commitments for a green, clean and healthy city and works closely with citizens, politicians, the administration, business and research. The team reports directly to the mayors' conference and works across departments, closely with the departments for the environment, climate and economic development. The Local Green Deal team supports companies, associations, clubs, initiatives and other organisations in how they can become active with their own contribution, and makes their successes visible. 225 deals are listed there (April 2025).

<https://mannheim-gemeinsam-gestalten.de/local-green-deal>

‘Climate-neutral Aachen 2030’ coordination office:

The ‘Klimaneutrales Aachen 2030’ coordination office is responsible for pooling the strengths of the local stakeholders in the Aachen Climate City Contract and driving the process towards a climate-neutral city. It builds a bridge between the city administration and urban society and supports the network of signatories. Together with the extended municipal climate protection team, the office is also involved in the monitoring of measures and in the coordination and updating of the 153 commitments (April 2025).

<https://klimaneutrales-aachen-2030.de>

‘Münster is becoming a climate city!’ team:

The city-wide climate protection process ‘Münster wird Klimastadt!’ is managed by an interdepartmental team consisting of the Climate Office of the First Mayor's Directorate and Münster Marketing, a wholly owned company within the Department for Planning, Building and Economic Affairs. The Climate Office primarily contributes its professional perspective and experience from almost 30 years of work in municipal climate work. Münster Marketing has expertise and experience in large, city-wide participation processes, such as the ‘MünsterZukunft’ future process. 134 commitments have been submitted (April 2025).

www.stadt-muenster.de/klimastadt/klimastadtvertrag

The Communication of Change ...

As a good host at the ‘House of Change’, it is important to create an inclusive atmosphere in which everyone feels respected and valued, regardless of their background or beliefs. This has a lot to do with appreciative communication and presenting credible arguments. It includes active listening, empathy and a genuine interest in learning from the perspectives and experiences of others.

What kind of communication leads to action? How can we deal with disinformation attacks and the challenges of the digital public sphere? And what scope do local authorities have despite growing bureaucracy and tight budgets? We have also attempted to answer or address these questions in CoLAB, as it is difficult to provide definitive answers, particularly in the current global crisis. However, we can give you a little preview.

Our communication about the 1.5 degree lifestyle and thus about greater commitment to climate protection and our environment must create a sense of belonging, security and trust. Our communication must serve to build a strong and effective network in our cities. In CoLAB, cities therefore focus on establishing a shared vision with the urban community.

Creating a communication platform makes the necessary information and arguments accessible and transparent. This is exactly what our ‘House of Change’ achieves. It enables the regular exchange of information and ideas and creates a cultural environment for this. If we want our communication to encourage businesses, politicians, initiatives and our citizens to join a large democratic movement for a liveable city, we must pull out all the stops, or rather, set all channels to send and receive.

What are surveys good for? Do they really give us the citizens’ opinion on a topic? We argue that when it comes to their own lifestyles, surveys only reveal people’s intentions, not their actual decisions. Unfortunately, what people say is not what people do. Good communication for change must therefore consider which communication style is best for which groups and for which purpose.

Our citizens must also understand the value of their actions, for themselves, for society and ultimately for our livelihoods on earth. The amount of CO₂ emissions saved is usually not a suitable measure of the value of an action. It is a rational parameter, not an emotional tipping point that directly inspires action. Communication must start here, with people’s feelings and values.

Communication for change is therefore more than just saying the right words in the right place; it also involves organising regular meetings and events, strengthening trust and willingness to cooperate. The ‘House of Change’, with its symbolic bottom-up matching idea room, offers opportunities to make contacts, similar to a dating platform. The municipal participation room promotes cross-sector discourse, and in the knowledge exchange inspiration room, we build up capabilities and expertise. This is also the place for reskilling and upskilling.

All these approaches to change require the right communication to ensure that they are actually used. And ultimately, we must not forget the impact of communication on shared successes and on boosting the morale of everyone involved. The CoLAB cities show how they have used these opportunities to benefit their shared goal of a sustainable, climate-neutral city.

Immerse yourself in the real world of communication in cities. Creative campaigns and a diverse communication package adorn the three cities and are an expression of their self-image. Come in and see for yourself.





Fully committed to ‘iDEAL’ Mannheim

With the ‘iDEAL for Mannheim’ campaign, the Local Green Deal literally emphasises that every single measure counts – ‘I deal’ means ‘I’m in’ for Mannheim. This idea is at the heart of the campaign. It is about more than just climate goals; it is about construction, mobility, biodiversity, nutrition, energy, circular economy and the environment. The eight areas of action are explained in a clear and motivating way using hidden object pictures, videos, a ‘Deal Box’ for companies and the ‘Deal-O-Mat’ for citizens. With the support of the Local Green Deal, everyone can find the right measure for them. The platform offers inspiring information for citizens and organisations who want to promote the vision of an iDEAL city that is green, clean, healthy and liveable. Many successful initiatives can already be seen on the success board.

<https://mannheim-gemeinsam-gestalten.de/local-green-deal>

In Aachen, it’s all about ‘Us.Now’

Aachen faces the future – the previous slogan for a sustainable and liveable city is given a dynamic boost with the new slogan ‘Climate protection. Us. Now.’ The campaign is driven by the vision of a future-proof, liveable and clean city of Aachen for us and future generations. On the hands-on platform, everyone can find a suitable activity for sustainable living. From green facades to repair cafés, solar panels to shopping trips: the platform offers tips, addresses and useful information on all aspects of climate-friendly living in Aachen. The filter function displays topics and target groups. The ‘Klima Match’ tool makes it easier for citizens to identify their own contribution. A successful start for us now, as demonstrated by the wall covered with signed commitments.

www.aachenklima.de/klimaschutz-wir-jetzt

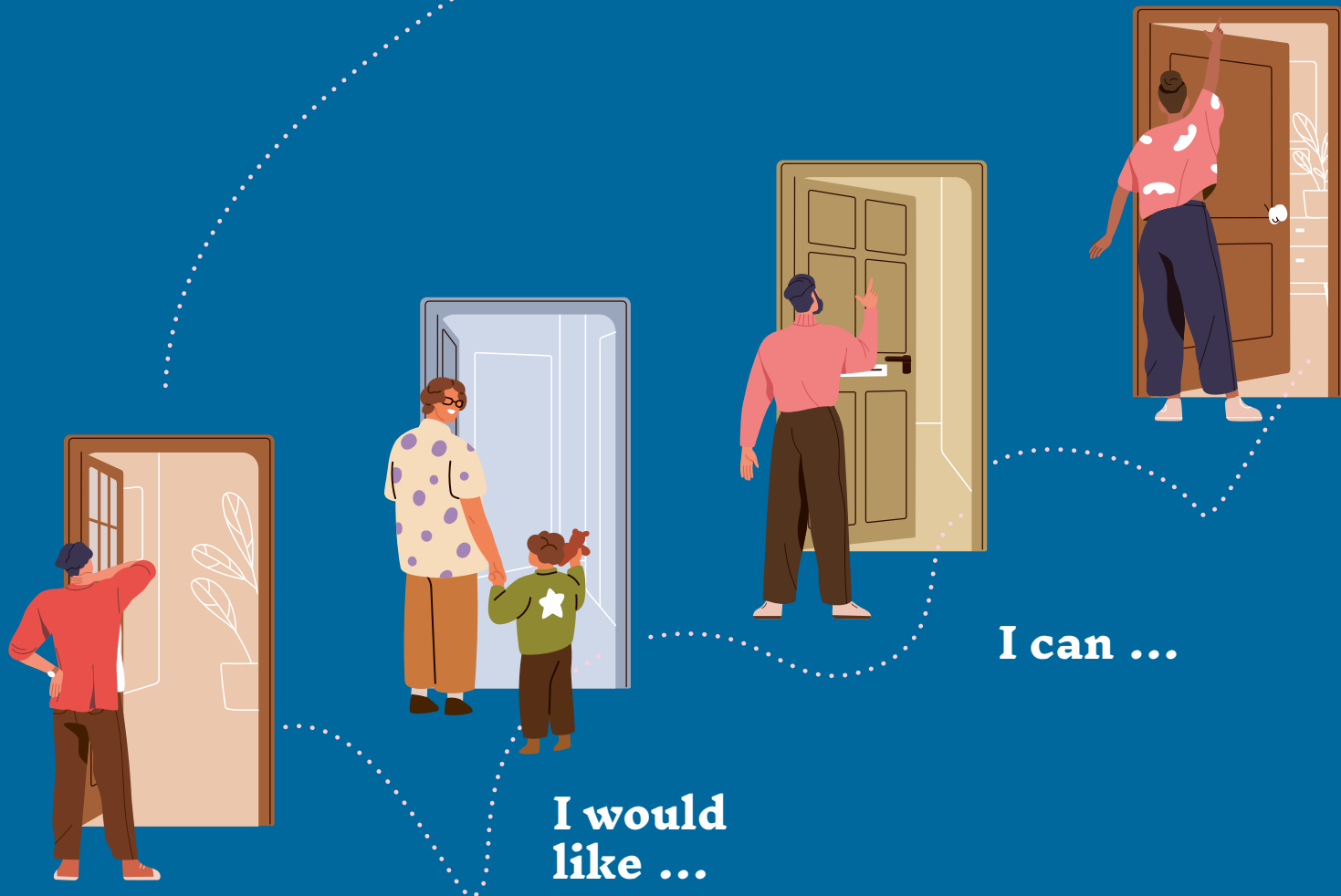
‘Because it takes all of us’ in Muenster

With the message ‘Muenster is becoming a climate positive city’, the city has launched a process that brings together all stakeholders of the urban community. Muenster cannot achieve its CO₂ savings potential through municipal measures alone. Beyond support at EU, national and regional level, it requires various forms of commitment from the different members of the urban society. To make these joint efforts visible, all commitments made in the Climate City Contract – by the City Group, companies, civil society and citizens – are presented on the ‘Climate City Wall’ in the town hall and at the informative ‘Klimastadt’ digital platform. The ‘Klimastadt im Alltag’ tool helps citizens find opportunities to participate in Muenster’s Climate City Contract.

