The People's Transition:
Community-led Development for Climate Justice

Including a case study focused on rural communities in Ireland

By Seán McCabe

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List of abbreviations

Acronyms	Reference
AFN	Alternative Food Network
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CLES	Centre for Local Economics
CLLD	Community-led Local Development
COP15	15th Conference of the Parties
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CWB	Community Wealth Building
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERF	Equity Reference Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI	European Social Investment Funds
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
FARNET	Fisheries area network
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
GPA	Government Procurement Agreement
GUC	Greater University Circle
ICOS	Irish Co-operative Organisation Society
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITIC	Irish Tourism Industry Confederation
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JT	Just Transition
LAG	Local Action Groups
LDS	Local Development Strategies
LEADER	Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale
MA	Managing Authorities
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
OCWB	Office of Community Wealth Building
OJEU	Official Journal of the European Union
PLC	Public limited company
PPN	Public Participation Networks
PTCD	People's Transition Community Dialogue
SME	Small/Medium Enterprise
TCC	Transformative Climate Communities
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Executive Summary

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What is the People's Transition?

This publication proposes a participative decision-making model, The People's Transition, that views climate action as an enabler of local development, gives people and communities ownership of the transition to zero carbon societies and enhances public support for a Just Transition by tackling inequality and raising standards of living through the delivery of climate solutions.

Why is this necessary?

To advance climate justice, it is necessary to share the benefits and the burdens of the resolution of the climate crisis equitably and fairly. Including people and communities in the design, planning and implementation of the transition to zero carbon societies is not simply the fairest approach. It will also be the fastest.

Climate change response measures that are unfair pose risks, both for the delivery of enduring climate action that succeeds in averting the worst impacts of climate change, and in terms of ensuring that the stability of democratic societies remains robust for the duration of the transition. Fast and effective action will be delivered when people see tangible improvements in their standards of living and, as a result, demand, rather than resist, the radical transformation that is required to avoid catastrophic climate change.

The People's Transition proposes an approach to climate action that puts communities and local development at the heart of Europe's Just Transition. A broad transition is required to wean our societies off fossil fuels, one which is embedded in all communities across the European Union, that listens to the hopes and aspirations of people, responds to the cultural fabric of society, and develops climate action rooted in local development that simultaneously tackles inequality and expands the capabilities of all people.

To accomplish this, the research underpinning this project sets out to describe a model, The People's Transition, that will engage communities on their terms, that will distil their local needs and priorities and address them with solutions that will both enhance community well-being and drive down emissions or build adaptative capacity. Based on extensive engagements with rural communities around Ireland, the research arrives at a model for community-led local transitions that can inform the development of *the Climate Pact*, the bottom-up component of the European Green Deal which seeks to give everyone a voice and a space in which to design new climate actions, share information, launch grassroots activities and showcase solutions that others can follow.

Factors underpinning the model:

1. To succeed in averting catastrophic climate breakdown, European and national governments will need to take transformative climate action in the absence of significant public support.

2. Successful climate action, in the absence of public support, requires reducing emissions and building adaptive capacity while, at the same time, enhancing standards of living and ensuring equal access to opportunity.

3. People care more about local development than climate action. In developing climate action that builds social approval, the onus is on decision makers to match appropriate climate strategies to the needs and priorities of the whole community.

How does the People's Transition work?

The People's Transition proposes adopting a **Capabilities Approach**, to ensure that actions for the benefit of the climate are developed on a foundation of equity. By allowing for the consideration of multi-faceted structural disadvantage that needs to be overcome in order to reach the furthest behind first and to ensure meaningful participation for all in the transition, the People's Transition can ensure that workers and communities in transition are given the opportunity to achieve outcomes that they value and have reason to value.

The model, detailed in the diagram below, is comprised of localised dialogue approaches, *The People's Transition Dialogues*, to develop community strategies, *People's Transition Local Action Plans*, designed to allow communities to co-create, and importantly, cooperatively own, the solutions to the climate crisis. Through engagement with decision makers and relevant experts, the process allows for the consideration of local development solutions that both reduce emissions and tackle inequality by viewing climate action as an engine of development – a temporary "anchor institution".

Figure 1: The People's Transition Model

Significant emphasis is placed on the **promotion of trust between communities and decision makers**; the importance of **community capacity building**; and the **valuing, and incorporation, of local knowledge and expertise into climate solutions**. The objective is that communities are assured of having their voices heard and learn to have faith in a bottom-up approach to policy making, confident that climate action will respond to their needs, rather than make their lives more difficult.

Key concepts

Key concepts

Anchor institution

An anchor institution is one that, alongside its main function, plays a significant and recognised role in a locality by making a strategic contribution to the local economy. Anchor institutions generally have strong ties to the geographic area in which they are based through invested capital, mission and relationship to customers and employees. These institutions tend to operate not-for-profit. It is much simpler for private businesses to move, so there is no guarantee they will continue serving the local community in the long-term. However, there are examples of for-profit organisations playing the role of an anchor institution.

Capabilities approach

The capabilities approach is a theoretical framework that entails two core normative claims: first, the claim that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and second, that freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to *do* and *be* what they have reason to value. The approach has been developed in a variety of more specific normative theories, such as (partial) theories of social justice or accounts of development ethics. It has also led to a new and highly interdisciplinary literature in the social sciences resulting in new statistics and social indicators, and to a new policy paradigm which is mainly used in development studies, the so-called 'human development approach'.

Community wealth building

Community wealth building is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people. Community wealth building is a response to the contemporary challenges of austerity, financialisation and automation. It seeks to provide resilience where there is risk and local economic security where there is precarity.

Community-led local development

Community-led local development (CLLD) is a term used by the European Commission to describe an approach that turns traditional 'top-down' development policy on its head. Under CLLD, local people take the reins and form a local partnership that designs and implements an integrated development strategy. The strategy is designed to build on the community's social, environmental and economic strengths or 'assets' rather than to simply compensate for its problems.

Climate action

Political, collective and individual action on climate change can take many forms. Climate action means stepped-up efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts, including: climate-related hazards in all countries; integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning; and improving education,

awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity with respect to climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. There are other challenges that intersect climate action and environmental protection such as enhancing biodiversity and improving water quality.

Just Transition

The concept of a Just Transition has its origins in the international labour movement. Just Transition is rooted in social dialogue and the participation of those affected, at every stage of the process. It is a vision-led, unifying and place-based set of principles, processes and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy.

Local development

Local development is the identification and use of the resources and endogenous potentialities of a community, neighbourhood, city or equivalent. The local development approach considers the endogenous potentialities of territories. Economic and non-economic factors influence local development processes. Among the non-economic factors, social, cultural, historical, institutional, and geographical aspects can be decisive in the process of local economic development.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future for people and planet. For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonise three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

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If climate action is to be fast, it must be fair. If it is to be enduring, it must be inclusive. If it is to benefit from widespread public support, it must share benefits and burdens equitably and fairly.

Based on these conventions, and drawing on the capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen[1], this report sets out how Europe could become a leader in the formation of bottom-up strategies for climate action that proactively address inequity, drive local development and create an enabling environment for a just transition by expanding the capabilities of individuals and communities.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing European decision makers over the coming decade will be to implement transformative climate action in such a way that it benefits from enduring public support and enables its long-term objectives to be realised without disruption or delay.

The People's Transition explores how community leadership approaches can allow citizens to work together to equitably share the benefits and burdens of climate action, build social approval for urgent measures and advance climate justice across the European Union.

Based on extensive consultation with rural communities in Ireland, the People's Transition develops a bottom-up model for transition that ensures wealth building for local areas, is participatory and therefore provides local ownership, and empowers local voices; these together ensure a faster, more publicly accepted approach to change.

The People's Transition has three interconnected aims:

    I.   To catalyse local development and address local development needs through the rollout of climate action,

    II.   To build social approval for the societal transformation that is required to enact effective climate policy, and

    III.   To create a virtuous cycle of demand for climate action and thus accelerate progress towards Europe's climate targets.

"It must be a just transition or there will just be no transition"

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission

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1   The capability approach (also referred to as the capabilities approach) is an economic theory conceived in the 1980s as an alternative approach to welfare economics. The core focus of the capability approach is on what individuals are able to do (i.e., capable of). A Just Transition, in essence, describes a transformation of society in which what individuals are able to do - in terms of standard of living - remains the same or improves, and should there be disadvantage due to the transformation, it should not disproportionally impact a specific cohort of workers or their communities.

This report builds on existing work by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies on Just Transition as well as cooperative approaches - such as the People's Business to understand how community-led approaches to climate action can ensure a fair distribution of benefits and burdens.

Human rights and dignity, for humans and nature, must form the basis of our response to climate change. Not everything that is good for the planet is good for people. It has been demonstrated that poorly planned climate action can undermine human rights (MRFCJ, 2015). In recent years, thanks to the work of activists, trade unions and civil society organisations, decision makers have become increasingly aware of the need to ensure action to combat climate change does not exacerbate inequality or marginalisation, however climate action must now reflect this increased awareness.

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change calls on countries to respect and promote their human rights obligations when undertaking climate action. Similarly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises human dignity as the imperative for the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals and commits to 'reaching the furthest behind first'. More recently, the European Green Deal has called for a transition that is socially just, fair and inclusive.

A Just Transition away from the intensive use of fossil fuels is something of a historic undertaking for the European Union, given that its origins were in a coal and steel trading community. However, the underpinnings of that community – to promote and secure perpetual peace and solidarity – should provide enduring motivation for the European Just Transition.

The call for a just transition in the European Green Deal, affirming similar calls in the Paris Agreement and the subsequent Silesia Declaration[2], recognises that there are workers and communities at risk of being stranded as the world moves away from fossil-fuel based development. Furthermore, it acknowledges that a poorly implemented transition, which neglects to care for those in positions of vulnerability, will not benefit from the enduring public support necessary to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. It is welcome news that the EU Just Transition Fund, one of the three pillars of the Just Transition Mechanism, is being used to ensure a green recovery in Europe in the wake of the current pandemic.

To date, just transition activities in Europe have, understandably, focused on high-emission extractive sectors which must be urgently wound down to meet our collective climate targets. It is understood that other industries such as the automobile, fishing, or farming sectors also need to transition but these have received less attention to date. **A broader transition is now needed, one which is embedded in all communities across the European Union, one that listens to people's hopes and aspirations, and develops climate action that simultaneously tackles inequality, expands the capabilities of all people and creates a virtuous cycle of public demand for faster climate action.**

Yet, while the importance of inclusive climate policy development seems well understood, there is no effective and easily transferable framework to enable the co-creation of climate policy with communities in Europe. The development of such a framework under the European Green Deal — as part of the Climate Pact currently being developed and committing to resourcing community-owned climate action — would operationalise the EU's commitment to fair and inclusive climate action and enable a genuine people's transition.

2   The Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration was launched at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Katowice, Poland in 2018.

1.1 The policy landscape

With the Paris Agreement as the north star, policy and legislation related to climate action is evolving quickly. A snapshot of this rapidly changing landscape will become quickly dated. The information contained here is up to date as of October 2020. The People's Transition seeks to address a current gap in participative mechanisms for climate action in the EU, namely the lack of robust, bottom-up approaches to the social transformation required to realise an emissions neutral union. To this end, the model described in this report should be seen as complementary to the Climate Pact currently being developed by the European Commission.

The big picture

The Paris Agreement sets the course for the EU, a signatory as a bloc, to follow. Increasing the ambition of the United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement calls for parties to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change (UNFCCC, 2015).

The European Green Deal substantiates the EU's response to the demands of the Paris Agreement. The 24-page document sets out a whole-of-economy approach to securing climate neutrality in Europe by 2050. It sets out the plan for how Europe is to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The Green Deal is the framework that puts climate change at the heart of EU policy-making by ushering in sweeping new plans and strategies for agriculture, hydrogen, building renovation, offshore wind energy, methane pollution, sustainable investment and the circular economy, to name a few. It also includes a new European Climate Law which will incorporate into law the goal set out in the European Green Deal. So although the legislation is not legally binding, the end goal of becoming climate neutral by mid-century is to be written into law. In addition to setting the long-term direction of travel, the climate law will also create a system for monitoring progress and taking further action if needed. Importantly, it provides certainty for investors and other economic actors and ensures that the transition to climate neutrality is irreversible. It is within this context that, in the weeks prior to publication, the European Parliament voted to increase the EU's emissions reduction target for 2030 from -40% to -60% versus 1990 levels.

Whilst discussions are taking place at European level, similar policy discussions are taking place at national level. Legislators in Ireland are currently developing the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2020, which seeks to enshrine a similar 2050 target into Irish law and set up an infrastructure of carbon budgets by sector and strengthened oversight. It amends a previous 2015 act which set up existing policy infrastructure — the National Adaptation Framework and the National Mitigation Plan. The latter was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2020, following a case brought forward by an Irish non-governmental organisation, for failing to specify the manner in which it is proposed to achieve the 'national transition objective'. Climate action policy in Ireland is further guided by the Climate Action Plan, published in 2019 — which sets out goals across key sectors including electricity, transport, built environment, and industry — and the Climate Change Advisory Council, an independent body tasked with assessing and advising on climate action in Ireland.

Just Transition in policy

The Paris Agreement recognises the importance of a Just Transition, calling on all Parties to the Agreement to take into account "the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of

decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities" (UNFCCC, 2015).

The European Green Deal is accompanied by the Sustainable European Investment Plan. To achieve the goals set by the European Green Deal, the plan will mobilise at least €1 trillion in sustainable investments over the next decade. This plan includes a Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) to reconcile the European Union's climate ambition with the imperatives of a socially just transition. Through grants and investment programmes, it aims to secure the professional transition of people likely to lose their jobs, to revitalise and diversify local economies, and to restore land.

The Just Transition Mechanism is composed of three pillars:

1. the Just Transition Fund

2. a dedicated Just Transition scheme under InvestEU

3. a public sector loan facility with the European Investment Bank, backed by the EU budget.

