



## WP2 METHODS: TRANSFORMATIVE OPTIONS FOR SHIFTS TO LOW-CARBON LIFESTYLES BY HOUSEHOLDS

The Citizen Thinking Labs (CTLs) in our project are workshop formats in which small groups of 20-25 citizens come together to work on specific questions or problems and co-create solutions, which are then analysed and utilised during the project. They were conceived as one-day workshops along the approach of social learning. This method was chosen to include real citizens and learn from their views and experiences in a bottom-up process while simultaneously facilitating knowledge sharing to and amongst them. Two rounds of CTLs took place in the 5 case countries (Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Spain and Sweden) in the fall of 2022 and 2023. The concept and guidelines developed for each round were applied in all case countries consistently. adelphi arranged training workshops for national implementers to further standardise the process.

Establishing a trusting environment was essential for a successful workshop. Participants needed to feel at ease and inclined to openly and honestly share their private beliefs and perceived issues. Consequently, we deliberately maintained a small yet diverse sample of people in our labs.

### CITIZEN THINKING LABS I: EVALUATING ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION OF OPTIONS

#### AIM & APPROACH

The aim of the one-day long CTLs was to collect feedback from citizens on preferences for specific lifestyle options i.e. which lifestyle options would face high or low acceptance rates. Additionally, we sought to understand the reasons why certain lifestyle options were rejected by participating citizens and collect feedback on conditions of acceptance for seemingly unpopular lifestyle changes by asking the question: *Under what conditions would citizens accept those lifestyle options with low acceptance rates?*

#### DESIGN OF THE DAY

The design of the labs involved various phases of design thinking, including learning and reflection, deliberation, and decision making. Central to the CTLs was the Climate Puzzle, which required participants to select from a set of 44 quantified lifestyle options that would enable them to reduce their carbon footprint to 2.5t (or at least close to it).

To start the workshop, the project team provided necessary input, covering project information, the carbon footprint calculation approach, and the significance and urgency of the 1.5°C climate goal. [Lifestyle options](#) in the puzzle spanned the consumption domains of nutrition, housing, mobility, leisure, and others and had already been developed and quantified during the project thus far. Playing the puzzle ensured active engagement through helping citizens to visualise the lifestyle changes necessary and their associated impacts for reaching the individual 2.5t climate goal. Participants were paired and took turns in playing and supporting one another in the climate puzzle, which helped to encourage and facilitate the discussion surrounding obstacles and enablers for implementing different lifestyle options. The project team documented participants' preferences for lifestyle options and the motivation behind it.

In the afternoon, participants discussed in small groups of 5-6 people the conditions for accepting the options they had discarded from their implementation portfolio in the morning. The project team facilitated the discussion and documented the qualitative information on reasons for rejecting certain lifestyle options and strategies to overcome existing barriers (i.e. conditions of acceptance for “unpopular” lifestyle changes).

Data was documented in predefined templates in a uniform manner across all case countries for further analysis. More information on the methodology can be found in Vadovics et al. (2024).

#### RECRUITMENT:

Recruitment was executed professionally by recruitment agencies in Germany, Latvia, Spain, and Sweden. In Hungary, the local case country partner oversaw the process. Recruiting took place

according to a quota plan to ensure a representative demographic composition of participants in each case country in terms of age, gender, level of education, and rural or urban living situation. An additional quota, i.e. at least 25% of participants should not have a pronounced interest in environmental and climate protection, was applied additionally.

## CITIZEN THINKING LABS II: A DEEPER DIVE INTO SOLUTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING HIGH-IMPACT OPTIONS

### AIM & APPROACH

The aim of the second round of labs was to further substantiate insights from the CTL1s and delve deeper into the requirements necessary to adopt the needed lifestyle changes rendering them more acceptable and fostering quicker implementation. Our focus was particularly on exploring the "problems" that citizens might have in envisioning their life in a 1.5° world, where many lifestyle changes were already feasible and had been adopted. Moreover, we strived to engage citizens in the identification of solutions to overcome problems on the personal and structural level. Lastly, we sought to extract insights into citizens' positive associations towards a 1.5° future.

