



Working Conference

EMPOWERING NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR CLIMATE ACTION

ARNHEM 10 & 11 APRIL 2019

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Conference Report

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The Conference in a Nutshell

On 11 April 2019 the Final Conference of the “Climate Active Neighbourhoods” (CAN) project was successfully hosted by the City of Arnhem (NL) and organised by Climate Alliance, a European municipal network.

96 participants representing project partners, municipalities, non-profit organisations, regional authorities, energy agencies and cooperatives, housing associations, consultancies, policy and science joined the conference. A fruitful exchange of ideas and perspectives on neighbourhood climate action was fostered during a keynote speech, a podium discussion, a thematic marketplace, two workshops and three site-visits.

The main thematic focus of the day was set on how to empower the neighbourhood level and residents to become a stronger and more active part of local climate action. During the three year project period of CAN a versatile range of bottom-up solutions was developed - from encouraging residents to take action on energy efficiency and energy poverty to financial support tools to new ways of cooperation.

Inspired by the keynote-speech of Professor Genus of Kingston University, who provided a

social science perspective on neighbourhood climate action and bottom-up participation models, the day was set in the right mood to share perspectives and experiences among the speakers, project partners and participants.

The highlight of the day was the Guided Marketplace, where a range of successful bottom-up approaches were presented by the project partners. A unique look into the experiences of the CAN partnership was provided for all participants.

Key findings of the conference day are:

Municipalities need to listen to the needs of the residents and become equal allies. A change of role towards becoming facilitators is a key element for successful neighbourhood climate action.

Peer-to-peer learning between individuals, initiatives and municipalities can lead the way into long-term and sustainable local climate strategies. Everyone is part of the climate and energy transition process - therefore we need to translate the steps of transition into specific and focussed actions.



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Opening by Cathelijne Bouwkamp



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The conference day was opened by Cathelijne Bouwkamp, Alderman of Arnhem at the Musis Sacrum, conference location in Arnhem. Neighbourhood climate action is a central and successful pillar of the energy transition in Arnhem.

To best support active neighbourhoods, the municipality of Arnhem developed the Arnhem Approach that capitalises on citizen's motivation for change while the municipality provides funding and support. The successful implementation of this approach triggered other NWE cities to take similar actions and inspired an on-going roll-out in Dutch cities. The CAN project has fostered not only Arnhem's local sustainable action, but also transnational learning.

Welcome by Simone Raskob



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Climate Alliance Board Member and Deputy Mayor for Environment and Construction of the City of Essen, Simone Raskob warmly welcomed all participants to the conference day.

She pointed out the importance of overcoming the challenges of climate change despite different national framework conditions. The CAN project is a major example of successful mutual learning across borders and of developing effective solutions to empower the neighbourhood level for local climate action together with citizens.

Keynote by Prof Audley Genus



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We are in need of energy democracy in order to be able to transform our energy systems towards a sustainable and low carbon future. To provide an outside-the-box perspective and to set the mood for the day, Prof Audley Genus of Kingston University reflected on the transformation of energy systems from a social sciences perspective. The understanding of social and cultural

influences on energy consumption is a key step towards an energy efficient future. Within the ENERGISE project, energy-related behaviour is being analysed across 30 European countries and a strategical encouragement of positive interaction amongst relevant stakeholders has been fostered via living labs. It has been found, that the role of local initiatives, peer-to-peer learning and engagement methods towards changing energy practices can be amplified by diverse actors and thus can result in a 'viral effect'.

A Look into Climate Active Neighbourhoods

To dive further into the day, Svenja Enke, CAN project manager, presented the partnership and its achievements along with Anne Joffre, from Brest Métropole. Within the CAN project - in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK - on average 1200 households have been reached, 1500 Tonnes of Greenhouse Gas emissions have been saved, and EUR 14 million of funding have gone into the project areas. Through a sensory experience, Svenja Enke then gave the audience a glimpse of the surprises the project brought along. Indeed, transnational exchange led the partners to develop unexpected aspects, such as energy poverty alleviation. Through an overview of the various topics and activities of the project like

community energy, bottom-up approaches to the energy transition as well as deep retrofits, participants gained a better understanding of what the conference day would bring.



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Panel Discussion “Neighbourhoods Matter Across All Levels”

The importance and potential of neighbourhoods for climate action was in the center of the discussion on the panel. The moderator Peter Heiland of Infrastruktur & Umwelt and five panelists exchanged their perspectives on the topic: Cathelijne Bouwkamp (Alderman of the City of Arnhem), Simone Raskob (Deputy Mayor of the City of Essen), Audley Genus (Professor at Kingston University), Dirk Vansintjan (President of REScoop.eu) and Tadhg O'Briain (Deputy Head of Unit at DG ENER of the European Commission).

