

Gödöllő Climate Club

| Hungary |



The Gödöllő Climate Club is a small, voluntary, grassroots group initiated in 2009 by GreenDependent Association in the town of Gödöllő in Central Hungary, with the primary goal of reducing the carbon footprint of its members. The club was initiated as a pilot project within a European Union FP7 research project called Changing Behaviour which investigated how to induce long-term behaviour change related to energy use. The pilot project proved to be successful as the club has been meeting ever since, attracting an increasing number of people.

CONTEXT: THE PERCEIVED PROBLEM

The Climate Club was established in order to raise awareness of climate change issues in households, establish links between climate change and household consumption and create a sense of responsibility for consumption and lifestyle-related emissions in households. In the Europe Union households are responsible for 26% of energy use; however, however, the proportion for Hungary is higher. Here, the share of households in final energy consumption is 40%, and 30% of CO₂ emissions are attributed to them.¹

As the findings of the above-mentioned research project on motivating behaviour change related to energy use pointed towards the importance of small groups, when initiating the club, GreenDependent decided to experiment with an informal group format using the inspiring examples of and lessons learnt from EcoTeams, CRAGs and transition towns. (See more on this in REF 3.)

INITIATIVE SOLUTION AND PROCESS

The Gödöllő Climate Club meets every month and members discuss climate change and energy-related issues, ideas and concerns in an informal setting while drinking fair-trade tea and eating homemade cakes. Club members keep track of their consumption and emissions with the help of a carbon calculator developed by GreenDependent. They also calculate the footprint of club events and occasionally plant fruit trees in a local community garden to offset the emissions.

More recently, club members have decided to become more active in the local community in order to raise awareness of what they do, attract more members, and motivate community level change towards more climate-friendly living.

CONTRACTION AND CONVERGENCE ELEMENTS

CONTRACTION

The primary aim of the initiative is to contract the carbon footprint of the climate club members. However, members also support each other in reducing one another's footprints, sharing skills and knowledge in lower carbon living and promoting awareness and practical action in the wider community through organizing and participating in community events in the town of Gödöllő in Hungary. The overall aim is to achieve contraction (i.e. have smaller and sustainable carbon footprints) not only for households but also for the community as a whole, but for the time being no specific contraction targets have been set.

CONVERGENCE

The contraction of the carbon footprint is not only about reducing one's own impact but also about sharing the resources available to humanity with others, both at the local and global level. As Gödöllő, the home town of the club, has a twin town in Indonesia, some of the club members have the more long-term goal of establishing a link with the community there.

Convergence in the club is also happening in terms of collecting and sharing information, and exchanging certain goods and services (e.g. plants and seeds; car-sharing between members). Decisions are made in a participatory way, taking into account everyone's opinions and ideas.

CURRENT STATUS AND IMPACT

About 15-25 people participate at each meeting of the club, but the number of people on the mailing list is a lot higher (cc. 200). Members regularly review their footprints and report on successes and difficulties, providing support and ideas for one another.

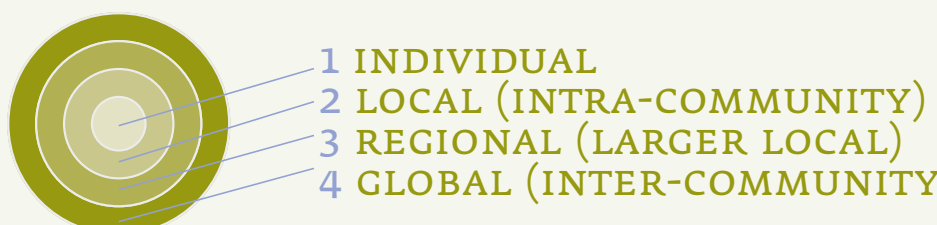
The climate club is now a part of an informal network of similar initiatives in Hungary (called KLIKK or Climate-friendly Small Communities; other members include Climate-Friendly Wekerle, the first official transition initiative in Hungary, and Transition Town Kecskemét). The climate club also has a twin club in the UK: the Fownhope Carbon Reduction Action Club. Both of these contacts have played a great role in establishing and strengthening club identity as well as inspiring further action.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING:

