

How to Change Everyday Routines towards Low Carbon Lifestyles: Preliminary Findings from a Field Test

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Topic

Lifestyle

Title of the Paper

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Form of Presentation

Presentation

Short Description (maximum 2500 characters)

Private households especially in industrial countries contribute significantly to the emission of greenhouse gases and to climate change. For this reason it is essential that private households change their daily practices and consumption patterns. The Project 'KlimaAlltag' is investigating low carbon lifestyles in different social strata from 2010 till 2013. The joint project examines everyday routines in different social classes, how and with what instruments they can be changed, how climate-friendly ways of life can be supported, and what kind of social effects are caused by decarbonizing lifestyles. The focus is on mobility, nutrition, home living and household energy consumption. The role of local authorities is considered as well because of their opportunities to influence behaviour by restructuring energy provision, local public transport and other local services.

As first important part of the research project a field test was conducted in Cologne to tackle the question how everyday routines and habits in different strata can be changed towards less carbon-intensive lifestyles. It was headed by the Consumer Association of North Rhine-Westphalia and did run from June to November 2011. 90 'climate households' participated to voluntarily reduce their CO₂ emissions. The households were chosen from different socio-economic backgrounds to investigate the significance of social vulnerability and cultural diversity. They received pertinent advice over the period of six months along with scientific back-up to help with implementing suitable measures in the covered areas home living and energy use, nutrition, and mobility. The instruments used to influence awareness and behavior were regular personal advice at home and outside home, checklists, information material, and an internet forum for exchange among participants.

After this field experiment at the end of 2011 half of the 'climate households' were interviewed intensively using qualitative interviews to analyze their experiences. The goal was to find out which conditions are accepted to permanently change lifestyles and which barriers exist to adapting individual everyday behaviour. First findings drawn out of these interviews about the experiences of the field test shall be presented.