

ERSCP 2012: Workshop Design Sheet

Workshop Design and Content

Title of Workshop *

Climate protection or perspectives for a good live

Subtitle

How to reach sustainable behavior

Objectives

Awareness of climate protection and lifestyle relationships and how to communicate

Short Description of Workshop Outline (max. 2000 characters) *

including Relevance and Background

To achieve the 2°C limit for climate change the industrialized nations have to reduce their CO₂ emissions by roughly 90%. Also other framework conditions like resource shortages, peak oil, dependency and risk reduction require action.

That is why, after an intensive discussion and participation process, the Vorarlberg provincial government adopted energy autonomy based on renewable energy sources as a long-term policy goal in an unanimous decision.

Such aims of course, can not be achieved simply by replacing fossil fuels. Simultaneously, buildings, mobility and industry need to significantly lower energy demand.

But there is more to come. The 2°C – aim, respectively energy autonomy, is only reachable when energy and resource consumption is decoupled from economic growth. Besides, it has often been neglected within climate discussions that this goal is interlocked with other fundamental questions (like north-south justice, nutrition, biodiversity, chance of prosperity for all).

Obviously, technological concepts alone can not reach this ambitious goal. It crucially regards questions of value systems. Only through fundamental changes in behaviour energy independence can be achieved because climate change and resource shortages are only an indicator, a result of our way of life, of our consumption patterns. It directly concerns questions like how we live, how and where we travel, what we eat, what and how much we buy consumer goods, etc. And it is not enough only being aware of these questions. Consciousness alone doesn't change anything. Subsequently only by doing a lot of things (habits) in a different way we can fulfill our needs in a sustainable way.

To achieve changes, to achieve different actions, we have to think about communication. Change needs a triangle of conditions. First we have to know "why" we should change (we are good in describing worst-case scenarios), second and mostly forgotten we need positive prospects (nobody will move without a promising idea) and finally we need to take first steps (positive experiences allow sustainable changes). Therefore communication should address needs and emotions rather than kWh, kg or other amazing physical units.

This means that even if at first glance it is not obvious, energy autonomy is both a cultural, but also a social project.

Expected Outcomes and Results

to discuss with the workshop participants about their knowledg and experience in changing behaviour. The expected outcome is to gain new insights and approaches in communicating climate protection measures and programmes (Do's and Don'ts, Lessons learned, etc.).