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Climate Change and Generation Zero:

Analysing the 50/50 Campaign: A Communication for Social Change Approach

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1 Introduction

Climate change does not respect national boundaries or distinguish between big and small polluters. It is one of the truly global problems humanity faces today. In spite of this, there is reluctance to believe in the existence of climate change even though the scientific consensus is that human influence bears much of the responsibility. In less than 200 years, human activity has increased the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases by some 50 per cent relative to pre-industrial levels, leading to an increase in global temperatures.[1] Yet contrarian perspectives abound, given prominence by the media and promoted by fossil fuel lobbies. One such example is Dennis Avery and Fred Singer's *Unstoppable Global Warming: Every 1,500 Years*, a book whose premise is that "human-emitted CO_2 has played only a minor role" in contributing to climate change.[2]

The first half of this paper will set the context on the gradual heating of the Earth's atmosphere – the popular term for which is global warming[3], how this anthropomorphically induced climate change is communicated, and the position of New Zealand on carbon emissions.

Scientific debate aside, the fight to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is slowly gaining prominence, spurred on by increasing number of unprecedented natural disasters and no-holds-barred campaigns like Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth*. Climate change activists, advocates and associations all over the world are making efforts to convince us of the seriousness of the issue. One such approach is Communication for Social Change (CFSC) – an empowering form of communication through which those involved define their needs and how they will work towards achieving these, thereby improving their lives and that of their communities.[4] Given that people find it difficult to believe climate change is happening, a CFSC approach could bring people closer to the issues and encourage them to find ways to alleviate the situation.

In New Zealand, organizations like 350, Generation Zero and the Coal Action Network are working towards securing a carbon independent future. The second part of this paper focuses on Generation Zero, group of young people who are motivated by a strong desire to effect social change and committed to achieving a zero carbon New Zealand. Using a CFSC

[1] King, D. (2004). Environment climate change science: Adapt, mitigate, or ignore? *Science* (New York, N.Y.), 303(5655), 176-177.
[2] Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. (2010b). Tree muggers. *New Statesman*, 139(5003), 34-35.
[3] Karl, T., & Trenberth, K. (2003). Modern global climate change. *Science (New York, N.Y.)*, 302(5651), 1719-1723.
[4] CFSC Consortium. (2012) Retrieved from http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/mission

approach, this paper will evaluate the communication strategies of Generation Zero, with a focus on their current campaign – 50/50 – aimed at urging policy makers to allot equal funding to improving public transport as well as roads. This evaluation is based on information publicly available on their website, communication with Kirk Serpes and Lance Cash, founding members of the organisation and documentation shared by the organisation's National Support Group. With messages, communication tools and approaches customised according to the stakeholder in question, Generation Zero provides us with an opportunity to study and understand the efficacy of different CFSC methodologies such as participatory communication, monologic/ dialogic communication, activism and advocacy.

2 Understanding Climate Change

> *"Let me tell you a secret. Sometimes – just sometimes – I get jealous of the people who don't believe in climate change."*[5]

Danny Chivers aptly captures the state of communication on climate change today. Lack of adequate information and contrasting views from deniers, doubt mongers, corporate lobbies and more, confuse an audience already distanced from considering climate change as an issue which affects them on a personal level.[6] A March 2012 study by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication reports a six point decrease (to 35 per cent) in the proportion of Americans who believe that most scientists think global warming is happening, with a two point increase (to 41 per cent) in those who believe there is a lot of disagreement among scientists[7]. Nevertheless, climate change is a reality. In the following sections, we will understand the basics of climate change, policies & policy makers affecting it, a local New Zealand view and more importantly, look at perceptions and beliefs about climate change and how communication affects them.

2.1 What is Climate Change and Why is it Happening?

The climate has always changed, as is evident from sources like polar ice caps, tree rings and cave deposits. Historically, this has been the result of forces of the Earth's natural carbon cycle, which maintained a balance of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Carbon emitted from sources like the earth's crust, plants, oceans etc. was absorbed back into rocks, rivers and plants; i.e. the biosphere acting as a carbon sink.[8] However over time, the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere has rapidly increased, creating an imbalance and effectively overriding the slow natural carbon cycle of the Earth.

[5] Chivers, D. (2011). *The no-nonsense guide to climate change: The science, the solutions, the way forward*. Oxford: New Internationalist, p. 11.

[6] Norton, A. and Leaman, J. (2004). The Day After Tomorrow: Public Opinion on Climate Change. MORI Social Research Institute. Retrieved on 10/06/2012 from http://climateprediction.net/schools/docs/mori_poll.pdf
Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. (2010a). Defeating the merchants of doubt. *Nature*, 465(7299), 686-687.
Washington, H., & Cook, J. (2011). *Climate change denial: Heads in the sand*. London: Earthscan.

[7] Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., Roser-Renouf, C., & Hmielowski, J. D. (2012) Climate change in the American Mind: Americans' global warming beliefs and attitudes in March 2012. Yale University and George Mason University. New Haven, *CT: Yale Project on Climate Change Communication*. Retrieved on 12/06/2012 from http://environment.yale.edu/climate/files/Climate-Beliefs-March-2012.pdf

[8] Chivers, D. (2011). *The no-nonsense guide to climate change: The science, the solutions, the way forward*. Oxford: New Internationalist.
Cox, P., Betts, R., Jones, C., Spall, S. Totterdell, I. (2000). Acceleration of global warming due to carbon-cycle feedbacks in a coupled climate model. *Nature*. Vol 408, 184-187.

Humans have been contributing to the increase of greenhouse gases in many ways: the accelerated burning of fossil fuels (which began in earnest during the industrial revolution of the late 18th Century); processes of urbanisation, such as the cutting down of forests and creation of urban concrete jungles; methane and nitrous oxide emissions from landfills, manufacturing, etc.; and air travel emissions.

Reports from the Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii peg October 2012 CO_2 levels at 391.03 parts per million (ppm). Although it is estimated that half of all current emissions are absorbed by ocean and land ecosystems, this absorption is sensitive to climate as well as to atmospheric CO_2 concentrations; creating a feedback loop.[9] Using a three-dimensional carbon climate model, experts predict that carbon-cycle feedback could significantly accelerate climate change during the twenty-first century. Additionally, under a 'business as usual' focus on conventional economic growth strategies, the terrestrial biosphere will only act as an overall carbon sink until approximately 2050, before turning into a source[10].