www.klimastadt.ms



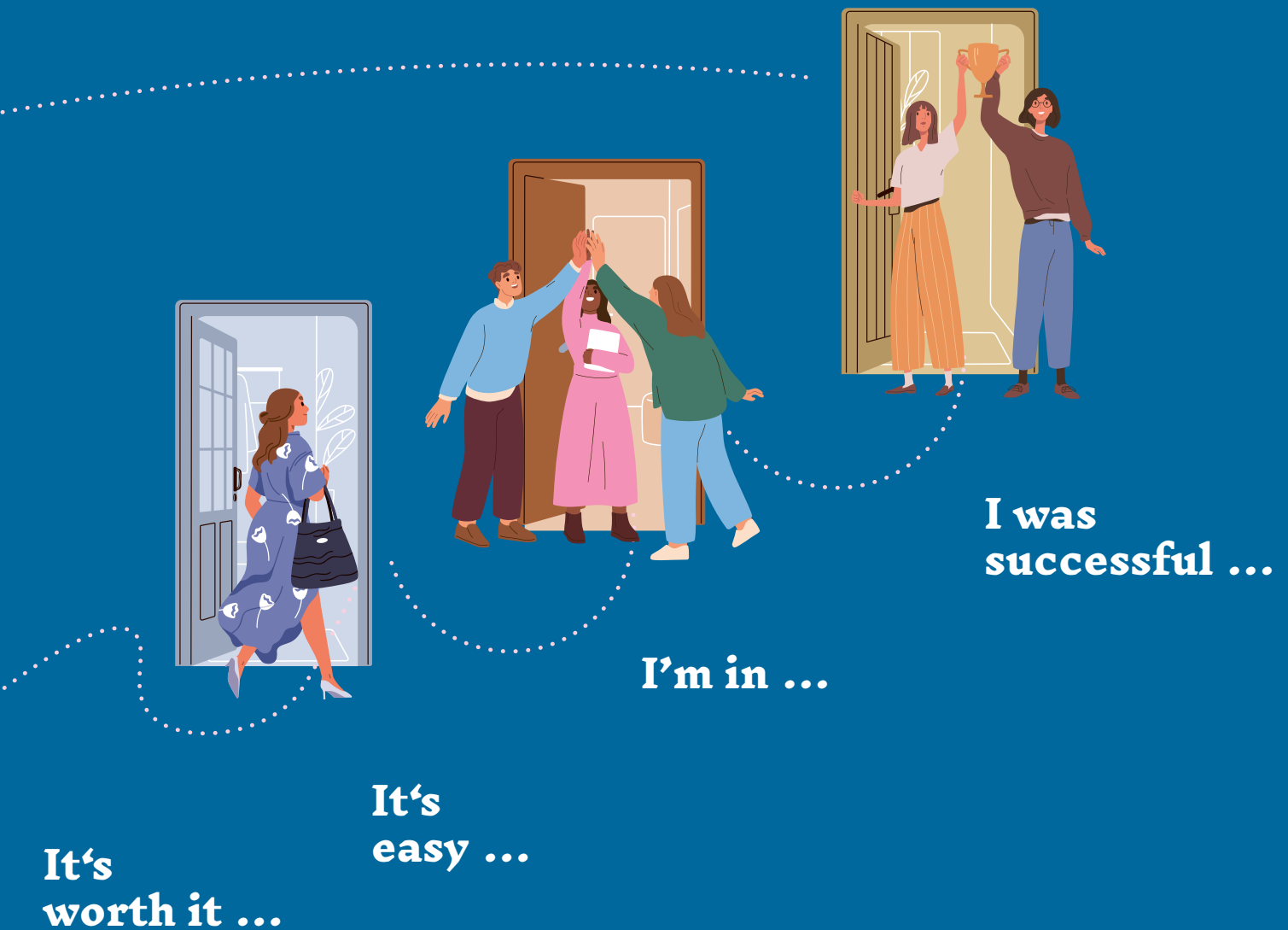
Seven Doors lead to Action



**I know,
I should ...**

**I would
like ...**

I can ...



From knowledge to action,

the path leads through seven doors of insight. (Almost) everyone knows that it is five to twelve and that we have to act to ensure a future worth living. But how does the desire to actually do something come about? And how do we gain the confidence that we can do it? How do we know that something is easy enough for us to join the movement? And is my successful action appreciated? The 'Seven Doors Approach' shows the way through these questions and helped us to furnish the 'House of Change'.

Chapter 3



Methods we use

The House Rules

Every change follows certain rules. This also applies to the transformation of an entire city into a sustainable, climate-neutral community project. The ‘House of Change’ is aware of this and relies on proven methods and in-depth knowledge of the effectiveness of approaches.

We talk about transformation and sometimes forget that we are all only human. The enormous technical changes we need to make to create sustainable, climate-neutral cities must therefore be accompanied by systemic changes that focus on our human behaviour. As architects (CoLAB Cities) of the ‘House of Change’, we have consulted our outfitters (CoLAB Partners) and many other clever minds and evaluated studies. From these approaches, we have developed the house rules for stakeholder and citizen engagement. We would like to encourage everyone involved in this topic to work in their cities to ensure that these rules are tailored to the Climate City Contract. Otherwise, the people we wanted to invite to our ‘House of Change’ might be left standing outside the door.

How did we go about it? There is a wealth of research and projects dealing with the topic of a lifestyle with 1.5 degrees of global warming. We have selected the approaches of behavioural and decision research that we believe are best suited to promote a change towards a life within the planetary boundaries. We have combined the most promising methods to help people in our cities find their way around, recognise options and pursue a sustainable lifestyle. We have not forgotten that we also combine stakeholder engagement with citizen engagement. After all, our citizens are at the end of the decision-making chain and consume what the market offers. Political conditions and rules also play a major role in this.

Everyone is responsible for the ‘House of Change’, and we mean EVERYONE. Studies speak of the gap between actual and intended action. We want to find ways to bridge the deep gaps that lead from knowledge to action.



Bridge between Value and Action

A constant question accompanies us in the design of the rooms of the ‘House of Change’. How do we manage to address the interests and values of our citizens in such a way that they recognise and use their own scope for action? Who holds the keys to the doors to this knowledge?

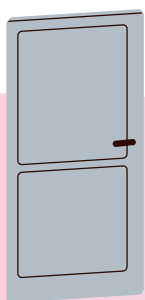
Examples of value-action gaps include people who eat unhealthily even though they care about their health, people who avoid green energy sources even though they care about the environment, and people who buy products that have been manufactured under unethical working conditions even though they care about workers.

At the ‘House of Change’, we want to bridge the gap between ecological thinking and non-ecological consumer behaviour. To this end, we have consulted our scientific partners and conducted intensive research into decision-making. We were particularly impressed by the ‘7 Doors Approach’ ^[1]. That is why we have made it the focus of our work and are working with stakeholders in the city to find the keys to open the doors. Join us on this journey.

Consumers can make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through environmentally conscious shopping and consumption habits. They could, if it weren’t for this gap. Clearly, factors other than our desire to behave in a climate-friendly manner play a role. It is about how we make decisions to do what we believe is right. Our inner values significantly influence our decisions.

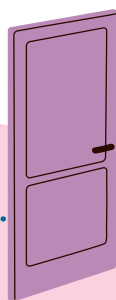
And the most relevant argument has the greatest influence on our decision. So we need to look at the whole system that surrounds us if we want to bridge the gap between desire and actual action. In these decision-making situations, product labels and packaging design also come into play. Only those who are informed and reflect on their own behaviour can make better decisions and have a more positive impact on their environment.

At the ‘House of Change’, we use the knowledge that people usually have to go through all of the following phases to reach a point where they perform a certain action. First, people must acquire the necessary knowledge about a particular topic. They then have to process this knowledge in such a way that they develop relevant values.



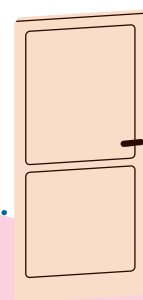
Door 1 Knowledge

I know, I should: Many people are aware that, in light of the climate change, it is high time to take action. Fear of an uncertain future is omnipresent. Credible arguments are essential to move us forward.



Door 2 Desire

I want to do: Targeted information, positive thinking and a belief in collective action and solidarity help to inspire a desire to actually do something and a willingness to take the next step.



Door 3 Skills

I can: However, sometimes people lack the conviction that they are really capable of changing their behaviour. Can they really do it? Here, it helps to teach the skills and provide access to them.

Next, they must translate these values into intentions in order to take action. Finally, they must translate these intentions into concrete actions. In addition, people sometimes need to take further steps before they act, such as recognising that an opportunity for action is available to them.

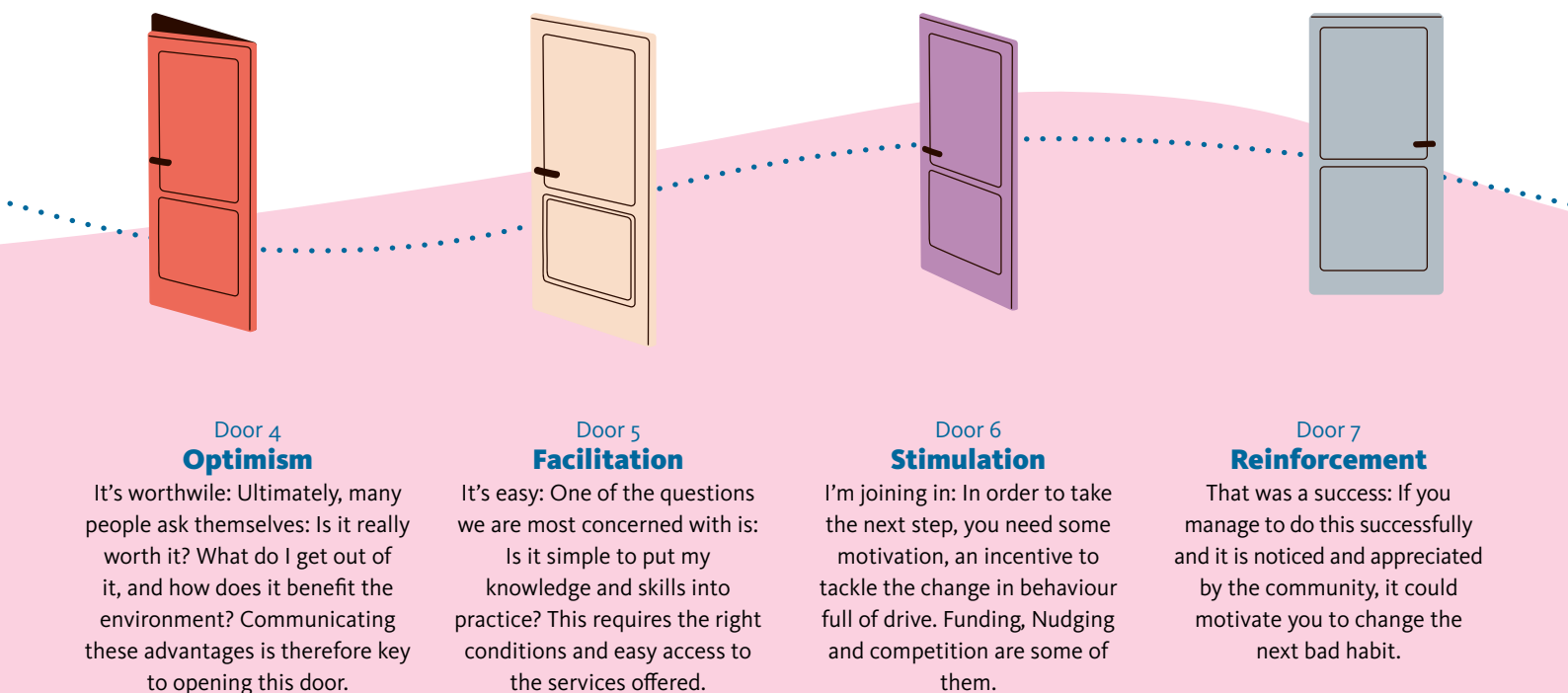
Overall, people exhibit value-action gaps because translating values into actions typically requires several active steps and various problems can hinder this process, including competing values, counterproductive incentives and a lack of relevant options.

