



What you can do for the climate/Climate-friendly food services at major events (KleVer)

 Industry | **Information** | Participation

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Project information

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Innovative climate action projects

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Project leader

32. Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag Bremen 2009 e.V. (33. Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag Dresden 2011 e.V.) and 34. Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag Hamburg 2013 e.V.

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Climate action at the 'Kirchentag' (the national church convention)

Major events such as Germany's biennial National Protestant Church Convention ('Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag') not only require a lot of preparation but also leave traces in terms of waste production and energy consumption. For this reason, their ecological footprint should be minimized.

At a glance

In 2009, the 32nd Protestant Church Convention in Bremen, with the support of the National Climate Initiative (NCI), organised numerous actions and encounters to promote climate-friendly behaviour. With a colourful bouquet of actions – from billboards to workshops and exhibitions to city tours and contests – the participative congress-festival showed participants how they can contribute to climate action. The 34th church convention in Hamburg, then, followed up on these experiences with another NCI project that focused on eco-friendly food and drink: less meat, more vegetables, tap water, more accurate estimation of quantities, reusable packaging, and less waste. Since the Convention takes place biannually, efforts were also made to ensure that these considerations would become a standard in the event management of national church conventions to come.



Participants of the national church congress in Bremen mark the 11-kilometer-long 'land-under line' with chalk carts and blue chalk.



A big event with a big footprint

The Protestant Church Convention is a big event drawing around 100,000 participants and is supported by a large staff and close to 6,000 volunteers. The logistics and accommodation of these vast numbers of people means more traffic, waste and energy consumption, alongside the attendant impacts on the climate. In order to include as many participants as possible, while holding up the church's environmental responsibility, the efforts to decrease the convention's ecological footprint focused on the planning and holding of this large event. The two church convention projects approached this challenge from several angles.

What were the project goals?

What you can do for the climate ('Wie leben wir klimafreundlich?') (2009)

- Environmental communication and various event formats were to provide information on climate-sensitive behaviour and involve the participants and contributors;
- Behavioural changes were to be encouraged.

KleVer (2013)

- A concept for climate-friendly catering at church conventions was to be designed, implemented and consolidated.

Preparing for the 2009 'Kirchentag' in Bremen

The Protestant church has been committed to climate action for some years now and has built on this experience when preparing the 'Kirchentag'. Leading up to the 2009 convention in Bremen, it ran an intensive public relations campaign with the Bremen population and stakeholders from the parishes about the climate project. All Protestant parishes in Bremen received flyers that notified them of the planned activities.

The campaign also sent out letters to the roughly 6,000 hosts of private accommodations, including a brochure

with tips for eco-friendly behaviour. Finally, the program of the church convention contained a climate map that highlighted the locations of the various actions.

What did the project achieve?

What you can do for the climate ('Wie leben wir klimafreundlich?')

- Various communication measures and events raised awareness for climate action;
- Behavioural changes, albeit non-quantifiable, were triggered by the measures;
- The topic of climate action at the individual level and within the scope of large-scale events was again taken up and pursued at subsequent church conventions.

KleVer

- A concept for eco-friendly catering was designed and implemented;
- Complementary communication tools were developed and used.

In the entrance area of the office of the Bremen Convention, a lecture series took place on humans and their impact on the climate. This was organised in cooperation with regional partners such as the Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND/FOE) and 'Bremer Umwelt Beratung e.V.', an NGO for environmental consulting, who offered valuable insights into flood and coastal protection, eco-friendly shopping and climate-friendly mobility.

The climate school, for its part, ran trainings and workshops on topics such as consumption, mobility and saving electricity. The offers were custom-designed for the parishes seeking to participate. The climate school presented a public exhibit of the temporary office of the church convention set up at the train station plaza.



A total of 250 people from 13 parishes participated in the workshops. Some 6,000 hosts provided for the private accommodation of the convention visitors. And, as a thank you, no less than 17,500 energy-saving lamps were distributed to the hosts and to the parishes from the regions covered by the church convention.

A broad reach

During the convention, the activities were geared primarily to the participants. A themed hall entitled 'Zentrum Zukunft' (future centre) drew 20,000 visitors. In addition to discussion rounds, such as on the topic of the energy of the future with Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel, there was the exhibition Energy@Home and a poster wall featuring climate tips. Four large screens on the main platforms also featured short films, animations and presentations.

"You can rotate the crank handle and see how much energy you are producing. It's really hard to get up to 80 watts. And then you'd have to crank eight hours at 80 watts just to be able to take a warm shower of two minutes. That's crazy!"

Participant of the 32nd church convention

Visitors were able to learn about food provision, electricity, heat and mobility thanks to a parkour of stations set up in three climate pavilions. Designed to offer hands-on experiences, the stations included the carbon bike, which showed the carbon footprints of different mobility forms, and the 'energy crank', which was very popular with kids.

Three different climate city tours showed how climate change would affect Bremen, for example by looking at the high-water mark of past floods in the city's inner core. A bicycle tour, finally, brought participants to see several solar and hydroelectric power facilities installed along the Weser river. In all, more than 500 people took part in the mostly booked-out guided tours.

What happened next?

