New Narratives on Climate Change from CCIs: Visioning on a future worth having.

Global Challenge 1

Context

The climate movement is suffering a collective crisis of the imagination. Faced with climate change accelerating before our eyes, we default to narratives that focus on consequences of inaction and constant disinformation.

How can we inspire and mobilise people across the globe with images of a world worth fighting for? Which is the role to be played by Culture and Creative Industries (hereinafter CCIs)? Can a new set of stories unleash a renewed momentum? Will breakthrough innovation emerge when artists collaborate with scientists, neuroscientists with engineers to truly change the way we see our future?

This Global Challenge aimed to foster a constructive dialogue on how to open our imaginations to a just and prosperous future and spark unprecedented collective action. To learn more, download this report.

The session was conducted by EIT Climate KIC, Europe's leading climate innovation agency and community.

1. Goals and methodology

The **overall goal** was twofold:

1- Identify how CCSIs industries can contribute to generate new, positive narratives on climate action. So far, it has been believed that scientific evidence would be enough to foster action. This has clearly not been the case. How can CCSIs contribute to change this?

2- Identify potential collaboration opportunities between CCSIs & Climate innovators. No one has the right answers or a "magic solution". The way forward will need to be built together, through innovative / long lasting partnerships and focusing on real people life conditions. How to make them work?

The methodology used was the "Sensemaking" approach provided by EIT Climate KIC, in which this organisation has wide experience with many organisations from across Europe and the international scene through its Transformations Hub. To know more, see this link.

Sensemaking is the ideal tool for addressing complex challenges in a participative, structured manner. As opposed to traditional mechanistic approaches which seek for predefined solutions to 'complicated' problems, sensemaking acknowledges the constantly evolving context of 'complex' environments and facilitate a structured collective process of observation, reflection, analysis, synthesis, pattern finding and insight generation to produce intelligence and identify paths for decision-making without "jumping too early into conclusions".

The point of departure is to recognise that progress can be made through adaptation and collaboration. The success of sensemaking lies in convening people in different ways and coming together collectively to a better understanding of the challenge and proposing creative solutions.
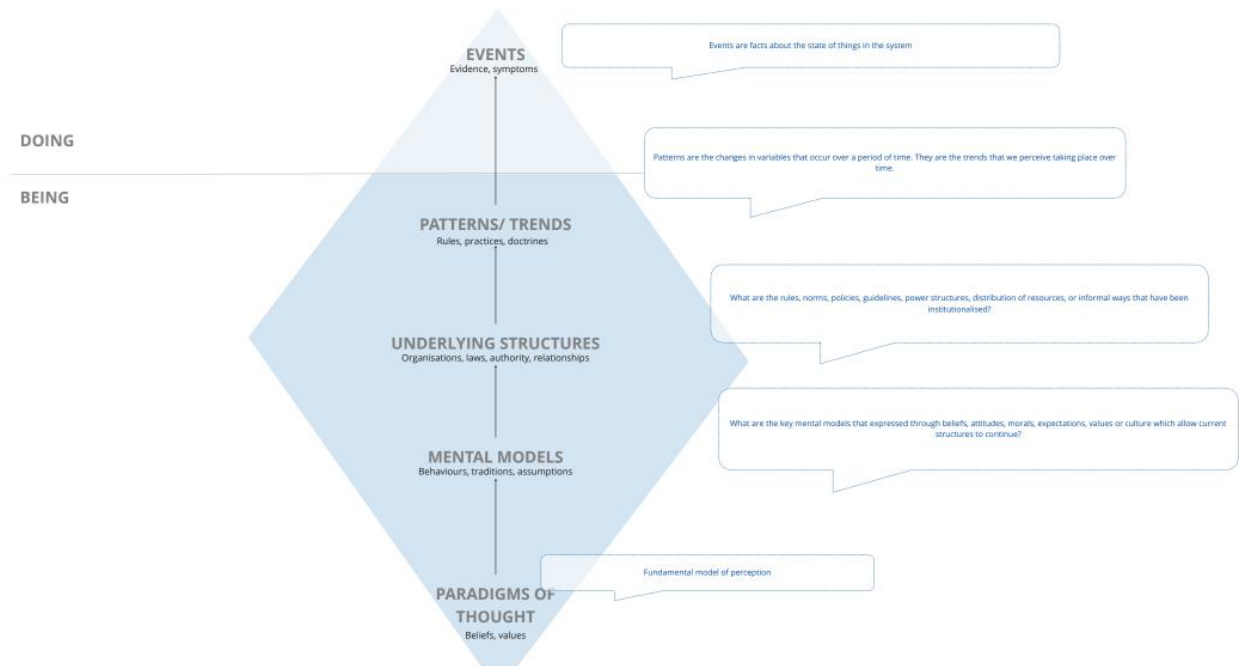
Hence, participants were divided in groups, fostering a collective reflection to generate ideas and future collaboration opportunities to make CCIs an active agent for change around 3 themes: "The role of the CCIs in changing the narrative around Climate Change in…":