Scientific studies show that even though people want to behave more sustainably, obstacles such as habits, practicality and price get in the way in everyday life. It has become clear that consumers expect brands to address these obstacles and make sustainable consumption an easy, seamless decision.

In order to reduce value-action gaps, we must work together to identify and eliminate their causes and, where necessary, apply general techniques such as reminding people of their values, bringing them closer to their values, encouraging them to act and supporting them in doing so, making it easier for them to act in accordance with the relevant values and more difficult for them to act in contradiction to them.

We have taken all of this into account in CoLAB when designing solutions. We have investigated which doors are already open in cities and who holds the keys to them. The ‘Rooms of Change’ hold many answers to how we can help people translate their values, such as happiness, health, the environment, beliefs, social cohesion, but also prosperity, into actions that will help them achieve their goals. At the end of the day, we are all human beings and need credible arguments and real alternatives that are in line with our values in order to act in a climate-friendly manner.

^[1] The Seven Doors change model is ©Les Robinson 2001



The Elephant and the Rider

To unlock the secret of behavioural change, we looked through the keyhole of rational and emotional decision-making. What can we do to ensure that rational action is followed by emotional awareness? How can we outsmart the elephant within us so that it moves in the same direction as the rider?

Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman posits that our brains are constantly trying to minimise their energy use and that they have developed a slow and a fast ‘thinking system’ to cope with the world ^[1]. Most of the time, we are aware of our ‘slow thinking’ but not our ‘fast thinking’.

The metaphor of the elephant rider explains the complex relationships between our two brains and how to find an attractive path that supports behavioural change ^[2]. The fast thinking system is similar to an elephant and the slow thinking system to a rider.

The elephant is strong and tireless once it is moving. It has a strong hedonistic and fear-driven character: its actions are driven by emotions. It seeks pleasure in the present rather than in the future, has a great fear of losing something when faced with unknown situations, and is afraid of going astray if it leaves its herd.

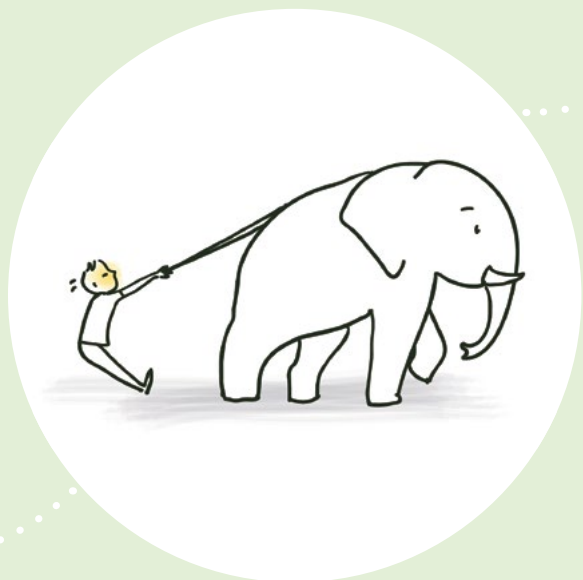
He is constantly alert and aware of things around him, focusing on general shape rather than details and content. He lets himself be guided by his intuition and has difficulty dealing with uncertainty, risk or statistics.

The slow thinking system is like a rider. Compared to the elephant, it is tiny and quickly exhausted. It has an imaginative, inventive mind, likes to deal with complex and abstract topics, and reflects on past and future situations to develop a plan.



The rider thinks he is in control, but in reality he is resting on the elephant's back and is unaware of what is happening most of the time.

When does a change in behaviour occur? Most of the time, we are on autopilot, the elephant follows familiar paths, our habits, while our consciousness barely perceives them. When the elephant encounters an unfamiliar situation, the rider helps to make the best decision.



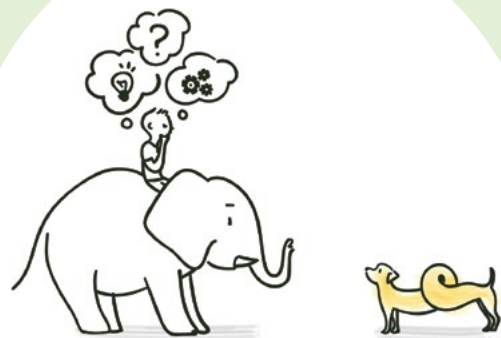
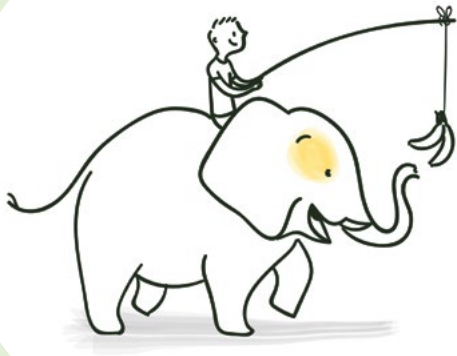
^[1] See Daniel Kahneman's book 'Thinking fast, thinking slow'

^[2] The metaphor of the elephant rider is attributed to the historical figure of the Buddha and was used in the book 'Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard' by Chip and Dan Heath.

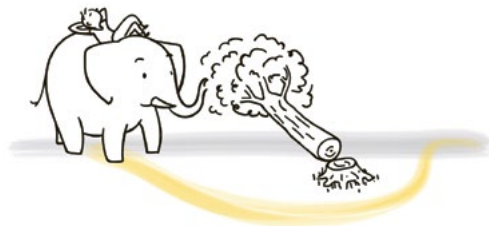
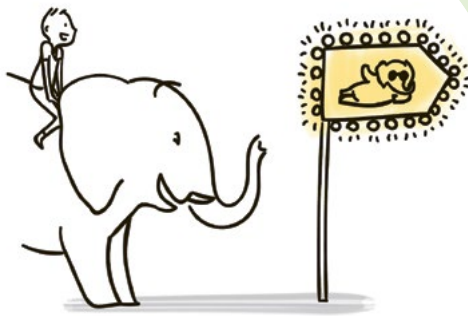
To consciously make a decision that deviates from our habits, five ‘mental events’ must occur almost simultaneously: We need to perceive a new option, like it, evaluate it positively, know how to implement it, and be able to implement it in the present.

A more complex strategy, but one that is highly effective in the long term, is to create an environment that supports personal development and learning. In such a situation, the rider ‘learns to lead the elephant’ and both learn to communicate well with each other and actively explore new paths.

We use this environment in the ‘House of Change’ to create exactly the right conditions for riders to learn how to guide the elephants within us.



To support a change in behaviour, we can change the environment in which the elephant and rider operate, either by building a barrier in the conventional way (by making a behaviour more difficult) or by creating a new attractive and meaningful pathway.



Attribution of the images: Illustrations are used with permission from the book “Designing for Behaviour Change to unleash social and environmental transformation” by Majka Baur.

More details about strategies to support behaviour change can be found in the free E-Book available on the scaling4good website: <https://scaling4good.com/behaviour-change-ebook>

Please change over

It would be too good if we knew exactly which levers to pull to make the change a success. What factors help to ensure that the residents of the ‘House of Change’ can become active? Who holds the key to sustainable, climate-neutral action? Who are the enablers?

We were keen to find out everything. In addition to NetZeroCities’ levers for change ^[1], we looked for opportunities for communities to promote change – and we found them in the IkKA model ^[2]. Equipped with the two sets of instructions, we set off on our journey.

As founders of the ‘House of Change’, we have done our homework. The solutions we have identified contribute to the NZC levers of change, particularly democracy and participation, governance and policies, learning and capabilities, and social innovation. However, finance and funding, technology and infrastructure also play an important role. This is especially true when comparing the NZC levers with the options available in the IkKA model.

According to the IkKA recommendations a municipality can choose which indirect measures it wants to use to support the implementation of direct measures to reduce greenhouse gases. Before we consider direct, mostly technical measures, which is what municipalities usually do first, we need to look at indirect measures. These are the real levers, which is why we at ‘House of Change’ consider how direct measures should be tackled with indirect measures. We are therefore following the mix of instruments indicated in the roadmap: information, regulation, incentives, provision of infrastructure and accompanying strategies. However, choosing and combining the right approaches is not only a matter for local authorities and their stakeholders, but also for regional, national and EU authorities. It is about finding the right mix. Who said it would be easy?



Learning & Capabilities Governance & Policies
Technology & Infrastructure

Looking back - Looking ahead

Our path to climate neutrality is not always easy. Signposts point us in different directions. Sometimes we have to take detours and look back to understand what has happened and why. Then we can look ahead again and see what opportunities we have as cities to move forward faster as a community.

NetZeroCities calls this ‘sensemaking.’ It is also known as ‘back-casting.’ Both concepts have in common that it is too late to check why you have not achieved your supposed goal or why you have achieved it too late once you have arrived there. Since we are in a hurry on our ‘balloon ride,’ we check after every turn, every experiment and every solution approach in CoLAB to see if we are still on track.

We can only determine this by learning from experience and keeping a close eye on the framework conditions, the headwinds (the hurdles) along the way and the tailwinds (the driving forces). It helps to take a bird’s-eye view. And we need to keep an eye on everything and not just focus on the behavioural changes we want to see in citizens.

This means that we must follow the signs in order to offer our citizens the right options for their decisions. Ultimately, the levers of change and the similarly structured mix of IkKA instruments are set by other actors, and they have the upper hand.

These ideas will be consistently reflected in our solutions, such as the strategic experiments we are conducting to bring about important behavioural changes that we would like to see. It is important that the target path for different problems also contains completely different branches on the way to the goal. As the saying goes, the journey is the destination. But we have to think backwards from the goal and consider everything that needs to go into the hiking rucksack.

^[1] NetZeroCities: <https://netzerocities.eu/the-netzerocities-project>

^[2] IkKA ifeu Institute Heidelberg: Recommendations for evaluating municipal climate protection measures as part of the ‘Instruments for Municipal Climate Protection’ (IkKa) project

Finance & Funding Social Innovation
Democracy & Participation



Citizens can decide whether they want to take a big step and save 1 ton of CO₂ or whether they want to take several small steps with the same result. This logic also underpins the CoLAB tool for climate-friendly decisions. Here you will find an example of measures in the area of energy and housing. Further examples are available for mobility, nutrition and waste prevention.

**With
one big step ...**

**... or step by step
to your goal!**



1

-250 kg

I save energy
when washing and
drying laundry.



1

-1000 kg

I produce my own
electricity: whether
I own or rent, I install a
photovoltaic system.
Either on the roof or on
my balcony.