Pillar 1, the Just Transition Fund, will be available to all member states from January 2021, focusing on regions with the biggest transition challenges. The proposed resourcing of the fund has been at the core of decisions taken by European leaders on the recovery. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been increased five-fold to €40 billion (Simon, 2020), made up of €30 billion from the EU Corona virus recovery fund and €10 billion from the 2021-2027 regular budget, the MFF (multi-annual financial framework). However, the amount falls short of what many had been calling for (ETUC, 2020). To access the three sources of funding, member states need to have territorial Just Transition plans that meet the European Commission's approval and must commit to match-fund every euro they receive with at least €1.50 from the European Regional Development fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) with additional national co-financing.

The Just Transition Fund will finance activities that are directly related to its specific objective only and that contribute to the implementation of the territorial Just Transition plans. It will support workers, companies, and regional authorities, encouraging investments that facilitate the transition. These developments are promising. However, concern has been expressed that the fossil gas sector is now to be included in Just Transition projects (CAN, 2020).

The activities and investments supported are restricted to a) productive investments in SMEs (including start-ups) that lead to economic diversification and reconversion, b) the creation of new firms, including support for business incubators and consulting services, c) research and innovation activities that foster the transfer of advanced technologies, d) the deployment of technology and infrastructure for affordable clean energy, as well as in greenhouse gas emissions reduction, energy efficiency, and renewable energy, e) digitalisation and digital connectivity, f) regeneration and decontamination of sites, land restoration, and repurposing projects, and g) those enhance the circular economy, including those that promote waste prevention, reduction, resource efficiency, reuse, repair and recycling, h) upskilling and reskilling of workers, i) job-search assistance to jobseekers, j) active inclusion of jobseekers, and k) technical assistance (EC, 2020a).

An initial allocation of €30 million has been proposed for Ireland from the Europe Just Transition Fund. This has positive implications where vulnerable areas, such as the Midlands, with its peat workers, or West Clare, with its Moneypoint coal workers, will be able to take up structured support.[3]

3   https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/libraryResearch/2020/2020-05-14_l-rs-note-the-european-green-deal-and-its-implications-for-ireland_en.pdf

In Ireland, the national Climate Action Plan commits to delivering a Just Transition recognising the significant level of change required and that burdens borne must be seen to be fair. Specifically, it includes support for the transition work underway in the Midlands region to deal with the challenges facing the semi-state peat fuel producer Bord na Móna, its employees and various contractors and businesses including local services which depend on the current business model. It recognises that a complete phase-out of peat and coal for electricity generation will have a significant impact on the workers, their families and the Midlands region as a whole. In November 2019, the Irish government appointed a Just Transition Commissioner to engage with relevant stakeholders and to recommend the essential elements of a Just Transition for workers and communities in the Midlands. The 2020 budget included a new Just Transition Fund of €11 million to be made available for projects focusing on retraining workers and proposals to generate sustainable employment in green enterprise in the Midlands region.

Box 1: What is the Just Transition Mechanism?

The Just Transition Mechanism was presented as the first deliverable of the European Green Deal. This shows the importance that the European Commission is putting on climate and social policies combined. It recognises the strong need for public acceptance of the policies to ensure that they are effective.

When the Green Deal was launched, the communication stated, "It must put people first, and pay attention to the regions, industries and workers who will face the greatest challenges. Since it will bring substantial change, active public participation and confidence in the transition is paramount if policies are to work and be accepted" (European Commission, 2019a).

The Just Transition Mechanism is designed to help support workers and communities across the EU who depend on fossil fuels and who will be most affected by a move to a fossil fuel free economy. It provides a dedicated source of EU funding for these regions.

However it is about more than funding: relying on a Just Transition Platform, the Commission will provide technical assistance to member states and investors and will ensure that the affected communities, local authorities, social partners and non-governmental organisations are involved. The Just Transition Mechanism will include a strong governance framework centred on territorial Just Transition plans (European Commission, 2019b).

Just Transition Mechanism is: "a key tool to ensure that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind. It provides targeted support to help mobilise at least €100 billion over the period 2021-2027 in the most affected regions, to alleviate the socio-economic impact of the transition. The Mechanism will create the necessary investment to help workers and communities which rely on the fossil fuel value chain" (European Commission, 2019b).

While the importance of inclusive climate policy development seems well understood, an effective and easily transferable framework still needs to be developed further to enable the co-creation of climate policy with communities in Europe. This is the motivation for developing a model for a capabilities and community-led approach. This hopes to also serve the framework of the Climate Pact which is currently being developed and commits to resourcing community-owned climate action, which would operationalise the EU's engagement to fair and inclusive climate action and enable a genuine People's Transition.

Bottom-up approaches

The European Green Deal recognises that "since it will bring substantial change, active public participation and confidence in the transition is paramount if policies are to work and be accepted." However, recent public consultations on the *Renovation Wave⁴* highlight the asymmetric capacity for engagement with the formation of climate policy in the EU. Between the 11 June and 9 July 2020, 441 stakeholders replied to the open public consultation. Of these, 45% were business associations and company/business organisations while just 12% were citizens (EC, 2020b). Similarly, the recently published Farm to Fork Strategy (EC, 2020c) makes no explicated reference to enabling participation of farmers or the public in seeking to advance sustainable food production. More needs to be done in this respect.

Importantly though, in response to the call by the European Green Deal, the Commission is setting up a European Climate Pact. It will give everyone a voice and a space to design new climate and environmental actions and amplify existing activities, share information, launch and interconnect grassroots activities and showcase solutions, offering opportunities for learning, exchange, co-creation and collaboration. The Pact mainly covers participative actions that go beyond existing legislation. The Commission indicates that the Pact should be a key part of Just Transition for all.

In Ireland, citizens' participation in climate action is limited. A citizens' assembly on the subject of "How to make Ireland a Leader on Climate Change" produced a report that has had an influence on the development of climate policy, though key recommendations have not yet been incorporated. The National Dialogue on Climate Action seeks to create awareness of climate action but there is little by way of provision for input through dialogue to shape the co-creation of climate policy. In January 2018, the government established four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs). These have provided a conduit for community input in the development of local climate strategies through submission portals. Public Participation Networks (PPNs) offer another channel of citizen engagement.

The relevance of this report

As Europe and its member states go through transformative change to embed climate action at the heart of their legislative and policy agendas, it would be easy for public participation to become a tick-box exercise of standard fare submissions, seminars and individualised commitments. This would be to miss a significant opportunity to own and share the benefits of climate action with communities through the co-creation and resourcing of local solutions. This report explores how the European Union might operationalise bottom-up approaches to climate action as part of a transformative and inclusive just transition.

1.2 Applying the capabilities approach to Just Transition

The capability approach is a theoretical framework underpinned by two normative assumptions. The first is that there is a moral imperative to enable people the freedom to achieve well-being and the second is that the freedom to achieve well-being is understood in terms of a person's capabilities – the opportunities they have to do or be what they have reason to value. Primarily employed in the field of international development or development ethics, recently scholars have been exploring how the framework provided by the capabilities approach can help address the logic of unequal relations that

4   The Renovation Wave, part of the European Green Deal, sets out a number of actions to be implemented to renovate the EU's building stock and enhance energy efficiency.

underpin the social and ecological crisis that Just Transition seeks to remedy (Nathan & Roelich 2019; Velicu & Barca, 2020).

While frameworks for Just Transition may vary between organisations or jurisdictions, with some more transformative and inclusive than others, most focus on: minimising hardship for workers through social dialogue between all stakeholders; reskilling and retraining workers for green unionised jobs; developing green enterprise; promoting active labour policies and providing appropriate social protection as security for those who are not in a position to retrain.

While these approaches are rightly the central focus of Just Transition activities to date and form the basis of the European Green Deal's Just Transition Mechanism, there are aspects of transition that will not be covered by these approaches. For instance, 'green' jobs may not be substitutional for 'brown', extractive sector jobs due to technical or geographical limitations. Similarly, there may be sectors where transition is imminent, but which are not traditionally inclined towards union membership and experience in collective bargaining is limited, such as in agriculture. There may be active labour market policies that do not meet with success in a region suffering socio-economic decline where carbon intensive jobs are the primary livelihood option. Finally, a transition that transfers workers from one livelihood to another, but continues to concentrate power and resources while leaving communities facing multi-dimensional deprivation in areas like healthcare, transport, governance, community vitality or psychological well-being, will have failed to grasp the full, transformative opportunity of realising climate justice.

Adopting a capabilities approach allows for a holistic consideration of transition that assesses individual well-being; evaluates broader social, community or cultural arrangements; and seeks to design policy responses that increase the freedom to achieve well-being through the kind of life that people are effectively able to lead. It is an inherently bottom-up approach that requires decision makers to actively listen to individuals and communities, to treat each person as an end and to embrace pluralism about values. This will, in turn, focus policy responses on increasing choices available to an individual and a community, rather than on short-term value for money propositions or economic returns. Furthermore, adopting a capabilities approach will seek to understand and address inequity – differences in the power, resources and authorities that groups have, stemming from combinations of historic, social, political and ecological processes. Climate and sustainable development policy making that expands choices and increases well-being at the local level will enable a transition from fossil fuel dependent livelihoods without risking workers or communities in high emissions sectors becoming stranded.

This research seeks to view the transition necessary to ensure a stable climate as an opportunity for transformative policy making that seeks to expand capabilities at every opportunity. By effectively sharing the benefits and burdens of climate action equitably and fairly, governments can offer new sustainable development pathways to the people and communities that enhance well-being and accelerate climate action.

1.3 Methodology

The purpose of this report was to develop a participative model, the People's Transition, that would allow for context appropriate, community-led and community owned approaches to climate action. The model would be flexible enough to be adopted throughout the EU, grounded in measures listening to, and learning from, local communities facing transition. Communities in rural Ireland were identified

as the focus of this work as they are facing a particularly challenging transition comprising the urgent need to reduce emission, persistent and pervasive inequality which is driving development deficits and outmigration, and acute vulnerability to climate impacts. This triple challenge vividly represents the complexity of the transition at the local level and thus a model robust enough to address these challenges presented by transition for rural communities in Ireland, should provide a solid basis for the development of the People's Transition Model.

For this research a design thinking approach was adopted. What is special about design thinking is that it allows for systematically extracting, learning and applying human-centred techniques to solve problems in a creative and innovative way. Design thinking is an iterative process which focuses on understanding the affected community, challenging assumptions, and redefining problems in an attempt to identify alternative strategies and solutions that might not be instantly apparent with our initial level of understanding. Design thinking revolves around a deep interest in developing an understanding of the people for whom the solution or service is being designed.

For this research, significant time was invested in listening to residents of rural communities in Ireland and empathising with the challenges they face. This allowed for an accurate definition of the problem to be solved so as to realise a People's Transition and the foundational assumptions on which the People's Transition approach would be based. The ideation phase then seeks to understand how a model would be successfully implemented.

The initial phase (May – August, 2019) of the research focused on extensive engagements with community groups, businesses, individuals and organisations across Ireland. This included a round table event and two extensive research trips, the first to West Cork to meet with farmers and community members and shoot a series of short anthropological films on the future of rural communities. These films served as a social listening project to understand the perspective of the communities engaged, increase awareness of the difficulties confronted by rural communities in the face of climate change and climate action, as well as a touch point for future engagements with communities, organisations and decision-makers.

The second research trip (September – October, 2019) was an extensive three week campervan journey around the country to meet with more than fifty farmers, community representatives, small business owners, cooperatives, and social enterprises. The purpose of the trip was to listen to their aspirations for the future of their work and their communities. The acknowledgements section recognises all those who contributed knowledge and experience to this work. These trips were complemented by extensive desk-based research.

Figure 2: Filming of a short series of documentaries on agriculture, climate change and the future of rural communities in Ireland as part of the Empathise phase of the research. Links to the final documentary series can be found in the next section
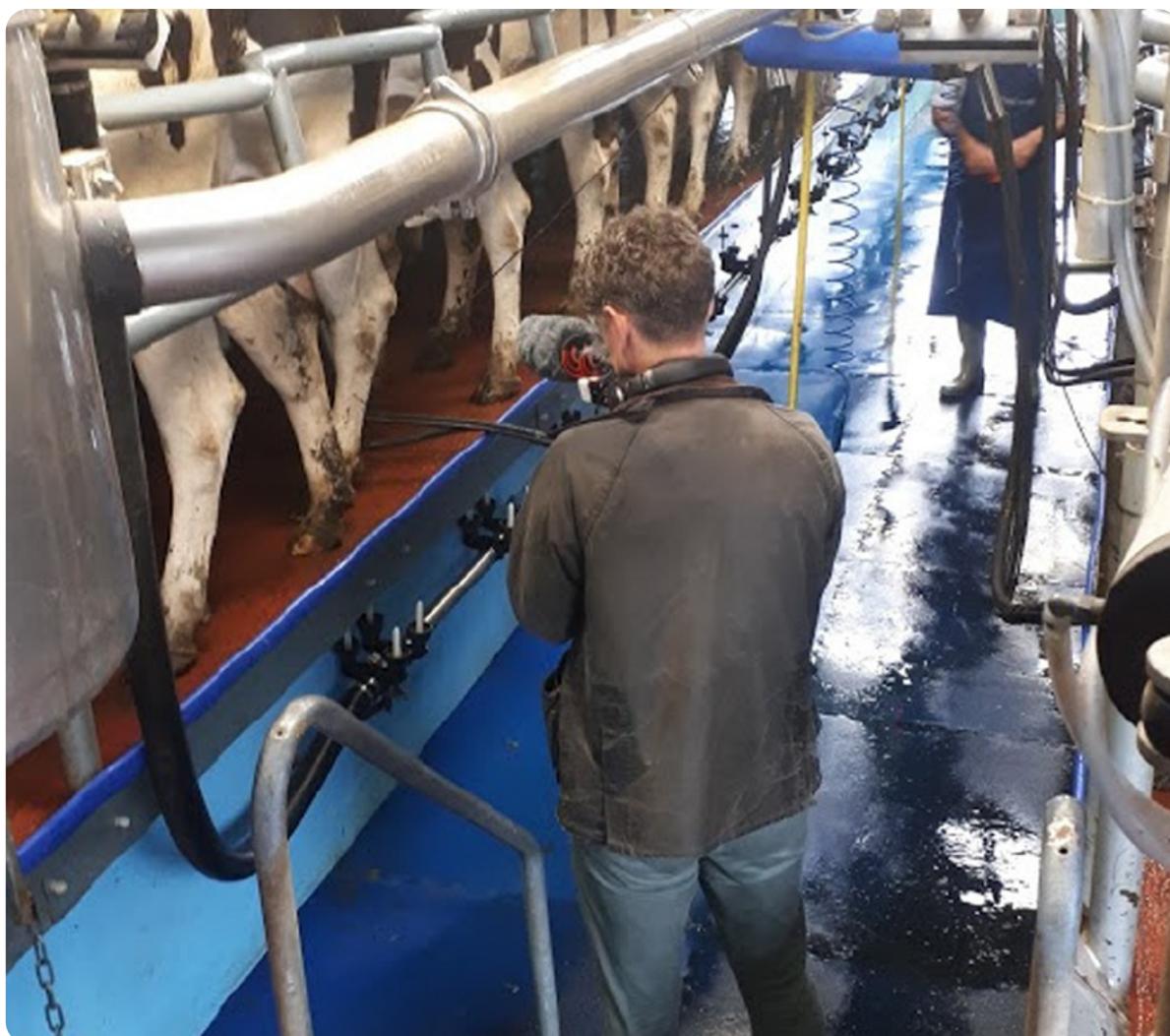
The second phase of this research sought to distil out the challenges and core assumptions for the People's Transition approach, based on the qualitative analysis of the interviews conducted in phase one and further key-informant interviews with relevant experts. Phase three of the research, or the ideation stage, sought to understand how frameworks like community-led local development and community wealth building could be combined with participative democracy approaches to generate community-owned responses to the climate crisis and build public support for the transition.

