

Improving climate communication:

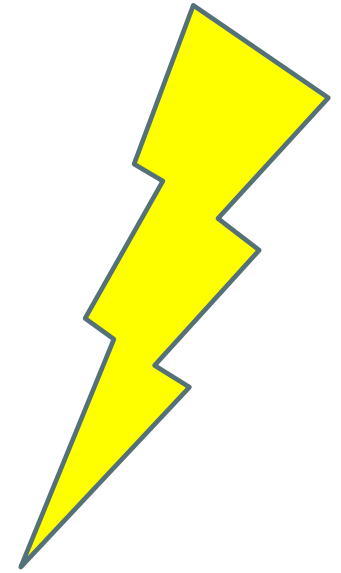
**How to talk about climate and
circular lifestyle activities at the local level**

Prof Dr Maike Sippel

NiCE Conference – From Niche to Centre: Mainstreaming Circular Lifestyles in European Cities
UBA - Umweltbundesamt

How can climate communication be effective?

- » How do I empower to take action?
Personal story from 2013...

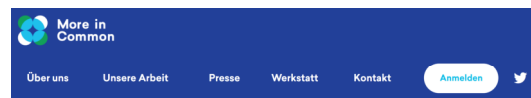


Does not work!

How does a way of climate communication look like that makes people outside activist circles feel that climate action is also THEIR climate action?

A way of climate action that creates a sense of identity in terms of tone and subject matter, and shows appreciation for different values and ways of life?

More in Common Germany Study, 2023.
<https://www.moreincommon.de/klimabewegung/>



**Wie schaut die deutsche
Gesellschaft derzeit auf die
Klimabewegung?**

Key Principles for Effective Climate Communication

10 evidence-based recommendations

How to open the door



1. Connect with people's values

What are people's concerns linked to climate? Find it out and base your communication on it.

2. Trusted messengers



Communicate authentically – and consider nurturing fresh voices from across all segments of society.

3. Test & research



Do not trust your own instincts – better research the characteristics of your target group, and test the effectiveness of your message.

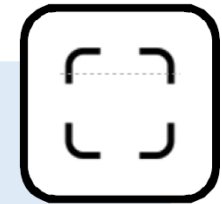
How to reach minds AND hearts

4. Bring climate home



Show relevant local (regional/national) examples of consequences and climate action – with a focus on solutions.

5. Use frames consciously



Use words and narratives that they resonate with your target group.

6. Use imagery to tell powerful stories



Show the humans behind climate – in realworld stories and authentic imagery.

7. Provide accurate information



Use clear, non-technical language and lead with what we know for certain.

How to turn concern into action

8. Provide spaces for interaction



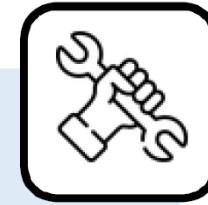
Make climate a topic in everyday conversations and consider organizing public dialogues formats.

9. Make climate action the ,new normal‘



Show people ,like you and me‘ that have begun to take climate action.

10. Offer possibilities for personal action



Encourage people to reduce carbon foot prints and to engage in social organising.

Municipalities: Prime arenas for communication

- People identify with their town, neighborhood, groups, places, and activities.
→ Anchor climate & circularity in these local identities and routines.
- Create spaces for interaction: Facilitate dialogue and collective action on climate. This not only cuts emissions & resource use, but also reduces polarization and strengthens social cohesion.
- Local networks and trusted figures are identifiable and reachable
→ How can you activate them?
- Tell the “already happening” stories: Many local success stories exist—from workplaces to civic groups to households. Curate and amplify this pool of everyday climate wins.



From activities to impact: Design the communication dimension

- Build communication into all your planned circularity actions: Every technical or policy measure needs a narrative, a messenger, a moment, and an audience—design them intentionally.
- Apply clear principles when you design your communication (e.g., audience insight, framing, co-creation, credible messengers, visible benefits, social norms).
- Learn laterally – use the NiCE Network to do so: Scan what works in peer municipalities; adapt and scale.



Invest in public engagement infrastructure (+ lead by example)

- Put resources to get people engaged – as you put resources to fund new infrastructure:
Ambitious citizen action needs time and budget for communication, dialogue, and storytelling—plan and fund it.
- Build durable capacity: Community partners, volunteer networks, training for local messengers, shared content library, recurring touchpoints (markets, schools, clubs).
- No-budget starter move you can personally start with right away: Municipal leaders, planners, and experts act as visible role models—share why they care, what they do, and where it's hard (human, not perfect).



Thank you!

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