1. Initiative website: <http://www.klimaklub.greendependent.org>
2. Information on the climate club on the Changing Behaviour website: <http://www.energychange.info/six-best-practice-pilots> and <http://www.energychange.info/downloads>
3. Vadovics, E., Heiskanen, E. (2010) Understanding and enhancing the contribution of low-carbon communities to more sustainable lifestyles: the case of the Gödöllő Climate Club in Hungary. Poster presented at the ERSCP-EMSU conference in Delft, Holland, 26-29 October 2010. Available from: <http://www.klimaklub.greendependent.org/en/research-results.html>

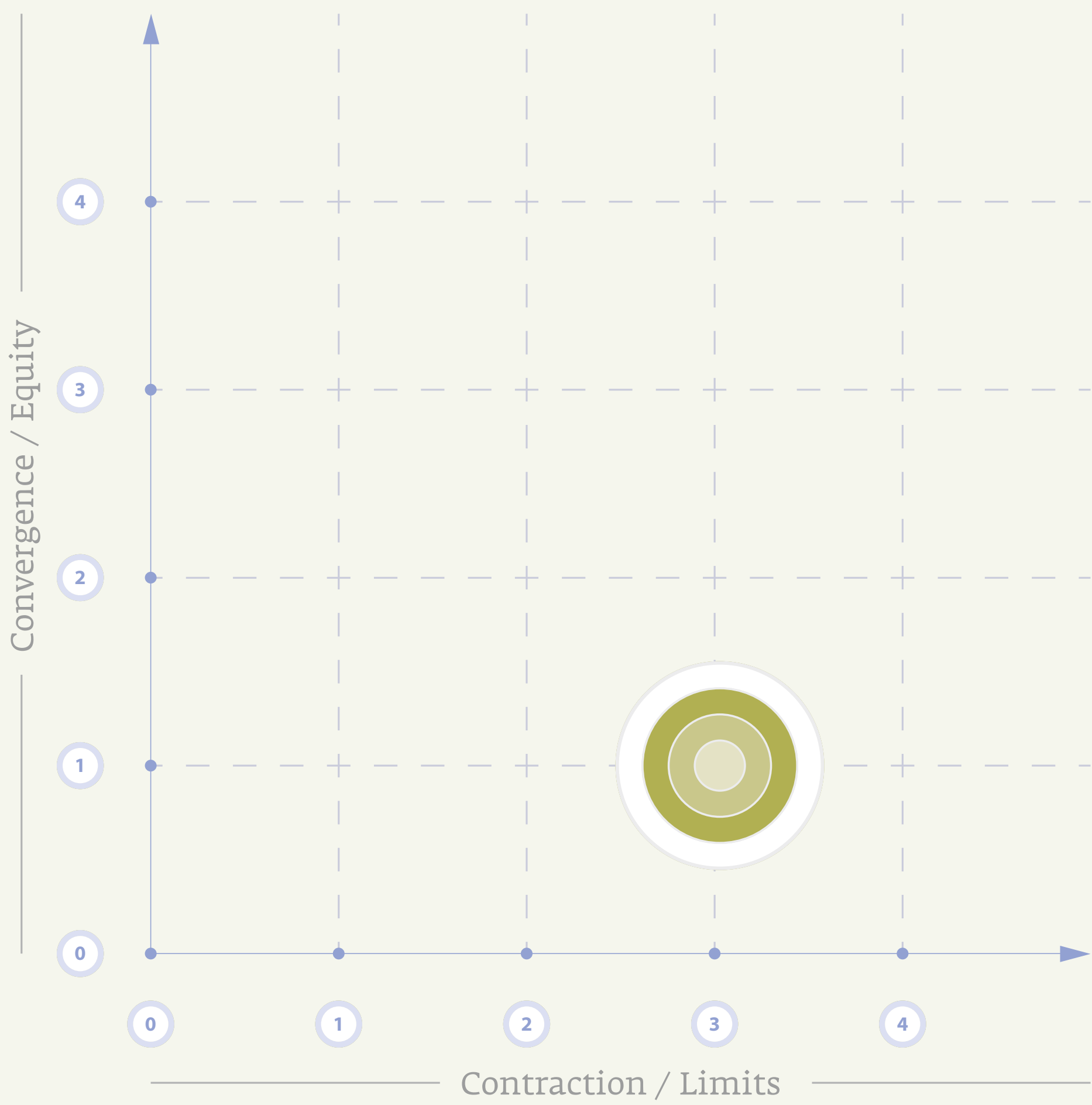


Scale of activities



Primary theme

CARBON/CLIMATE SPECIFIC



1. Data for the EU is from the EC (2007) and for Hungary is from GKM (2008).