Figure 3: Map of locations visited during the research, primarily during a three-week campervan journey around the country to meet with farmers and rural community members to discuss climate change and the future of their livelihoods and communities
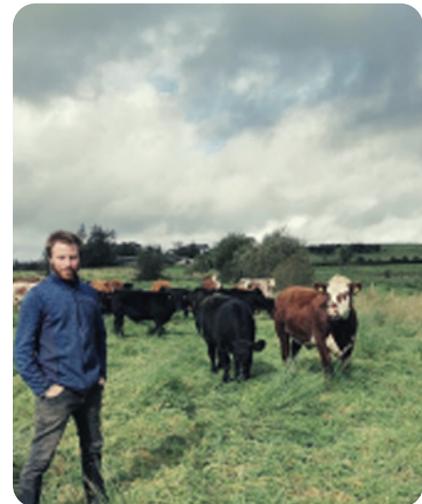
2. Case Study: Rural Ireland facing transition

2. Case Study: Rural Ireland facing transition

This research is based on extensive engagement with communities around Ireland to understand the challenges facing them at a time of transition and to understand their needs and priorities. However the observations here are not unique to Ireland and can be applied to different communities and sectors in different countries. Therefore it is important to detail them in this report. This social listening research was complemented by desk-based research and the production of three short documentaries that give voice to the communities.

Rural communities are highly dependent on nature and the environment for livelihoods and social structures. Climate change-related impacts will have distinct and severe effects on these communities as many rural livelihoods depend on the stability of the climate. These impacts will worsen over time, putting further pressure on economic activities such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism. On the other hand, poorly planned climate policy and efforts to reduce emissions could have a detrimental impact on rural communities.

In Ireland, agriculture is the sector with the highest emissions profile and is thus on the frontline of the fight against climate change. Agricultural emissions are anticipated to continue to rise over the coming decade and discussions on reducing emissions have commonly been perceived to represent a threat to farmers livelihoods (Finnerty, 2016; McMahon, 2019), and have unfairly pitted farmers against environmentalists.

Agriculture is also a sector suffering from serious inequality. A 2019 FEPS-TASC report highlighted the agricultural sector as the most unequal in Ireland in terms of income (Sweeney, 2019). In that same year, the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority, Teagasc, warned that thousands of farmers in Ireland were facing 'serious poverty' (Fox, 2019). Increasingly, frequent and severe extreme weather events, driven by climate change, threaten to exacerbate challenges for the agricultural community, increasing inequalities and further undermining the financial well-being of rural communities[5].

> *"The one guy who was told what to do was the farmer. He became more efficient, he became more productive. And they say now, 'You've knocked ditches and you've cut away hedgerows, and drained bogs and made the land more productive, but now that's the wrong thing to do because it's bad for the environment'" – Farmer, Cork, Ireland*

Rural communities also face geographic and demographic challenges that diminish their ability to prepare for climate change or absorb impacts of regressive policy making associated with climate

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5   A 2013 report by Dr. Stephen Flood on behalf of Stop Climate Chaos estimated the cost of climate impacts on Irish agriculture at between €1 billion and €2 billion per year by 2050.

action. Physical isolation, limited economic diversity, outmigration, ageing populations, and limited public services increase vulnerability.

Other emerging threats, such as Brexit or the damage done to the tourism industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic, could further deepen inequality and intensify out-migration. However, there may be benefits too as COVID-19 ushers in an era of decentralised work and working from home (Hepburn *et al.,* 2020) in which issues of out-migration for work may well be rolled back as people are free to return to, and work from, the countryside. There are also, however, striking inequalities and issues of spatial justice which have been highlighted by COVID-19 response measures (JCFJ, 2020).

2.1 Climate policy and structural inequity for rural communities

30% of people in Ireland live in rural areas. While this figure is slightly higher than the EU average of 27.3%, it is clear from figure 3 below, that many EU countries have significant proportions of their populations living in rural areas. As a 2019 Central Statistics Office study showed the capabilities of Ireland's rural communities in comparison to their urban counterparts are diminished due to differences in income, housing, health, education and commuting patterns[6] and this will impact on the extent to which they will be able to navigate a transition away from fossil fuel-based economies.

Despite the recent development of Climate Action Regional Offices[7], local government in Ireland currently has limited institutional capacity to respond to, plan for or anticipate the impacts on lives, livelihoods and communities of climate action and climate impacts.

Source: CSO Ireland
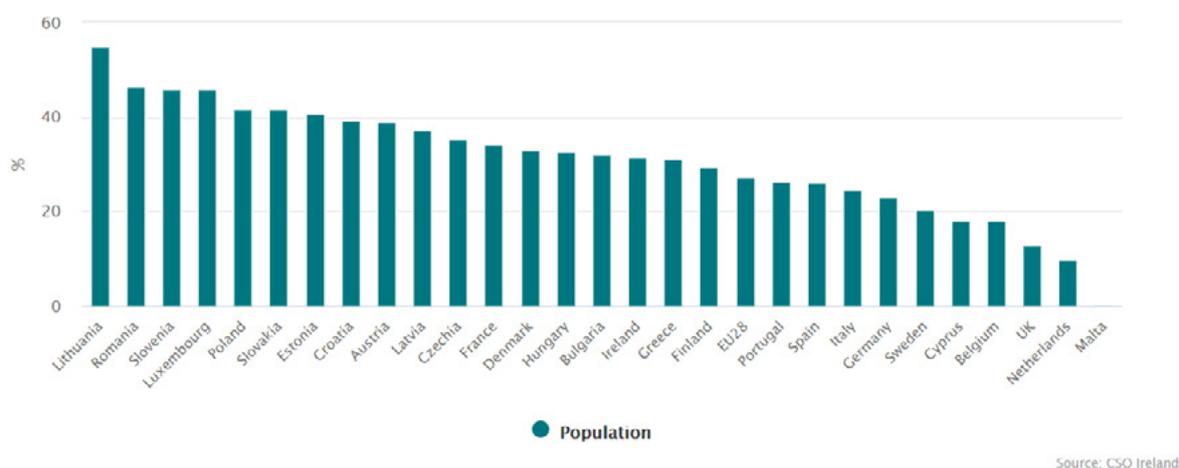
Figure 4: Proportion of population living in rural areas by country

Poorly planned climate policy may place greater limitations on capabilities in rural areas. For instance, more urbanised areas have shorter distances to everyday services like public transport. Policies that prioritise public transport, or disincentivise car transport through carbon tax or congestion charges in urban areas, without addressing the underlying inequity in public transport access, will leave rural areas at a disadvantage.

Currently, the average distance to a public bus stop in remote areas in Ireland, at 7.1km, is 17 times longer than the average distance of 0.4km in cities. The average distance to a train station in rural and remote areas is 47.3km, 14 times longer than in cities at 3.3km. Nationwide, the average distance to a

6   All figures in this section are taken from Central Statistics Office (2019) Urban and Rural Life in Ireland. Available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-urli/urbanandrurallifeinireland2019
7   Four local authority Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) have been established to drive climate action at regional and local level in Ireland. The CAROs are operated by a lead local authority in four different regions grouped according to shared climate change risks.

hospital emergency department is 20.1km. The shortest average distance in cities is 4.4km and the longest average distance is 45.0km in rural and remote areas.

> "It's difficult because the options for earning a living just aren't here. So there's nothing to keep young people here and as each generation move out, that becomes an even bigger problem. I currently hire one young woman. But business is very slow. Even the summer was slow. I don't see how we can continue just relying on tourism and farming. There needs to be other options to keep young people around." – Café owner, West of Ireland

Likely driven by these disparities, car dependence differs greatly from urban to rural areas. Nationwide in Ireland, 40.6% of people commute by car. In cities, 33.6% of commuters drive, while this figure reaches 48.2% in rural areas with high urban influence. In cities, 6.1% of commuters cycle in contrast to between 0.5%-0.7% of commuters in rural areas. Policies that seek to alleviate car dependency by incentivising active travel will have a disproportionate impact while incentivising a transition to electric cars will need to navigate economic inequality. Disposable income varies significantly depending on geography. In 2017, cities had the highest median household disposable income at €46,458, 34.2% higher than in highly rural areas (€29,424).

2.2 The social cost of food

The pressures experienced by farmers in Ireland are not unique. In France, agricultural incomes are among the lowest in the country and, tragically, the rate of suicide among French farmers is 20% higher than it is in the general population (Michalopoulos 2018). The French court of auditors has criticised the unequal and negative effects of aid allocation under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Late last year, newly appointed Agriculture Commissioner, Janusz Wojciechowski, highlighted that, across Europe, between 2005 and 2015, four million farms were lost - more than 1,000 a day – as farmers seek viable work elsewhere (O'Donnell 2019).

This story of inequality and out-migration in agriculture is set against a landscape of wastage that is environmentally untenable. In the EU, approximately 88 million tons of food is wasted every year, at a cost of €143 billion (Fusions, 2016). This waste comes with a carbon footprint of 170 million tonnes CO2-eq per year – approximately equal to the total emissions of the 39 heavily indebted poor countries, as classified by the World Bank. Reform of the CAP for the period 2021 to 2027 could offer significant opportunities to redirect agricultural practice across the EU and bolster climate action in the sector. This would be best achieved through legally binding targets for member states to use CAP money for climate objectives and ensure that the measures these funds go towards have specified and quantifiable climate outcomes.

The current food system in the European Union undermines the realisation of climate justice, and efforts to protect future generations will not succeed if the

basic needs of people living in situations of poverty and marginalisation are ignored. In 2018, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and then Executive Director of Oxfam, Winnie Byanyima, said that exploitation is hardwired into our globalised food supply chains (Byanyima 2018). Abuse of power by supermarkets and their suppliers results in farmers receiving a fraction of the price that their produce is sold for. Many workers in the production of grapes, melons and mangoes cannot afford to eat outside of harvest season (Oxfam, 2019). Human trafficking is so rife in the commercial agriculture and seafood industry that the International Labour Organisation estimates almost 3 million people in these sectors work under threat or coercion (ILO, 2017). Local and global challenges in our food system are deeply interrelated.

The COVID-19 pandemic shines a light on the fragility of global supply chains, which is of concern for food security in Ireland as a net importer of food[8]. It also highlights the role of agriculture as the world's largest driver of global environmental change and the links between agricultural intensification and an increased risk of zoonotic disease emergence and pandemic transmissions (Graham *et al.*, 2008; Wallace & Davis, 2016).

The health ramifications of the current food systems model go further still. Ireland's obesity rates are among the highest in Europe, having rapidly increased in recent years. Again, the links between agricultural policy, obesity and noncommunicable diseases are understood (Hawkes, 2012). In fact, the number of obese children globally has risen ten-fold in the last four decades[9] and there are strong links between this increase and current food systems. Indeed, experts argue that many of the most severe health issues - from respiratory diseases to a range of cancers and systemic livelihood stresses - are linked to industrial food and farming practices (De Schutter, 2019).

Furthermore, an analysis of writings on distributional outcomes in agriculture nationally and globally paints a concerning picture. While agriculture is the most unequal sector in the Irish economy in terms of income, recent studies have shown that, globally, openness to trade leads to significant income inequality for farmers (Siami-Namini, 2019) suggesting that the current globalised food system is contributing to increasing global inequality.

2.3 Listening to, and learning from, communities around Ireland

Social listening was central to this research and involved extensive engagement with communities around Ireland to understand their needs and priorities and the challenges facing them at a time of transition. The research trips highlighted concerning issues which included the disintegration of rural services, indebtedness, increasing overheads and unsustainable workloads due to intensification and the vulnerability of

8   A general overview of the FAO food and agricultural trade dataset indicates that in 2017, Ireland imported 53% more foodstuff by quantity than exported. This data includes imported feed for livestock, with maize being Ireland's largest foodstuff imported in 2017 – highlighting the significant role of supply chains in maintaining local fodder supplies.

9   WHO/NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, 2017

farm incomes and rural outmigration. Rural decline is an overused and dehumanising phrase, but it speaks to a diminishing of individual capabilities in the places people have made home, in some cases for multiple generations. It describes the loss of community, culture and identity in villages across the country – a loss of young people to urban centres; a loss of essential services such as post offices, schools and garda (police) stations; a loss of social hubs such as pubs and sports teams; and a loss of small, locally owned businesses.

