



Zollverein

ALL TOGETHER NOW



ALL TOGETHER NOW

Building a creative alliance for climate action – adapting the Manchester model in the heart of the Ruhr

Gelsenkirchen's Urbact Transfer Story

By Susanne Dippel, Climate Action Manager, City of Gelsenkirchen and Stefanie Rogg, freelance Project Manager for the City of Gelsenkirchen, March 2021

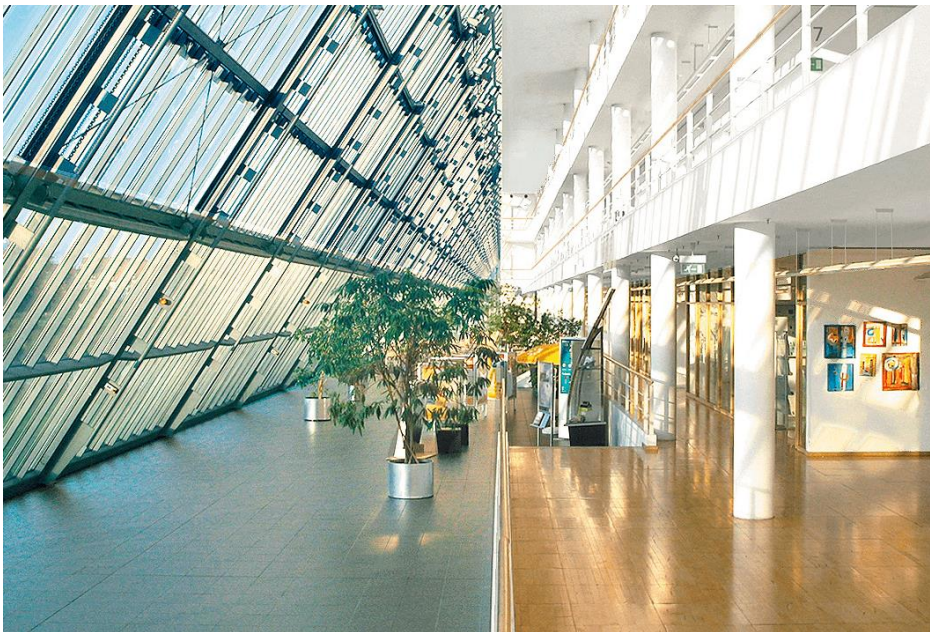
Our “black gold” is already a thing of the past. Today, vibrant neighbourhoods, locations of excellence for the arts and fascinating creative events are outstripping industrial culture. Programmes such as [Kreativ Quartiere Ruhr](#) have shown how making culture and creativity an integral part of urban development can transform urban spaces. However, the sector's response to the climate crisis had been relatively muted, and climate change seen mainly as the remit of policy bodies and city administrations. What if this were to change and the city's cultural and creative sector to unite and act on climate and inspire others to do the same? This was the idea which Manchester brought to Gelsenkirchen in the summer of 2018, with the example of the Manchester Arts Sustainability Team (MAST). Gelsenkirchen's Head of Culture, saw how Manchester's approach could be a way to make climate action an integral part of its drive for urban transformation.



Joie de vivre in the creative quarter of Ückendorf - artists and creative people use their studios and formats to transform a no-go-area into a district worth living in (Photo VR places festival @ c/o-raum für Kooperation)

Our aim: activating creatives as actors for climate action

Susanne Dippel, the city's Climate Action Manager was surprised, but also delighted, when the Head of the Culture's office got in touch to suggest joining C-Change, an URBACT-funded network of five cities aiming to build on and learn from Manchester's experience with cultural collaboration on climate. As Susanne puts it *"The climate action team always knew that to really address climate change on the city level in a way commensurate with the scale of the crisis, we needed not only strong policy and programmes but also real commitment and active engagement across other city departments, stakeholders and citizens to put them into practice and drive change from the bottom up"*. The Climate Action Team didn't need much convincing.



Typical Ruhr area - formerly a location for industrial production, today a space for culture, science and future (Photo Science Park Gelsenkirchen @ Designfaktor)

And, there was also great potential to reduce impacts. The Ruhr region is home to about 200 museums, 100 cultural centres, 100 concert halls, 120 theatres, 250 festivals and around 3,500 industrial monuments as well as two large musical theatres and more than 250 festivals and events. Unlike the collieries of its past, there are no belching smoke stacks. Nonetheless, from energy use to audience travel, these creative and cultural places and events all contribute to climate change and climate action had not been high on their list of priorities.