Over the past few years, various unprecedented natural disasters such as the 2010 floods in Pakistan, hurricane Katrina, heat waves in Russia and the Queensland flooding have occurred. Moreover, even if none of these incidents can be individually linked to climate change; this overall trend of more frequent, extreme weather events is exactly what one would expect from a warming world.[11]

2.2 **Climate Change Communication**

Climate change communication is often characterised by contrasting views amongst the various stakeholders, leaving the wider public confused and unable to relate to the urgency of the issue. Tickell observes that: "Communicating the fact of climate change is a complex process involving political leadership, science, public pressure, and even perhaps a useful catastrophe or two to illuminate the issues."[12] But one thing is certain; climate change is no longer a radical claim, but an established scientific fact. What remains is communicating this fact to a public for whom climate change is not a 'backyard issue'.[13]

Climate change campaigns can be distinguished by the aims they seek to achieve – either to change individual, voluntary behaviours or to influence policy or systemic behaviour. The former succeeds when targeted groups or individuals change their behaviour in a desired way, for example optimizing water usage or carpooling. With the latter, mobilised constituencies are critical to influencing a wider chain of events or outcomes at a structural level. The notion of a mobilised public is what Salmon, Post and Christensen identify as a defining characteristic of 'public will' campaigns, or "organized, strategic initiatives designed to legitimise and garner [mobilise] public support . . . as a mechanism of achieving . . . change."[14]

[9] Cox, P., Betts, R., Jones, C., Spall, S. Totterdell, I.
[10] Ibid
[11] Chivers, D. (2011). *The no-nonsense guide to climate change: The science, the solutions, the way forward*. Oxford: New Internationalist, p. 11.
[12] Tickell, C. (2002). Communicating climate change. *Science* (New York, N.Y.), 297(5582), p. 737.
[13] Speth, G. (2011). Communicating environmental risks in an age of disinformation. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 67(4), 1-7. doi:10.1177/0096340211413559
[14] Cox, J. (2010). Beyond Frames: Recovering the Strategic in Climate Communication. *Environmental Communication*, *4*(1), 122-133, p. 124.

Cox argues that such communication is non-adaptive to the scale and timetable required to address the complexities of climate science and/or the urgency required. He further asserts that the assumptions of a mobilised public – either as a result of communicative acts that mobilise or from mobilisation that enables a particular end – do not appear to be working in the case of climate change.[15] One reason is that opponents of climate change have become more sophisticated in mounting contrasting 'public will' campaigns and creating uncertainty about climate science itself.[16] This has resulted in a failure to effectively educate the public about climate change and create a constituency capable of demanding adequate political action.[17]

Oreskes and Conway contend that one reason people are confused is because there have been intentional campaigns to mislead them. They compare these campaigns, combatting the idea the Earth is warming due to human interference, to similar ones denying cigarette smoking causes cancer or that DDT should be banned.[18] Washington and Cook note that there are patterns in denial of scientific evidence – the most common is to attribute observed changes to natural variance. This brings a sense of complacency – if the occurrences are natural, there is no cause to worry or make changes. While it is hard to refute natural variances, scientists must help to differentiate natural from human-influenced occurrences.[19] Oreskes and Conway urge them to take the time to publically disseminate their findings and also suggest reforming academic research reward systems to encourage these outreach efforts.[20]

The media also needs to take responsibility for educating the public about climate change. Tickell acknowledges that covering climate change is difficult as: "News has to have a beginning and an end, and often has to be artificially polarised. A process that occurs over years or centuries is hard to report on very often."[21] The media also has to revise its view on balanced reporting when it comes to climate change. Washington and Cook point out that a situation where "the vast majority of the scientific community is given equal space with denial advocates is anything but balanced."[22] Current reporting serves to promote the view that the scientific community is split evenly about whether human-caused climate change is real, when the reality is 97.5 per cent of climate scientists attribute climate change to human influence.[23] Owing to its complexity, journalists need to take care when reporting on climate change and make an effort to provide both sides of a story supported by verified sources, rather than ideological arguments.

Climate change science is complicated at best. But there have been instances when attempts to convey the threat it poses have surmounted all the barriers. More such efforts of clear, concise and attention-grabbing communication – like the film *An Inconvenient Truth* – are sorely needed if humanity is to be sufficiently roused to support climate change solutions.

[15] Cox, J.
[16] Cox, J.
Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. (2010b). Tree muggers. *New Statesman*, 139(5003), 34-35.
[17] Cox, J.
[18] Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. (2010a). Defeating the merchants of doubt. *Nature*, 465(7299), 686-687.
[19] Washington, H., & Cook, J. (2011). *Climate change denial: Heads in the sand*. London: Earthscan.
[20] Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. (2010a). Defeating the merchants of doubt. *Nature*, 465(7299), 686-687.
[21] Tickell, C. (2002). Communicating climate change. *Science* (New York, N.Y.), 297(5582), p. 737.
[22] Washington, H., & Cook, J. (2011). *Climate change denial: Heads in the sand*. London: Earthscan, p. 93.
[23] Anderegg, W., Prall, J., Harold, J., & Schneider, S. (2010). Expert credibility in climate change. *PNAS 2010*, doi:10.1073/pnas.1003187107. Retrieved on 10/11/2012 from http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/06/04/1003187107.full.pdf+html
Washington, H., & Cook, J.

2.3 **Climate Change Policy**

The atmosphere is akin to a global commons that responds to many types of emission. As human balloon flights around the world illustrate, the air over a specific location is typically halfway around the world a week later, making climate change a truly global issue.[24] In such a scenario, the solution can only come from international cooperation. The first step to achieving this was the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in order to provide the world with a clear scientific view on climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts.[25]

In 1992, the IPCC played an important role in the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – the key international treaty intended to reduce global warming and cope with its consequences.[26] While the intention of the treaty was for countries to monitor and reduce their emissions, none of the signatories agreed to any binding reductions, largely due to obstruction from U.S. negotiators and fossil-fuel lobbyists.[27]

In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was drafted via the UNFCCC process. It called for industrialised nations to reduce their emissions to 5.2 per cent below 1990 levels within the 2008-2012 period. Developing countries were not required to reduce emissions under the Protocol.[28] The U.S. delegation, led by then Vice-President Al Gore, initially signed up only on the condition that carbon trading is allowed under the treaty, affecting its efficacy.[29] They later pulled out of the Protocol in 2001, citing the negative economic impact due to emission reduction costs and because developing nations were not required to meet reduction targets.[30]

Largely cooked up by U.S. economists to make the protocol more palatable to their corporate allies, carbon trading allows nations to buy their way out of carbon emission reduction by purchasing 'carbon credits'.[31] Every year, each country would be allotted an emissions quota or a fixed number of carbon credits. If any country emitted less than its quota, it was allowed to sell its excess credit on the open global market. Conversely, the same applied to countries that had to emit more than their quota – they simply purchased the required carbon credits.[32] The next year the number of credits available – the cap – would reduce, leading the system to be called cap-and-trade. Yet, the system started out with many questions unanswered – how each country's quota was determined, the cost of carbon credits and regulating their sale, were among the key issues. Added to this was the complexity of 'carbon sink credits' – whether a country's current forested area or annual planting of trees should be subtracted as a carbon sink and that amount added to their carbon allocation. This effectively allowed nations with large

[24] Karl, T., & Trenberth, K. (2003). Modern global climate change. *Science (New York, N.Y.)*, 302(5651), 1719-1723.
[25] Chivers, D. (2011). *The no-nonsense guide to climate change: The science, the solutions, the way forward*. Oxford: New Internationalist.
[26] IPCC. (2012). Retrieved on 13/06/2012 from http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization_history.shtml#.T9sFOcWj4SY
[27] Chivers, D.
[28] Hardy, J. (2003). *Climate change: Causes, effects, and solutions*. Chichester: Wiley.
[29] Chivers, D. (2011). *The no-nonsense guide to climate change: The science, the solutions, the way forward*. Oxford: New Internationalist.
[30] Tickell, C. (2002). Communicating climate change. *Science* (New York, N.Y.), 297(5582).
[31] Chivers, D.
[32] Hardy, J.

forests to meet their obligations without substantially reducing emissions. The major issue, however, was that carbon trading focused on emissions stabilisation rather than reductions, leading the U.S. Brookings Institute to call the system flawed and doomed to failure.[33]

Kyoto has had mixed effects over the years. The authors of the Hartwell Paper argue the Kyoto protocol had failed to achieve its goals, attributing this failure to a misunderstanding of the nature of climate change as a policy issue and the basic, structural flaws in the UNFCCC/Kyoto model.[34] The protocol is set to expire this year and so far no decision has been made on a treaty to replace it.