Agriculture has been the lifeblood of rural Ireland for generations. Beyond providing the community with food, agriculture has provided jobs – and not just for the farmers and farm labourers. The broader community – shop keepers, butchers, bakers, creamery and abattoir employees – depended on agriculture for their living. A combination of market forces and power asymmetries between farmers on one side and the agribusiness and supermarkets upon which they depend on the other, is undermining both agriculture and the fabric of rural life that depends on it. This is not necessarily a new phenomenon – many interviewees spoke about how rural decline has been a prevalent issue for decades. What is new, however, is the perception that action to combat environmental damage could further undermine rural livelihoods or accelerate rural decline and the risk that this would turn rural communities off urgently needed climate measures.

> *"I think the biggest threat affecting positive change in agriculture is the narrative around it, politically. I think in a rural constituency like the one I live in politicians always avoid talking about the future of farming because they don't want to upset farmers. But what if we say that whatever solutions we come up with for the future of farming support the farmer and make it a desirable occupation? It's one that we definitely need – it's probably the most important occupation in the world." – Elected representative & farmer, South of Ireland*

The much-feted economic boom brought about by intensification of dairy in Ireland may not be a panacea for rural decline but may, in fact, accelerate it. Interviewees in other, less prosperous areas of agriculture – such as beef or tillage – spoke of confronting existential challenges of their own, the former due to large business interests and the latter due to competition from imported feed. Meanwhile vegetable growers spoke of the fierce competition just to survive, given the prevalence of cheap, imported vegetables in supermarkets.

Significantly, farmers face power asymmetries when negotiating produce price with the large supermarkets and other actors who dictate the price for their product. They expressed concern that further decreases in the price of milk, or increasingly frequent adverse weather, might force their family into dire financial straits. These forces are impacting the standard of living for farmers and the broader community, diminishing quality of life and rural livelihood opportunities.

The lifting of the EU milk quotas in 2015, which had restricted Irish milk output since 1984, has resulted in a rush to intensify in the dairy sector. This has led to many households taking on intergenerational levels of debt to finance this expansion. The construction of new milking parlours and slurry pits, building or expanding sheds, renting land and purchasing stock are all increasing the pressure on farmers and their families. The increase in labour required by the larger farms has had to be borne by the family as there generally hasn't been local labour available and, if it has been available, the money has not been there to pay wages.

While there is no one prevailing sentiment, positive or negative, about the direction in which agriculture is moving, many expressed concern about how the 'intensification-treadmill' in the dairy sector did

risk consolidation of family farms into bigger, more industrial farms and some interviewees expressed concern about future corporate takeover of farming in Ireland. Attitudes were oftentimes split even within a single household, where younger generations of farmers would express enthusiasm for the development of automated farming practices and increasing farm sizes, while older generations would often express concern about the shift towards mono-culture practices and the impacts it would have on the future of rural life. Several interviewees lamented the lack of access to alternative market options and the lack of general information on, and promotion of, organic and regenerative farming practices from official sources which they believed would be better for the farmer and for nature.

> *"After my first child was born, I began to think about climate change and question how I was farming. I already had €600,000 of debt from expanding my dairy herd, and I was going to double debt to expand further. But then I sat down in front of the excel sheet that Teagasc send us to calculate margins and I started to delete the input costs – fertilisers, veterinary costs, expanding my sheds – and I began to realise I was running to stand still. So I started to reduce my herd. I still have cows but far fewer. I've no debt and a better quality of life." – Farmer, Midlands*

2.4 Implications for climate action and Just Transition

The need for a Just Transition for agriculture in Ireland is self-evident. The combination of inequality in the sector, the reliance on an increasing emissions intensive livelihood and the deep-seated concerns within the farming community about the potential negative ramifications of climate action all point towards a transition that could fail to take root if not carefully planned. Plans should be designed with these inequities in mind. Climate action that increases the costs of fuel in the absence of affordable alternatives will regressively impact upon those living in remote areas. Climate action that further diminishes the margin of return being made by farmers in precarious situations or that makes agricultural livelihoods less viable will meet with strong resistance. Climate action that promotes active travel or public transport use will not share benefits widely in Ireland without substantial infrastructural investment in rural areas. Policies that neglect to consider such inequity in their design, planning and implementation run the risk of turning communities against climate action.

The way future climate action is implemented will determine whether rural communities are further burdened or regenerated. This dilemma is especially evident when considering climate solutions and policies that may increase energy, transportation, and other costs. At the same time, a substantial portion of climate action must occur in rural areas through renewable energy deployment, reinvigorated local food communities, and changes to land-use patterns. Rural communities will play an integral role in addressing climate change and, if done fairly, climate action can restore vibrancy and opportunity in rural Ireland.

To date, agriculture has not been a central focus of Just Transition discourse and planning in Ireland. The focus of Just Transition activities has centred on the winding down of peat extraction. Ending the production of peat as a fuel has multiple environmental benefits including reducing emissions, enabling peat bogs to act as efficient carbon stores, preventing negative impacts to water quality and lowering flood risks. Peat extraction is highly concentrated in the Midlands region, with some works located in the Mid-East region and in Kildare and the West region, Roscommon and Galway. The Midlands is a largely rural community where agriculture, peat and the energy industry have an important position in the local economy. Bord na Móna and the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) have provided significant

levels of employment in the region for over 70 years, and indeed many of the rural communities and villages emerged in close proximity to their sites.

Ireland's first progress report for the Just Transition Commissioner[10] was published alongside the first call for proposals under the €11m Just Transition Fund in May 2020 – not to be mistaken with the Just Transition Fund under the EU Just Transition Mechanism. The focus of Just Transition efforts is set on the Midlands region, with key priorities for the fund including retraining workers and proposals to generate sustainable employment in green enterprise in the region. The Just Transition Commissioner Kieran Mulvey has stated that he is pursuing a "whole of Midlands" approach[11], in remarking following a Bord na Móna meeting about job creation:

> *"This is designed primarily to create within the Midlands region a whole-of-community, whole-of-economic integration between those six counties involved – including Littleton in north Tipperary, and east Galway (O'Donnell, 2020)."*

A comprehensive implementation plan for the region is expected in quick response to the report's recommendations, particularly with the decision to fast-track the region's exit from peat extraction and energy production and the associated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Bord na Móna (DCCAE, 2020).

The Climate Action Plan, a whole-of-economy climate agenda published by the Irish government in 2019, tasked the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) with identifying steps that could be taken to address the vulnerability arising for workers, firms, and sectors in relation to the transitions to a low carbon and a more digital and automated future. In response to this request, NESC published a comprehensive report in 2020: *Addressing Employment Vulnerability as Part of a Just Transition in Ireland*.

Drawing insights from key stakeholders in the Midlands region on their experiences to date, NESC outlines valuable lessons for the Irish government. Their recommendations include a strong focus on community-based approaches, including support for collaborating and strategising with local stakeholders to drive local economic and community development, sharing local knowledge and embracing the complexity of transition thus avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches. The report called for participative and multifaceted approaches to governance as well as the development of place-based development framework that enables community enterprise and empower community action and enable sharing of benefits (NESC, 2020).

While the primary focus on just transition planning to date has been peat extraction in the midlands, there are other sectors in which transition from fossil fuels, while not yet receiving due attention, will have a significant impact on social outcomes. In Ireland, 90% of greenhouse gas emissions are produced by six sectors which account for approximately 9% of total direct employment: crop and animal production–and hunting and related service activities; air transport; electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products; land transport; and manufacture of basic metals (Goldrick-Kelly & Nugent 2019).

The need to ensure a coherent, localised response in rural Ireland to transitions in agriculture is particularly acute. The broader agri-food sector accounted for 173,400 jobs, or 8.6% of total employment

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10   In 2019, the Irish government appointed Kieran Mulvey as a commissioner to help ensure a co-ordinated and effective approach to Just Transition, focusing initially on communities and workers affected by the ending of peat harvesting for power generation in the Midlands region.
11   Press release, DCCAE, May 2020. Available here: https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/news-and-media/press-releases/Pages/Just-Transition-Progress-Report-is-released.aspx

in 2016 (Government of Ireland, 2018). This sector will serve as the primary vehicle for the model proposed by this research, though the parameters of the model should be sufficiently flexible to allow it to be applied to different sectors and contexts. In a separate 2020 NESC report, *Four Case Studies on Just Transition: Lessons for Ireland,* Sinéad Mercier draws out 11 lessons from an analysis of four just transition case studies from around the world. Of note for the purposes of this research is lesson 7:

> *An inclusive, place-based approach is necessary, with an overall focus on regional development rather than just directly affected workers and companies.*

The model developed by this research proposes that maximising the potential of this inclusive, place-based development approach will help to build social approval for transition and significantly enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes. Thus, it provides an enabling environment for just transition activities.

2.5 Towards a Just Transition for agriculture using a capabilities approach

The predominant agricultural model in Ireland is an extractive model. In this, the labour of the farmer, combined with the cost of inputs and infrastructure, ultimately serve to primarily benefit supermarkets, agribusiness and their shareholders. Long-run gains to the family farm must be weighed against the ramifications that increased pressure due to debt, higher workloads or diminished services have for the well-being of the farmer.

On the other side of the equation, the consumer, who ostensibly benefits from the low commodity price, is also experiencing an extractive system. Edge-of-town superstores have proliferated as precarious work and the gig economy developed and the housing and rental crisis deepened. For many, shopping in these stores is a saving in time or money — a significant incentive for those that are time or cash poor. Though perhaps not as apparent as in the case of the farmer, the consumer is having their time and labour extracted and, in return, is partaking in a system that is economically efficient but one that does not enhance well-being and is neither environmentally nor socially sustainable. Ultimately, this system requires agricultural intensification to sustain itself and this creates a hostile environment for the traditional family farm and increases livestock GHG emissions.

Figure 5: The prevalent extractive model in agriculture
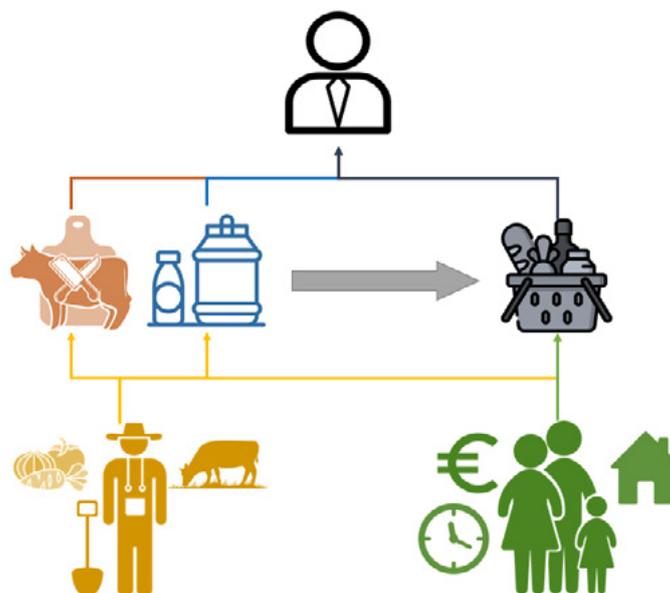
This is a simplified model of an extractive food system. Here the farmer sells their produce to either the privately owned abattoir, creamery or supermarket. Beyond the payment for their produce, little or no further benefit returns to the farmer. On the other side, the family, contending with time pressures and financial pressures, buys their groceries from a supermarket that offers convenience. This system channels resources from the farm and the household, where they are most scarce, upwards towards agribusiness, supermarkets and, ultimately, shareholders.

An alternative cooperative system is possible but requires political will and supports. A re-orienting of the system to maximise benefit both for the consumer and the producer requires support for the farmer and robust legislative provision to enhance the well-being of the consumer, as well as a policy landscape that incentivises the development of cooperatives and community-owned business. Viewed as rights, such an approach would recognise that climate action encompasses the right to:

- an adequate standard of living for both the producer and consumer which includes health and well-being, and necessary social services

- work

- rest and leisure to enable the consumer to afford healthy produce at a fair price and to enable the time to shop

- food with sufficient availability and access which adequately meets dietary and cultural needs

- housing for the consumer as access to a kitchen is important for preparing food

In seeking to holistically address or counteract the extractive system, policymakers should look to identify the opportunities to enhance and expand the capabilities of producers or consumers through measures that bolster their human, social, natural, physical or financial capital.

Table 1: Applying the capabilities approach to agriculture.

Capital	Assets	Capability	Farmer example	Consumer example
Human capital	Knowledge, personal health, skills, labour and access to education and training.	Ability to access information, to understand, to reflect and to physically carry out activities.	The nature of information made available to a farmer through government offices or representative bodies shapes the choices that farmers make. Access to education/training about establishing cooperative business models, regenerative farming, organic farming and silvopasture would present alternative or enhanced livelihoods options.	A good deal of attention is paid to changing consumer behaviour which could be identified as building consumer knowledge and awareness. However, this fits a personal responsibility narrative which obscures information on local food systems and the social and solidarity economy and promotes instead sustainable products through a business as usual model.

Enhanced training and skills development could transform consumers into small scale producers or cooperative members. |
| **Social capital** | Social networks and informal relationships and memberships of formalised groups or associations. | Ability to collaborate with, and learn from others, to engage in reciprocal interactions and to forge and maintain informal and formal relations. | The cooperative movement in Ireland demonstrated the value of social capital within the farming community. A producer connected to skilled and educated collaborators (neighbours, co-producers and organisation members) is more likely to ask assistance and make savings through economies of scale. | Consumers are rarely considered to have social capital. Individualism and economic freedom have been central tenants of neoliberalism. However, the agency that exists within networked consumers is significant, as evidenced by consumer cooperatives and mutual bodies in housing, health-care, insurance and retail. |
| **Natural capital** | Natural resource stocks that people can draw on for their livelihoods, including land, forests, water, air and so on. | Ability to situate one's practice in an environment/ecosystem that provides necessary inputs for operations. | In the context of farming, natural capital is primarily healthy soils and sufficient land as well as access to clean water. | Maintaining access to a healthy environment is central to individual and community well-being. |

			Access to land is a significant issue for the next generation of Irish and European farmers, with significant risk of families exiting farming and land being consolidated into large holdings by large or corporate landowners.	Emphasis on the 'green economy' which describes nature in terms of financial capital, encourages the privatisation and financialisation of so-called 'ecosystem services' such as water, carbon credits or forestry. This disassociates communities from the co-creation of solutions and shared ownership.
Physical capital	Energy, irrigation and sanitation, transportation means and infrastructures, production technologies, and equipment.	Ability to operate easily, efficiently and effectively or have infrastructures, systems or equipment in place for operating.	The physical resources represent significant choices in the livelihoods options of a farmer. Decisions to intensify dairy production, for example, come with significant infrastructure costs related to land, sheds, milking parlours etc. These investments represent a type of 'lock in' or long-term commitment to a particular direction for the farm which, in the case of dairy, may present sustainability issues should the regulatory environment shift on account of the environmental impact. Similarly, decisions to work with other farmers or members of the community cooperatively will require investments which determine the direction the farm will take in the medium to long term.	Connectivity, whether that is transport infrastructure, public transport services or internet access, is a key enabler of development outcomes in rural areas. Other physical capital – e.g. proximity to schools, community centres, shops, post offices, Garda stations – will determine social outcomes for an individual and community. Public spending on renovation and maintenance of existing physical capital will ensure continued use and availability.

