LOW ENERGY HOUSING

WHAT IT’S ABOUT:
The Low Energy Housing campaign, launched by SWITCH-Asia, focused on increasing the sustainable use of resources in the building sectors in the city of Shenzhen and Sichuan province, China, by influencing a shift in construction practices including energy efficiency and recycling of building materials. These activities were connected to improving quality life for citizens in the target cities by emphasizing that green buildings are more healthy environments for people to live in. Low Energy Housing also framed its activities in terms of contributing to climate change mitigation.

The initiative made extensive use of events and workshops designed to connect stakeholders from business and government with the benefits of sustainable buildings and construction practices in China’s unique context, as well as facilitate the emergence of coordinated action on policy development, real estate planning and construction between public and private actors. The Low Energy Housing campaign also leveraged international expertise to provide technical training and project consultation. The goal of shifting construction practices was achieved by tapping into the desire among Chinese construction firms to participate in the larger, national transition toward a more sustainable development model for China.

PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

IMPACT

The Low Energy Housing campaign was highly focused on results with a rigorous monitoring system in place for an Asian and global audience. The campaign resulted in significant savings from reducing carbon emissions by allowing construction projects to avoid purchasing carbon credits in China’s carbon emissions trading system. It increased the share of sustainable buildings in Sichuan’s market from 4.2% in 2010 to 16.6% in 2014, and 22.3% in 2010 to 39.5% in 2014 in Shenzhen. The campaign connected with more than 700 small and medium-sized enterprises and engaged in 42 outreach activities.
COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Low Energy Housing Campaign attracted 36 stakeholder groups ranging from local authorities and media outlets, to consumer associations and community leaders. They provided input into policy dialogues and benefited from technical training, sharing best practices, and networking. Over the three-year campaign, the adoption of sustainable practices and the construction of green buildings by participating firms resulted in 7.45 million square meters of energy efficient floor area being constructed, which translates to a reduction of 420,000 tonnes of CO2 and 67 petajoules (PJ) of energy savings. It also increased the use of solar heaters and geothermal heat pumps by 16.5% compared with 2010.

COMMUNICATIONS TAKEAWAYS

Connecting with Audiences:
Foster Public-Private Partnerships

Build public-private partnerships to help advance policy change and provide the incentives needed to spark sustainable behaviour change in your target audience. As in this case, partners can be brought together for learning opportunities (such as on the benefits of low energy housing), to build coalitions toward policy goals, or for peer-to-peer learning. For example, in Low Energy Housing, the success of the program results from the financial investment of public and private actors and the interactions of the international, governmental, business, and NGOs through networking and knowledge sharing.

Strategy:
Identify a Need around which to Align Activities

Identify where your audience is experiencing a coordination gap or lack of capacity, and craft a strategy designed to support their efforts. The scope can include specific technical needs as well as more general gaps in coordination across actors. For example, the construction stakeholders in Low Energy Housing participated to meet their need of gaining sustainable and low-carbon building knowledge and capacity.

MORE INFORMATION

http://www.switch-asia.eu/projects/low-energy-housing/
http://www.switch-asia.eu/multimedia/low-energy-housing/
http://www.switch-asia.eu/programme/