- The national church convention became more readily associated with climate action in the public eye;
- The lessons learned and measures from the project are being incorporated into the planning of future church conventions;
- The environmental action supported and implemented by the church convention is now listed on the convention website, at www.kirchentag.de/ueber_uns/umweltengagement/umweltengagement.html.

During the church convention, an approximately 11-kilometer-long blue chalk line encircled Bremen's inner city – the so-called 'land-under line'. It symbolised the high-water mark that would likely result from a rise in sea level due to climate change. At one section of this line, the convention visitors also formed a human chain in an event called 'Land under water' to demonstrate in favour of climate action as part of one of the many activities of the convention.

With the 'Klimafair' contest, parishes and institutions were able to submit their proposals for ways to make everyday life more climate-friendly. The first prize was won by the parish of the 'Erlöserkirche Potsdam' (church of the redeemer Potsdam) for having negotiated a unique electricity tariff for itself with the local energy provider. As part of the deal, the provider agreed to match every kilowatt-hour of electricity delivered to the private households of those persons engaged either full-time or on a volunteer basis with the church with 1.25 cents for an eco-fund. That money is then used to finance ecological projects.



The 'KleVer' concept for climate-friendly food services

The 34th German Protestant Church Convention in Hamburg in 2013 focused on climate-friendly catering prior to and on the day of the convention. In line with the convention's motto 'As much as you need', the consumption of meat and sausage products was to be reduced by about 20 percent compared to the previous convention. The buffets for the 5,000 volunteers were modified to offer a higher proportion of raw food and vegetarian options. In addition, food waste for the whole convention was minimised thanks to a focus on the calculation of food quantities and the reuse of food residues. Finally, the dishes were reusable, napkins were made from recycled paper, and aluminium foil was avoided entirely. All these measures were to set a standard for future church conventions. In the public space, the organisers together with the water utility company Hamburg Wasser set up seven water dispensers. In this way, passersby equipped with their own reusable containers could drink tap water.

During the 'Kirchentag', the project was presented to visitors at the KleVer booth. The church convention also set up a strategy, adopted as early as 2012, that aims at transitioning to a 100 percent ecological, seasonal, regional and fair-trade food provision for convention staff and volunteers until 2019. The guideline developed in the project contributes to achieving this goal for future church conventions.

Contribution to climate action

The visitor survey conducted during the church convention showed that 40 percent of visitors knew of the climate project. Together with the numerous accompanying activities, it is thus safe to assume that more and more people are beginning to integrate eco-friendly habits into their everyday lives.

The 17,500 energy saving lamps distributed in Bremen were an element that led to direct savings. The catering provided at the 34th Hamburg Church Convention generated a total of 532 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents – which is 46 percent less than what a conventional type of food services provision would have produced. An important factor in achieving this was the focus on regional organic products, the predominantly vegetarian diet and the avoidance of high-intensity foods such as wet rice, butter and beef.

Lessons learned

Organisers of large-scale events have much to gain by looking to the church convention projects for ideas.

Checklist for success

- Respect the interests and resources of the target groups;
- Offer creative eye-catchers and hands-on stations, especially for target groups who have yet to be won over;
- Integrate emotions such as fun, pleasure and enjoyment into the design of the formats;
- Involve regional and competent cooperation partners;
- Encourage public discussion through partnerships and networks;
- Develop long-term strategies for events.

Use creative eye-catchers and hands-on stations

People who are not necessarily seeking information on climate action become interested in the topic through captivating and creatively designed media. Intensive advertising using all media channels as well as the information screen at the centrally located stage significantly increased the degree of awareness for the climate project.



Do not forget about feelings

Dietary themes are very much linked to emotions. Food is about tradition, sensory experiences, regionality and home, but also about freedom and being able to live one's preferred way of life. When designing the formats, positive emotions such as fun, excitement and enjoyment are crucial to reach people's hearts and minds.



Healthy and climate-friendly meals at the helpers' buffet

Include regional and competent cooperation partners

Events need the cooperation of established, competent and credible regional partners, such as environmental associations, energy agencies or consumer protection agencies. For the KleVer project, this was the municipal water supply and waste disposal company Hamburg Wasser, and for the church convention in Bremen, it was the state chapter of the BUND/FOE. During the planning stage, early cooperation with potential partners also helps to avoid duplicate offers and to clarify which supplier or provider is most suitable for which format.

Achieve project permanence through long-term strategies and realistic goals

A concept can be designed such that it would be directly transferable to other events. Guidelines and transparency through good documentation and realistic

objectives, assist in this goal both during and beyond the project. At the 2017 church convention, which took place in Berlin and Wittenberg, the theme of eco-friendly catering continued to be pursued, this time under the motto 'food with a face'.

The website of the church convention now has a page just on the topic of environmental management. It draws attention to activities taking place at and between the church conventions.

Climate action needs your initiative

Since its launch in 2008, the National Climate Initiative (NCI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) has been supporting numerous projects that contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Funding has been given to a broad range of activities, from developing long-term strategies to providing practical assistance and investment aid. With a focus on advancing climate action on the ground, the Initiative benefits consumers, municipalities, businesses and educational institutions.

Legal information

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