•   What we eat:
•   How we move:
•   How we dress

These 3 challenges were distributed among the Tables, so that several tables responded to one of the challenges and can diversify and compare results.

The specific methodologies were based two iterative discussions following the Iceberg model (see below), which is a systemic tool supporting organizing content from any harvest activity to reveal more in-depth assumptions. Here it was used in organising insights from roundtable conversations.

ICEBERG MODEL

The iceberg model suggest that beneath the visible level of events, there are underlying patterns, structures, mental models and paradigms of thought that are responsible for creating them. If ignored, they will keep us locked into re-enacting the results that ultimately nobody wants.

EVENTS
Evidence, symptoms

Events are facts about the state of things in the system

DOING

BEING

PATTERNS/ TRENDS
Rules, practices, doctrines

Patterns are the changes in variables that occur over a period of time. They are the trends that we perceive taking place over time.

UNDERLYING STRUCTURES
Organisations, laws, authority, relationships

What are the rules, norms, policies, guidelines, power structures, distribution of resources, or informal ways that have been institutionalised?

MENTAL MODELS
Behaviours, traditions, assumptions

What are the key mental models that expressed through beliefs, attitudes, morals, expectations, values or culture which allow current structures to continue?

PARADIGMS OF THOUGHT
Beliefs, values

Fundamental model of perception

To frame the debates, a roleplay was assigned to participants, making them address the topics from two different perspectives:

- From the consumer-citizen perspective
- From the industrial-business perspective

Each participant followed the concrete narratives assuming a role which enabled full engagement and structure for the collective work. The process for each table could be summarised as follows:

1— Roundtables: Check In and role-play distribution (15')
2— Sensemaking session: Storytelling, listening, reflection and discussion (45')
3— Sharing specific conclusions with other Roundtables and way forward (30')

2. What we eat

Participants discussed the patterns, underlying structures, mental models, and paradigms of thought influencing our daily food choices; then suggested proposals on how to create new narratives, and what the role of CCIs could be to foster them.

To frame the debate and to support each group's thinking, the following basic data was shared:

- Food production must increase by an estimated 70% to feed the projected population by 2050. However, this increase needs to be sustainable to minimize environmental degradation and resource depletion.
- Despite there being enough food produced globally, millions of people suffer from hunger and malnutrition. In 2020, an estimated 811 million people were undernourished worldwide, with the majority living in developing countries.

- Current dietary patterns contribute to environmental degradation, including deforestation, biodiversity loss, water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. The production of animal-based foods, particularly beef and lamb, is particularly resource-intensive and environmentally damaging. Transitioning towards more plant-based diets and adopting sustainable agricultural practices can help mitigate these environmental impacts.
- Nutrient Decline in Food: Some studies suggest that certain essential nutrients in food, such as vitamins and minerals, may be declining due to factors like soil depletion, agricultural practices, and food processing methods. Ensuring adequate nutrient intake requires attention to both the quality of food production and dietary diversity.
- Agriculture accounts for about 11% of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Livestock production processes are the biggest emitter in this sector, generating 4 billion tons of CO_2eq in 2018 and causing widespread deforestation.
- Food retail -which includes the activities from markets, supermarkets and restaurants selling food to consumers– and most of this sector's emissions come from food and plastic waste.
- Food waste alone represents 8 to 10% of global GHG emissions. In the EU, 57 million tons of food is wasted every year: that's 127 kg per inhabitant.