In total
1000 kg!



**CLIMATE
GOAL**

ACHIEVED!



Chapter 4



Innovative Solutions

Long-Term Solutions need Time

Our solutions for the work of the ‘House of Change’ can only be accompanying, encouraging approaches. As already mentioned, everything is needed: the rooms, the structures, the communication and the people. Therefore, all the things we have identified for the ‘House of Change’ are important and only effective when used together. Please do not forget this when you leave our house.

Every solution raises more questions. And that has to do with the fact that we are dealing with behavioural changes. Will the solution that we as cities consider to be good also be accepted by the public? Will we be applauded for it? Or are these just flashes in the pan, fleeting moments that will soon be forgotten? Only time will tell.

In our search for the right long-term solutions, we have therefore relied on tried-and-tested approaches (see chapter ‘Methods used’). We have tried to consistently apply the possibilities available to local authorities, the levers at our disposal and findings from behavioural and decision-making research in each of the solutions we have developed.

The innovation of our CoLAB solutions, from the ‘House of Change’ transformation platform and the citizen tool for climate-friendly decisions to the establishment of an agency for 2030, is based on the interaction of these methods and complementary elements.

And every solution is only as good as its implementation on the ground. Can we offer citizens the right arguments and genuine alternatives with these solutions? Can we make the impact visible and measurable? We have also explored these questions. How we communicate the solutions and enable everyone to participate is a task that goes far beyond the CoLAB project. But we would not be architects of the ‘House of Change’ if we did not find solutions for this, or at least think about them. To implement these solutions, we need everyone’s support, from politicians and specialist authorities to our businesses and citizens. This requires excellent communication, tactical sensitivity and diplomatic skill.

You can find out more about enabling conditions for solutions in the following chapters: strategic experiments, lessons learned and policy briefs.



Strategic Experiments

How do you experiment strategically? How can you skilfully use a municipality's mix of instruments to solve a very specific task? What we want from our citizens usually involves technical change. But how can we provide the right support strategically and methodically, and who will do it?

Before we can achieve the desired changes, we need to find the levers that will enable citizens to make the shift. We have already defined the signposts: information, incentives, infrastructure, regulation and accompanying concepts. The next step was to identify the biggest challenges facing all three cities in implementing their Climate City Contracts with regard to consumer behaviour. In Mannheim, the municipal Working Group as part of the Transition Team has joined forces with the Local Green Deal, the Climate and Environmental Departments, the Climate Action Agency, as well as the Municipal Waste Management Company, to start their search. First, the most relevant behavioural changes were identified on the basis of criteria previously defined by the team: measurable CO₂ reduction contribution, number of target group affected, dimension of the challenge, number of stakeholders involved.

Four specific measures were selected as strategic experiments: switching from oil or gas heating to district heating or heat pumps, unsealing and greening front gardens, switching from combustion vehicles to environmentally friendly alternatives, and proper waste separation, disposal and reduction. For each of these tasks, which were identified as particularly difficult for citizens to solve, the instruments and necessary stakeholders were identified.

An incredible number of factors must be taken into account as framework conditions. Here we describe how we accompanied two of the experiments in Mannheim and another in Aachen and Muenster. At this point, we can only highlight a few excerpts and special achievements.

One thing we have learned is that it is worthwhile to consider a change from all angles and to approach the experiment strategically. Our experiments are continuing, that much we can promise.



The Heat Transition Experiment

Mannheim's municipal heat planning for a future-proof heat supply has been completed. Now we need tradespeople and citizens to help shape the heat transition. That is why Mannheim has a Heat Transition Academy, a central point of contact that provides tradespeople with all the relevant information they need to implement the heat transition for their customers – from municipal heat planning, legal requirements, subsidy programmes and expansion options to innovative product solutions. The Heat Transition Academy is an initiative of various craft guilds, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber of Crafts, the Climate Action Agency, MVV Energie and the City of Mannheim. With the comprehensive training programme, tradespeople and engineers, can optimise their consultations, which leads to high customer satisfaction. The Climate Action Agency provides regulations and financing options, informs citizens at events and via the website 'All about heating'. www.waermewende-akademie.de

The Greening Experiment

We have a very specific problem in **Mannheim**: the trend towards gravel gardens. The administration is therefore working with environmental initiatives and the Climate Action Agency to raise awareness of the disadvantages for people, animals and the environment when gravel surfaces and waterproofing membranes prevent any life and the absorption of rainwater instead of natural gardens. With a subsidy programme for greening unsealed areas, reduced rainwater charges, tailored advice on all greening measures, the 'Mannheim makes room for green' campaign run by the Climate Agency, brochures with suitable plants, an annual greening event, plant exchange parties, competitions, postcards, model gardens, various accompanying concepts ranging from biodiversity strategies to climate adaptation concept, Mannheim is pulling out all the stops. Only by working together with horticultural businesses and residents can we ensure that more natural front gardens are created and that ugly stone gardens disappear. www.klima-ma.de/begrueenen

The Mobility Experiment

Aachen's 'Clever Mobil' programme is all about climate-friendly corporate mobility management. It also contributes to the health of employees and reduces costs for companies. The focus is on supporting businesses, companies and institutions in the introduction and optimisation of their own mobility management by identifying potentials in modal shift and suitable measures to incentivise sustainable commuting. 'Clever mobil' is a joint offer of the city and city region of Aachen together with the partners IHK Aachen, AVV and ASEAG. The programme actively promotes the mobility transition and aims at supporting participants in the future-oriented organisation of employee mobility as a contribution to the mobility transition in the city and city region. The comprehensive approach has been successful: 28 participating companies with a total of 30,000 employees and 610 bookings in the mobility test weeks 2024. www.go-clever-mobil.de

The Renovation Experiment

Deep renovation of residential buildings in **Muenster**: The phase-out of gas supply in existing buildings through local deep renovation campaigns is one of the greatest challenges to achieving the CO₂ reduction targets. The City of Muenster addresses this challenge by three levers of change: a funding programme, information campaigns and services as well as an initiative by the district craftsmen's association and craft businesses that have joined forces to form a powerful alliance of experts for deep renovation of residential buildings. The development of the number of applications approved in the context of the funding programme 'Climate-friendly residential buildings' for deep renovation performs quite well: 2020: 154, 2021: 227, 2022: 250, 2023: 320, 2024: 314. <https://stadt-muenster.de/klima/foerderprogramm>

The ‘Klima plus’ Agency - a plus for Aachen’s climate endeavours

Klima^{plus}

Inspires, informs and motivates people to local climate actions: On 16 May 2025, ‘Klima plus’ celebrated its opening as a new advice centre for the urban community. The ‘Klima plus’ Agency in Aachen is based on its predecessor AltbauPlus. With the new foundation, the spectrum was adapted to the collective effectiveness of civil society.

The central question for the design of ‘Klima plus’ is: How can I become self-effective? The aim is both to arouse curiosity and to provide answers to specific questions. ‘Klima plus’ sees itself as a space for experiencing the main topics presented and as a place for people to meet. A real plus in Aachen’s ‘House of Change’ and a new place where knowledge becomes action.

The opening will create a contact point in Aachen’s city centre where climate-relevant future topics can be experienced and understood. The aim is to promote climate-friendly behaviour in the private and business environment, provide information and offer guidance. Due to the central role of the Altbau plus association in the development of ‘Klima plus’, advice on the energy-efficient refurbishment of buildings is a key offer. Other important topics are energy efficiency, the circular economy and climate neutrality. The latter is overseen by the ‘Klimaneutrales Aachen 2030’ office, which coordinates and manages the partner network of the Climate City Contract.



Long-standing climate consulting at its best in Mannheim



The 'Klimaschutzagentur Mannheim' has been running an incredibly diverse programme for many years. It is what we call a genuine climate action agency, creatively operating in all areas of the 'House of Change'. It is like an interior designer for the positive engagement of citizens.

Fifteen years of Climate Action Agency in Mannheim and the official opening of the new central office location at the main railway station – if that's not a reason to celebrate with many guests, then what is? And that's exactly what the agency team did in April 2025! The three shareholders of the non-profit company, the City of Mannheim, the energy supplier MVV Energie and the municipal housing association GBG, offered their congratulations and gave a joint review and outlook on current and future projects: the Heat Transition Academy, One-Stop-Shop, Climate Net 'KliMA-Netz 2.0' and the Greening Forum, to name but a few. The agency received particular attention for its installation of the multi-award-winning sustainability model flat.

The success story in figures is impressive, and the team of 13 people wants to keep going. Since 2009, 42,264 energy consultations have been carried out and 5,042 energy efficiency measures have been promoted. They have involved in 802 lectures and events with a total of 31,711 participants, including 385 school workshops with 8,902 pupils. Between 2020 and 2024, we have subsidised the installation of PV systems with 9,691 kWp in Mannheim.

The agency is active on all channels: website, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn.



Find your Action – The Tool

Wouldn't it be great if you could find the right measures for your sustainable lifestyle at the touch of a button? Already sorted by area of life, from living and nutrition to mobility and consumption. Then we have just the thing for you at 'House of Change' – the tool for climate-friendly action.

To be clear: the digital tool for climate-friendly living that we have developed together with our CoLAB partners wechange and ifeu cannot work miracles. Everyone has to pull several levers and literally walk through seven doors (see 'Bridging the value gap') to turn knowledge into action. However, helpful tools are important along the way, and we provide these in the 'House of Change'.

In our search for suitable solutions for such a digital decision-making tool, we looked at many existing products (especially CO₂ calculators). We were particularly inspired by the new 'CO₂ Rechner' from the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA) and the PS Lifestyle tool from the EU project of the same name. However, we felt that simply providing citizens with the corresponding savings potential of individual actions in everyday life was not enough. We wanted to find the perfect match between values, lifestyles and the appropriate actions. That's why we brought wechange on board, who had the right approach with their 'Mitwirk-O-Mat' (which brings volunteers together with initiatives).

That's exactly what we used, and we ask our citizens about their values and what the measures should fulfil before we go to the appropriate actions: big impact, doing something together with others, low cost and time expenditure, easy to integrate into everyday life - seven questions sort the actions to be selected later along these interests. A filter from the categories Living & Energy, Mobility & Travel, Food & Nutrition, Shopping & Use, Avoid & Reduce, and Green & Nature creates tailor-made actions. Further information and the potential CO₂ savings can be found for each of these measures. The climate impact of each action has been calculated by the ifeu institute, which is the leading authority in Germany in this field. The selected activities bring the cities' Climate City Contract to life and make citizen engagement visible.

The tool thus fulfils several of our requirements: it should impart knowledge, appeal to people's values, make collective action visible and simplify access to individual action. Each of the three cities has found its own approach to using the instrument. Some are focusing more on ambitious CO₂ measures, while others are placing the emphasis on diversity. Our advice is therefore that each city must find the right mix. A one-size-fits-all solution is only possible to a limited extent.