The Durban conference of 2011 only succeeded in securing the E.U.'s agreement to extend its emission reduction goals beyond 2012. Russia, Canada and Japan declared that they would not adopt new targets and U.S.A. had not ratified the original treaty to begin with.[35] The E.U.'s decision creates a bridging mechanism for the period between the expiration of current goals for developed nations and the entry into force of a new international deal that envoys agreed to prepare for no later than 2020. If approved as scheduled in 2015, the pact will be operational from 2020 and will become the key action in the fight against climate change.[36]

2.4 **New Zealand and Climate Change**

A signatory on the Kyoto Protocol, New Zealand is one of 149 nations working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.[37] Comparing emission patterns with the rest of the world, New Zealand is unique in that 49 per cent of its emissions come from agriculture – methane produced by cattle, sheep, deer and goats digesting grass and nitrous oxide from manure, fertilisers and soils. Its uniqueness also extends to the fact that about 70 per cent of the energy generated comes from renewable sources like hydro-power.[38]. In spite of this, trends show that emissions are increasing, mainly due to the transport sector, agriculture and the use of fossil fuels to generate electricity. In 2005, New Zealand's total emissions were 76.5 Mt CO_2-equivalent (CO_2-e), approximately 0.2 per cent of total world emissions.[39] Atkinson observes that this low percentage is due in large part to the country's small population.[40] However, New Zealand's emissions intensity in comparison to its population is high. In 2005, the emissions per person were the 13th highest in the world, at 18.3 tonnes CO_2-e per person – compared to an already substantial world average of 4 CO_2-e per person.[41]

[33] Ibid
[34] Prins, G.; Galiana, I.; Green, C.; Grundmann, R.; Hulme, M.; Korhola, A.; Laird, F.; Nordhaus, T.; Pielke, R.; Rayner, S.; Sarewitz, D.; Shellenberger, M.; Stehr, N. and Tezuka, H. (2010). *The Hartwell Paper: A new direction for climate policy after the crash of 2009*. Retrieved on 11/06/2012 from http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/27939/1/HartwellPaper_English_version.pdf
[35] Krukowska, E. (2011). *EU Agrees to Extend Kyoto Emission-Reduction Goals Beyond 2012*. Retrieved on 15/06/2012 from http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-12-11/eu-agrees-to-extend-kyoto-emission-reduction-goals-beyond-2012.html
[36] Ibid
[37] Ministry for Environment. (2012). *New Zealand's Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990–2010*. Retrieved on 14/06/2012 from http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/climate/greenhouse-gas-inventory-2012/index.html
[38] Ibid
[39] Ibid
[40]

New Zealand has put into place the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), which compels any entity releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere to transfer to the government a qualifying emission unit (New Zealand Unit – NZU) for each tonne of their emissions. These are supplied free of charge by the government to selected recipients. If polluters don't have enough units, they can purchase additional NZUs from other sellers or Kyoto credits from the global market. However, as already discussed, global carbon trading schemes are flawed to begin with and the ETS is no exception.[42]

The ETS is often characterised as a cap-and-trade system but this is incorrect. New Zealand imposes no cap at a national or sectoral level and places no limit on what proportion of any firm's restrictions may be covered by externally purchased credits. In the larger scheme of things, New Zealand, due to its size, has no ability to influence the world price of carbon credits. Furthermore, in the absence of a cap, local emission volumes will change only insofar as the price of internationally purchased carbon credits constitutes an incentive to change.[43] The second major flaw of the ETS is with revenues accrued from trading. Under a carbon tax, money collected from polluters would have gone to the government. This could then have been spent on initiatives to help reduce emission levels through improving public transport or reforestation. Under the ETS, if a polluter requires additional NZUs or carbon credits from the global market, the money goes to the sellers of the units, with no accountability to government or to the wider public.[44]

Despite all this, as of October 2012, New Zealand sits on a surplus of 35.3 million Kyoto carbon units. The reason for the surplus is carbon sinks – for while projected total emissions rose, they were balanced by a projected increase in removals from forestry. And this rise is primarily due to more accurate estimates of the rate at which forests sequester carbon.[45]

New Zealand has however, refused to sign fresh commitments for reducing greenhouse gas emissions under the new Kyoto Protocol.[46] Tim Groser, the New Zealand Climate Change Minister, reiterated the government's commitment to reduce emissions under the ETS, saying it was better to contribute to efforts under the UNFCCC, to reach a deal that would tackle the lion's share of the problem, rather than the 15 per cent of global emissions Kyoto covered.[47]

[42] Bertram, G., & Terry, S. (2010). The carbon challenge: New Zealand's emissions trading scheme. Wellington, N.Z.: Bridget Williams Books.
[43] Ibid
[44] Ibid
[45] Ministry for Environment. (2012). *New Zealand's Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990–2010*. Retrieved on 14/06/2012 from http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/climate/greenhouse-gas-inventory-2012/index.html
[46] Watkins, T. (2012, Nov 13). *Clark steers clear of NZ's Kyoto debate*. Retrieved on 23/11/2012 from http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/7945234/Clark-steers-clear-of-NZs-Kyoto-debate
[47] Fallow, B. (2012, Nov, 10). NZ backs off Kyoto climate change route. *The New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved on 23/11/2012 from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10846305

3 Case Study: Generation Zero

3.1 **Who is Generation Zero?**

Generation Zero is a New Zealand based organisation comprised mainly of young people between the ages of 18 and 30, with a vision of achieving a zero carbon Aotearoa by 2050.[48] With a firm belief that the barriers to alleviate climate change are not technical, but the lack of political will and a clear sense of direction, Generation Zero has embarked on a series of campaigns aimed at educating the public about this lack of action and influencing government to make environmentally friendly policies. With bases in Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and Hamilton, Generation Zero has over 1000 members spread across the country.[49]

Begun in July 2011, Generation Zero's core value is *Inter-Generational Justice*. This is based on the argument that, while every other generation has inherited a world with a promise for greater prosperity and a brighter future, the current generation faces an inheritance of ecological and economic debt, rising sea levels, poisoned ecosystems, lack of water, international famine and mass migration.[50] This works in favour of the target audience that Generation Zero wants to convert to its cause – youth and young professionals, whom they hope to imbibe with a sense of injustice at the lack of concrete measures to build a sustainable world.