MAST's success – from emissions reductions and its active role in the city's climate change partnership to performances, exhibitions and even a soap opera exploring climate change themes - motivated Gelsenkirchen to explore how it could build a new alliance with and across the sector, both for the city and the region. After all, Gelsenkirchen is located at the heart of an agglomeration with over five million inhabitants and cross-city networks. You can't and shouldn't shape the future in isolation. So, in January 2019, Gelsenkirchen, together with four other cities and led by Manchester, embarked upon its C-Change journey.

Our process: Do it with passion!

Through international sessions with all six cities, Gelsenkirchen learnt more about the Manchester model – seeing how a MAST meeting was run and what climate action looked like in practice at a theatre, a multi-arts centre and a tv studio – and explored how this might work in Gelsenkirchen. Working with Manchester was particularly informative, given the parallels in terms of its industrial past and location within a city-region. But Gelsenkirchen also benefitted from exchange with the other four cities – from the Portuguese city of Águeda’s experience with sector training to citizen engagement through culture in the Croatian city of Šibenik.

On the local level, setting up and running a C-Change group to shape and make cultural collaboration on climate a reality in Gelsenkirchen was key. The group brought together people from the cultural and creative sector, from theatres to individual artists. It was led by the C-Change project manager appointed by the city’s culture office working closely with the Climate Action Manager. Meetings were slow to get going, with some scepticism regarding what was initially seen as a more top-down approach from the city. But that changed when the project leads were able to get beyond simply presenting Manchester’s model and the URBACT methodology, reinterpret their leadership role and move into the role of facilitators.

As the group started to engage more actively, external guests came to speak on different topics, kick-starting lively discussions, and often leading to action, as happened with the *a tip:tap* tap water and refill initiative.



Gelsenkirchen’s C-Change local group members and Climate Action Manager developing ideas and actions (Photo 5th ULG @ Serkan Akin)



Presentation of the a tip:tap water and refill initiative to Gelsenkirchen’s local group (Photo 5th ULG @ Serkan Akin)

A key moment was when local group members - an artist, youth theatre director, musical theatre director and trainee with Gelsenkirchen’s leading event organiser - went to Manchester in October 2019. The visit included carbon literacy training led by trainers from HOME, one of Manchester’s leading cultural venues, and lots of opportunities for peer exchange. Telling fellow C-Change group members of their experience when they returned, their conviction and enthusiasm was infectious, showing how important connection and emotion are to the process of change.



Christiane Freudig (Consol Theater), Christopher Lammert (artist), Tobias Werner (Musiktheater im Revier), Stefanie Rogg (C-Change Project Manager and ULG co-ordinator), Susanne Dippel (Climate Action Manager), Julia Hewelt (emschertainment) and Simon Curtis (MAST) at the C-Change network meeting in Manchester, October 2019 (Photo © Stefanie Rogg)

At this stage there was a shift from a “you have to” phase to a “we want to” phase. At the end of 2019, the C-Change group also shifted shape with the launch of the DIE KLIMARTIST*EN (THE CLIMARTISTS), with its own logo, visual identity and Facebook page. Under DIE KLIMARTIST*EN banner, a range of creative initiatives on climate started to flourish and Gelsenkirchen became a sought-after partner in the city and the region.



*DIE KLIMARTIST*EN on Facebook (Screenshot @ CCI)*

Then the COVID pandemic hit. Cultural venues closed, events were cancelled and the future was very uncertain. It was no longer possible for DIE KLIMARTIST*EN to meet face-to-face as a group. Creativity came to the rescue. During summer 2020, Stefanie Rogg, the C-Change project lead, started a climate café under the tagline #smalltalk to keep the dialogue going in a safe way. She would be there every Thursday, in a café in the creative quarter of Ückendorf, ready to connect with those who could come and even making new connections to support DIE KLIMARTIST*EN alliance.

iso ENCAPERT.

KLIMARTIST*EN

Allianz für eine neue Idee
von André Becker

Corona hat dem Globus neben vielen Einschränkungen und Problemen insbesondere auch einen echten Boost erwiesen – plötzlich fragte man nicht mehr zur Wochenendbeobachtung in sein Garten-Näuschen auf Mallorca, und auch das erste Dinner-Haushaltchen kann nicht mal eben im Vorbeiflug mitgenommen werden. Anderswärts sind auf einmal Regeln und Maßnahmen umsetzbar, die vorher undenkbar gewesen waren – es sollten nicht so ganz Argumente für den Klimaschutz sein, welche die „Friday For Future“ anbrachten – insbesondere schon business as usual vorläufig über die Variante der Wahl.