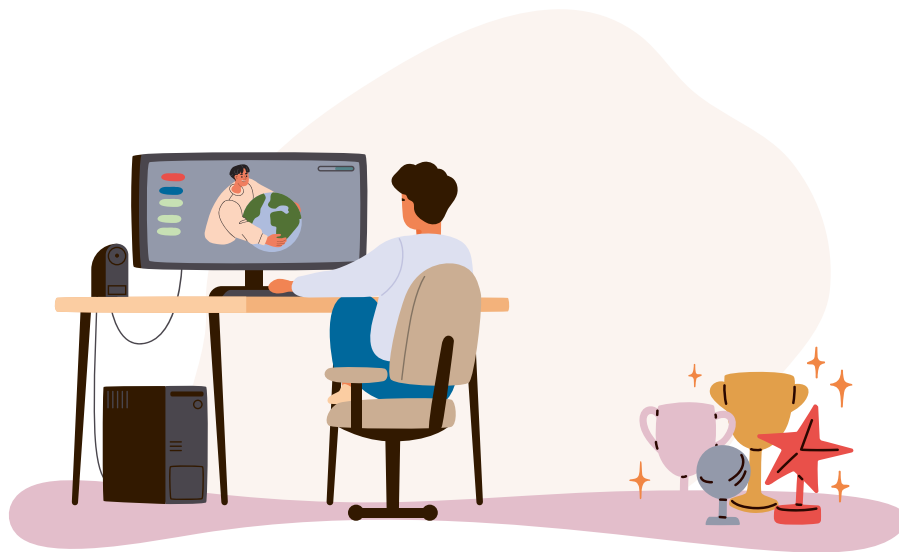
Even the best tool is useless if it is not used. At 'House of Change', we are prepared for this. We have found answers to questions such as: Is the tool easy to find? Do citizens enjoy using it? And will it be used in the long term? We found the answer to these questions with 'Lego® Serious® Play'. Stay tuned for more information (see chapter 'Peer Learning').

The digital tool, which is called 'Deal-O-Mat' in Mannheim, 'Klima Match' in Aachen and 'Klimastadt im Alltag' in Muenster, is tailored to the inspiring campaign of each city.



The Mannheim 'Deal-O-Mat'

In Mannheim, as a pilot city for the Local Green Deal, not only companies but also citizens are being called upon to sign a deal. Join us in shaping your 'iDEAL Mannheim' and get involved. Every deal counts! Whether Mannheim residents want to implement ideas for sustainable, environmentally conscious behaviour in their private households, in their everyday lives, in clubs or at work, or simply want to be inspired, the 'Deal-O-Mat' makes it easier for them. The tool not only shows citizens what measures they can take to make their everyday lives more sustainable and climate-friendly, but goes one step further: they can incorporate



the actions they have selected into the Climate City Contract as a personal deal. Each measure is accompanied by further information on implementation, potential CO₂ savings and other benefits. Those who submit their deal not only receive their own action list to take home, but also a thank-you letter to download. In this way, we can work together to support Mannheim on its way to becoming a climate-neutral city by 2030. As the Deal-O-Mat says: The measure is right for you! (Started May 2025)
<https://klimastadtvertrag.de/mannheim/deal-o-mat>

The Aachen ‘Climate Match’

The Aachen ‘Klima Match’ (engl. Climate Match) is a playful digital matching tool that enables private individuals to participate in the Climate City Contract! The aim is to guide users to actions that suit them and their everyday lives. By answering various questions, a list of suggestions for reducing CO₂ emissions is created. Users can click on the measures they would like to integrate into their everyday lives. The resulting list of activities can then be downloaded and sent to the ‘Klimaneutrales Aachen 2030’ office as ‘My contribution to the Climate City Contract’. The CO₂ savings from all submitted measures are added together. The reduction potential and the number of people who have submitted a contribution are listed in the

update of the Climate City Contract as ‘Contribution of civil society’. (Started May 2025)

<https://klimastadtvertrag.de/aachen/klimamatch>

The Muenster ‘Climate City in Everyday Life’

With the message ‘Münster wird Klimastadt’ and the Climate City Contract, a process was launched to bring together as many stakeholders in Muenster society as possible, including the city administration, the Muenster city group, companies, associations, citizens, clubs and climate activists. The motto of this process is: ‘Because it takes all of us’. The process focuses primarily on information, activation and motivation. The ‘Klimastadt im Alltag’ tool provides support to citizens to reorient their everyday decisions towards climate-friendly options and to find their commitment for Muenster’s Climate City Contract. The tool guides users to actions that suit to their everyday lives. By answering various questions, a list of suggestions for climate-friendly actions is created. Moreover, users get also further information about offers and services helping them to implement the suggested climate-friendly actions. (Start June 2025)

<https://klimastadtvertrag.de/muenster/klimastadt-im-alltag>

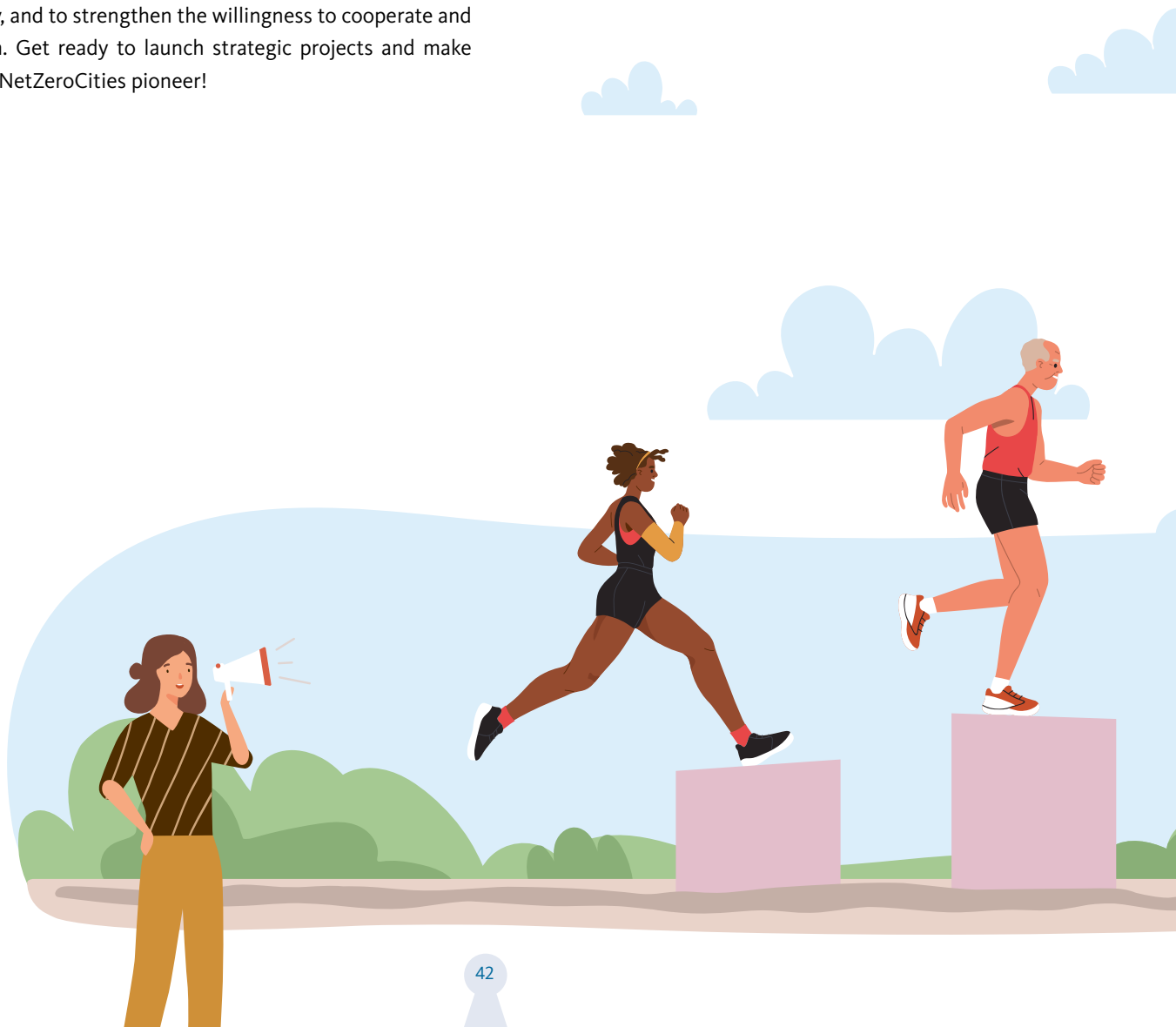
Playful to the Next Level

At ‘House of Change’, certain rules apply to ensure that collective success can be achieved. But who knows the game and the rules for working together to transform the city into a climate-neutral city? Who makes the rules for the transition team?

In CoLAB, we have started an experiment to set the rules in a playful way and have developed the ‘Next Level’ serious game. Please note that although it is a game, it is a game that should be taken seriously. Because these are the very challenges that await you out there in reality.

Our CoLAB partner Creative Climate Cities has teamed up with cities to develop a serious game designed to foster the implementation of commitments made under the Climate City Contract or, in the case of Mannheim, under the Local Green Deal.

The game aims to promote cross-departmental cooperation within city administrations and beyond, with the urban community, and to strengthen the willingness to cooperate and take action. Get ready to launch strategic projects and make your city a NetZeroCities pioneer!



Master the Challenge

Immerse yourself in the interactive simulation game ‘Next Level’ and actively help shape the city! You take on the role of various players who are working to make your city climate-neutral and sustainable. As a team, you will develop creative solutions to challenges such as clean energy, sustainable mobility and climate-friendly construction. Find out who or what you need to develop the necessary building blocks for this goal.

Don’t forget, just like in real life, you play as a team. The goals are ambitious and you need a lot of support from the city community. You can expect a variety of fields of action with challenging tasks. It’s not easy to keep your eyes on the goal and time is running out. Make an effort, because you will be rewarded for every task you complete and can climb further up the ladder of success.

Master the challenge together and gather knowledge that will take you all the way to the top. Are you a champion, pioneer or explorer team? Find out and make your way to the next level.

Step by Step to the Top

The game is played over three rounds to complete a selected challenge. Level 1 is about ‘observing’, level 2 is about ‘analysing’ and level 3 is about ‘implementing’. With each level you reach, you get closer to solving the challenge. In each level, you will encounter questions and events that you must work through together. The challenge cards were developed by the cities based on the activities in their Climate Action Plans and the action areas of the Local Green Deal. The question and event cards are based on the hurdles and framework conditions that need to be overcome on the way to achieving the goal.

The sand timer indicates the number of minutes you have for each round of the game. Once the time has expired, no more answers can be submitted. At the end of the game, the success stones you have collected show you how much progress you have made in solving the challenge.