Events – Patterns – Underlying structures – Mental models

The current system favours a "easy demand" culture (we want to save time, money, disturbances… our way of eating in increasingly "hostage" of our decreasingly efficient work-life balance) – Hence everything trends to be centralised in one-stop-shop supermarkets and there is a lack of information on what we really consume – What is the origin of the products we are buying? Which are the seasonal products? Who is really getting benefited / paid by our purchases?

This results in patterns such as the change on values: there is an excessive focus on success –without even a clear image of what "success" is- and we tend to erase the link between "our way of eating" and "our way of being". Also, there is the "speed culture" element: we associate "healthy and slow-paced way to eat" with the past, and we have lost connection with the previous generations and their knowledge and learnings.

In turn, this has provoked an institutionalised reality of too much power in less hands (big distributors, providers, retailers, packagers) and an overall culture of "everything everywhere at the same time" - all types of products are available and offered at sale in all places all through the year. The underlying mental models do not allow to change this because of an overall fear of losing wealth and a too strong culture of competitiveness. There is no such thing as "planned consumption".

Proposals for a New paradigm

The new paradigm should be based on the ability and willingness to share more, a cultural / educational / ethical swift towards sustainable, local food which does not need to be "visually perfect", where food waste is regarded as something morally unacceptable. We also need to work on the establishment and exchange of best practices and new role models in peer groups and a redefinition of competitive processes.

3. How we move

Participants discussed the patterns, underlying structures, mental models, and paradigms of thought influencing our daily mobility choices; then suggested proposals on how to create new narratives, and what the role of CCIs could be to foster them.

To frame the debate and to support each group's thinking, the following basic data was shared:

- Transport is responsible for about one-fifth of GHG emissions.
- About 40% of these come from the transportation of merchandise, while the rest (60%) come from passenger travel, led by air travel.
- Rapid urbanization has led to increased demand for transportation within cities, resulting in congestion, air pollution, and reduced quality of life.
- Efficient public transportation systems, along with policies promoting walking, cycling, and carpooling, are essential for addressing urban transport challenges.
- Accessibility and Equity: Many communities, particularly in rural and remote areas, lack access to reliable and affordable transportation services, limiting opportunities for economic and social participation. Ensuring equitable access to transportation is essential for promoting social inclusion and reducing disparities.
- Intermodal Connectivity: Enhancing connectivity between different modes of transportation, such as rail, road, air, and maritime, can improve efficiency and reduce costs. However, achieving seamless intermodal connectivity requires overcoming regulatory, technical, and logistical barriers.
- The ways of traveling show dramatic differences between conditions and ways of life - a large part of poorer citizens experience a lack of access to fast and safe transport, which limits their opportunities for education and meaningful work, while the rich middle class and affluent citizens travel without restrictions, but the most harmful ones the environment by planes and contribute to enormous carbon dioxide emissions.

Events – Patterns – Underlying structures – Mental models

In our culture the ownership of a car has become a "way of life" (not only the mere fact of having a car, but also the need to show to others that it is faster, more expensive). The fact that the transportation networks are often inefficient help to reaffirm this individualism. This illustrates the current paradigms of thoughts where primacy is given to instantaneous gratification.

This translates into patterns in which everything must be fast (culture of competitiveness), and the physical distance is not anymore, an "excuse" to make us wait. Within this context, comport is preferred to healthy lifestyles, there is no ground for negotiation and the publicity dictates the norms where saving time is the greatest asset.

Proposals for a New paradigm

We must find a way to make the rewards of good practices visible, and for this the application of heuristics could be a good option, since there is no such thing as an "ideal solution". Public transport policies and education, together with legislation for innovative changes were also perceived as parts of the new paradigm puzzle.

4. What we wear

Participants discussed the patterns, underlying structures, mental models, and paradigms of thought influencing our daily choices in this area; then suggested proposals on how to create new narratives, and what the role of CCIs could be to foster them.

