Citizens Acting on Mitigation Pathways through Active Implementation of a Goal-setting Network

Results in Brief

Innovative phone app boosts low-carbon lifestyles

A scalable tool that collects data and incentivises change on a personal level enables behavioural transformation, predictive modelling and informed policymaking.

The EU is striving to become climate neutral by the year 2050. To achieve this, citizens must change the way they live. The EU-funded CAMPAIGNers project developed the Climate Campaigners phone app to educate and motivate citizens to change behaviours. The app also provides data analyses that can inform policy decisions and contribute to predictive modelling tools.

Climate Campaigners revolutionises lifestyle research

Too often, lifestyle research is driven by hypothesising how citizens might behave. When the many factors that conspire to drive individual choices appear, it is clear that the hypothetical citizen does not reliably represent human behaviour. This negatively impacts effective policymaking as well as the development of accurate predictive models.
The project addressed this challenge by collecting important demographic data from app users. For example, knowing how behaviour varies due to aspects of identity such as gender, age, education and income level gives scientists granular information pertaining to human choice.

In addition to gathering information about identity, the app also provides choice with respect to what type of Lifestyle Challenge an individual wants to explore. Challenges are broken into four sectors: mobility, housing, food and other consumption. Which Challenges an individual chooses and how this connects to aspects of identity provide valuable information to researchers.

**Lighthouse cities anchor goal-setting network**

The project launched Climate Campaigners in 14 cities around the world, with the potential to reach 20 million citizens. According to junior researcher Giulia Garzon: “The diversity in custom, environments, infrastructures, lifestyles and weather patterns between lighthouse cities meant that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to creating Challenges was not feasible.” Therefore, the project tailored Challenges specific to the needs of lighthouse cities.

Garzon states: "The most promising outcomes of the CAMPAIGNers project are the collection of multidisciplinary knowledge and approaches in the field of behavioural change in real-world settings, as well as the acquisition of innovative communication strategies between cities and citizens for effective engagement in climate change mitigation."

The empirical data collected, although not of the expected magnitude/scale, will inform policy makers at European, national and local levels in the development of targeted environmental policies. Such data will also advance integrated assessment models used to predict climate conditions in the coming decades.

**Incentivising transformational behaviours**

While a phone app can diversify the array of people included in a lifestyle transformation study, it is important to find ways to encourage citizens to take up the app and continue using it. To reach these goals, the project included scientific institutes, civil society organisations and consultant enterprises to optimise design.

Climate Campaigners leverages prosocial behaviour by integrating a sense of belonging and community into the app. Highlighting co-benefits such as improved health outcomes also motivates change in behaviour. Further, participation in many Challenges is linked to rewards, such as free credits in a bike-share programme.
Currently the number of app users is approaching 5,000. Development of the app will continue, with a focus on increasing accessibility and maintaining sustainability. Results of data analyses are shared through an interactive dashboard, and other dissemination avenues include policy briefs and workshops targeting various political levels.

Climate change is the greatest challenge facing humanity. Combating it requires the effort of every individual. By envisioning a solution built on that most ubiquitous of tools, the smartphone app, CAMPAIGNers has increased our chance of success.

**Keywords**

CAMPAIGNers, phone app, Climate Campaigners, lifestyle research, lighthouse cities, behavioural transformation, integrated assessment models, climate change

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