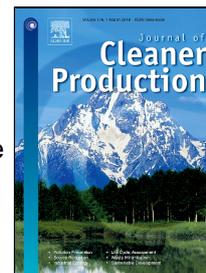


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## The human factor: Classification of European community-based behaviour change initiatives

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### Abstract

Behaviour, practices and culture constitute a powerful human factor in the energy system; in particular the interactions between technologies, practices and norms lock individuals in to certain patterns of (often inefficient) energy use. Consequently, behaviour change has gained traction amongst policymakers as a key area of intervention given the impact energy-related behaviours have on climate change. Given the increasing emphasis within policy perspectives in the European Union, it is surprising that a gap in understanding of the success factors of behaviour change initiatives remains. This paper addresses this gap by identifying and characterising behaviour change initiatives across five European countries (the UK, Ireland, France, Italy, and Spain). The paper provides insights into the success factors and commonly encountered barriers to behaviour change initiatives. Initiatives are classified into 6 broad categories (community-based interventions; information and awareness based interventions; eco-districts; show-case events; energy switching; and smart-technology focused interventions). The results suggest that there are significant knowledge gaps between what is known to work to engage individuals in behavioural change and what is currently being applied in practice. An over-reliance on education and awareness-raising projects is evident, illustrating that such projects do not sufficiently aim for sustained behavioural changes. A dearth of projects incorporating fiscal measures, regulations or legislation to drive behaviour change reflects reluctance on behalf of decision-makers to engage widely with diverse approaches to foster lifestyle change. This paper contributes understandings of the different models and delivery tools employed to change energy-related behaviours; insights into the critical success factors that underpin best practice and the barriers to action; and a 'what works in practice' overview of the meaningful approaches to change behaviour.

**Keywords:** Behaviour change, Energy, Interventions, Practices, Sustainability, Europe.

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