Financial capital	Money and savings, access to loans, financial services.	Ability to purchase goods and services, to receive credit or make investments.	Access to a steady cash flow and reliable credit enables farmers to develop on farm infrastructure, hire workers, build adaptative capacity to climate impacts and take the necessary steps to diversify income.	Financial capital will determine the willingness of a consumer to seek out sustainable product options that are more sustainable. The success of edge-of-town supermarkets is predicated upon exceptionally low prices which are maintained through controlling production and manufacturing costs and minimising staff costs, thereby minimising the benefits to the local community.

A holistic approach to addressing the extractive system described in Figure 1 would look to intervene on the side of both the producer and consumer. For the consumer, policies like the four-day work week and the implementation of a living wage would go some way towards enabling people to shop locally or afford a fairer price for produce than those offered in supermarkets. Other interventions, such as introducing a constitutional right to housing or otherwise robustly addressing the current housing crisis by ensuring that adequate housing is accessible to all, would further reduce poverty and ensure that all families had kitchen space in which to prepare locally produced food.

Interventions on the side of the producer would seek to ensure targeted supports so as to build resilience to climate impacts and provide the necessary resources and capacity building to enable enhanced farm-to-fork approaches and diversification through partnership with other farmers. Creating community businesses would also enhance outcomes for both producers and consumers. For example, producer or consumer-led cooperatives enabling the development of local abattoirs, creameries, or shops that give the community ownership over more of the supply chain and thus enhance local outcomes. Similarly, introducing regulations to limit the size of supermarkets depending on the area in which they are built would give local business the opportunity to develop and sustain. While none of these measures could be called climate action in and of themselves, they contribute to a scenario where, with fairer earnings and an improved quality of life for farmers, the need for agricultural intensification would be reduced or reversed. A capabilities approach creates scope for consideration of the multidimensional factors driving climate degradation and allows for the identification of comprehensive solutions, grounded in climate justice.

Figure 6: A potential regenerative model based on the capabilities approach
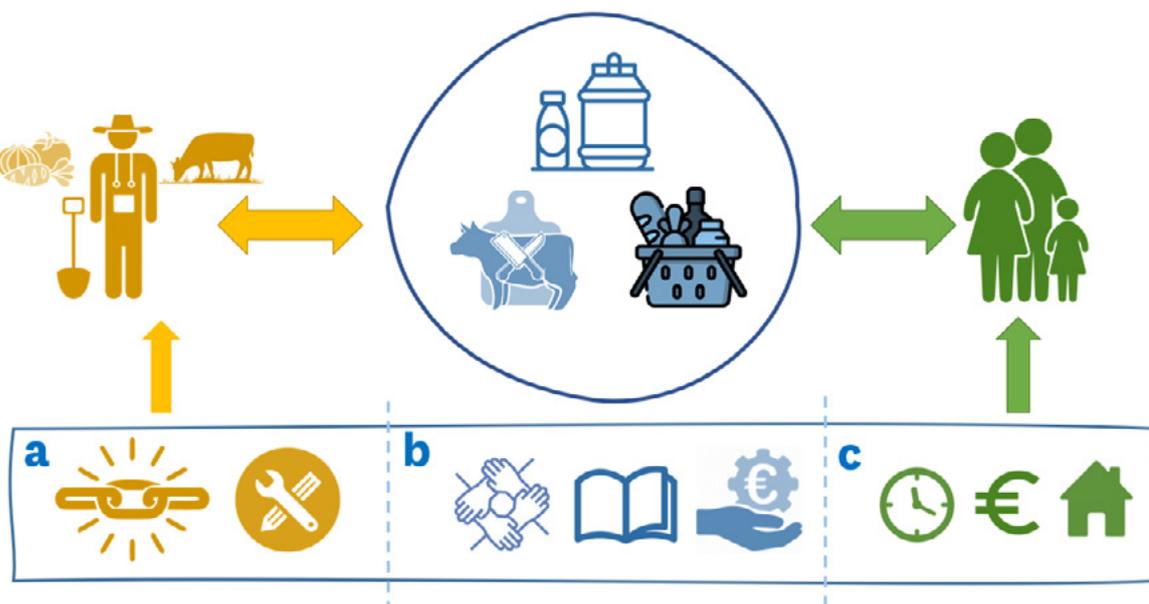
By creating context appropriate policy interventions at all points in the supply chain, it is possible to build a localised system that rewards producers and consumers, enables local development and accelerates climate action. The interventions indicated here are a) resilience building for farmers on the impacts of climate change and resources and capacity building to enable diversification and climate smart approaches; b) development of community trust and enhanced participation in decision- making; context appropriate and practical education in the development of community business, cooperative models and social enterprises; and targeted grants to enable the creation of community-led businesses and c) a four day work week; a living wage; and the right to housing.

Will climate action in Europe be extractive or distributive?

The example in this case study illustrates how important it is to avoid creating a legislative environment that favours large business models because of the detrimental impact that has on the well-being of communities by channelling profits to large enterprises. Instead, a legislative environment that seeks to create the enabling conditions for well-being can achieve positive social, economic and environmental outcomes. Therefore, it will be important for the European Union to consider how it can serve as a catalyst for local development, distributing benefits as widely as possible while mitigating emissions or adapting to climate impacts. To achieve this, a capabilities lens, coupled with a whole-of-society approach is necessary to appreciate how the supply and labour chains for climate action can be harnessed to develop community businesses and build local wealth.

3. The factors underpinning a People's Transition

3. The factors underpinning a People's Transition

Time is running out in the global fight against climate change. In the year of drafting this report, as the world has been overwhelmed by the challenge of containing the COVID-19 pandemic — in itself a consequence of the destruction of nature (Lambertini et al, 2020; Wallace, 2016) — our natural world has continued to offer up warning signs of a system falling out of equilibrium.

In the months before the publication of this report the northern hemisphere had its hottest summer on record (NOAA, 2020); temperatures within the Arctic circle reached record levels (38°C) (Rowlatt 2020); the minimum extent of the Arctic sea ice was the second lowest on record (NSIDC 2020); the Atlantic hurricane season set numerous records for storm formation (Wood 2020); flooding impacted millions of people in China (Insurance Journal 2020), the Sahel (UNOCHA 2020; France24, 2020) East Africa (BBC 2020) and along the Mekong river in South East Asia; and unprecedented wild fires in the United States of America and Australia drew worldwide attention for the devastation they wrought (Leonard & Freeman, 2020).

With the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of public support for emergency measures in determining the success of interventions has become clear. Suppressing the spread of the virus has been contingent on public acceptance of social distancing, the wearing of facemasks and unprecedented lockdowns. However, public acceptance of these policies has waned the longer they have remained in place, as concern about individual freedoms overtook the collective concern about the impact of the virus (Hirsch & Gallardo, 2020).

The climate emergency poses a much greater threat to the health and well-being of societies than the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the implementation of response measures differs significantly between the two crises. In order to be successful in mitigating the most catastrophic climate impacts, policies must be adopted before the full extent of the threat is clear to the public.

Furthermore, these measures will have to remain in place over much longer timescales than those envisioned for the pandemic, with many measures likely to stay in place indefinitely. Some of these, such as the ending of peat extraction or changes to agricultural systems, will necessarily intersect with cultural norms and traditional practices and, implemented badly, could undermine the sense of worth of individuals or entire communities. As such, the climate response cannot count on the same type of public acceptance for top-down measures as has been evidenced during the pandemic. In the long run, a reliance on top-down measures to implement climate action would likely render climate action futile and threaten the long-term stability of democratic institutions.

Instead, successful climate action commensurate with achieving the target of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will require careful consideration of climate justice. Climate justice links human rights and development so as to achieve a human-centred approach to climate action, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly[12]. Adopting a climate justice lens to the design, planning and implementation of climate policy and plans can enable decision makers to identify and avoid potential social pitfalls while

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[12] Principles of Climate Justice, Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice (Available at https://www.mrfcj.org/principles-of-climate-justice/)

also maximising the co-benefits of those measures. Central to this is the ability to catalyse development through climate action.

Climate action presents an unprecedented opportunity for rural development. Realising this opportunity requires the recognition of the role of communities as implementing partners in the rollout of climate action and seeks to mobilise climate finance[13] so that it 'sticks' in communities and enables development as well as climate action outcomes. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to consider the landscape in which climate action will be implemented so as to develop a localised implementation model that is people-centred, respects the diversity of context and does not reproduce class assumptions.

As the climate crisis accelerates, there is little public appetite for the kinds of transformative policies needed and thus elected representatives and decision makers are wary of making substantial intervention. This research develops a model for a rollout of climate action that actively builds support for it through addressing local development needs, enhancing job opportunities, and enhancing standard of living in rural communities.

The underlying factors for the development of this model are addressed below.

3.1 Taking climate action in the absence of widespread public support

In recent years, thanks to the efforts of campaigners and activists, awareness of climate change has increased. However, other social and economic concerns that are perceived as more immediate are given priority by the public. In the most recent general election in Ireland, in February 2020, exit polls showed that climate change was a key issue for only 6% of voters, with the electorate attributing greater importance to issues such as health, housing and homelessness (IPSOS MRBI, 2020).

This is not unique to Ireland. While a recent FEPS study found that Europeans consider climate change to be the top challenge facing the continent (Bartha *et al.*, 2020), the nature of the climate crisis, in which the worst of current impacts are distant geographically and the worst of future impacts are distant in time, means that other issues of immediate concern tend to take precedence for the public in terms of day-to-day priorities. This is borne out by the findings of a 2017 survey of perceptions of public priorities conducted in France, Germany, Norway and the UK. When respondents were asked about the most important issue facing their country, climate change registered 5th, 10th, 4th and 13th respectively. In Norway, where concern was greatest, just 10% of respondents highlighted climate change as the most pressing issue.

It is important to consider how this low prioritisation of climate change among the general public, relative to other societal concerns, impacts on the outcomes of governance and decision-making processes. Equally, it is necessary to understand the extent to which public perception is mutable and over what timelines.

Box 2: Challenge of rising populism

It is often assumed that education or awareness of climate change serves as a key determinant of public perception. However several studies contradict this. Studies suggest that education and raising awareness may not be an appropriate strategy to pursue to build support for climate action. Not only does knowledge of climate change serve as a poor predictor of desire for climate action (Whitmarsh

13   Climate finance is "finance that aims at reducing emissions, and enhancing sinks of greenhouse gases and aims at reducing vulnerability of, and maintaining and increasing the resilience of, human and ecological systems to negative climate change impacts", as defined by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Standing Committee on Finance.

2011), but it may also cause divergence in opinion based on people's political persuasion (Lee *et al.,* 2015). **The socio-economic situation that a person finds themselves in is more likely to determine whether climate change is of immediate concern, with individuals who have achieved a certain standard of living more readily disposed to engage with concerns of a less immediate nature** (Fransson & Garling, 1999; Lo & Chow, 2015; Palm & Feng 2018). A recent study of the 23 European countries contained in the European Social Survey found that people who place themselves on the right side of the political spectrum have a lower level of education, and prioritise self-enhancement over self-transcendence values, are more likely to be less concerned about climate change, hold climate sceptical views and perceive fewer negative impacts (Poortingaa *et al.,* 2019).

It would be fair to take from this that the underlying factors which determine the prioritisation of climate action are relatively inelastic and so will not be transformed in the timeframe necessary to avoid climate breakdown. Indeed, just as political support for climate change builds, so does political opposition. This polarisation is evident in the surge of support for right-wing populist parties across Europe, with many of the factors building support for climate action simultaneously boosting parties that hold positions of climate denial (Gardiner, 2019).

It is fair to assert that climate change has not become the key priority of electorates in time to secure political cover for the measures necessary to avoid dangerous climate change. **Therefore, it holds that if catastrophic climate change is to be avoided, decision makers will now have to take the necessary decisions to combat climate breakdown without the assurance of a supportive electorate. Given the scale of the transformation required, these challenges come with enormous risks, both in terms of delivering enduring climate action that succeeds in averting the worst impacts of climate change but also in terms of ensuring the stability of democratic societies remains for the duration of the transformation.**

Decision makers, appreciating how a transformation on this scale will impact on the lives of people and communities, must seek means to proactively build support for the actions undertaken by sharing the benefits as well as the burdens.

Factor 1

To succeed in averting catastrophic climate breakdown, European governments will need to take transformative climate action in the absence of significant public support.

3.2 Conditions for people-centred climate action

As the climate crisis accelerates, there remains a reluctance on the part of decision makers to undertake the deep and transformative policies necessary to avert catastrophe and enable communities to adapt. Elected representatives remain wary of interventions on the scale that, according to science, is necessary as the public propensity for supporting transformative change remains low.