A lively discussion provided unique insights into the different actor's points of view. The discussion ranged from the effectivity and efficiency of neighbourhood climate action to the local, national and EU-level policy changes required to enhance neighbourhood climate action. Unanimously, the importance of climate action through neighbourhood initiatives was recognised as well as the need for public actors to provide resources and support. Especially the question of how to involve citizens actively into climate action incited a lively discussion among the panelists and the audience as the energy transition will only succeed with locals taking action. The urgency to intensify neighbourhood level climate action to contribute to the Paris Agreement targets, and specifically the important role of municipalities to enhance such neighbourhood climate action was at the centre of the panel discussion.



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Marketplace of the CAN Partnership

At the five stations of the marketplace the partners showcased their activities in an interactive way.

The cities of Brest and Plymouth presented their take on fighting “Energy Poverty” at the neighbourhood level and insisted on the careful approach necessary to adopt when interacting with people affected by it, as it is a highly sensitive topic. However the results in both cities call for more funding for energy poverty, as fighting it reaches further than just energy, but also positively impacts health and well-being.



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EPAMSA and Optivo presented their methods to carry out “Energy Retrofits”. EPAMSA introduced Energy Performance Contracts, a socio-financial tool leading to retrofits with a guaranteed reduced level of energy consumption. Behavioural change of residents is thus being fostered. Optivo presented its work on energy poverty reduction and improved energy efficiency in Hastings, which includes investments in retrofits and a behaviour change programme. It required a high level of manpower but led to important improvements in comfort and a reduction of energy bills in the targeted social housing.

Energise Sussex Coast and the City of Essen made the participants experience what “Community Shared Responsibility” means through an interactive role play. It provided an overview of the variety of actors involved in climate action processes. Especially the

benefits of successful bottom-up climate action were showcased.



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Coming to “Facilitation and Providing Services”, Liège Energie and Energieagentur Rheinland-Pfalz shared the tools and structure they utilize in order to answer the needs of residents as efficiently as possible. Given the wide set of measures implemented, a matrix was used to cluster them according to attractiveness and feasibility.

At the station “Engaging Residents for Change”, Worms presented their Energy Caravan, a free energy advice offer for house owners while Climate Alliance showcased the transition tours it’s been leading, giving visibility to climate-friendly initiatives and shops that also improve life quality in neighbourhoods. In Arnhem, the local fund allowing residents in targeted neighbourhoods to decide for themselves what they want to focus on and improve has been a huge success, from which both the municipality and the residents learned a great deal.



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Parallel Sessions

During the afternoon three parallel sessions took place. Read more about them below.

a. Neighbourhood Initiatives in Arnhem

One of the three site visits led to the Arnhem-West neighbourhood, where the neighbourhood initiative “Groen West” aims to make their neighbourhood energy neutral by 2030. To implement a range of ambitious projects such as climate workshops, neighbourhood-shared electric cars or district heating and to achieve their goals, “Groen West” cooperates closely with the municipality. This mutually trusting relationship allows the neighbourhood to actively contribute to the energy transition in Arnhem.



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b. “Local Climate Action in Practice”

Taking local climate action ideas into practice requires a cooperation of a variety of stakeholders and financial funding. On EU-level are several funding opportunities, which were presented by Birgit Haupter (Infrastruktur & Umwelt) and Andy Deacon (Climate Alliance). Starting from the status quo of these funding instruments, potential future key topics were presented.

As climate action is set in the framework of behaviour, organisational, technological and policy-legal change, the participants of the workshops discussed which areas are in most need of action on the local level. Drawing from the experiences of the projects Climate Active Neighbourhoods (Interreg NWE), ACE-Retrofitting (Interreg NWE) and ENGERGISE (Horizon 2020) the audience exchanged ideas for future climate action projects and potential collaboration they'd like to foster during a world café networking session.

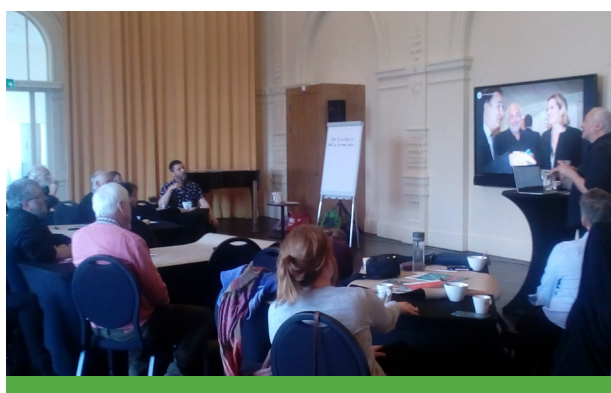
The topics “Retrofitting of Condominiums/ Buildings”, “Collaboration of Energy Communities”, “Social and Health Aspects of Energy Transition”, “Peer-to-Peer Learning of Climate Action Initiatives” and “Empowerment of Residents” turned out to be the most interesting for the workshop participants. The networking session can potentially trigger future collaboration amongst the stakeholders present.



