

and ordinary citizens

Awareness increased but challenges remain

People in Finland clearly understand how they can act to help mitigate climate change today better than they did in 2004 and 2002, when previous attitude surveys were conducted. More and more people are aware of the benefits of actions like using public transport, separating and recycling wastes, and saving energy.

Citizens' readiness to change their lifestyles has also increased, even though many possible actions still seem difficult or irrelevant to some people.

Surveys show that Finnish consumers' habits have not changed much since 2004. People see climate issues as important, but still want to hold on to their own lifestyles, while expecting others to change their ways.

Networks to remain active

Although the Finnish communications programme has ended, climate issues will not be forgotten. Major new challenges lie ahead. Finland has a lot to do to reach national emission reduction targets, and publicity and awareness work will continue to play a vital role. The networks of key actors that have been built up during the programme will continue to spread information and ideas in the future.

Professionals and ordinary citizens alike can always benefit from good advice and accurate information. Existing materials will have to be updated, but there is also a need to keep on working to inform people even more about climate issues, as specified in the programme of the new Finnish Government.



"It's been very rewarding to come and see the messages communicated here in Finland through the national campaign, which looks very comprehensive," said Renita Bhaskar, the European Commission climate campaign coordinator. Bhaskar particularly praised Finnish local grassroots projects, which she hopes can be widely replicated.



The Programme's Manager Kirsti Kärkkäinen and Financial Administrator Nina Broadstreet stress that it's essential to get local organisations and people from different sectors actively involved in climate communications work.

The Finnish Climate Change Communications Programme 2002–2007

- The Finnish Climate Change Communications Programme has been an important part of Finland's national climate strategy. The programme has aimed to increase awareness of climate change, its impacts, and ways to mitigate them. The culmination of the Finnish programme coincided with an EU-wide public information campaign.
- The programme was implemented jointly by the ministries of Trade and Industry, Transport and Communications, Agriculture and Forestry, and the Environment, as well as the Finnish National Board of Education. It was coordinated by Motiva Ltd.
- A total of 62 projects were funded through the five-year programme from a total budget of some 2.5 million euros.



The Finnish Climate Change Communications Programme

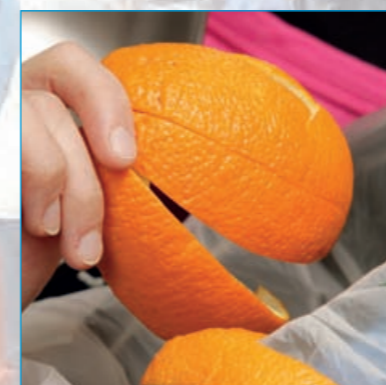
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Awareness, attitudes and action

The Finnish Climate Change Communications Programme 2002–2007

Climate change is today high on the agendas of politicians, organisations and businesses in Finland, and also featured in the media more prominently than ever. Ordinary citizens are also increasingly realising how they can help to mitigate climate change through their own lifestyle choices as they become better informed. More and more people are already putting this knowledge into action.

Reaching professionals

Awareness of climate issues has grown considerably in Finland since the Climate Change Communications Programme was launched in 2002. People are now better equipped to take in information from different sources, and also more ready and willing to act.

The factors behind these changing attitudes include political developments, ever more alarming scientific predictions, recent exceptional weather conditions, and the many highly visible campaigns and projects within the Finnish Climate Change Communications Programme and the related EU-wide campaign.

Many focus areas

The programme provided funding for campaigns directed at many different groups. Projects were designed to inform their intended target groups about the impacts of climate change, and to encourage them to help reduce these impacts.

The programme's first phase focused on businesses, including firms in the energy, waste management, construction, forestry and farming sectors, as well as local authorities, regional associations and journalists.

Special efforts were made throughout the programme to reach young people, who will be responsible for important decisions in the future. Schools and teachers were key target groups.



"The Finnish Climate Change Communications Programme has got people from different administrative sectors to work together well. The programme's steering group has been an effective forum for the exchange of ideas, involving communications professionals and experts from many fields," says Pirkko Heikkinen of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, who coordinates Finland's research programme on adaptation to climate change.



"It's rewarding to see that people in Finland are now more willing to act, and that the small actions taken by many ordinary people seem to be making a difference," says Industrial Counsellor Sirkka Vilkkumäki of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, who chaired the steering group of the communications programme.

Links to an EU-wide campaign

During the programme's final year from June 2006, a special campaign You Control Climate Change was run across Finland in collaboration with the European Commission's EU-wide programme. The campaign especially aimed to bring climate issues closer to ordinary people – to arouse their interest, increase their awareness, and change their attitudes.

The Finnish campaign was uniquely intense and effective, thanks to the networks, materials and working methods already established during the earlier phases of the Finnish Climate Change Communications Programme. The involvement of the EU helped to raise the profile of the campaign, which involved more than 70 partner organisations and high-profile climate ambassadors.

