

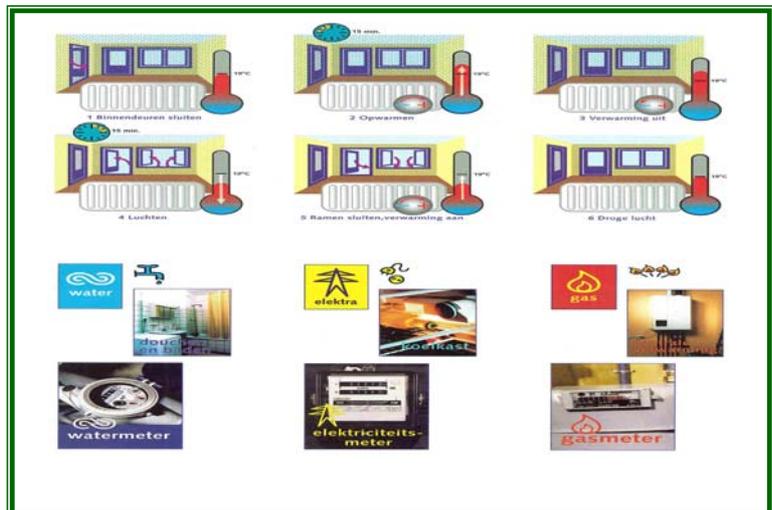
Case Study 2: The Dutch 'Groene Energie Trein' (Green Energy Train) project 2001-2003 in Leidsche Rijn

The Netherlands

Summary

The Green Energy Train project ran from November 1st 2001 till May 1st 2003 in Leidsche Rijn, a new district of Utrecht municipality, the Netherlands. The target group consisted of tenants of social housing that had moved into newly built houses. The project targeted energy-relevant behaviour at the household level. SME Consultants, based in Leidsche Rijn, managed and implemented the project, in close cooperation with the municipal Neighbourhood Centre. The initiator of the Green Energy Train Programme, consultancy AardeWerk, developed the method and delivered the educational material. The project was financed for 167,916 Euro by means of a subsidy granted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment.

One goal of this project was to accomplish 10% energy saving in households by bringing about lasting behavioural changes among the target groups. This goal has not been reached. Other goals involved the application of the educational method, testing it on its effectiveness, and measuring the impact on participants' behaviour. These goals have been partially achieved.



The project faced several problems right from the start. Collaboration between project team members was difficult. The project manager SME had doubts about the method and underlying philosophy. The people that were locally recruited to become coaches dropped out during the training. Recruitment efforts did not result in the desired numbers of participants. Although the method was intended to be demand driven, the underlying approach remained rather present and was not tailored to the particular target group at all (participants had difficulties with the lack of concreteness).

Lessons learned

1. When there are multiple goals, it should be checked if these are reconcilable and who is committed to which goals.
2. The scope should be considered in relation to the resources and time available
3. Collaboration and trust among project team members is crucial:
4. The design of the project and the materials should be tailored to the target group, the particular geographical setting and be suitable to achieve the goals
5. The method and material used should be tested in advance, so that necessary changes can be made.