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c. Workshop “Community Energy”

This workshop was an opportunity to highlight various bottom-up initiatives in the UK and beyond. It appears like a successful strategy that also adds great social value to the communities via shared experiences and responsibilities. Contrary to top-down solutions, imposed on a population from above, the social cohesion that comes with bottom-up community-owned energy must not be underestimated.



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Energise Sussex Coast highlighted that a successful energy community project must be truly community-led and needs to rely heavily on cooperation. Every opportunity and every potential ally needs to be utilized to slowly create a snowball effect.

Dirk Vansintjian, President of REScoop, insisted that locals must take as much ownership as possible now, if a more democratic energy transition is ever to be achieved. In his experience, those investing in community energy regularly halved their own consumption through an increase in knowledge. He added that energy democracy needs to be from 100% renewable sources and half owned by the local community, as external interests always drain value from the local economy. He stressed that the sun, wind and water should be considered ‘common goods’ and not left for outside companies to come in and take that asset away. “We need a plan, not a free market approach” he concluded.

Closing

Personal conclusions and highlights of the Conference of four conference participants summarised the conference day. Especially the wide array of different activities undertaken by the CAN partnership to promote and support climate active neighbourhoods impressed the audience and provided inspiration to realise similar activities in their respective municipalities and organisations. Svenja Enke (Climate Alliance) closed the conference and thanked the organisers and the participants for their contribution to the success of the Final Conference of the INTERREG NWE project “Climate Active Neighbourhoods”.

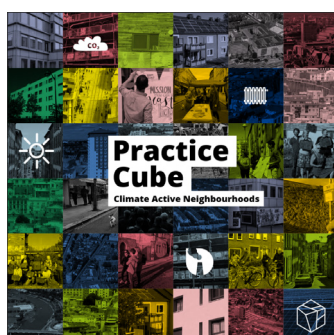


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Additional Information

Practice Cube

Get inspired and become (more) climate active within YOUR neighbourhood! The Practice Cube offers a look into the experiences made over three years by the partners of "Climate Active Neighbourhoods". The multi-national consortium has closely collaborated on methods and solutions for realising a low carbon future, increased energy efficiency and a socially just energy transition on the neighbourhood level.



Download it here:

[Climate Alliance Website: Practice Cube](#)

[CAN Website: Practice Cube](#)

Final Brochure

The final brochure of CAN provides a look into the experiences and practices of the partnership of five Northwest-European countries and showcases the main messages of the project's results.

To learn more go to the [CAN website](#). The brochure is available in three languages (ENG, DE, FR).

Project Facts

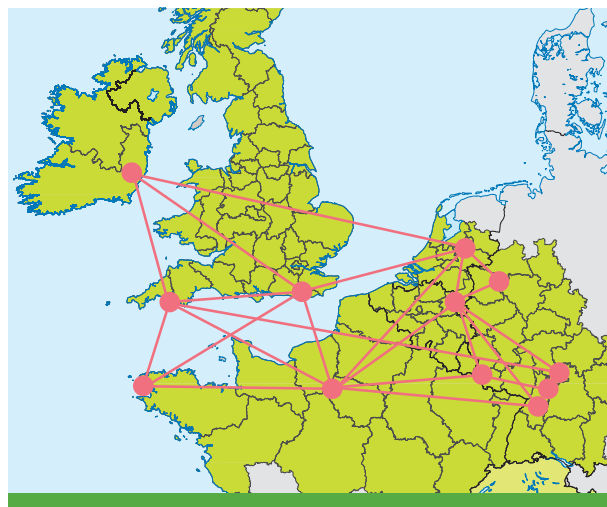
The Partners

- Climate Alliance (Lead Partner)
- Optivo with Hastings Borough Council and Energise Sussex Coast
- City of Arnhem
- Brest métropole with Brest Ener'gence
- Energieagentur Rheinland-Pfalz
- City of Essen
- Liège Energie with City of Liège
- Plymouth City Council
- EPAM Seine-Aval with Mantes-la-Jolie
- City of Worms

[Read more](#)

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The transnational partner network of CAN

Duration

February 2016 to April 2020

€ 7.8 million total project budget
€ 4.7 million funded via ERDF