Generation Zero aims to bring about legislation change in New Zealand to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the near-term, while pushing for a coherent long-term national plan. To achieve this, Generation Zero has a two pronged approach – encourage behavioural change amongst the voting public by raising awareness of climate change, and by engaging directly in national and local politics. They are not aligned with any political parties, are completely independent in their views and are supported by organisations such as Medical Students for Global Awareness, Engineers without Borders New Zealand and Global Poverty Project. Guiding them is also an advisory board comprised of experienced professionals like Jeanette Fitzsimons – former Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand Co-leader, Sudhvir Singh – Founder of Medical Students for Global Awareness and Simon Terry – a sustainability strategist.[51]

As an organisation involved in social change, the general character of Generation Zero can be defined as a mix of activism and advocacy. They have a strong doctrine that dictates all their actions, conforming to what Moyer defines as 'The Rebel' role of activism – putting issues and policies in the public spotlight and on society's agenda. Through the use of non-violent direct actions such as flash mobs, a funeral procession and similar stunts, they educate and inform the public about how official power holders have failed to act in the public interest.[52] As

[48] Generation Zero. (2012). *Climate Talk*. Retrieved from http://climatetalk.co.nz/
[49] Ibid
[50] Ibid
[51] Ibid
[52] Norton, A. and Leaman, J. (2004). The Day After Tomorrow: Public Opinion on Climate Change. MORI Social Research Institute. Retrieved on 10/06/2012 from http://climateprediction.net/schools/docs/mori_poll.pdf
Serpes, K. (2012). Guest Lecture notes – Social Change and *Movements*. [Power point slides] Auckland, New Zealand: Unitec Institute of Technology.

advocates of a cause, Generation Zero is also involved in the political process through official and unofficial means in order to affect policy decisions on local, regional and national levels.[53]

3.2 **Generation Zero – Communication Approach**

Generation Zero's communication is shaped by a set of values identified as defining their brand personality (see Fig. 1). These form a basic checklist to ascertain if communications sent out are consistent and true to the essence of the brand; i.e. the external personality that all communication is framed within.

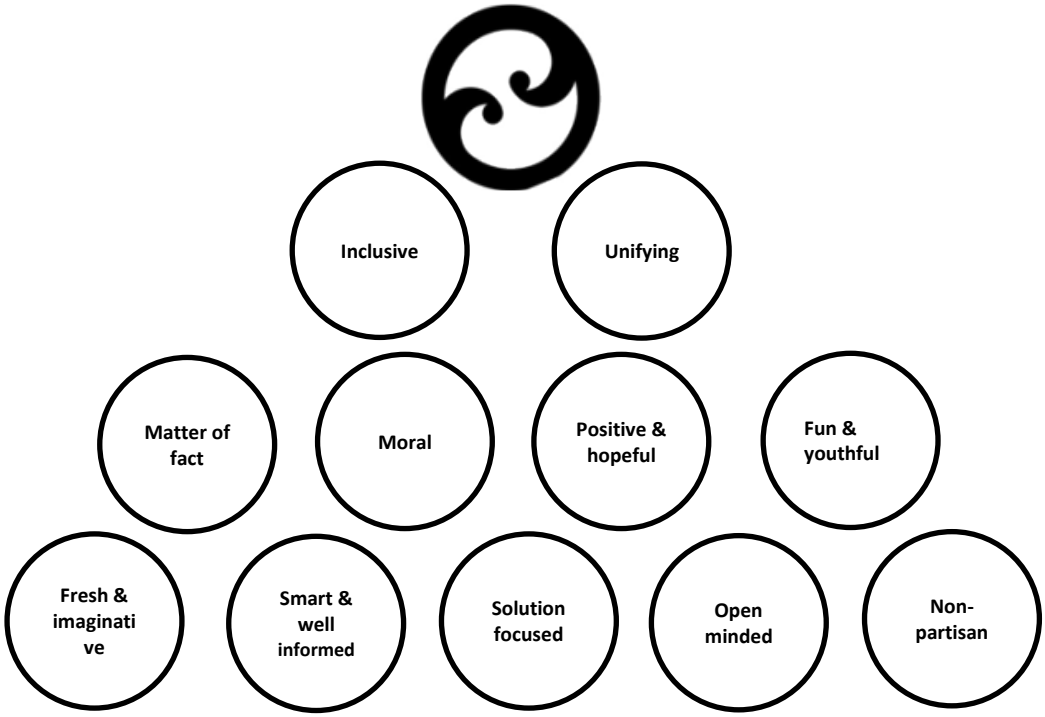

Figure 1: The Generation Zero Brand Values[54]

They also use various framing strategies; communications designed using carefully selected words to target a specific worldview.[55] Framing as a communication tool has been utilized in various disciplines ranging from political sciences to psychology to journalism. Entman describes it as "…to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described.[56] Individuals perceive and understand messages through the lenses of their experiences, cultural context and environment. Framing thus makes use of these lenses to create communication that is more effective in persuading, by constructing messages that appeal to our existing

[53] Kirch, W. (2008). Encyclopedia of Public Health: Volume 1: A - H Volume 2: I – Z. Springer.
[54] Cash, L., personal communication, June 6, 2012.
[55] Ibid
[56] Entman, Robert M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43: 51-58, p. 52, emphasis in original.

worldviews. One example of Generation Zero's framing is their use of the term 'carbon pollution' instead of 'carbon emissions', thereby evoking a greater negative reaction.

Generation Zero talks to multiple stakeholders involved with and affected by climate change. To analyse their communication strategy, it is therefore necessary to understand how communicating with a different stakeholder can alter their communication approach. It is important that the essence or core of a message remains the same irrespective of the stakeholder in consideration, and that only the approach alters.

The key stakeholders for Generation Zero are:

3.2.1 **Internal Communication**

The internal structure of Generation Zero is divided into different clusters depending on the level of commitment and involvement. The National Support Group (NSG) is at the core of the organisation and is involved in making the major decisions.

In order to maintain a flow of information amongst the members of the NSG and selected key members, Generation Zero utilizes email and Dropbox – an online storage facility where resources and documents are stored. Quarterly meetings called National Councils are also conducted involving the advisors, NSG and regional coordinators. For the larger base of volunteers, the Facebook page and newsletter serve as the main modes of communication. Communication is primarily two-way with participants encouraged to give feedback and suggestions. This helps maintain general awareness and to foster a sense of collaboration. An example of Facebook utilisation would be electronically mobilising volunteers for a demonstration.[57]

3.2.2 **External Communication**

Social media and the internet also feature prominently in Generation Zero's external communications strategy. A separate Facebook page is maintained for external audiences.[58] The website www.generationzero.org.nz is the primary interface for those not already involved in the Facebook community. A blog, climatetalk.co.nz, hosted by Generation Zero, provides members with a forum to discuss various climate change issues. Each campaign also gets its own site, allowing the main website to maintain a clean, focused approach.