Grassroots campaigns

A survey conducted in 2007 showed that most Finns had grasped the main message of the campaign and realised its importance. The celebrity climate ambassadors chosen to help reach priority target groups particularly gained attention through the media.

The campaign organisers believe that active grassroots projects and well-attended local events were the best ways to reach people. Local organisations are uniquely able to highlight vital issues for local audiences, and enlist the local media. The You Control Climate Change campaign was most successful in localities where active networks had already been built up earlier in the communications programme.

Projects and materials galore



Wide-ranging information about climate change

Information about climate issues was carefully compiled and presented through many elements of the programme to make it accessible to ordinary people.

Journalists were actively encouraged to cover climate issues, and funding was provided for the production of TV and radio programmes and videos. Finnish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) together set up a special website to give all interested citizens a broad picture of the nature and impacts of climate change.

Helpful tips for households

Ordinary households can do many things to reduce their impacts on the climate, especially when it comes to saving energy, looking after wastes carefully, and choosing between transport options. But it takes time to change attitudes and lifestyles. People can benefit greatly from background information, practical tips, incentives to act, and examples to follow.



Materials produced during the Finnish programme featured many practical tips for households on energy-saving measures and other climate-friendly choices. Producers included environmental organisations and other NGOs, important actors in the energy and waste sectors, and property-owners' associations.



Practical advice for professionals

Many groups of professionals can help to mitigate climate change through their work.

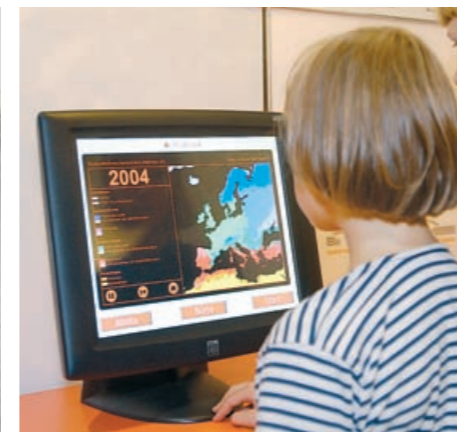
Projects directed at professional target groups included special training for journalists provided by the Finnish Meteorological Institute, and the production of materials on energy and waste management. It is especially important to reach customer service staff, who often have to deal with questions from the public about climate issues.

Transport firms have benefited from advice on measures to reduce fuel consumption. Special materials were also produced for forest-owners and foresters, and every farmer in Finland received a special guide to climate change suggesting many ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



New ideas for schools

Young people appreciate wide-ranging and varied information on the climate impacts of their lifestyles and consumer choices. Motivating and activating this key target group was a major objective of the Finnish programme.



Many new teaching materials have been produced through the programme by various organisations.

Young "climate ambassadors" trained by the Youth Academy and Finnish environmental organisations also visited secondary schools and colleges around Finland to give briefings on climate issues and encourage youngsters to become active in climate projects.



CHANGE

- campaign highly visible

The You Control Climate Change campaign involved open meetings, outdoor events, exhibitions and training sessions, as well as prominent advertising in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, on billboards, and on stickers on buses and taxis.

Events in many towns and cities

The cities of Turku, Tampere, Kouvola and Jyväskylä were particularly active during the campaign. The Foreign Ministry's local Europe Information Units also co-ordinated or organised events in other towns all around Finland.

The local authorities in the Helsinki metropolitan area jointly compiled an exhibition about climate change.

Plenty of enthusiasm in the classroom

As part of the campaign, teachers' associations compiled and distributed teaching materials related to climate change for every secondary school around Finland.

Teachers and pupils alike found the theme of climate change highly motivating. Hundreds of schools ran thematic days or weeks, or integrated aspects of climate change into their teaching throughout the autumn 2006 term. About a hundred schools produced their own imaginative materials for a nationwide competition.



Thousands of personal resolutions

Throughout the campaign You Control Climate Change postcards were distributed, encouraging everyone to make resolutions to change their ways for the benefit of the climate. About 4,500 such pledges were logged in the communications programme's resolution bank through the postcards and the programme's website.



Encouraging local actions

Municipalities and other local operators can greatly help to mitigate climate change, especially through prudent land use planning, energy services, waste management and transportation policies. Such local actors are also important communicators and motivators, since they are familiar with local residents' needs and interests.

The Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities has particularly worked to spread ideas about ways for the municipal authorities to help mitigate climate change.

One project in Tampere, Finland's second city, has successfully encouraged many public and private sector employers to provide public transport passes as benefits for their staff.

Climate-friendly choices

People who are keen to help mitigate climate change need specific answers to help them make the best possible choices.

A special website that enables electricity users to compare the prices of different kinds of electricity from different suppliers was revamped during the communications programme. So far only relatively few householders and firms in Finland purchase green electricity.

Other new materials produced cover a wide range of issues from the favourable climate impacts of wood products to new ways to integrate solar energy systems into oil heating systems.



For more details of the many projects within the Finnish Climate Change Communications Programme, see www.ilmastomuutos.info