To frame the debate and to support each group's thinking, the following basic data was shared:

- Fashion is the world's third most polluting industry, producing about 10% of our annual carbon footprint – more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined.
- GHG emissions are not the only problem with the fashion sector: it also consumes the equivalent of the water needs of five million people every year and creates millions of tons of plastic and other waste.
- Clothing production has approximately doubled in the last 15 years, driven by a growing middle-class population across the globe and increased per capita sales in developed economies.
- An expected 400 percent increase in world GDP by 2050 will mean even greater demand for clothing.
- One report found that addressing environmental and social problems created by the fashion industry would provide a $192 billion overall benefit to the global economy by 2030.
- The annual value of clothing discarded prematurely is more than $400 billion.
- 80% of apparel is made by young women between the ages of 18-24.
- Garment workers - primarily women - in Bangladesh, make about $96 / month. The government's wage board suggested that a garment worker needs 3,5 times that amount in order to live a 'decent life' with basic facilities.
- A 2018 US Department of Labor report found evidence of forced and child labour in the fashion industry in Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Turkey, Vietnam, and other countries.

Events – Patterns – Underlying structures – Mental models

We live in a "fast world" which also implies "fast fashion" – we buy new clothes very often (especially in the so called 'western world'), which implies elevated levels of pollution, water use (for fabrics production) and waste – as many of our clothes are not recycled. There are some efforts on clothes recycling schemes and materials innovation – however, in participant's view, these activities could often be linked to greenwashing practices. In addition, the fashion industry's effects on climate change –although they are becoming more visible lately - are still very much unknown to the wider public.

Current trends such as "Slow fashion" are increasingly becoming more popular, particularly among the younger generation. However, such trends are still emerging – it is difficult to move from 'fast' to 'slow' fashion quick enough, to sufficiently eliminate the impacts of climate change / water scarcity / pollution. In addition, people tend to buy new clothes instead of repairing them.

Several reasons underpin the above behaviors related to our 'clothes buying behavior:
- Price: quite often it is cheaper to buy new clothes that used ones - second hand clothes are often expensive, in comparison to what is offered (this could relate to positioning second-hand as 'vintage')
- Daily habits related to acceptance by society: societal norms require us to a) wash our clothes too often (which leads to their deterioration) b) wear clothes which 'look like new,' i.e., holes (from use) in our clothing are not welcome in work environments.
- "Throw-away" culture instead of 'repair culture': new clothes are connected to 'showing wealth,' which is a central value in our current society. This leads to a 'throw away' culture to buy new clothes, instead of a 'repair culture' which was the norm in the past, due to necessity. A 'repair culture' is not trendy at present.
- We live in a world of customers, not makers. We are embedded in a consumerist mindset, instead of a 'maker' mindset.
- Lack of skills for repairing and access to repair equipment: although 'clothes repairing' starts gaining more ground in recent years, 'repair' skills are less present. Also, our 'quick' mode of living and the lack of time experienced by most of us do not allow space for learning these 'repair' skills. On top of that, access to repair equipment (e.g., sewing machines) is often difficult / expensive.

- Identity: we have linked clothes to the display of our identity to the world. Clothes are strongly linked to our desire to be different, to display our uniqueness (prêt-à-porter), even to display social class and privileges.
- Lack of knowledge and lack of close relationship with nature: we are often not aware of the materials included in our clothes, and the impact they are having on the environment surrounding us. In addition, we consider nature as 'the other', not as part of ourselves.

Proposals for a New paradigm

Participants stressed the need to establish a culture of "sharing" as an existential practice. For instance, they mentioned the behavior model we apply with baby clothes, whereby there is generally a very strong sharing culture among parents, which somehow disappears or fades away when they (we) grow up.

In addition, a new paradigm based on the "pride for repair" could completely switch our behaviours, making us feel proud about wearing clothes longer, and buying good fabrics that last in time.

Education and culture are seen as an essential in the change process, whereby clothes can be seen as a 'second skin' that we do not throw away, but instead take care of and repair. New practices would need to be supported, like e.g. washing our clothes less often, or fostering curiosity about our clothes and enhancing our skills in relation to repair and fabric innovation. The reinvention of the concept of "cool" could support this culture shift – e.g., consider "cool" to have clothes that last longer, and that are not fully clean every day.

A shift in the way we link clothes to our personal identity could also help: can we find other ways to 'recognise' and truly and deeply 'see' each other, that are not linked to the clothes we wear? This could also link to a more inclusive society – where clothes do not signify "class" or to "identity."