Are you curious? Ask the CoLAB cities or Creative Climate Cities directly to get support for your game. You can use the challenge cards from CoLAB, but you can also create your own. For more information contact:

<https://creativeclimatecities.org>



Cool Tools to Action

In this age of digital communication and social media, it is almost essential that we also use these channels to motivate our citizens. In keeping with the philosophy of the 'House of Change', cool tools make it easy and fun to find your own sphere of action. They appeal to people who like to take on challenges and at the same time convey knowledge about the measures. But card and board games are also very popular.

We made the tools tested in CoLAB available in the Challenge and Inspiring Room. The cities tried out various tools, sometimes the same ones, sometimes different ones. However, it was clear to us from the outset that gamification is a key to motivating citizens to adopt a sustainable lifestyle, but that it does not automatically lead to lasting behavioural change. Various studies have already proven this, and it is therefore important to be aware of these limitations. For us, these tools are pieces of a puzzle and they also give us important clues about what people like to use, and we also obtain useful data from them. Gamification is simply part of what we do, because learning new behaviours should be fun, and achieving success together is enjoyable and leads to new connections. Our CoLAB methods are also reflected in the game formats. They transfer knowledge, create incentives and facilitate participation. The hope is that the experiences gained in the game can be transferred to real life.

The Way '2Zero'

All good things come in zeroes – this clear message marked the launch of the '2Zero' app in Mannheim in January 2025. Because less is more when it comes to saving CO₂ together. The free app suggests various ideas for saving CO₂ over the course of a year. All you need to do is download the '2Zero' app to your smartphone and join the Mannheim group. Under the motto 'Your Way 2Zero', anyone who lives, works or goes to school in Mannheim can take part. It is also possible to participate in teams – for example with colleagues, your club or your class.

During the challenges, participants collect climate points: the more points they collect, the greater the CO₂ savings. Partner companies from all over Germany and the Mannheim Climate Agency reward the efforts with prizes. The programme kicked off with a six-week sprint: each week is dedicated to a specific discipline, such as mobility, consumption, digital life, living, leisure and nutrition. Users can select challenges that suit



them and implement them within a set period of time. The app provides support in the form of practical tips and background information. Initial conclusion: It covers the entire spectrum of the 1.5 degree lifestyle. Local authorities can incorporate their own challenges. Use of the app costs an annual fee for cities, but it is very well developed and offers useful evaluation options.

www.2zero.earth/kommunen

Who has the most 'Klimataler'?

The 'aachen.move' app is based on the German online tool 'Klimataler' and enables users to travel in a climate-friendly and healthy way while even earning rewards. Anyone who gets around on foot, by bike or by bus and train can collect 'climate coins'. These climate coins can be exchanged online for attractive discounts. The app, which was designed to encourage people to change their mobility habits, had been in operation for over two and a half years since summer 2022. One Climate Coin is equivalent to 5 kg of CO₂ saved. This turns everyday journeys into a game with a real impact – for everyone who wants to make a difference while having fun. Unfortunately, the annual costs incurred by the city for such an app are relatively high, so its use had to be discontinued. Nevertheless, there is a great conclusion at the end: the app with its reward system was downloaded by over 20,000 people and actively used by between 2,000 and 6,000 users in Aachen, depending on the time period. The competitive spirit and team ratings were greatly appreciated. So highly recommended, but with associated costs.

<https://klima-taler.com/de/staedte>

It clicked with 'KliX³'

The federal research project KliX³ allows citizens to participate in the first nationwide long-term study on private CO₂ footprints. The CoLAB cities did not want to miss out on this opportunity. Since the end of 2024, they have been using the KliX³ real-world laboratory and are partners in this exciting project. Once a year, KliX³ participants calculate their own CO₂ footprint using the Federal Environment Agency's calculator. The KliX³ toolbox provides participants with a wealth of knowledge and lots of practical ideas for implementing more climate action in their everyday lives. Everyone can record the steps that are right for them in their climate plan. Participants can explore individual topics in more depth and exchange ideas in online workshops. Mannheim is taking advantage of the offer for its employees as part of its internal training programme, while Aachen and Muenster are offering it to their citizens as a motivating opportunity to make their personal climate protection efforts more effective. www.klix3.de



Dieting with the 'Klimawaage'

The climate scale is an entertaining demonstration and evaluation game that displays the potential CO₂ savings that can be achieved through various measures. This makes it easier for us to lighten our backpack of bad habits and go on a 'climate diet'. The game consists of a classic set of scales with two weighing pans and a set of cans of varying weights. Each can is assigned to a topic area (e.g. nutrition, mobility or living) and represents the CO₂ savings achieved by a specific everyday action. The 'Klimawaage' Card Game answers the same key question. The card set is a simplified, more compact and easier to transport version of the scales.

It is particularly well suited for use in schools and other educational settings. The 'Klimawaage' scales and the card game are a participatory tool for greater sustainability in everyday life. Our review: highly recommended for use at information stands or exhibitions, for workshops and as an accompaniment to lessons in schools and other educational settings. The instructions and the card game (1 piece only) are available free of charge. The Mannheim Climate Action Agency is already using the tool successfully.

<https://nachhaltigerkonsum.info/aktionsmaterialien>



Complete the 'Klima Puzzle'

The 'Climate Puzzle' game helps you piece together a sustainable, climate-neutral life. The game was developed as part of the EU project '1.5 Degree Lifestyle' and is available in several languages. The project was a great enrichment for CoLAB and will appear several times in the book. The puzzle playfully forces you to fill in the gaps between your current behaviour and your desired behaviour, measure by measure. The size of the puzzle pieces corresponds to the amount of CO₂ emissions saved by the chosen action. Once you have solved the puzzle, you move on to the next game mode and can decide for yourself when you want to implement your measures and what support you need to do so. A discussion-provoking game for citizen workshops. Costs are very low. Our conclusion: Highly recommended.

<https://d-mat.fi/en/what-we-do/climatepuzzle>

Chapter 5



Monitoring of Impact

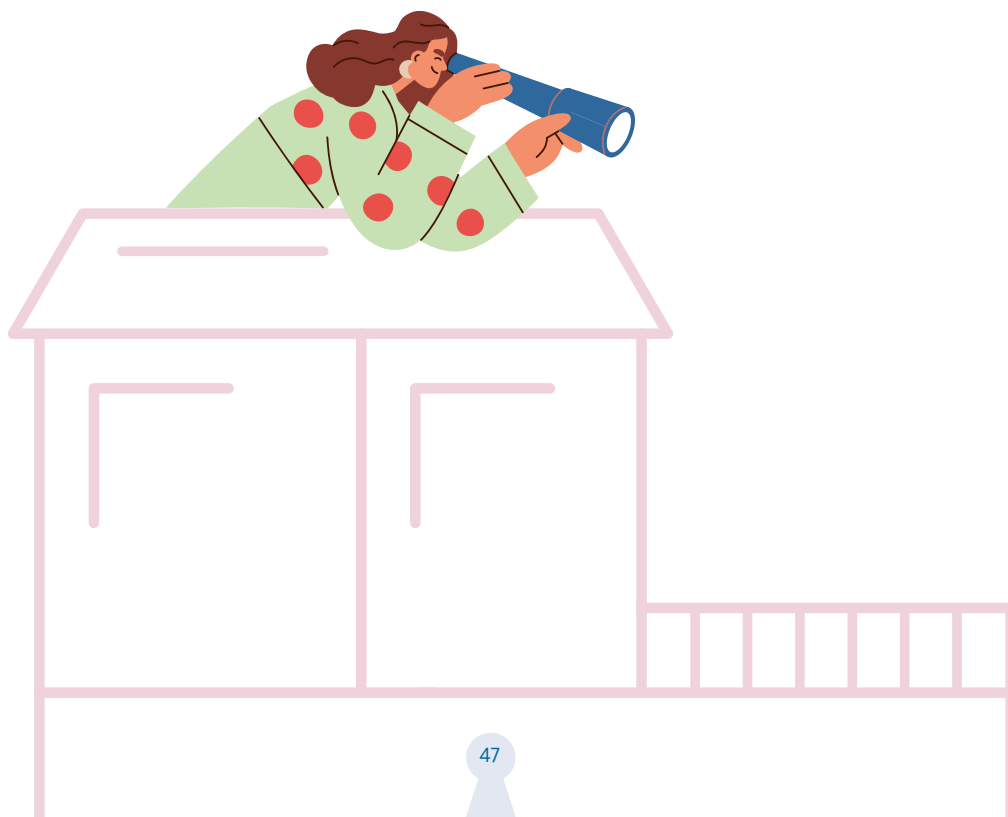
Everything under Control?

Let's be honest, what do you associate with monitoring? Ever heard the saying, 'Only what can be counted counts'? That's how most cities diligently count CO₂ emissions and then wonder why they can't convince anyone with that alone. How do we measure success in achieving climate neutrality? Is it really about having everything under control? Or is it about evaluating measures in order to draw the right conclusions for the future?

Everyone evaluates only the result of a project, measure or strategy, but not what was invested to achieve the right result. With the 'House of Change' concept, we therefore want to focus more on measuring and evaluating impact than on output. And here we mean the impact that is collectively achieved through the cooperation of all stakeholders in all rooms of the 'House of Change'. The success room merely demonstrates the end of the success chain, what is visible and recognisable. What is usually shown in urban climate monitoring is only the measurable result in CO₂, but not what exactly had to be done to achieve it and what framework conditions applied.

Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to understand what works and what does not, and how climate strategies should therefore work in the future. This includes gathering knowledge and insights from all activities that are intended to lead to the goal and finding common ground in order to analyse findings and identify similarities.

What you should not expect in this chapter is the official MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning) report on the CoLAB project, but rather what we have learned from it and how the three cities are dealing with it. What convincing concepts have we developed to make the success of the behavioural change visible and, in some cases, measurable? How do we package the success stories so that everyone understands them and can identify with their own contribution? How can we use the results to convince politicians and decision-makers to create the right conditions? What do our figures really mean and what are they worth?



Instrument Mix proves effective

We are therefore looking for ways to measure the impact triggered by the use of levers for change in cities' climate protection strategies. We are interested in key performance indicators that can be used to measure actual changes in the behaviour of our citizens. This appears to be a difficult task, as numerous studies and tools are dedicated to it. Some of these have found their way into the 'House of Change'.

Our efforts in the 'House of Change' to bring about collective impact and change in consumer behaviour across the entire urban community must not only be visible, but also measurable or at least assessable. This is difficult because measurability is usually hidden behind quantitative figures and assessability also includes qualitative figures. Therefore, in the IkKA Model 'IkKa – Recommendations for evaluating municipal climate protection measures' with a description of the procedure and the results of the evaluation system, we have adopted a perspective that helps us to think in terms of direct and indirect measures and to evaluate their interaction. Our CoLAB partner, ifeu, analysed the key methodological issues involved in evaluating measures and developed proposals for assessment.

A methodology with concrete calculations of GHG savings was developed for direct measures. Direct measures are actions that lead directly to GHG reductions, such as renovating a building or travelling by bicycle instead of by car.