Aus Gelsenkirchen machten sich im Jahr 2019 einige die von dieser Schwelgenperiode nicht länger anschauen wollten. **Tobias Werner** (Geschäftsführer des Musiktheaters im Revier), **Christiane Freytag** (Geschäftsführerin des Grand Theaters), **Christoph Lammer** (Bühnen- und Kulturschaffender) und **Jella Rogge** (Mitbegründerin der Erziehungswissenschaftlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Stadt Gelsenkirchen) sowie **Stephanie Rogge** (Projektmanagerin im Auftrag des Betriebs Kultur der Stadt Gelsenkirchen) auf dem Weg nach Manchester, um dort zu lernen, wie man es anders machen kann.

Als Kulturschaffende, Betriebs-Quartiersmanager*in aus dem Ruhrgebiet schauten sie dort 30 Mitgliedern der Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft, darunter Galerien, Theatern, Kulturämtern sowie BBC und ITV, über die Schulter, die in diesem Verbund seit 2010 bereits aktiv und renommierend an der Senkung der CO₂-Emissionen arbeiten. Der „Manchester Arts Sustainability Team“ gemeinsam Verbund leitete bezüglich der CO₂-Senkung dabei so herausragende Ergebnisse, dass diese Erfolgsgeschichte europaweit ausstrahlte wurde.

Die Gelsenkirchener KLIMARTIST*EN – eine Wortneuschöpfung des Sonett-Machers und amnibus-Künstlers Christoph Lammer, stellen sich dabei als eine kreative Allianz in den Diensten des Klimaschutzes und der Reduktion des CO₂-Ausstoßes. Kunst und Kultur sehen sie als One des klimawirksamen Handelns. Arbeitet die Technik eines Theaters ressourcenbewusst, ist die Verantwortung der Mitarbeiter*innen mit Leistungswasser anstatt Meerwasser denkbar? Gibt es Möglichkeiten der schöpferisch inspirierenden Umsetzung von klimawirksamen Themen durch Schauspiel oder Bildende Kunst? Nicht Diskussion, nicht Doktrin, sondern alltägliche, selbstverständliche Handeln soll das neue Credo von Künstler*innen und Kulturangehörigen sein, so wie auch Brandschutzvorschriften längst Teil des Alltags von Kulturinstitutionen sind. Konkret werden dabei die Absätze und Strukturen in den Einrichtungen oder Verbänden anhand kreativer Aufgabenstellungen unter die Lupe genommen werden. Und damit nicht genug, Stephanie Rogge im Auftrag der Stadt Gelsenkirchen koordinierende Projektmanagerin der KLIMARTIST*EN, die Teil des internationalen Projektes „C-Change“ sind, die über eine EU-Förderung nach vier von Städten in den Genuss der Expertise aus Manchester kommen: Bari – Marano (Italien), Wrocław (Polen), Sibónia (Ungarn) und Agueda (Portugal), bringt sie auf den Punkt:

„Es ist gut, wenn wir so auf interaktive und unterhaltsame Weise einen Bewusstseinswandel herbeiführen können und damit der Kulturbetrieb sich jetzt die Notwendigkeit erkennt, Handeln zu müssen und sich auf die Aufgaben vorzubereiten, die in den nächsten Jahren im Rahmen der Klimaschutzverpflichtungen kommen werden.“

CARBON LITERACY TRAINING (Carbon-Kohlenstoffdioxid, Literacy=Bildung, Wissen)

Zur anschaulichen Veranschaulichung der Idee wurde das „Carbon Literacy Training“, das auch Kernbestandteil des Projektes ist, aus England importiert, eine Art Klimakurs, so Susanne Dippel. „Ich kann mit kreativen Arbeitsmitteln und Techniken vermitteln, Klimaschutz kann Spaß machen!“

Das „Carbon Literacy Training“ will mit Emotionen die Teilnehmer*innen der Kreativbranche erreichen und zum Nachdenken anregen. Auf diese Weise kann sich die Kreativ- und Kulturbetriebe einfließen – Wie verhalte ich mich selbst, und was kann ich in meinem eigenen Arbeit ändern und klimafreundlicher machen? Zum Abschluss des Trainings sollte dann jeder einen umsetzbaren Vorschlag formulieren. Bei mir war es die Umsetzung auf „Leistungswasser“, so die studierte Raumplanerin. Eine durchaus klimawirksame Entscheidung gegen die (Plastik)flasche, wie der gemeinnützige Verein „a-träger“, der sich für den Konsum von Leitungswasser engagiert und der auch Teil des Projektes ist, klärt.

Viel, was bereits an Konzepten, Tools und Empfehlungen vorhanden ist, so wie der speziell für Personen, Projekte und Einrichtungen der Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft entwickelte und zur Verfügung stehende Klima-Rechner. Dieser ermittelt nicht nur den CO₂-Verbrauch, sondern punktet auch mit Empfehlungen.