[57] Serpes, K., personal communication, June 6, 2012.
[58] Ibid

Generation Zero also encourages Climate Conversations, a participative, dialogic form of communication aimed at promoting awareness, involving audiences and increasing participation in climate change discussions and activities.[59] A Climate Conversation is a 30 minute interactive presentation to a group of young people about climate change and is appropriate for schools, lectures, environmental groups, or any small group setting.

Interacting with policy makers and government has taken different forms depending on the agenda at hand. For example, for the Elect Who campaign, communication was dialogic – youth interacted with various candidates up for election, assessing their approach to climate change and sustainable energy. The Media is mainly targeted through various on-ground activities or 'stunts'. Generation Zero is known to launch most of its initiatives via these stunts that serve two purposes – grab attention and help create interesting PR worthy stories as well as provide a fun way for volunteers to participate yet still convey a message.[60] Examples would include the dancing flash mob to demonstrate the impact that sea level rises would have and the funeral procession to promote the death of 'business as usual' in order to stimulate pre-election debate around unsustainable climate change policies. These stunts are then uploaded to YouTube.

Generation Zero has just organized Power Shift, New Zealand's largest youth conference on climate change. The conference attracted approximately 600 participants from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.[61] Designed on the participatory model, it aimed to create active stakeholders and generate collective action towards achieving carbon neutrality. Speakers and interactive workshops involved audiences in climate change debates, posed questions and encouraged dialogue.[62]

The latest campaign launched by Generation Zero is called 50/50. The ensuing sections will analyse the various components, communications approaches and tools used in the campaign.

4 50/50 – A Fair Share for Smart Transport

4.1 **Snapshot**

There were more than a few raised eyebrows on the train from Ngauranga to Wellington today as 40 young people did the morning commute in their underwear. They were part of a youth environmental group called *Generation Zero*, which fights for climate change action and intergenerational justice. Group organiser James Young-Drew, 22, said the stunt was designed to launch their 50/50 campaign, which is protesting the government's plans to spend $14 billion on highway projects over next decade but not nearly as much on "smart transport options" such as light rail, buses and cycleways. "We were aiming to expose the government's unbalanced transport budget and what better way to do that than by exposing ourselves," he said. "A lot of people on the train were dumbfounded at first, until they realised what our cause was...quite a

[59] Tufte, T., & Mefalopulos, P. (2009). Participatory Communication. A Practical Guide. *World Bank.* DOI: 10.1596/978-0-8213-8008-6
[60] Serpes, K., personal communication, June 6, 2012.
[61] Ibid
[62] Tufte, T., & Mefalopulos, P. (2009). Participatory Communication. A Practical Guide. World Bank. DOI: 10.1596/978-0-8213-8008-6

few tried to pretend like there wasn't anything out of the ordinary going on. But Wellingtonians have a pretty good sense of humour. Most people saw the funny side."[63]

4.2 **Description – What is 50/50?**

50/50 is the campaign launched by Generation Zero which calls for an equal funding split between roads and smart transport options. The campaign outlines the need for smart transport choices that include efficient rail networks, bus services and walking and cycling facilities. Generation Zero's research indicates that the New Zealand government will spend approximately $14 billion (NZ) over the next decade on Roads of National Significance (RoNS).[64] On the other hand, only $500 million will be spent on new infrastructure for public transport ($300 million) and walking and cycling ($200 million). This is a ratio of almost 30 to one in favour of roads.[65] Overall, the government is proposing to spend more than five times as much money on roads than it will spend on public transport, active transport and rail freight combined.[66] Generation Zero is strongly opposed to the current budget outlay, describing it as unbalanced and risky.

For Generation Zero, the reason for targeting the policy makers in control of the transport budget is simple – New Zealand's gross emissions have increased significantly since 1990, despite promises to stabilise and reduce them, and transport has seen the largest percentage increase over the years (estimated at 70 per cent).[67] Furthermore, Huang, Anson and Vale argue that most of this increase in emissions from transport can be attributed to Auckland.[68] Even Transit New Zealand reports that due to inadequate passenger transport services Auckland's car ownership levels have soared to 1.6 motor vehicles per household, putting it on par with Southern California – currently the world leader in private car ownership.[69] Thus the government's decision not to adequately invest in smart transport options is severely affecting the goal of carbon neutrality. While the 50/50 campaign is targeted nationally, Auckland being the largest population centre faces the most acute problems. Indeed, although the campaign started out as a local issue of the Auckland branch of Generation Zero, its importance to the larger goal of a post-carbon environment transformed it into a national issue for the movement.

4.3 **Background and context**

When Nielsen, an urban quality consultant with the Danish firm Gehl Architects, arrived in Auckland, his first impression was not Auckland, City of Sails but Auckland, City of Cars. In an address to more than 200 council staff, architects and urban designers he said he would have

[63] Forbes, M. (2012, May 29).Underwear protest on Wellington trains. *The Dominion Post*. Retrieved from http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/7006213/Underwear-protest-on-Wellington-trains
[64] Generation Zero. (2012). *50/50 - A fair share for smart transport*. Retrieved from http://generationzero.org.nz/5050?home=home
[65] Ibid
[66] Ibid
[67] Ministry for Environment. (2009). *New Zealand's 2020 Emissions Target*. Retrieved on 14/06/2012 from http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/climate/nz-2020-emissions-target/index.html
[68]

to go back to Houston, Texas, in the 1990s to find a first-world city with so much space given to vehicles.[70]

Nielsen's observation was not far off. Historically, Auckland's and New Zealand's transport planning has followed pro-car American models, far more closely than has been the case in Australian or Canadian cities, or even many cities in the U.S.A. The Auckland transport system has been centred on motorways for much longer than other comparable cities, and this is one of the major reasons for the extremely low usage of public transport.[71] Yet investment in Auckland's public transport networks has been recommended on multiple occasions. In particular, the railway development proposal of the Halcrow Thomas Report of 1950, the bus-rail recommendation by De Leuw Cather and Company in 1965, and the 1969 Robbie's Rapid Railway plan proposed by then Mayor of Auckland Sir Dove-Myer Robinson.[72]

Another unique aspect of New Zealand governance is the setting up of Transfund, whose principal objective is to allocate resources to achieve a safe and efficient roading system. Taxes levied on motor vehicles are paid into a fund which can only be expended for transport projects. Apart from New Zealand, U.S.A is the only other developed country in the world where this is seen.[73]

Current policy makers have continued this trend with large budget allocations for RoNS, even though these show a low cost benefit ratio.[74] But all is not lost. Reports from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and Statistics New Zealand suggest that that per capita, demand for vehicle travel has declined by around 1 per cent per annum in the last seven years.[75] WWF New Zealand highlighted how a Colmar Brunton poll showed seven out of ten New Zealanders want to see more government funding awarded to public transport improvements in major towns and cities, with the figure in Auckland climbing to 78 per cent.[76] All that remains is for the government to follow through on its electorate's needs.