Consequently, dominant approaches tend to focus on citizens as consumers and thus requiring persuasion to adjust their behaviour so as to drive a sustainability agenda among corporates. The implicit assumption here being that it should be possible to consume our way out of an environmental crisis created by excess consumption. More transformative decision-making would require systematically tackling how environmentally problematic ways of life are sustained and recreated. Elizabeth Shove, in

her provocative and contemplative 2010 paper on the potential contribution of the social sciences to environmental policymaking writes:

> *"[The radical unmasking of unsustainability] suggests that transitions towards sustainability do not depend on policy makers persuading individuals to make sacrifices, specified with reference to taken for granted benchmarks of normal nonsacrifice; or on increasing the efficiency with which current standards are met. Instead, relevant societal innovation is that in which contemporary rules of the game are eroded; in which the status quo is called into question; and in which more sustainable regimes of technologies, routines, forms of know-how, conventions, markets and expectations take hold across all domains of life" (Shove 2010).*

Undertaking such decisions would require a change of perspective — to view people as agents of change and implementing partners in climate action. Furthermore, it would require deep consideration of inequity and the risks it poses to the effective implementation of climate action.

Rollback of services and imposed community building

Climate policy that fails to incorporate considerations of inequality promotes a view of communities as homogenous groups, rather than acknowledging the contestation, difference, tension and distinction from which action on climate change can be designed to meet a range of political and public ends (Walker 2011). Multiple issues arise when policymakers view community as an instrument of government, as a means of effecting policy or as a tool for behavioural change. Such approaches depoliticise the goals that a community is being asked to meet, risk government co-opting communities to its own ends, treat the community (and indeed communities) as a unified and monolithic group and rely on often unpaid or poorly paid community members for government work (Jackson, 2015). Often times such community-based approaches are, in neoliberal contexts, coupled with rollback (the withdrawal of state provision and formal support to meet national goals) and rollout (the promotion of market-based approaches and individualism) forcing communities to compete for resources (Aiken 2017).

As the tendency within market-based modes of governing is to devolve responsibility to both the individual and market, community becomes the context for atomised individuals to enact reflexive expectations (Eadson, 2016) — expectations not grounded in the real needs and priorities of the community, but rather the needs and priorities of those with the means to have their voices heard. This results in a conceptualisation of community not as a body with agency but rather as a vehicle to guide individuals towards behavioural change and drive them towards pre-defined targets. As the benefits of cohesion within community are intangible and abstract, instrumental and economic targets tend to crowd out community concerns. Communities in receipt of funding are faced with new challenges in the form of competition with other groups, misaligned timeframes and demands on administration. As a result, the objective of the community often finds itself at odds with the objective of the funder (Creamer 2015). This can alienate communities from climate action, rather than presenting them with a sense of ownership, and thus lead to disengagement.

There are numerous examples of climate policies that are accessible only to those who can afford it, even when some financial incentives are put in place, highlighting the role of economic inequality. For instance, in Ireland, the costs of retrofitting of homes can be more than €75,000 per house, with grants covering approximately 50% of that cost. This leaves a sizeable remaining cost on the homeowner and

may account for low take-up rates — 120 homes were retrofitted in 2017 and 139 in 2018 under the grant scheme (McGee, 2019). Inequalities in social capital play a role in accessing climate solutions. For example, Eadson and Foden (2014) find that community energy initiatives are 'inherently fuzzy and potentially exclusionary' highlighting fundamental barriers to collective action such as social inequalities.

Climate ethics literature discusses the motivational gap arising from the shortcomings of a conventional moral judgement system that is not well equipped to identify a complex issue such as climate change as an important moral problem, and the reluctance of people to change their behaviour and the temptation to shirk responsibility (Peeters *et al.*, 2019).

The motivational gap, when considered with climate policy that is blind to inequality and the immutable drivers of perception of climate risk, serves to underscore that a redesign of approaches to the design, planning and implementation of climate action is necessary to create climate action that is truly people-centred. Parallels could be drawn between the motivation gap and the 'value-action' gap discussed by Shove and Blake — the problem that people who espouse green values do not always act in accordance with them (Shove 2010; Blake 1999).

To build public support while undertaking climate action, climate policy needs to be people-centred and to address inequalities. In practical terms, this is achieved by tailoring climate action to address local community needs or to deliver tangible community benefits. In essence, climate action must in itself deliver sustainable local development outcomes.

Factor 2

Successful climate action, in the absence of public support, requires reducing emissions and building adaptive capacity while at the same time enhancing standards of living and ensuring equal access to opportunity.

Box 3: Avoiding the individualisation of climate action

There is a school of thought on climate action that hold that responsibility for responding to climate change rests with individuals whose choices will make the difference. A primary failure of such an approach is that it does not recognise inequity. Climate policy that is blind to inequity fails to recognise the differing capabilities of individuals to take part in the necessary transition to a zero-carbon future. Such policies are likely to push the cost of climate action onto the individual. To garner social approval for climate action, policies must be designed in full cognisance of the potential harmful impacts they may have and efforts should be undertaken to mitigate negative outcomes.

As might be expected, support is weak for climate policies that increase the cost of living and it would seem that perceptions are shaped by levels of wealth and understanding. A Behaviour & Attitudes (B&A) poll for The Sunday Times taken in Ireland in 2019 found that just 18% of respondents supported doubling the carbon tax to €40 per tonne. A 2018 study in Europe indicated that while citizens supported a ban on the sale of inefficient appliances and the subsidising of renewable energy services, only 7% were strongly in favour of a carbon tax . A recent study in the UK found that while British adults were willing to pay for climate policies, the perceived severity of impact of climate change, and higher socio-economic status, were strong determinants of willingness.

Derived purely from neo-classical economics, a carbon tax is an effort to address the market's failure to incorporate carbon emissions into pricing. The belief is that by overcoming the cost differential between carbon fuel and alternative energy sources, a carbon tax will incentivise consumers to transition.

The challenge with individual taxation for emissions reductions is to ensure that it does not taint the perception of climate action in the eyes of the public. To avoid scenarios where taxation risks sowing resentment, as witnessed with the rise of the *mouvement des gilets jaunes* in France in late 2018, tax justice should be a primary priority.

Redistribution of wealth is paramount when talking about addressing inequalities and social and climate justice. This redistribution could be achieved through tax reform. For example, by a progressive reduction in the taxation of labour prior to the introduction of environmental taxes, by the closing of tax loopholes in air transport (Krenek & Schratzenstaller, 2016) and maritime sectors (Parry *et al.*, 2018), by the introduction of a financial transactions tax (McLynn, 2016), or by the rationalising of corporate tax and the closing of tax havens, which cost governments in the region of USD 800 bn per year in lost tax revenues (Shaxson 2019) — more than enough to tackle the climate crisis.

For individuals who, owing to some inequality of access, cannot secure energy alternatives, an environmental tax will be punitive without robust consideration of distributional outcomes. Previous work by FEPS discusses how the pre- and redistribution of wealth would help reset the fundamentals of inequality and political and climate justice and recommends initiatives such as helping low-income households, introducing free public transport, installing energy efficiency measures in homes and reducing other taxes for low-income families to compensate for the new tax (Billingham, 2019 and Stainforth *et al.,* 2020). Predictability, transparency, and effectively targeted pro-poor investments that 'reach the furthest behind first'[14] will likely be essential for public acceptance.

3.3 Climate action must catalyse local development

The resources and skills required in keeping successful community-based action on climate change going can often discourage people from getting involved. Those at the forefront of this type of community tend to be 'professional, university-educated individuals with extensive project management experience and high-level accounting and budgeting skills', while those with less training are at a disadvantage (Creamer, 2015). Not all community members can afford the time necessary to volunteer. For others, there are structural barriers, such as access to childcare for example. It follows that the concerns of those who can take the lead in identifying the problems faced by their community and devising solutions will dominate the outcomes, while potentially marginalising those who do not share the same vision (Creamer 2015).

Box 4: Risks to effective climate action from transactional politics

Transactional politics is an issue which is particularly acute in Ireland. Irish politics is marked by constituency service and individual brokerage. The nature of democracy in Ireland is not linked to social movements, but rather is the result of interplay between social science research, media and parliamentary debate, all of which employ the notion of clientelism (Kusche 2017). While Ireland is not unique in Europe in this regard, it certainly provides ample material for consideration, particularly with regard to planning and zoning in rural regions, where economic resources, personal contacts and social

14   The United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on all countries to reach the furthest behind first in taking action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

capital have played a central role in exercising influence over local decision makers down through the years (Scott *et al.*, 2019). Similar relationships in rural politics between public representatives and voters can be found in Greece (Trantidis, 2016), Spain (Cinar, 2016) and Italy (Zinn 2010).

Figure 7: Comparison of climate performance to perception of corruption
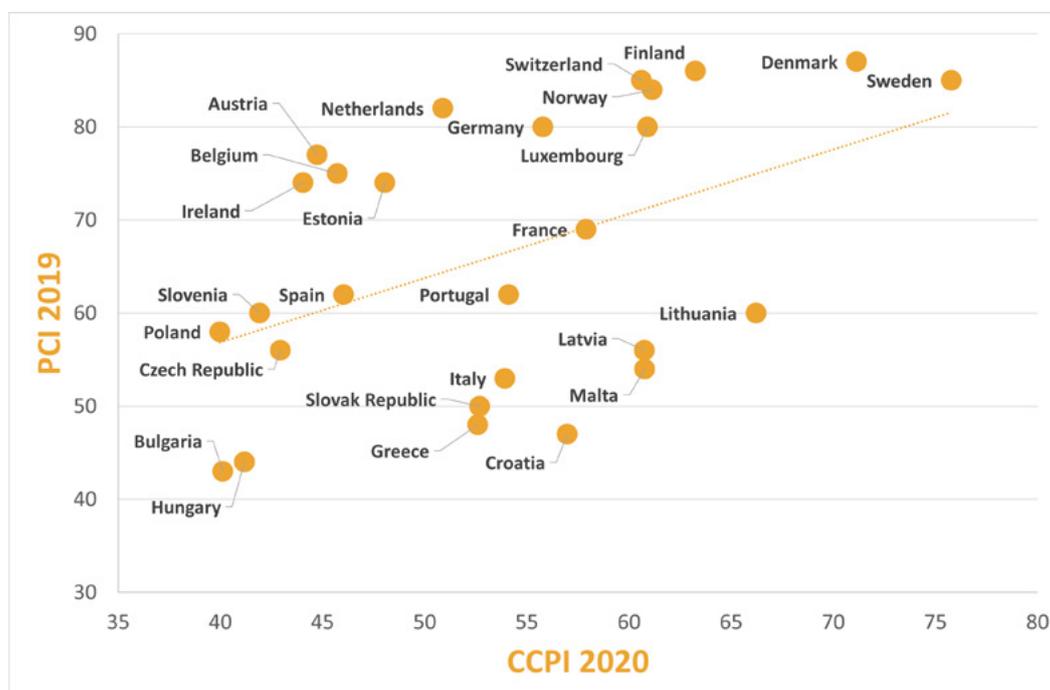
Data source: Transparency International Perception of Corruption Index 2019 and the Climate Change Performance Index 2020

Comparing perceptions of national corruption, as a proxy for public trust in democratic institutions, with progress on tackling climate change, some correlations can be seen among those countries in Europe with the most to do on climate change also suffering from a lack of faith in their institutions. This further indicates that climate action which does not improve standards of living will run the risk of rejection by populations either through protest or the ballot box. The onus is on decision makers — guided and supported by a range of professionals from fields such as natural science, engineering, planning and social science — to design climate action that addresses community needs and priorities.

In order not to misalign objectives when engaging communities in climate action (Creamer 2014), engagement with people around climate change cannot be separated from broader community development and well-being initiatives, and needs to be understood as a longer term process, rather than as one-off project consultations (Simon *et al.,* 2019).

To achieve this, this research seeks to describe a model that will engage communities on their terms, in a representative manner, to distil out their priorities and address them with solutions that both enhance community well-being and act to drive down emissions and build adaptative capacity. Communities should not be expected to process the multifaceted challenges of understanding climate solutions that both reduce emissions and tackle inequality. However, they should be confident in having their voices heard and be able to trust in a bottom-up approach to policymaking that will respond to their needs in such a way that the systematic challenges presented by climate change are addressed.

Factor 3

People care more about local development than climate action. In developing climate action that builds social approval, the onus is on decision makers to match appropriate climate strategies to the needs and priorities of the whole community.

3.4 Climate action can proactively build public support

If climate interventions are intentionally designed to foster trust and secure social approval, they will maximise potential for success. This requires consideration of what constitutes meaningful participation and how it can proactively build trust.

3.4.1 What is meaningful participation?

There has been a significant amount of attention paid to participative approaches to climate action. The European Green Deal states that "active public participation and confidence in the transition is paramount if policies are to work and be accepted" and it makes numerous references to inclusive growth (EC, 2019). In the Irish context, the Climate Action Plan, published in 2019, discusses participation primarily in the context of energy generation but it does highlight the role of PPNs[15] as a means to distribute information and "animate local community groups to get involved in climate action initiatives" (DCCAE, 2019) and provision exists for a National Dialogue on Climate Action — a collaboration between citizens, the government and relevant agencies covering a range of climate related issues.

However, whether these mechanisms can be considered as meaningful participation or significant in securing broad social approval for climate action is debatable. Participation initiatives or opportunities to make submissions related to climate action tend to be responded to by people who self-select. While there is no data to illustrate whether gaps exist in terms of the socio-economic circumstances of those who engage, it is reasonable to expect that the concerns of those with a better education and a higher standard of living will be better represented.

While recent democratic initiatives in Ireland have focused on openness, transparency and participation, there has been little discussion of empowerment at the local level, of addressing inequality or of the value of local knowledge and the co-creation of policies, plans or projects with local communities. The forensic nature of such work is heavily based on creating social networks, nurturing relationships and is inherently challenging, messy and resource intensive. It seems unrealistic, however, to expect that the existential crisis confronting us will be resolved with a silver bullet or technocratic fix.