Assessment options have also been developed for indirect measures. Indirect measures motivate and support local actors in implementing climate protection measures (e.g. through advisory services). Indirect measures give municipalities considerable leverage to achieve local GHG reductions.

Municipalities can assess indirect measures using the IkKa methodology as follows:

1. Evaluation by prioritising indirect measures: When developing climate protection concepts, the methodology can be used to prioritise strategies, instruments and measures in a specific and objective manner. Prioritisation enables local authorities to take active and efficient action in climate protection with their (limited) resources.
2. Assessment of the utilisation of municipal opportunities: Municipalities do not act alone in a multi-level system comprising federal states, the federal government and the EU. This assessment enables municipalities to check whether they are making full use of their (limited) scope for action. This leads to a more differentiated and concrete assessment of municipal climate protection work.

In Mannheim, the IkKA method has already been tested (as part of a master's thesis) by evaluating the measures in the Climate Action Plan (SECAP). We will also use it to evaluate the strategic experiments and the effectiveness of our CoLAB solutions after we have methodically introduced the mix of instruments.

www.ifeu.de/projekt/nki-instrumente-fuer-die-kommunale-klimaschutzarbeit-ikka-bewerten-und-planen-kommunaler-massnahmen-im-klimaschutz



Data-Driven Transitions are key

It is not without reason that we have welcomed a second knowledge mentor to our ‘House of Change’ in the form of our CoLAB partner Climate View. Their motto is: measure what matters, with a focus on KPIs that drive change. The aim is to make climate change manageable, transparent and actionable.

Climate View has developed a data-driven, impact-oriented method ^[1] based on a framework, a platform and a model in seven iterative steps. The method combines physical, behavioural and economic principles to promote shifts in activity that reduce emissions and create additional benefits such as health and economic growth. It is based on a logic of impact that links measures, municipal characteristics, behavioural changes and levers. The seven steps of the method are: definition of goals, identification of levers, behavioural changes, gaps, measures, resolutions and financing.

The two approaches thus complement each other perfectly in our ‘House of Change’. The method promotes iteration and adaptation in order to respond to new data and changing conditions. It provides a common basis for all stakeholders – from administrative staff to citizens – and strengthens accountability and transparency. Behavioural changes play a central role in the method, as they form the basis for shifts in activity, which in turn enable the desired effects such as emission reductions and additional benefits. The method emphasises that behavioural change involves not only short-term decisions by individuals, but also long-term decisions by organisations and administrations. The iteration of scenarios and measures ensures that the required behavioural changes are realistic and effective.

This is also the reason why the City of Mannheim will include the evaluation of CoLAB activities, which are intended to lead to behavioural change, in its monitoring with Climate View.

www.transitionelements.org/4-whitepapers

^[1] Source: Shalit, T., Dixon, M., & Eklöv, K. (2024). Data-Driven Transitions Revised Edition. Stockholm.



Useful Tools for Impact Analysis

Impact monitoring is about monitoring measures and actor-centred monitoring, not about the greenhouse gas balance that cities compile annually. What tools can help us examine and evaluate the specific activities or measures taken by local authorities, municipal climate protection management and municipal companies?

The impact monitoring of concrete measures is carried out on a bottom-up basis and is designed to map the results and the implementation status of individual activities and to analyse the progress of specific climate measures. This enables local authorities and politicians to steer climate protection measures in a targeted manner. At 'House of Change', nothing escapes our attention. We are always on the lookout for clever tools that can already be used in cities in conjunction with the monitoring methods presented. However, the two examples we show are subject to annual licences. We don't want to hide that.

In order to make the IkKA model practical for local authorities, the methodological proposals for evaluating measures described above have been clearly presented in an online tool for municipal users. The software 'Maßnahmen Planer' (Measure Planner) can be used to prioritise the reduction of GHG emissions from direct and indirect measures based on municipal options. It allows quick comparisons of GHG reductions achieved by various (municipal) measures and their alternatives. This can be helpful in climate checks/climate impact assessments of municipal decisions. In the (further) development of climate protection concepts, target-oriented fields of action can be identified by prioritising them for your own municipality and selecting the most relevant measures for the respective municipality from a pool of 300 measures. As a result, the municipality can see in which areas it should become more active. The Measure Planner will continue to be operated by the Climate Alliance after the end of the project.

www.massnahmen-planer.de

The ClimateOS platform serves as a central database for defining targets, developing scenarios, planning measures and monitoring progress. It supports municipalities in decision-making, financing and reporting.

If we think of the platform as a window, then the central dashboard is the glass pane. On the one hand, it is a place where the various administrative units and municipal utilities can find out what is happening in the municipality. On the other hand, external interest groups can also use it to gain an overview of how climate change is being tackled. This ensures transparency. The dashboard helps municipalities and stakeholders keep track of the desired impact. Based on the objectives and the selection of levers, it visually presents possible scenarios. Through dynamic updating of the iterative steps of behavioural changes, target/actual comparisons and measures, the dashboard becomes a snapshot of progress. Many cities such as Dortmund, Mannheim and the Rhein-Ruhr Region are successfully using the platform to achieve their climate targets. Aachen will follow shortly.

www.climateview.global/en/opensource

In addition, another German NetZeroCities pilot project is underway – the Climate City Dash 2.0 pilot initiative, together with the German Mission cities of Dortmund, Heidelberg and Munich, as well as TU Dortmund University, UnternehmerTUM, Munich University of Applied Sciences

and Fraunhofer ISE. The aim is to incorporate the measures and commitments of the local economy into the municipal dashboards. Here, too, Climate View is both a technology and knowledge partner for the project. The underlying data models, which are based on the IPCC knowledge base, form the data backbone for public authorities and private actors to jointly develop and finance EU taxonomy-compliant projects. This sounds exciting and we will keep an eye on it.

<https://netzerocities.eu/germanys-pilot-activity-climate-city-dash-2-0/>



Monitoring & Success Dashboards

How can we better involve businesses and civil society actors in the municipal journey towards climate neutrality? What role do public dashboards and underlying data models play in this? What data and facts convince politicians to make the right decisions? How do we communicate the success of our actions transparently?

Our 'House of Change' has open windows so you can look in and see what's happening and look out to see what's been going on outside in our city. Here we show what is already being used in CoLAB cities to publicise our climate protection measures, thereby providing the urban community with facts and figures for their own contribution and, of course, making all contributions visible. Which monitoring tools and dashboards do the three CoLAB cities use, and how do they report on the

success of their measures? We have already revealed some of this information in the Success Room and on the platforms set up by the cities for this purpose.

Mannheim: ClimateView is the innovative monitoring tool of the Climate Action Plan 2030. On the information platform, you can see exactly which measures are being implemented and what GHG savings potential the City of Mannheim has on its way to climate neutrality

by 2030. We invite you to be curious and rediscover Mannheim's climate strategy and the dashboard under this link:

www.mannheim.de/klimaschutzmonitoring

In **Muenster**, the 'Klimadashboard' provides transparent climate communication through open data. Anyone interested can stay up to date on developments and the players involved in the journey towards climate neutrality. The climate dashboard shows the most important figures from the energy and greenhouse gas balance sheet and also visualises individual indicators that are included in the balance sheet. The climate dashboard was developed by the Smart City and Climate Departments of the City of Muenster in cooperation with other departments and subsidiaries of the city group.

<https://klimadashboard.ms>

Aachen currently uses the ECORegion tool from ECOspeed and is now switching to Climate View, but this will take a little while. General information and latest figures here:

<https://aachen.de/in-aachen-leben/klima-umwelt/klimaschutz/klimaschutz-in-aachen/>

At this point, we should not forget to mention tools that show how changing your own behaviour can make a measurable contribution to climate protection. In our tools, we have already referred to the Citizen CO₂ Calculator from the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA), which was developed in large part by our partner ifeu. The calculations for most tools, including the Deal-O-Mat, were made using this calculator. By calculating your own carbon footprint with the quick CO₂ check or the detailed CO₂ balance, you can compare your own values with the German average and check which measures you can take to effectively improve your carbon footprint. This helps users get started with the 'Climate Puzzle' and also helps them evaluate the measures in the Deal-O-Mat. The tool also includes the 'My Climate Policy' section, a CO₂ calculator for events and a CO₂ culture calculator, UBA environmental tips and the 'Denkwerkstatt Konsum' (think tank on consumption), from which we derived the 'Klimawaage' (Climate Scale).

https://uba.co2-rechner.de/de_DE



Chapter 6



Meaningful Conclusion

Enabling Transformation

Let's imagine we could see into the future. What changes would we have brought about? What framework conditions and levers for new forms of governance and politics, for social innovation and cooperation, democracy and participation would have been effective? What would the future look like for our citizens? What credible arguments would have convinced them, and what alternatives would have been chosen?

City administrations operate in an increasingly uncertain world in which complex social, ecological and technological changes are challenging traditional planning approaches. How can cities prepare for long-term change, anticipate risks and exploit new opportunities? For strategic future planning, cities need tools and approaches to overcome uncertainties and design resilient, sustainable urban development concepts. The 'House of Change' as a vision and form of collaboration is one such opportunity for us to create the enabling conditions in which the entire urban society can work together.

We need new formats for decision-making, suitable framework conditions for our sustainable, climate-neutral urban planning and shared perspectives for the future. How can climate targets be implemented or translated into a language and goals that everyone can understand and relate to? What have we learned from the 'House of Change'? We believe that evidence-based approaches enable us to develop long-term but flexible strategies instead of reacting to crises with quick fixes that do not correspond to our shared visions and values.

We note that the factors contributing to enabling transformation include acceptance of the interconnection of spaces, structures and communication for change. We must succeed in living and working together in such a way that the instruments and opportunities for action available to politicians, businesses, civil society and citizens are fully exploited for the benefit of all.

The final chapter of the story of the 'House of Change' is therefore devoted to the big takeaways we've learned together in our pilot city project and during the EU peer learning process, and we offer some tips as policy conclusions.



Intensive Learning among Peers

The goal is to create a sense of collective learning, not a destructive review of an activity. Simply put, the focus and intention are on learning together, not assigning blame. This is also a golden rule of the ‘House of Change’. It is well known that working alone on a solution yields less than pooling all knowledge and experience.

It should be self-evident that projects are associated with creating meaning. NetZeroCities refers to this as ‘sensemaking’. We spent a long time considering how we could structure our project so that it not only fulfils this purpose, but also enables us to address such a complex issue as CoLAB in such a short period of time.

That is why we have relied on collaborative learning from the very beginning of the CoLAB project. Equal learning between colleagues within a city, with other cities, at national and European level – that is what collegial learning means. It operates effectively at the working level, and we have learned so much in equipping our ‘House of Change’ that we would like to pass this on as a gesture of mutual trust. As part of the exchange within the cities, we have identified the need to find new arguments for climate neutrality, the right choice of words and the right approach. This is one of the most important findings from the ‘House of Change’.