And that is where 50/50 comes in. New Zealand is a unitary state – where the central government confers powers it deems fit on regional councils. While local transportation planning and contracting of subsidised public passenger transport are some of the portfolios that are handled at the regional level, state highways and associated infrastructure is controlled at a national level. This effectively means that funding for local roads and public transport must primarily come from regional sources with support from the NZTA given on a 'needs' basis. With

[70] Orsman, B. (2008). *Big steps to change City of Cars.* Retrieved on 16/06/2012 from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10539171
[71] Mees, P., & Dodson, J. (2001). *The American Heresy: Half a century of transport planning in Auckland*. Retrieved on 15/06/2012 from http://www.cs.auckland.ac.nz/~cthombor/Pubs/AKtransportMees.rtf
[72]

a 50/50 style allocation of the transport budget, the possibility of developing smart transport options becomes more feasible.[77]

4.4 **Aspects of Social Change**

For Generation Zero, the campaign to obtain equal funding for smart transport takes on wider significance on the social change platform. The first and most important reason is linked to their goal of achieving a carbon neutral New Zealand by 2050. In a submission to the Auckland City Council they believe implementing smart transport solutions in Auckland's Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP) is like taking advantage of 'low hanging fruit'; i.e. relatively simple and comparatively inexpensive changes which would help yield significant reductions in Auckland's carbon footprint.[78]

Smart transport offers other benefits as well. These are:

- Improved public health through reduction in preventable deaths, road crashes and air pollution on one hand and increasingly active lifestyles through cycling and walking on the other
- Reduced stress and anxiety from avoiding traffic and congestion
- Greater personal choice derived out of lower dependency on cars and more public transport options
- Reduced dependence on oil
- Less traffic
- World class cities
- A cleaner and greener New Zealand[79]

4.5 **Media and Methods**

The 50/50 campaign was launched in May 2012 and a range of methods has been used to communicate to the various stakeholders of the campaign.

The launch of the campaign was done in true Generation Zero style featuring a unique stunt designed to 'expose' the government's unbalanced transport budget.

Figure 2: Launch of 50/50

Endorsed by Auckland Council's transport committee chairman Mike Lee, forty members of Generation Zero stripped down to their underwear and took a ride on a

[77] *NZ Transport Agency*. (2012) Retrieved on 14/06/2012 from http://www.nzta.govt.nz/planning/investment/index.html
[78] Generation Zero. (2012). *50/50 - A fair share for smart transport*. Retrieved from http://generationzero.org.nz/5050/?home=home
[79] Ibid

Wellington train (see Figure 2). The climate change activists braved the cold to hand out flyers, hold up banners and talk to people about their cause for an hour at Wellington Railway Station after getting off the train.[80] Television and online media covered the stunt extensively.

As a follow-up to the train event, bake sales were conducted in locations across New Zealand in an attempt to sell six billion cupcakes to help balance the government's 'half-baked' transport budget (see Figure 3). The outcome was a feature story on the popular TVNZ show *Close Up*.

Figure 3: Bake Sale

Communications to the government and policy makers have included official submissions to the city councils of Auckland, Dunedin, Wellington and Hamilton through the public consultation process. Generation Zero hopes to persuade policy makers to take a different point of view by emphasising specific changes they would like to see in the RLTP. Other actions include presentations to local governments and emails to local members of parliament (MPs). Also, an open letter was addressed to Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee which was signed by a number of famous and important New Zealanders like Dunedin mayor David Cull and media personality Rod Oram.[81]

The Road Ahead, a multi-party speaker event was conducted in Wellington on 23rd August 2012. It comprised MPs Nick Smith (National), Phil Twyford (Labour) and Julie Anne Genter (Greens), who were invited to discuss their parties' views on investing in New Zealand's transport future (Figure 4). Professor Ralph Sims, transport expert for the International Energy Agency and IPCC, participated as the moderator of the discussion. The MPs' responded to some prepared questions on the RoNS and addressed audience queries as well. Similar to the Elect Who campaign, the stakeholders; i.e. students, young professionals, etc., were the ones interacting with local government representatives, creating a participatory, two way communication process.[82]

[80] Forbes, M. (2012, May 29).Underwear protest on Wellington trains. *The Dominion Post*. Retrieved from http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/7006213/Underwear-protest-on-Wellington-trains
[81] Serpes, K., personal communication, August 29, 2012.
[82] Tufte, T., & Mefalopulos, P. (2009). Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide. *World Bank.* DOI: 10.1596/978-0-8213-8008-6

Figure 4: Nick Smith, Phil Twyford & Julie Anne Genter at The Road Ahead, Wesley Church, Wellington. August 23, 2012

The cause is also being promoted through social media via Facebook, Twitter and the Climate Talk blog. Supporters like the Smart Transport Network also feature articles and posts on their websites. The 50/50 website incorporates salient aspects of the campaign, updates and opportunities to get involved. In addition, newsletters are sent to members, keeping them apprised of latest developments.

Generation Zero has a structured media advocacy plan in order to reach a wider audience. For example, on August 19th, 2012, the organisation featured in a lengthy piece on the RoNS on National Radio's *Insight* programme, with spokesperson Paul Young putting forward their views.[83] Two hoarding sites were also erected at Mt. Eden, Auckland, calling for smart transport solutions (Figure 5.).[84]

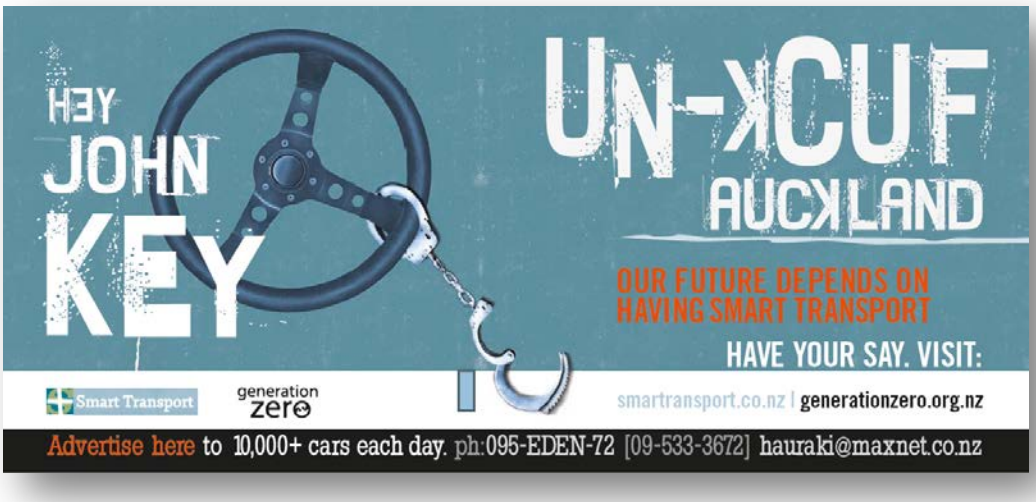

Figure 5: Hoarding Design

[83] Radio New Zealand. (2012) *Insight: Praying for Major Roads.* Sunday August 19th 2012. Retrieved from http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/insight/20120819
[84] Serpes, K., personal communication, August 29, 2012.