Considering inequity and actively rebuilding trust in participative approaches

> *"When individuals feel that their voices are not heard or they cannot make meaningful change in decision making processes, it may produce a cynicism that water governance favours the same winners and losers; reinforces the status quo" (Bresnihan & Hesse, 2019)."*

Bresnihan and Hesse (2019) could just as easily be speaking of governance related to all environmental

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15   Public Participation Networks (PPNs) aim to enable local authorities to connect with community groups around the country. Introduced via an amendment to the Local Government Act in 2014, the PPN recognises the contribution of volunteer-led organisations to local economic, social and environmental capital. It facilitates input by these organisations into local government through a structure that ensures public participation and representation on decision-making committees within local government. PPNs are comprised of community groups and these are categorised into voluntary groups, environmental groups and groups representing socially excluded or marginalised communities. By the end of 2018, over 14,800 community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations were members of a PPN. Over 900 PPN representatives were elected to over 370 committees on issues such as strategic policy, local community development and joint policing.

action in the above quote. If the needs and priorities of the whole community, including poor or marginalised members, are to be represented in the design and implementation of climate action, then the approach to engage communities must proactively work to earn the trust of community members. When economic inequality and exclusion are high, it is not uncommon for marginalised citizens and communities to withdraw from political engagement altogether (Goubin, 2020). On the other hand, by addressing inequity and enabling participation, community-led processes can enhance their credibility and allow the public to feel an ownership over the direction of local development while also building trust in the process.

Valuing local knowledge and expertise

Valuing local knowledge and expertise is central to climate justice. Integrating local knowledge into decision making through participative approaches complements scientific expertise and there is a growing evidence base that such approaches foster better outcomes (Pickering *et al.,* 2020; Ernst, 2019; Bresnihan & Hesse, 2019). Achieving meaningful and reciprocal dialogue between experts, community groups and decision makers should be the objective of any initiative seeking to encourage meaningful participation.

It has been demonstrated that where genuine engagement with communities has not occurred, and local knowledge has not been integrated into the management of environmental initiatives, low levels of trust and collaboration have been found (Bosch *et al.* 2012). Conversely, where meaningful participation is evident and local knowledge has been incorporated into decision-making processes, higher levels of trust in the adoption and implementation of projects is evident (Snitker, 2019; Šūmane *et al.*, 2018).

Building local capacity

For the purposes of this report, capacity building refers to education and training processes for individuals, communities or organisations designed to improve or retain the skills, knowledge, tools, equipment or other resources to effectively engage in building a sustainable society. Awareness raising and knowledge building about the expected impacts of a changing climate and the need to change behaviours or adapt are normally the starting points of capacity building efforts.

However, drawing on emancipatory pedagogies represented in the works of Paulo Freire, Ira Shore, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, it is possible to describe a community educational process that would seek to move beyond teaching the public about climate change, its impacts and its solutions. In order to realise the transformation necessary to avoid catastrophic climate breakdown, it will be necessary to move towards local capacity building approaches based on dialogue that values social interaction, collaboration, authentic democracy, and self-actualisation towards making fundamental changes both individually and collectively (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014).

3.4.2 Building trust through co-development

As the purpose of the People's Transition is to co-create, with communities living in a locality, projects and programmes that meet the dual aim of achieving community priorities and furthering climate action, there is clearly a symbiotic relationship between the delivery of successful initiatives and the extent of trust that those communities have in the process to achieve those aims.

Lessons can be learned from integrated project delivery studies in the construction industry, where trust-based relationships between contractors are central to delivering complex development projects.

Adopting such a lens also helps to conceptualise community stakeholders as implementing partners rather than clients of government initiatives.

Research on trust building techniques and integrated project delivery provides a useful framework for considering the dynamic process of building trust within a People's Transition project (Pishdad-Bozorgi, 2017):

I.   **Context-based trust** develops when a constrained circumstance makes the parties realise that to trust and proceed is their only option.

II. **System-based trust** develops because of formalised arrangements and systems in place with little or no considerations of personal issues.

III. **Cognition-based trust** is the result of individuals' perception of their collaborators' level of trustworthiness based on their behaviour and reputation.

IV. **Affect-based trust** represents the highest level of trust and emotional intelligence developed through an established relationship and track record.

The priority for the long-term success of People's Transition projects will be to move communities quickly from the context and systems-based categories to cognition and affect-based categories.

Context-based trust could be considered to represent the type of trust fostered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Social approval for severe measures existed because of the public acceptance of the seriousness of the situation and fear of the dangers of the virus. However, such trust is unlikely to suffice over the long run and is not a trust upon which the social approval for the response to a crisis as complex and enduring as the climate crisis can be built. System-based trust is reasonably analogous to the type of top-down implementation framework described by Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier (1983) in *Implementation and Public Policy* and currently commonplace in Ireland and throughout Europe.

By delivering on community needs and priorities quickly and effectively, People's Transition initiatives can garner affect-based trust within the communities where they are active and create a demand through driving the creation of cognition-based trust in other communities. To realise this potential, the resources necessary to deliver on the initiatives co-designed with the community must be secured prior to commencing the Community Empowerment strand. Failure to properly resource and support a community to project completion, having raised hopes and expectations through engagement, would risk damaging trust in participative approaches.

Co-creation and the building of social and political trust are central to the design of the People's Transition approach. A commitment to building trust at a foundational level must exist in every region where this model is being implemented. A conducive environment can be achieved through[16]:

•   Identifying and building relationships with trusted actors prior to commencing the project.

•   Ensuring the early involvement of all trusted actors and key partners.

16   This list of attributes is drawn from conversations with key informants familiar with community projects in Ireland and a review of literature related to building trust in project management, including Swan, W., McDermott, P., Wood, G., Thomas, A., & Abott, C. (2002). Trust in construction: Achieving cultural change. Manchester, UK: Center for Construction Innovation; Wong, P., & Cheung, S. (2004). Trust in construction partnering: views from parties of the partnering dance. International Journal of Project Management, 22(6), 437–446.doi:10.1016/j. ijproman.2004.01.001; Terje Karlsen, J., Græe, K. and Jensvold Massaoud, M. (2008), "Building trust in projectstakeholder relationships", Baltic Journal of Management, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 7-22. https://doi.org/10.1108/17465260810844239

- Ensuring independence from any political parties, private sector actors or vested interests of any kind.

- Permitting only sincere engagement from political actors – no prepared speeches or remarks, politicians and decision makers come to listen and learn.

- Disallowing titles and ensuring a non-hierarchical structure that fosters a shared culture and a sense of belonging for all participants.

- Prioritising open dialogue, transparency, and information sharing.

- Ensuring necessary resources for delivery are available before commencement.

3.5 Foundations from which to build

By designing climate action to prioritise local development outcomes, decision makers can minimise potential negative outcomes and maximise public support for the measures required to transition to a fossil fuel free society. This requires intentionally designed, bottom-up mechanisms to meaningful participation and the co-creation of plans and strategies as discussed in this section. The need for community-led approaches to tackle inequality and improve policy making is recognised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in their special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C:

> *"At the level of groups and individuals, equity in pursuing climate resilience for a 1.5°C warmer world means addressing disadvantage, inequities and empowerment that shape transformative processes and pathways, and deliberate efforts to strengthen the capabilities, capacities and well-being of poor, marginalized and vulnerable people. Community-driven Climate Resilient Development Pathways can flag potential negative impacts of national trajectories on disadvantaged groups, such as low-income families and communities of colour. They emphasize social equity, participatory governance, social inclusion and human rights, as well as innovation, experimentation and social learning. (medium evidence, high agreement)" (Roy et al., 2018)."*

Taking the assumptions developed in this section as the underpinnings of community-based approaches to climate action, the next section will draw lessons learned from just transition and community leadership frameworks in order to inform the parameters of a capabilities approach to climate action.

4. Catalysing community leadership for climate action

4. Catalysing community leadership for climate action

Community-led approaches to climate action are not new and the concept of a just transition predates concern about climate change. However, it is necessary to understand existing frameworks in order to articulate a model that draws on the lessons learned rather than reinventing the wheel.

Building on the foundation discussed in the previous section, the People's Transition relies on an array of flexible, community-led approaches for local development which can expand the capabilities of individuals and communities while taking urgent climate action.

Figure 8: The People's Transition model is built on a capabilities approach foundation to level out underlying issues of inequity. It recognises that building local capacity, valuing local knowledge and fostering trust should be foundational elements of climate action upon which community approaches can be developed.
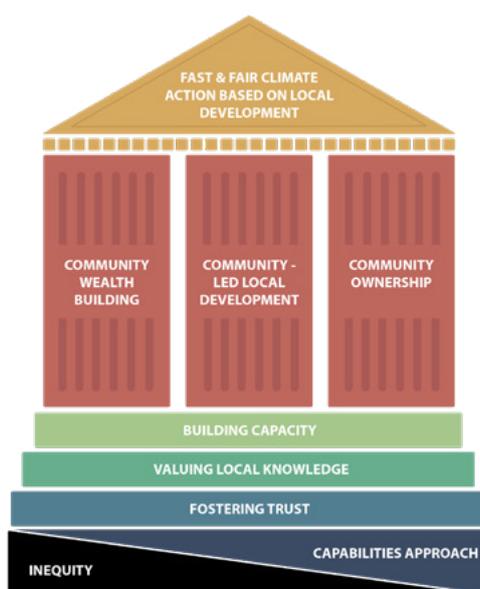
The priority is to ensure that climate action catalyses local development and that the public spend on climate action, where possible, is channelled into communities through the creation of jobs, community businesses and local production opportunities. The People's Transition model seeks to deliver this by combining the strengths of community-led local development, community wealth building and other community business and participatory decision-making approaches. This section discusses each of these frameworks for community leadership in turn. But first, some background on the Just Transition and what it means to create an enabling environment for a transition that is fair and equitable.

4.1 Background - Just Transition

At its core, the model outlined creates an enabling environment for a Just Transition. It assumes that with greater emphasis on local development and climate action specifically designed to expand the capabilities of individuals and local communities, a Just Transition will be easier to realise.

The contemporary rise of the idea developed out of the US trade union movement in the 1970s, with Tony Mazzocchi and others seeking to reconcile environmental and social concerns:

> "[T]hey believed that it was possible and necessary to promote, through the mobilization and collaboration of workers and communities, public policies that simultaneously address environmental challenges and secure decent jobs and livelihoods for affected workers (JTRC, 2018)."

The following decades saw increased activities and significant legislative accomplishments in the US, alongside increased interlinking and collaboration between trade unions and environmentalists. (JTRC, 2018:7) While Just Transition's popularity was in decline in the US by the early 2000s, the concept was already spreading across the world, especially through the activities of the United Nations.

Just Transition has become an umbrella term for a broad range of approaches to pursuing fairness while addressing climate issues affecting human livelihoods[17]. The *Just Transition Research Collaborative[18]* (JTRC) broadly defines 'Just Transition' as "the idea that justice and equity must form an integral part of the transition towards a low carbon world" (JTRC, 2018).

To date, dominant approaches to just transition lean towards sector-focused solutions, though notably the recent Scottish Just Transition Commission is focused on economy-wide transition. However, there is an increasing realisation of the need for holistic strategies that tackle inequality internationally as seen by the recent momentum for a 'New Green Deal' in the US, UK and EU (JTRC, 2018:6).

In December 2015, the Paris Agreement was a historic landmark as the first global legally-binding climate deal, signed by 195 countries with the Just Transition at the centre of state responses to climate change, ensuring decent work and quality jobs for the workforce. Therefore, as the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) recognises, Just Transition is not an optional policy but a legally binding obligation for Ireland and other signatories to the Paris Agreement, reaffirmed under the Katowice *Ministerial Declaration on Just Transition and Decent Work* in November 2018 (ICTU, 2019).

These commitments are further complemented by the comprehensive guidelines for a Just Transition process devised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which emphasises the role of social dialogue in Just Transition policy formulation, along with echoing the need for decent work and quality jobs (ICTU, 2019).

As previously stated, in January 2020, the Just Transition Mechanism was announced. Part of the European Green Deal Investment Plan, it is a tool to ensure that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind. It provides targeted support to help mobilise at least €150 billion over the period 2021-2027 in the most affected regions, to alleviate the socio-economic impact of the transition (EC, 2020). This is significant as it takes the Just Transition platform beyond coal regions and has the potential to bring about climate action whilst at the same time addressing wider inequalities.

17   Just Transition frameworks apply to other significant transitions facing society, including as a result of digitalisation. This research's primary focus is the transition to a zero carbon society, however many of the concepts could be applied to other transitional contexts.

18   The Just Transition Research Collaborative is a space for exchange and discussion that brings together a range of experts from academia and civil society to collectively map and analyse the different understandings and narratives of 'Just Transition' underpinning the concept's growing popularity and uptake. The project provides an important contribution to the science-policy dialogue around Just Transition and offers policy recommendations on how the approach can be used to foster the transition to equitable low-carbon development. The project is run jointly by UNRISD and Edouard Morena (University of London Institute in Paris) and supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

4.1.1 Conceptualising a Just Transition: Ideal approaches

While the literature identifies many points of divergence among approaches to Just Transition, the JTRC identifies four *ideal* approaches to Just Transition, namely: status quo; managerial reform; structural reform; and transformative.

Status quo

Status quo approaches pursue the 'greening' of the existing economic and political institutions and structures through voluntary bottom-up, corporate, and market-driven changes. The role of states is thus to provide *an enabling environment* for climate action through incentives for businesses and consumers. Notably, these changes do not involve reconsiderations of the underlying 'rules' of political nor economic systems.

Managerial reform

Managerial reform approaches pursue greater equity and justice within the economic and political systems through moderate modifications and additions to existing rules and standards. However, the economic model and balance of power do not change. This is prominent among national unions and large environmental organisations and private sector initiatives.

Structural reform

Structural reform approaches pursue both distributive and procedural justice, where decision-making and management power is shared between all the relevant stakeholders – not just single companies or interest groups. This involvement in governance itself uplifts the agency of workers, communities, and other affected groups and structurally aids in fair distribution of benefits and compensation. This approach typically appears at the local level citizen or worker-owned initiatives such as in energy cooperatives.

Transformative Reform

Transformative reform approaches pursue the overhaul of the existing economic and political systems seen as responsible for the environmental and social issues that have been recognised. These approaches involve changing rules and modes of governance as well as promoting *alternative development pathways* which imply different relationships between humanity, the planet and 'growth'. Notably, such approaches also involve addressing interconnected social issues including racism, patriarchy and classism, along with the context-specific nature of transformative solutions.

