

Carbon theatre in public spaces – using participatory theatre and co-design methods in a museum for shaping low carbon lifestyles

Birgit Brunklaus* 1, Lizette Reitzma (1), Jennie Schaeffer (2), Merja Ryöppy (3), Hayley Ho and Sofie Nyström (1)

1 RISE SWEDEN, 2 VASTMANLANDS COUNTY MUSEUM, 3 SDU UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN DENMARK

Introduction and objectives: Over the past ten years, the need for public spaces to deal with burning societal issues, such as climate change, has become even more important. Participatory theatre offers ways to meet the longing for shared forums by engaging large groups of people in exploring difficult social dilemmas. It can potentially empower participants to change their own situations and organizations. In a previous design research project ‘Quantifying your carbon footprint’, the goal was to visualize carbon impacts of daily life activities. The goal of this project was to further explore and understand the climate and environmental impacts of lifestyles.

Material and methods: The project is built on participatory theatre and object theatre methods. Moreover, co-design methods and pop-up exhibitions are used to engage young citizens in negotiating social norms and understanding their possible impact on CO2 emissions. We have used the findings from the Quantifying carbon footprint project as an entry point and expanded those with Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) on objects from the current museum collection and on daily life activities that have a carbon impact.

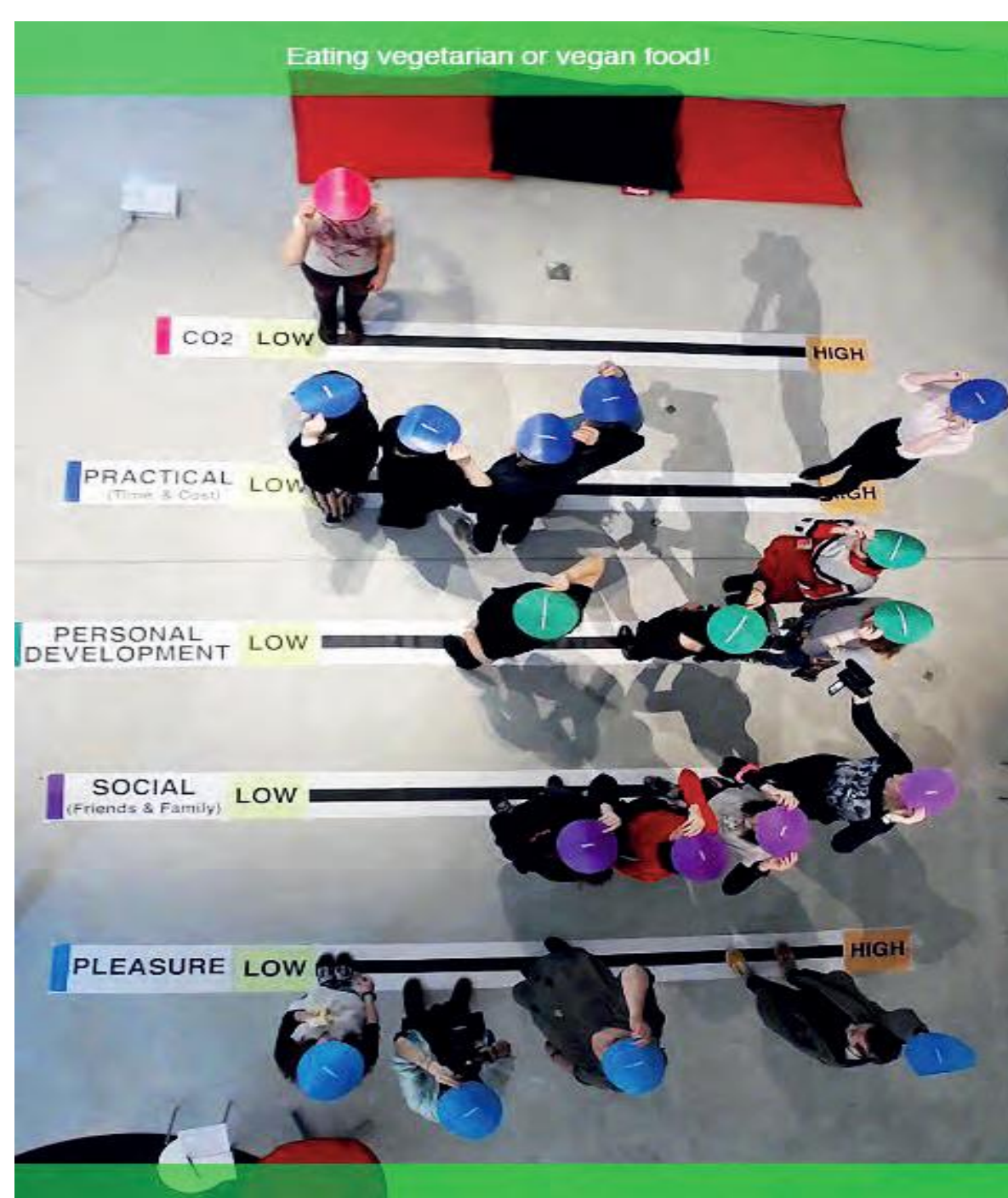


Figure 1: Participants standing on lines and debating consequences of their daily life choices.

Where do you go for vacation? When was your first flight abroad?
Carbon footprint: Spain 1 ton CO2.

What do you eat? Vegetarian or meat?
Carbon footprints: Vegetarian meal 0,6 kg CO2, pork meal 1,3kg CO2, beef meal 4,5 kg CO2.
How much meat do we eat? 60kg/year!



CO2 Theatre Instagram:
<http://hotsta.org/co2theatre>

What do you wear? Did you buy a new T-shirt?
Carbon footprints: 2-6 kg CO2 (1kg eko).
How much cloth do we use?
13 kg/year, 8 kg/year are waste! 2,8 pair of shoes/year!

Should you update your mobile phone to a new one or use a fair phone?
Carbon footprints: 35 kg CO2 new phone, 16kg CO2 for a fair phone.

Results and discussion: The results show that Participatory Improvised Theatre and Object Theatre methods help to understand and set in action the complex CO2 information. The project has created a shared understanding of carbon emissions and enabled to explore social dilemmas related to changes in lifestyles. The museum collections play a crucial role in the process of understanding how we handle products and objects in our everyday life, today and historically. Developing new practices for museums involving participatory methods are discussed in order to engage young citizens in climate research.

Conclusions: The project shows that using the museum’s collection, the history and value of things from the past centuries became surfaced and easier to reflect compared to today’s unsustainable lifestyle – travelling and over consumption. Using lifecycle-based information has helped the participants to understand the carbon footprints of objects and lifestyles. Using Object Theatre and Participatory Theatre to explore social dilemmas has helped them to understand the context of different lifestyles.

(Many thanks to the participants and to FORMAS for financing the research.)

FORMAS 2018 - 02178