Additionally, a document with various talking points is being circulated and shared amongst members featuring messages designed within specific frames. These will be used as guidelines for members, enabling them to carry out informed conversations with the media and local politicians.

Examples include:

> *Freedom of Choice Argument*
>
> Oil prices have quadrupled in the past decade and are going to keep increasing. The IMF says that large, abrupt price changes due to geopolitical instability are likely and difficult to absorb. Furthermore, the current economic recession is attributable, at least in part, to the price of oil doubling between June 2007 and June 2008.
>
> In Auckland, most of us are slaves to our cars, with no freedom of choice on how to get around the city. We need to see more sensible investment in smart future focused transport options, like rail, cycling and walking infrastructure. An equal split of government funding between this kind of smart transport and new roads or highways, would go a long way to giving Aucklanders more freedom to choose how they wish to travel, something that will only increase in importance with higher fuel prices.
>
> *Explanation:* The above argument equates car use to slavery to fuel prices while equating freedom with smart transport. An example of how to frame an argument using metaphors.[85]

4.6 **Constraints and Suggestions**

The biggest constraint that Generation Zero faces is its lack of a large Auckland membership. Getting people together in smaller cities like Dunedin is no issue; in Auckland, its sheer size makes it difficult to organise. While a call to action in Wellington will bring out up to 200 members, in Auckland this figure stands at approximately 40.[86] This poses a problem for the 50/50 campaign simply because the vast majority of people affected by lack of adequate public transport are residents of Auckland and as such the biggest push for change should come from here. It is important that policy makers see the majority as having a problem with the current transport budget for the campaign to have its desired effect.

If getting people together in one location is the problem, Generation Zero must look for alternate solutions – especially in Auckland. One possibility is generating an e-movement. Current recruitment strategies involve an existing member speaking to small groups and taking them through a filtering process involving attending an event, a social interaction and then involving interested people in a project. While this ensures that those that join are dedicated and committed, it is time consuming. If change has to happen, a faster means of gathering support is called for. Rojas and Heaney[87] suggest inducing spill over from allied movements and tapping into overlapping organisational membership amongst supporters – an opportunity brought about by the blurring of boundaries between movements over the past few decades. As a follow through on this suggestion, a petition has been started on avaaz.org, with an aim to

[85] Generation Zero. (2012). *50/50 - A fair share for smart transport*. Retrieved from http://generationzero.org.nz/5050/?home=home

[86] Serpes, K., personal communication, June 6, 2012.

[87] Rojas, F., & Heaney, M. (2008). Social Movement Mobilization in a Multi-Movement Environment: Spillover, Interorganizational Networks, and Hybrid Identities. Mimeo.

collect 5000 signatures, which will then be sent to Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee. As of 1st December 2012, 2,566 signatures have been collected.

Beyond public mobilisation, it is also important for Generation Zero to extend its efforts in getting the support of key stakeholders – regardless of whether they are current climate change activists or not. Critical stakeholders include politicians, philanthropic leaders, scientists, scholars and the private sector. An example of such an effort can be seen in the non-partisan coalition – Building America's Future – which is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. It seeks to engage a multitude of stakeholders in a cross-sector effort to help cities and states prepare for the inevitable consequences of climate change and connect under-served communities with green jobs, mass transit, and energy-efficient, affordable homes.[88] Generation Zero has started taking steps in this direction with the open letter addressed to the Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee, signed by well-known New Zealand personalities and corporate figures. However, there is a need for these efforts to be intensified and made more public if they are to positively affect campaign outcomes and the associated advocacy efforts.

Another possibility suggested by Curtin and Lacey is the Citizen's Initiated Referenda Act 1993 – a democratic mechanism unique to New Zealand, which provides a means for advocacy.[89] It allows for any citizen to trigger a vote on any issue that concerns them. In order to do so, the proposed question must be submitted to the Clerk of the House of Representatives. After the question is approved, twelve months are allotted to collect the signatures of 10 per cent of enrolled electors. If sufficient signatures are collected, a referendum must be held within twelve months, with public debate on the issue occurring in the lead-up to the vote. The result of the referendum is not binding on the government, but it is unlikely that the outcome will be neglected if it is a clear demonstration of public preference. This however, is a long term proposition.

In terms of framing, a higher degree of empathy is recommended. Climate change has failed to grab people's attention because the public does not see it as affecting them immediately and personally. Hence the route to converting someone to a cause is to make it personal to them and to their value system. Benford and Snow propose that frames are more likely to be accepted if they fit well with the beliefs of the recipients, involve empirically credible claims and fit the narratives audience tell about their lives.[90]

With the current communications strategy, the audience is being asked to connect with the solution first – the 50/50 split in funding. Assuming the reader wants to know why the 50/50 spilt is required, leads them to information explaining how they are affected on a personal level. This flow may cause some to lose interest if they see the solution as something far-removed from their everyday lives and may not investigate deeper to find out how they will be affected. The communication process must start at a point the recipient will identify with and then logically take it forward to the solution of a problem now identified as personal. Benford and Snow pose some interesting questions in order to determine the significance of the frames and determine the communication start point. For instance, are communication framings congruent or resonant

[88] Rodin, J. (2008). Climate Change Adaptation: Vital Speeches of the Day, 74(12), 547-553.
[89] Curtin, J., &

with personal everyday experiences of the audience? Or are the framings too abstract and distant from the lives and experiences of the targets?[91] Generation Zero can use these as guidelines to help determine how effective the frames will be and develop communication that will resonate deeply and inspire action.

Another aspect of communication in multicultural New Zealand is reaching out to a wide variety of ethnic minorities.[92] On one hand, research has shown that the meaning people ascribe to climate change – their understanding of the phenomenon, perception of risks involved, and their corresponding value judgments and emotional reactions – is closely related to how climate change is portrayed in communication.[93] On the other, values, belief systems and culture have a clear influence on people's responses and lead to different attitudes and preferences for courses of action or inaction.[94] Put together, this means Generation Zero needs to consider avenues suitable for communicating with a mass audience hailing from a variety of cultural backgrounds. One option is to use ethnic media. Most communities in New Zealand have ethnic media outlets such as Maori Radio or community newspapers like Indian Weekender. Another is to connect with community groups such as The New Zealand Chinese Association.