Small Talk für die Kreativ-Szene

Die für Gelsenkirchen finanziert einen ersten Anlaufpunkt zu einem „Small Talk“ am Donnerstag 17 Uhr in der **Strohalle am Platz** (Bücherei) statt. Das für Gelsenkirchen in Gelsenkirchen in der Zwischenzeit bereits etablierte und für die Stadt Gelsenkirchen ein wichtiger Bestandteil eines physischen „Climate Café“ sein wird!

www.ki-jam.klimawirkung.de

Very British...

In Manchester besuchte die KLIMARTIST*EN und die Projektpartner*innen u.a. auch die 100-Jahre der britischen „Creative Cities“ – die quasi die britische Antwort auf das deutsche UNESCO-Netzwerk sind. Die Stadt Manchester hat sich als erste britische Stadt für dieses UNESCO-Netzwerk beworben und ist seit 2012 Mitglied. Die Stadt hat sich als erste britische Stadt für dieses UNESCO-Netzwerk beworben und ist seit 2012 Mitglied. Die Stadt hat sich als erste britische Stadt für dieses UNESCO-Netzwerk beworben und ist seit 2012 Mitglied.

42

City magazine coverage of the #smalltalk climate café in the creative quarter of Ückendorf in Gelsenkirchen (Screenshot @ CCI)

The idea behind the C-Change Pilot Action Programme was to support creative initiatives on climate through micro-grants. The first grant helped Szeniale 2019, an independent arts festival, demonstrate and engage on climate action with its 5,000 visitors. While plans for further actions had to be paused, in December 2020, the *Make a Change* installation on the theme of consumerism was still able to go ahead – a more lowkey affair than Szeniale but powerful still.

DEIN FESTIVAL | 13. JULI 2019 | GELSENKIRCHEN

AUCH DAFÜR STRAMPELN WIR UNS AB:

SZENIALIZE YOUR BICYCLE!

WIE SZENIAL IST DAS DENN.

FESTIVAL DER FREIEN KÜNSTE szeniale Gelsenkirchen

#szeniale

www.szeniale.ruhr

Szeniale 2019 - a Gelsenkirchen C-Change pilot action (Screenshot @ CCI)



Make a Change 2020 – a Gelsenkirchen C-Change pilot action - (Screenshot @ CCI)

As C-Change and DIE KLIMARTIST*EN alliance gathered pace, the *Fridays for Future* movement was also galvanising demand for action on climate. In July 2019, the city of Gelsenkirchen declared a climate emergency and started the process of developing its new climate change strategy. As a result of C-Change and the newly founded DIE KLIMARTIST*EN, the city set out its intention to both involve the cultural and creative sector in this process and include sector support in resulting programmes.

Challenges: Don't let it get you down and be patient!

Gelsenkirchen's C-Change journey wasn't without challenges. But thankfully, in the words of Herbert Grönemeyer, with 'a pulse of steel' we are born with the talent for improvisation. And this talent was put to the test, especially when nine months in, three key people involved left their roles all about the same time. But new people also bring new perspectives and new networks, and when Stefanie Rogg took on the role of C-Change project manager she brought in new connections building on many years of experience working with the cultural and creative scene across the region.

There is no question that COVID was and remains the biggest challenge. It meant adapting, rescheduling and in some cases cancelling activities, notably plans for sector training, despite having four sector representatives ready to go as trainers. And plans to extend the training model working with influential regional institutions - the Ruhr Regional Association and Urban Arts Ruhr - also had to be put on hold. While some momentum was maintained through initiatives such as the climate café, the second Covid wave put a stop to further initiatives before May 2021, when C-Change funding ends.

The URBACT benefit: Learning has no borders!

The opportunity for international exchange, which is central to URBACT, enabled us to learn not only about the Manchester model but also to see what climate action looked like in practice for Manchester's cultural venues and events – a source of inspiration and ideas for action back in Gelsenkirchen. The opportunity to exchange our ideas with the other C-Change partners and to see what they were doing in their cities, was also incredibly valuable.

Manchester City Council's project management in the capable hands of Grainne Bradley combined with the guidance of Claire Buckley, C-Change Lead Expert as well a range of on-line tools and resources, helped keep us motivated, hone our own project management skills and, last but not least, strengthen the bond with the C-Change partners in working towards a common aim.

Conclusion: We campaign in solidarity - ALL TOGETHER NOW!

A truly integrated approach to urban development relies on meaningful connection, trust and genuine collaboration amongst different stakeholders, groups and networks. While Gelsenkirchen has not achieved all it set out to do, the C-Change process has in itself been a model of connection, trust and collaboration - on the international level with the other city partners and on a local level, through DIE KLIMARTIST*EN alliance and the coming together for the first time of the city's culture and climate teams. Whatever happens next, this will stand Gelsenkirchen in good stead.