### DESIGN OF THE DAY

The day commenced with a visualisation exercise imagining a sustainable world in 2030. The scenario is based on a document by David Pfau and was adjusted to our purposes by the project team. A similar scenario was used during the STLs in WP3. In this scenario for a world in 2030, global net emissions had been significantly reduced to 2.5t of carbon equivalents per person per year by including a set of 12 high impact lifestyle changes (from all domains).<sup>1</sup> We chose the 2030 horizon (and lifestyle options with enough impact to allow citizens to reach the 2.5 t goal by 2030) because this time frame is much more relatable for citizens than a timeframe until 2050. While some country variations regarding impact exist for the lifestyle options chosen, we aimed to generate comparable results for potential conflicts and their solutions across case countries and thereby decided to use the same set of lifestyle options in all case countries.<sup>2</sup>As the acceptance rates by participants in CTL1 were low for some of the selected options, we included the corresponding "conditions of acceptance" (also collected in CTL1). The objective of this exercise was to ascertain whether, given these required conditions, citizens would indeed adopt high-impact lifestyle changes, and if not, identify additional barriers. The 2030 world scenario was presented to participants during a "dream journey session" in the morning, either by reading it out loud or by playing it from a pre-recorded tape. With eyes closed, participants were systematically guided through the session in steps. Subsequently, a dedicated time for individual reflection followed, during which participants composed letters to real or imaginary friends, contemplating their thoughts on the scenario guided by the following questions:

- o How do you feel about this vision (positive/negative)? What has improved or negatively affected your life?
- o What was missing in the vision? Which additional changes can you see for the world in 2030?
- o Where do you see risks/conflict/tension?

<sup>1</sup> The set of lifestyle changes included in the scenario predominantly featured those that have a high emission reduction potential, i.e. if implemented to the extent indicated, would enable individuals to reduce their carbon footprint to 2.5 t by 2030.

<sup>2</sup> The following lifestyle options were included: I will lower the room temperature of my home (2 degree); I will choose shared housing (i.e. live smaller) [36m2 per person for Germany]; I will insulate my house; I will install my own solar panels; I will go on vacation by train instead of plane [fly 50% less per year per person in Germany]; I will drive less for my hobbies and leisure [drive 50% less per person per year in Germany]; I will switch from using a conventional car to an electric car; I will avoid food waste at home; I will reduce animal-based products in my diet (80%); I will eat only as much food as I need to stay healthy; When moving house, I will move closer to my workplace (50% closer); I will carpool



The purpose of the reflection phase was to prompt participants to contemplate the envisioned future and to help facilitate the scheduled group discussion afterwards. Participants were organised by the local facilitators into four groups, each covering two consumption domains. Within these groups, they discussed positive and negative reactions to envisioned lifestyle changes in their 2030 lives. Participants were also asked to identify anticipated problems, conflicts, or inconveniences in the 2030 world they had envisioned. Moderators guided each group, documenting the outcomes on whiteboards.

During lunch break, the moderators consolidated findings from the morning session, potentially incorporating examples of problems uncovered from the initial CTL and displayed them on a new board. In the afternoon session, participants discussed ideas for solutions to these problems on two levels:

- o Personal level: What can I as an individual/a household do?

- o Structural level: What do politics and society need to do?

The data was then documented using pre-prepared templates in all case countries to facilitate further analysis.

#### RECRUITMENT

The recruitment was carried out in a similar way to the recruitment of CTL1.

#### CITED WORKS

Vadovics, Edina, Jessika Luth Richter, Maren Tornow, Nadin Ozelik, Luca Coscieme, Michael Lettenmeier, Eszter Csiki, et al. 2024. 'Preferences, Enablers, and Barriers for 1.5° C Lifestyle Options: Findings from Citizen Thinking Labs in Five European Union Countries'. *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy* 20 (1): 2375806. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2024.2375806>.