How can we stimulate a new collective image, disconnected from fast-fashion clothing? The participants highlighted that CCIs can play a significant role in re-imagining, supported perhaps by media and brands to change current perceptions, and reinvent the concept of 'cool' considering a more sustainable and just world.

5. Conclusions

a. Usability of the method

The combination of role playing in story telling turned out to be a very engaging way of generating **meaning** and deepening the understanding of not only superficial, but also systemic features in the three areas analysed.

By assigning a role to each group participant and emphasizing the importance of listening to stories, the knowledge, experience, and specific contexts from which the exercise participants came could be extracted and used to build an in-depth explanation of phenomena occurring in the fashion, food, and transport sectors. Even if we did not have domain experts on board, the experiences of all of us as reflective consumers were detailed enough to reach deeper levels with the Iceberg model by combining the perspectives of supply and demand and trying to understand the reasons for the forms they take.

None of the groups stopped at the level of describing the surface itself (which shows what people and companies do). In all of them, the discussion focused on the values and paradigms that underlie how looped our behaviours and business models are, how they result from the predominance of "speed" in satisfying changing needs.

b. What new concepts and values do we need?

All three groups drew attention to similar mechanisms resulting from the primacy of the language of efficiency, profit, satisfaction, and ownership. It seems that the search for new narratives should focus on new, redefined concepts:

- **Time.** Currently, much of our activity - especially as consumers - is based on the belief that our primary right is a quick rate of satisfaction. Every system of distribution, sales, but also services - including digital ones - must, above all, be very fast. This completely changes the psychological and material structure of our consumption - we need more and more things and experiences to satisfy an increasingly hungry and dispersed cognitive system.
Things and experiences get boring very quickly, their attractiveness cycle is short, and our satisfaction is superficial and temporary. Inventing new forms of satisfying needs that will relate to patience –for instance "I will eat fruit only when it is in season"- , longevity -"I am most proud of those things that last for several years"-, long time horizon -"we cannot go on vacation now, we will plan a trip to another continent and calculate how it will compensate for the carbon footprint generated"- is potentially a very important space for the creative sector.

- **Having vs. sharing**. These are critical categories for all three sectors discussed, although each of them has slightly different paths and models of re-organization. The decision to build utility models in fashion on producing clothes of high quality and low environmental harmfulness would require a change in thinking not only that it is good to have clothes for a long time, but also that they should be exchanged with others and thus dynamize one's experience -"I don't get bored that I still look the same because my clothes are in circulation with other people". Expanding the public transport model, which is based on sharing the costs and experience of travel - and minimizing the "ownership" of means of transport (cars) would require investment in the availability of the former, reliability, but also in the variety of additional values that we obtain by traveling. collectively. Supporting the values of sharing, collective use and freeing ourselves from the "compulsion to possess" through stories and images is one of the most important tasks of our sector.

- **Identity and happiness.** The stories created during our exercise repeated the theme of an intense search for fulfilment and happiness through patterns of intense consumption and very hard work, which takes a lot of time and energy, and therefore forces us to search for happiness very

quickly (instant happiness). Due to the scale of sacrifices that such a work model requires from us, they become the basic material (apart from consumption patterns) for building a sense of identity (a sense of who I am and what I am like).

Already here we can see how this third area is related to the previous two and how a change in them should automatically allow for a change in the ways of creating identity - not by investing in strenuous work and intensive consumption, but by collective reflection on it resulting from an extended time horizon. what we as a community can do to meet our needs while respecting others (people and species). The identity resulting from the fact that as a resident of a given area, I respect the land and the farmers who produce food, I understand and know what their work is like, which is why I eat the things closest to me and I am ready to pay a little more for them. Because it also treats the local farmer as a guardian of our common good (land, landscape, plant, and animal ecosystem). He finds time (!) to see how local food is grown and time to cook for himself.

The same story can be told about traveling, which can be a way of getting to know (the area or other people) rather than moving as quickly as possible. One group clearly stated that the climate crisis is a moment in which we cannot just recreate models of identity and happiness given to us from a time when issues of planetary boundaries did not exist. Especially since we know that they are not effective (not only for the planet, but also for us). The role of the creative sector is to consistently implement various activities for collective happiness and satisfaction.