Cultural nuances must also be considered while framing communication for ethnic groups. For example, framing communication for Maori audiences in the context of Kaitiakitanga, which describes a traditional concept or guiding principle in Maori culture – humans are the guardians of the world who assist the Gods and ancestral spirits to preserve and protect the physical environment, as well as cultural elements such as art and language.[95]

A useful guide would be to follow the four phase participatory communication model of Research – Design – Implementation – Evaluation. This would help in designing communication and activities that the community feels more involved with and therefore more amenable to.[96]

[91] Ibid
[92] Zhu, Y., & Hildebrandt, H. (2007). Culture, Contexts, and Communication in Multicultural Australia and New Zealand: An Introduction. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* (John Benjamins Publishing Co.), 17(1), 1-9.
[93] Flottum, K., Dahl, T. (2012). Different contexts, different "stories"? A linguistic comparison of two development reports on climate change. *Language & Communication*, Volume 32, Issue 1, 14-23.
[94] Gudykunst, W.B. & Lee, C.M. (2003) Cross-cultural communication theories. In Gudykunst, W. B. (Ed.) Cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp.7-33
[95] Tourism New Zealand. (2012). *Maori Culture*. Retrieved on 23/11/2012 from http://www.newzealand.com/travel/media/features/maori-culture/maori-culture_kaitiakitanga_feature.cfm
[96] Papoutsaki, E. (2012) Lecture notes. Communication for Social Change. Unitec.

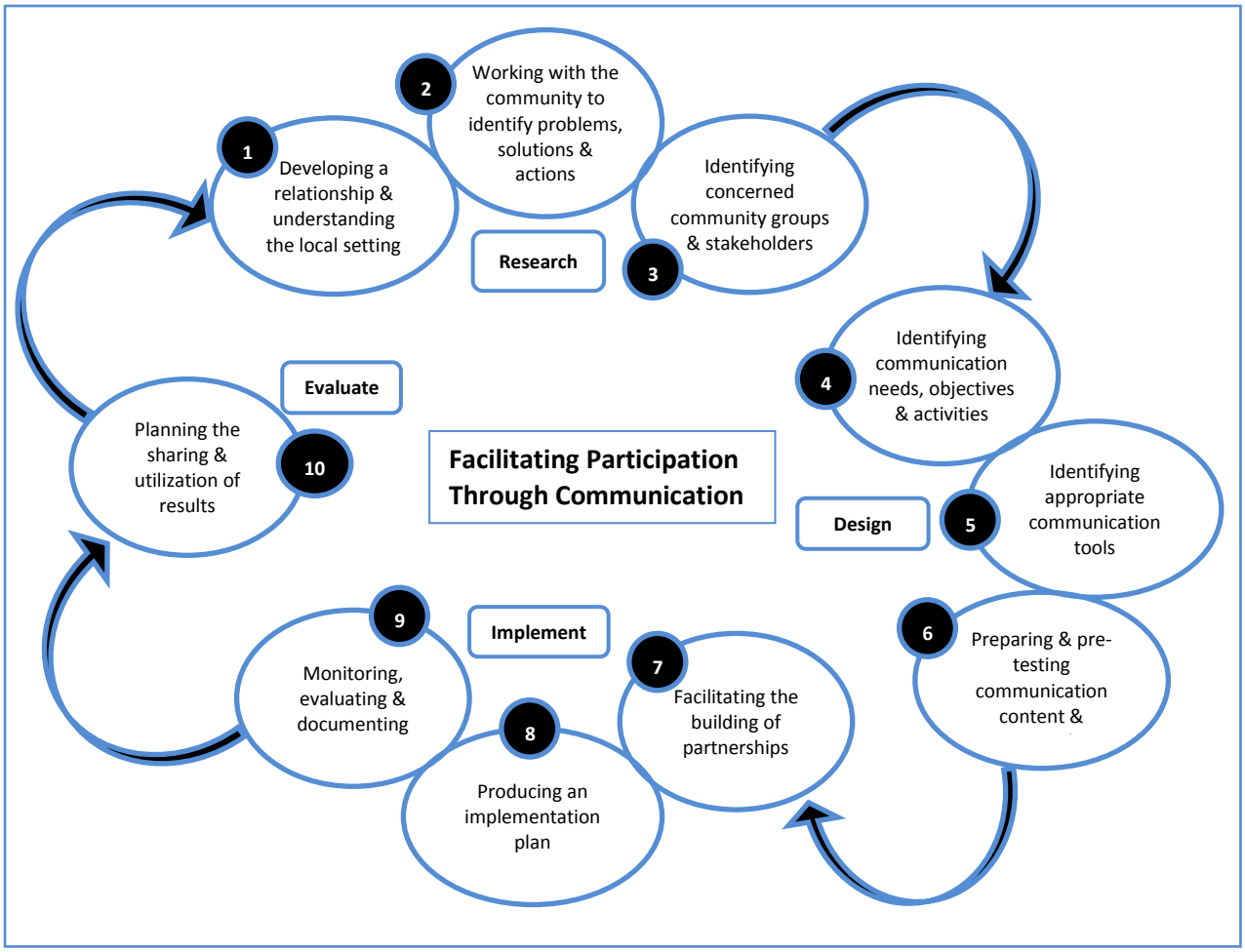

Figure 6: Participatory Communication Model

The research stage will help identify the correct frames, asses the level of community discourse required, or also involve 'dipstick' studies to test the efficacy of existing frames. The design stage involves applying the right frames to the right stakeholders, and with the right communications tool. For example, The Freedom of Choice argument mentioned above is a good frame for the community as a stakeholder. Suggested means of communication are employing social media or maybe a stunt or activity; e.g. The Freedom Wall – graffiti walls set up in universities where students express their hopes for freedom from carbon dependency. Decentralisation of implementation would help in reaching a wider audience. Implementation should include a plan for perpetuating the message for the duration of a campaign as well as monitoring the frequency of messaging and reach of chosen mediums. Collecting feedback is an effective way to check efficacy of messaging and to incorporate changes or innovations or additional activities as the campaign progresses – to ensure the message does not die out.

5 Conclusions

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues facing humanity today. It is imperative that all nations rally behind a common policy goal to help alleviate the situation. The Kyoto Protocol,

with all its drawbacks, was still a powerful statement acknowledging the need to make concrete efforts to combat climate change. However, as we have seen, the Protocol did not have a strong positive effect for various reasons. Nonetheless, we are at a stage where policy changes supported by follow-through action, can still go a long way to improving the situation.

The 50/50 campaign in New Zealand by Generation Zero is just one step towards this goal. A series of similar efforts across the globe will create the conditions required to tackle climate change successfully. As the campaign is still in progress, it remains to be seen how successful it will be. In order to reach its full potential, not only does awareness of the campaign need to grow, it must also reach a wider audience. While Generation Zero has utilised a diverse range of media, a stronger focus on the preliminary stages of the participatory communication model will help them design more effective strategies which are also matched with the right communication tools. The key is to identify the crucial stakeholders, frame a message that will make the most sense to them and deliver it via a medium they will not be able to ignore or miss. The right tools in turn must be constantly evaluated for their reach and frequency, if they are to then create a strong, lasting impact and encourage subsequent action.

From what we've seen of the campaign so far, the advocacy approach is emphasised, with most efforts focused in Wellington. However, just as with elected governments, the will of the electorate matters. Therefore it is vital that Generation Zero step up the activist role and work towards gathering a larger number of supporters, especially in Auckland, where the potential for change is higher. The answer lies in the CFSC approach – bringing community and stakeholders closer to the issues and encouraging them to find and support solutions. More voices must join in with those of Generation Zero and its allies to create a ripple that can't be ignored by parliament, and bring about the change envisioned.


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