How do we argue for the climate neutrality goal? Climate neutrality against or with prosperity, understood as a livable environment and the preservation of our livelihoods? We were able to provide some answers with the solutions from CoLAB, but the discourse on this must continue if we are to be successful.

For two years, the CoLAB cities held weekly one-hour online meetings. Knowledge about implementing systemic change was expanded and consolidated. In addition, we met with the CoLAB partners online every two weeks. We also organised face-to-face C2C (city-to-city) meetings, which took place in Mannheim, Aachen and Muenster on a rotating basis. We continued to meet with our scientific partners to design and test solutions together. We have also founded the national self-organised network of German EU Mission cities ‘stronGERcities’ and meet online every two weeks to organise joint workshops. The Twin Cities Learning programme with Juvaskyla (Finland) and Vilnius (Lithuania) has expanded capacities and skills in the areas of social, organisational, operational and experimental learning. Study visits to Mannheim, Juvaskyla and Vilnius provided unforgettable impressions and there were many takeaways for all sides. In addition, we have maintained an active dialogue with many cities across Europe where citizen engagement has been an issue.

We firmly believe that peer learning should be inspiring and motivating. That is why we swear by creative and agile learning methods. One of these is the art of storytelling, which we hope this book will convince you of. For our collaboration, we worked with our partner wechange to create a CoLAB project exchange on a cooperative online platform. Here, we employed the tension-based working method, supported by our partner scaling4good. No question was left unanswered, no tension unresolved. Brainstorming using the ‘A to Z’ method of searching for terms alphabetically led to results incredibly quickly. Our creative solutions are based on ‘Design Thinking’, ‘LEGO® Serious Play®’, the ‘6 Thinking Hats’ or the ‘Walt-Disney-Method’ and much more. Take note: Learning can and should be fun.



Our Key Findings

transformation

When we talk about transformative change in cities, we are talking about spaces, structures and communication. And we are talking to people about human behaviour.

holistic approach

For every desired change, a holistic approach involving stakeholders and instruments must be considered. Indirect measures such as promotion and consulting enable the implementation of direct, mostly technical measures.

transition team

Interdisciplinary and cross-departmental cooperation is crucial for successfully finding solutions and implementing them.

communication

So-called climate communication is a task that all Mission Cities must fulfil in order to legitimise their measures and motivate the people living there. As a city, we must improve our messages and arguments, especially when it comes to reaching our own city administration and politicians, our businesses and citizens.

democracy and participation

We need to talk to everyone, to the loud dissidents and the quiet outsiders, the sceptics and the marginalised. This should also go hand in hand with a strengthening of democratic thinking, an important task in times of increasing populism and the goal of a just transformation and the limitation of planetary boundaries.

spaces for encounter

Now more than ever, we need places that connect people and enable exchange and dialogue. Nowhere else do more people meet every day than in city centres. They are true places of negotiation and encounter.

access to and bundling of information

There is not a lack of information and solutions, on the contrary. This needs to be made visible to urban society and all activities need to be bundled on one platform. A lot is already happening in cities in the area of climate protection and sustainability; these efforts must be pooled.

dissemination of solutions

Strong and motivated players are needed in the city administration and throughout the city's society to use and promote the products and solutions that have been developed.

smart city

We can only achieve climate neutrality by being smart. Smart city applications, digital twins and local city apps offer the opportunity to keep administrators, politicians and the population in constant dialogue, to make changes visible, to simulate the future and thus make it conceivable. These processes must also be moderated and explained intelligently.

monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to understand what works and what does not, and how climate strategies should therefore work in the future. This includes gathering knowledge and insights from all activities that are intended to lead to the goal and finding common ground in order to analyse findings and identify similarities.

Messages of Change for Politicians

Especially under the extremely changing political, economic and ecological conditions, we need more flexible strategies and different approaches. On the one hand, transformation takes time, on the other hand, we don't have any and have to react very quickly to the changes.

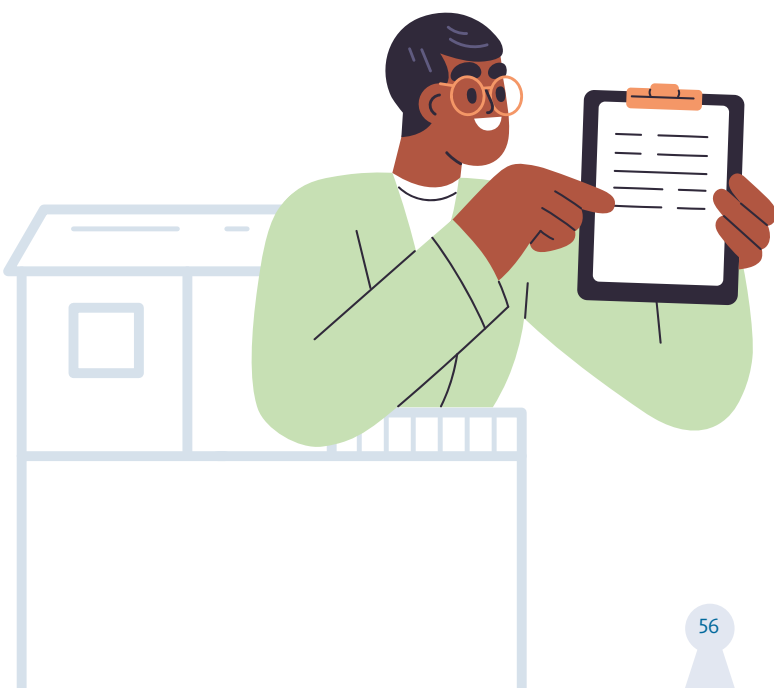
The 'humble government' approach, which we owe to NetZeroCities partner Demos Helsinki, fits perfectly with our vision: a model that can overcome political deadlock by first establishing a narrow consensus between actors with different points of view and then giving these actors the autonomy to pursue these goals in their own way.

We admit that we have reached our limits with policy recommendations in terms of how far our insights and solutions align with political visions and ways of thinking. Is this feasible, and how can we convince our decision-makers and local councillors? Have they already arrived at the 'House of Change'? They can usually be convinced by figures, data and facts. But are we providing the right strategic facts? Do we have the tools at our disposal to offer our cities strategic foresight to overcome uncertainties and shape resilient, sustainable urban policies? In times of crisis, politicians tend to react in the short term, as is currently the case with budget cuts, which are largely being passed on to local authorities for 'non-mandatory' tasks.

Cities need reliable strategic forecasts that help decision-makers manage the urgency of everyday demands and develop a long-term perspective on urban challenges. This supports evidence-based decision-making by incorporating megatrends, early signals and scenario planning. That would ensure strategic continuity in cities, even as political leadership and priorities change over time. We all need training and new skills so that we can analyse megatrends and strategic uncertainties, develop alternative future scenarios, and integrate futurology into city administration and long-term planning.

How can we communicate the results not only of our project but also the many intelligent approaches from science and research on planetary boundaries to local, regional and EU policy-makers, as they are the ones who set the framework conditions? We urgently need new skills and capabilities in our cities, because there are currently no ambitious or adequate responses to these challenges. What citizens and businesses are experiencing at the legislative level is confusing and does not provide the transparent and necessary arguments for behavioural change.

Sometimes we want to shout out loud from the 'House of Change': „The world is falling apart, and we are still discussing whether climate protection is 'reasonable' and whether we can postpone the target dates. We can no longer assume that our planet, and with it humanity and the environment, will survive these discussions“.



Policy briefs

Policy Brief 1

Climate protection must be seen as a mandatory task for local authorities; there is no reason not to view it this way.

Policy Brief 2

Cities must use their instruments and options for action to enable citizens to actually live a sustainable, low-carbon lifestyle.

Policy Brief 3

We need evidence-based decision-making that takes planetary boundaries into account.

Policy Brief 4

Urban policy must embody the shared vision of life within planetary boundaries and a liveable city for all, and promote communication on this topic.

Policy Brief 5

Decision-makers at all levels must act in accordance with systems thinking, which links policy areas such as mobility, climate adaptation, digital transformation and governance.

Policy Brief 6

The number of staff and confidence in the city administration's own resources must be strengthened. City administrations must become drivers of innovation.

Policy Brief 7

Cities and municipalities need more freedom in their decisions and room to experiment, as well as suitable financing formats.

Policy Brief 8

Regulations and product labelling must ensure that products are sustainable and that buyers can trust them.

Policy Brief 9

Climate and social policy must be considered together in order to ensure socially just collective action.

Policy Brief 10

The EU's ambitions for cities must be strengthened by ensuring that urban challenges and solutions are better integrated into future policy-making.

Some of the policy briefs are derived from the 'EU 1.5 Lifestyles' project, with which CoLAB was also in close contact. You can find the project's policy briefs in full at: www.onepointfivelifestyles.eu More about the 'humble government' approach here: <https://demoshelsinki.fi/publication/a-call-for-humble-governments>

A Home full of Memories

Every house tells a story – and our journey through this project together has filled many rooms with life. In the past few months, we have developed ideas, opened doors to new possibilities and set supporting pillars for the future. The following pictures are more than just snapshots – they are windows into a time full of commitment, creativity and collaboration.



CoLAB partner Workshop in Mannheim
'Digital Tool for climate friendly decisions'



Local Green Deal Working Group Workshop in Mannheim
'Strategic Experiments'



C2C Workshop in Aachen 'Citizen Engagement and Climate Agency'



C2C Workshop in Mannheim 'House of Change'



CoLAB partner Workshop 'Testing Instruments' in Mannheim



Climate City Contracts 'Commitments Wall' in Aachen



'Klima Puzzle' meets 'Deal-O-Mat' at SCORAI Conference in Lund



Aachen and Muenster proud to get the Mission Label



Presenting ColAB and the Deal-O-Mat at New Year's Event for Citizens



Presenting ColAB and the Deal-O-Mat at 10th ECST in Aalborg



City Forum in Muenster 'Because it takes all of us!'



Re-Opening of the 'Sustainability Model Flat' in the Climate Action Agency Mannheim



Testing the finalised 'Next Level' Game in Aachen



Lego® Serious® Play Workshop 'Transition Team Work' in Mannheim



Lego® Serious® Play Workshop 'Communicating Citizen Digital Tool' in Mannheim



The Game Set 'Next Level'



Workshop Defining the Framework for the 'Serious Game' in Mannheim



Study visit 'Sustainability Model Flat' in Mannheim



Lego Play result 'Deal-O-Mat' Mannheim CoLAB Team



Aachen CoLAB Team preparing C2C Meeting



Twin Cities Juvaskyla and Vilnius at study visit in Mannheim



'Climate Neutral Aachen 2030' coordination office team



CoLAB Team Meeting in Aachen



CoLAB Study Visit in Vilnius, demonstrating Twin Cities' Replication Plans

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To be continued ...

After a long, eventful day, the 'House of Change' slowly comes to rest. But not without reviewing what has happened, learning from our joint efforts and celebrating our success. Why don't you drop by again?

