

# Understanding and enhancing the contribution of low-carbon communities to more sustainable lifestyles: the case of the Gödöllő Climate Club in Hungary

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**Problem:** climate change and the need to reduce the carbon footprint of households – in Hungary they are responsible for 40% of energy use by final consumers and 30% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

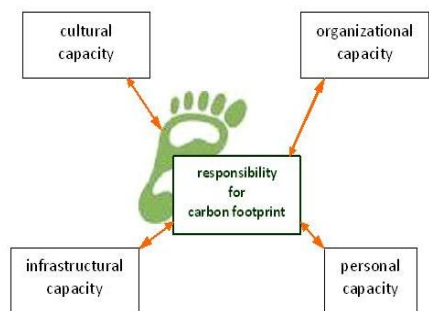
## Challenges:

- emphasis has so far mainly on individual consumers and households, not on their wider context, communities. Communities influence how we consume, so they should be taken advantage of in SC policies and projects  
How can communities contribute?
  - they help overcome barriers related to social dilemmas, social conventions, socio-technical infrastructure and the helplessness of individuals
- To achieve more sustainable lifestyles, systemic change is needed  
How can communities contribute?
  - contribution to systemic change from the bottom-up is possible and necessary
  - they provide alternative niches for developing and testing more sustainable solutions



**Conclusion:** communities' capacity to influence consumption behaviour as well as their capacity for change need to be utilized.

Capacities	Description	Barrier to behaviour change	How the Gödöllő Climate Club can help overcome barrier
Personal	Individuals understanding of the issue, their willingness and ability to act, their values skills and enthusiasm	Lack of knowledge and understanding, lack of willingness and skills, helplessness	Sharing and creating knowledge Providing advice, skills, motivation and encouragement Members can see that 'others are doing their bit' Assurance that being 'green' is normal
Infrastructural	Facilities and structures enabling sustainable living available in the community	Current socio-technical infrastructures	Creating knowledge network on the carbon intensity of lifestyles and the low-carbon solutions available in the community Limited impact on 'hard' infrastructure at the moment
Organizational	Values held by formal organizations in the community	Social conventions, helplessness	Challenging existing institutions Changing taken-for-granted beliefs about modern life and creating a supportive environment for problematizing current lifestyles
Cultural	Legitimacy of sustainability and low-carbon living in the community	Social dilemmas, helplessness	Creating a community of individuals prepared to change their lifestyle and promote these changes to others and by doing so creating legitimacy for sustainable and low-carbon values and living

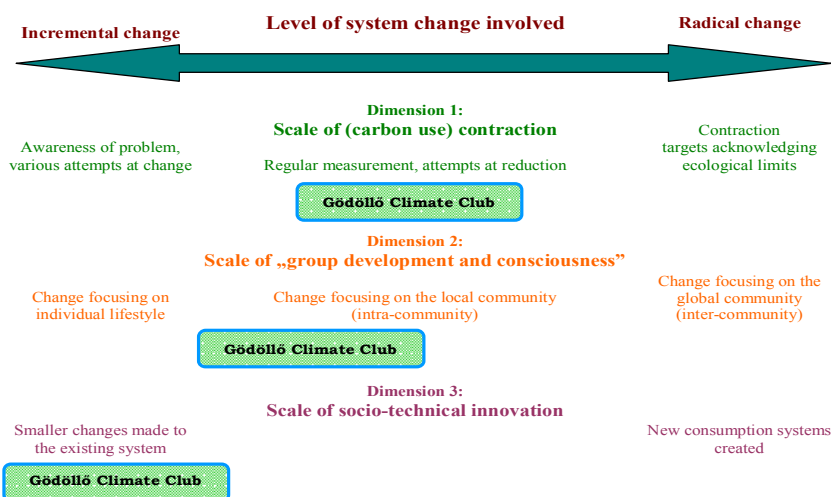


## Dimensions of system change for transition to more sustainable, low-carbon lifestyles:

(1) To what extent does a community acknowledge the need to reduce carbon use in order to stay within ecological limits? Are there any measured and documented efforts at reduction?

(2) Does the change initiated by the community focus on the individual, the local community, or includes the global community as well?

(3) Does the community offer an example for creating fundamentally new socio-technical systems, or the infrastructural innovation in question is more incremental?



## Facilitating climate clubs:

- Enabling and rewarding local citizens to initiate clubs and keep them active
- Creating support structures – guidebooks, toolkits and websites, informal and formal training opportunities, networks and networking opportunities
- Creating a supportive local environment for clubs to operate in – e.g. supporting structures set up by local governments, media opportunities
- Making funding easily available for local initiatives – 'light' administration, support for administration
- Considering policies to encourage community management of problems and resources

The Gödöllő Climate Club is a pilot project implemented in Hungary by GreenDependent in the framework of the Changing Behaviour project.