For the purposes of this report, the ideal just transition framing employed is that of ***structural reform***. The intent is to design a participative model that would enhance the agency and capabilities of workers, communities and other relevant stakeholders and thus ensure that the benefits of transition, and climate action are shared equitably.

4.1.2 Creating an enabling environment for transition

The National Economic and Social Council, in their report 'Addressing Employment Vulnerability as Part of a Just Transition in Ireland' (NESC, 2020) states:

"[W]e can expect the transitions in Ireland to be complex and messy, and to take time…when it comes to managing transition for society more broadly, there is no readily available template, recipe or off-the-shelf approach. Every town and region will have its own context and past experiences that will and should shape the response to transition. We know that substantial preparation is required for a just transition, whether it is led by government, regional or local/community-based actors, and that plans must be followed up with government support… [A]n inclusive, place-based approach is necessary, with an overall focus on regional development and investment."

While it would be impossible to articulate a one-size-fits-all model for the transitions facing communities across Ireland and Europe, this report builds a flexible framework with the purpose of creating an enabling environment for these transitions that ensures fairness and social approval. An enabling environment is defined based upon Amartya Sen's capabilities approach. Specifically, that a capabilities approach to a just transition should recognise that people in transition must be given the opportunity "to achieve outcomes that they value and have reason to value" (Sen, 2001).

This would require a level of local development that enables freedom of choice and individual heterogeneity while being sensitive to the multi-dimensional nature of welfare. Individuals, families and communities are embedded within, and their lives are shaped by, institutional, cultural, social, geographical and economic terms within their territorial society (Biggeri & Ferrannini, 2014). The nature of the transition due to the removal of fossil fuels will change these terms. The challenge of a just transition is ensuring that these terms change to the benefit of individual freedoms and the enhancement of welfare. An enabling environment for a just transition is a localised level of development whereby individual and collective agency can positively influence the environmental, social and institutional factors that shape human flourishing.

The community is the place where the interaction among local authorities, formal/informal institutions, citizens and the society as a whole is most immediate, and recurrent in time; where inequalities, forms of exclusions, power imbalances and vulnerabilities are most immediately experienced by people; where institutional changes take form and evolve; where international and national policies are grounded leading to final outcomes (Oxfam, 2016).

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires localising the Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, 2016) and recognising territories and communities as the places where change happens (Oxfam and ARCO, 2016). The evolution of local community is central to the development processes affecting individual and collective capabilities as well as individual and social empowerment evolution (Deneulin , 2008; Ibrahim, 2009; Pelenc *et al.*, 2015) and this in turn is central to the realisation of a fair and equitable transition.

For the purposes of this report, and drawing on lessons learned from engaging with communities on the brink of transition in Ireland, the People's Transition seeks to design a model of local environmental, social and economic development, catalysed through the rollout of climate action, which enhances capabilities through:

- Listening to the needs and priorities of local communities;
- Expanding opportunity and choice for individuals and communities;

- Embedding social inclusion, belonging and enhanced democratisation of natural, social and economic resources into sustainable development planning;

- Enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to act as implementation partners;

- Fostering social networks and enhancing social capital such that individual and community agency increases.

4.2 Framework 1: Community-led local development

The community-led local development (CLLD) model, developed by the EU, offers a starting point for the development of an enabling environment for a just transition and expand the capabilities of local communities. Rather than an add-on to climate action, Just Transition should be considered the 'how' of developing and implanting climate policy. A transition that broadly shares benefits and burdens will require that communities are included in developing plans for their own futures and will harness local and traditional knowledge in shaping how climate action is planned and implemented.

Community-led local development (CLLD) is a term used by the European Commission to describe an approach that turns traditional 'top-down' development policy on its head. Under CLLD, local people take the reins and form a local partnership that designs and implements an integrated development strategy. The strategy is designed to build on the community's social, environmental and economic strengths or 'assets' rather than simply compensate for its problems (European Commission, 2020).

Based on the LEADER[19] programme, CLLD adopts participative approaches to techniques such as strategic planning, project management, monitoring, evaluation, and review and local decision-making (Roncevic *et al.*, 2020) to drive the empowerment of local communities and organisations as development actors in sustainable local development. In the current programming period (2014-2020), the LEADER method has been extended to cover not only rural but also coastal (FARNET) and urban areas under the banner of CLLD.

The seven features of the LEADER/CLLD approach align closely with the programmatic attributes identified earlier as necessary to create an enabling environment for a just transition. These are: 1) Bottom-up approach, 2) Area-based approach, 3) Local partnership, 4) Integrated and multi-sectoral strategy, 5) Networking, 6) Innovation, 7) Cooperation (European Network for Rural Development, 2018).

The rationale behind LEADER is:

> "[G]iven the diversity of European rural areas, development strategies are more effective and efficient if decided and implemented at local level by local actors, accompanied by clear and transparent procedures, the support of the relevant public administrations and the necessary technical assistance for the transfer of good practice (Thuessen & Nielsen, 2014)."

Through area-based Local Action Groups (LAGs), partnerships between the public, private and civil sectors, local representatives are embedded into the development and delivery of local development strategies (LDSs), decision-making and resource allocation (European Network for Rural Development, 2018). Further, there is a wide range of areas that projects can cover, including encouraging farm diversification, supporting small businesses, investing in villages and the natural/built heritage both to improve local services and to improve tourism.

19   The acronym LEADER derives from the French phrase "Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale", which translates as "Links between activities for the development of rural economy".

With LAGs as 'active agents of development', rural regions can increase competitiveness and productivity by:

- recognising and valorising their own resources

- developing inter-regional and intra-regional linkages – hard and soft (institutional) infrastructure

- emphasising the quality of life of citizens and the natural environment

- promoting multi-level governance to ensure ongoing and meaningful local participation and vertical linkages which ensure state buy-in and coordination of agency inputs

Recalling lesson 7 from the NESC just transition case studies — an inclusive, iterative, place-based, context-specific approach enabled by public investment is more likely to provide the best outcomes, including the creation of low-carbon employment alternatives (Mercier, 2020). It is clear that the LEADER programme is a ready-made enabler of localised and inclusive transition planning.

Box 5: The Irish experience of LEADER

Ahead of participating in LEADER programmes, several rural communities already had some experience with community-led or bottom-up initiatives, and communities have embraced LEADER methodology over the past 30 years. In the past, Irish LAGs have been lauded as among the most successful in Europe for their engagement with local volunteers and creation of local business and employment opportunities (European Court of Auditors, 2010; Cawley, 2009).

The National Rural Network details case studies of beneficiaries of LEADER (2014-2020). One example is the Offaly-based Mid Ireland Adventure, a start-up company addressing the growing demand for adventure sport activities in rural locations. LEADER funding facilitated the purchase of essential equipment such as mountain bikes and paddle boards, allowing the growing business to tap into the value held within the midlands environment and build a local and international client base. The founder is the main employee, along with one seasonal position created in 2018, with more jobs to be created as the company expands. The business contributes to the region as well, contributing to increased tourism, linking activities to neighbouring businesses, and also supporting increased local environmental, cultural and historical awareness (NRN, 2019a).

Another example is Coillte Sláintiúil, a start-up enterprise providing woodland conservation solutions. With a LEADER grant supporting equipment purchases, the company has built up reputation, networks, and capacity for more complex conservation projects. Sustaining employment of a team of three, there are plans for bringing in another two full-time employees. The new equipment increased output of 40%, including three new projects it would not have been able to take on without the LEADER support. Along with enhancing ecosystems and plans for environmental education, Coillte Sláintúil supports a number of EU policies including the EY Biodiversity Strategy (NRN, 2019b).

Outside of such successes, over the lifetime of LEADER in Ireland, there have being increasing concerns about the administration costs, with Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring, stating in December 2019 that total expenditure since 2016 had reached over €75 million — of which €33.5 million (approximately 45%) was spent on "administration costs of the LAGs and the cost of their engagement with communities to generate projects" (Ring, 2019). Notably, this €75 million is 30% of the allocated €250 million to the LEADER programme for the 2014-2020 period.

With each iteration of LEADER, concerns over financial and administrative accountability, duplication, and perceived 'democratic-deficit', had led central governments to gradually expand bureaucratic controls over local responsiveness and innovation as well as the representation requirements on LAGs for community representatives (Cawley, 2016). **From 2021, the new EU budget will provide for more flexible CLLD funding and should be linked to the European Green Deal and Just Transition Fund.**

4.2.1 Community-led local development: strengths and weaknesses

Key benefits of CLLD revolve around access to a range of EU funding sources for more encompassing projects, area-based local empowerment through partnership (as a means and end), and evident sustainable rural development outcomes. However, these benefits are heavily dependent on the governance capacities of member state governments and their Managing Authorities (MAs) and LAGs.

Access to European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)

The capacity for CLLD to draw from multiple ESIF "has been well-received in several contexts, hereby strengthening the integrated, place-based and bottom-up approach of [EU] Cohesion policy"((Servillo & de Brujin, 2018). Multi-fund CLLDs provide for a greater capacity for LAGs to cater to the needs of their territories, for example, the 2014-2020 programme has seen a minor 'revamp' of an EU local development agenda for urban areas (Servillo & de Brujin, 2018).

> "[A] real bottom-up approach is restricted by the limitations of what can be supported under ESIF rules. The real added value of the bottom-up element would only take effect if there were no limits in terms of intervention area (Kah, 2019)."

Area-based local empowerment through partnership

Due to rural areas having their own distinctive development needs and resource potentials, area-based and collaborative bottom-up approaches are found to work best in producing and coordinating sustainable and inclusive development strategies on the local and national level (Walsh, 2018).

'Development coalitions' at the regional and local levels have the capacity to transcend sectional and geographical interests, mobilise cross-community support for development objectives, and facilitate coordinated action (Breathnach, 2011). This is supported by international evidence that decentralisation and the strengthening of local governance structures are associated with more successful *stimulation* of local economic potential and enhancing sustainable growth (O'Keefe, 2016). That said, the innovation capacity is necessarily restricted by the scope of projects that can be supported under ESIF rules (Kah, 2019; Servillo 2019).

However, the demarcation of territories for LAGs is an important factor in the effectiveness of CLLDs:

> "Some CLLDs cover a single contiguous area. Others cover separate sub-areas within a city or town, which will present challenges for LAGs and projects to target residents within those territories, including the eligibility of match funding at that level of territory. In some cases, the potentially positive impact in territorial terms

is limited due to some CLLD LAGs following administrative boundaries rather than covering functional areas (Kah, 2019)."

Sustainable business and employment outcomes

More indirectly, partially because LAGs are comprised of both employers and customers of local services, their projects generate significant local multiplier effects, such as is noted in the Irish experience. This helps to build the local economies and ensure that more expenditure remains within the LAGs' communities.

Considering job creation by LEADER over the 2007-2013 programme period in Northern Ireland, Angiolioni *et al.* (2017) find that the investments increase jobs in the tourism sector and enable farm diversification.

As noted above, the benefits of CLLD as an approach are "strongly dependent on the specific regulatory and governance conditions in each Member State and the willingness of actors to overcome policy silos and work together" (Kah 2019). In other words, the key limitations of CLLD stem from resource challenges to the governance capabilities of individual domains.

Running LAGs and steering local development is recognised as a seriously complex task requiring sufficient staffing and management structures, though the experience of many localities across Europe is one of lean management offices with weak institutional embedding. Salchner (2018) finds ideal staffing of managing offices stands roughly at population-to-staff-ratio of one full-time equivalent for 15,000-20,000 inhabitants, provided there is an absolute minimum of two employees. Meeting administrative capacities appears to be particularly difficult for rural LAGs.

Zwet *et al.* (2017) specify a number of administrative burdens faced by local authorities:

- unfamiliarity with process
- small size of administration
- excessive complexity of process
- lengthy design phase
- bureaucratic process (perceived as) cumbersome
- complicated guidance from above

Other challenges noted in the same study include difficulty in engaging with stakeholders and beneficiaries due to their lack of knowledge or interest, and limited timeframes to accomplish administrative and governance responsibilities and meet deadlines.

To this, van der Zwet & Bachtler (2019) note:

"If citizens are to make a meaningful contribution to the design and implementation of the strategies, national and subnational authorities need to prioritise support for local and community leadership and involvement in CLLD initiatives through techniques such as consultative planning, citizens' juries, participatory budgeting, consensus conferences and open fora. Technical assistance should be used to build local capacity and expertise (van der Zwet & Bachtler, 2018)."

Lastly, underfunding of rural development directly hinders the success of CLLD approach, or any approach for that matter.

4.2.2 Tailoring community-led local development for a Just Transition

The LEADER programme provides a template for the type of bottom-up policy formation that can enable local, community-owned sustainable development. The challenge is to realise the full potential of the model by:

- Engaging a broader swathe of the community in the development of CLLD projects through appropriate participative fora and mechanisms like participatory budgeting.
- Directing CLLD approaches to address the dual challenge of local development and climate action.
- Removing silos and ensuring that a broad range of public investment in climate action and development are channelled through CLLD structures via public procurement processes and local government funding.
- Leveraging diverse European funds to enhance democratisation of local economies and expand the capabilities of communities to realise their development priorities.

Combining CLLD with the concept of community wealth building can expand the capabilities of local communities and realise the full potential of CLLD to create an enabling environment for a just transition.

4.3 Framework 2: Community wealth building

Community wealth building (CWB) is a flexible, site-specific economic model. Coined by The Democracy Collaborative in 2005 (Guinan & O'Neill, 2019), CWB is a place-based, practical systems approach to economic development, built on local roots and plurality of ownership (McInroy, 2018). The pillars, or strategies, utilised by CWB models differ depending on the needs of the local community. CWB models recognise diversity of place and the importance of malleable strategies. CWB is a partnership between anchor institutions, communities and businesses which aims to create strong, sustainable local economies that support fair work, encourage local spending and use public land and property for the common good. Crucially, social and environmental gains are included as an intentional function of the economy in a CWB model which ensures environmental and economic stability. Harnessing the capital and influence of anchor institutions, CWB aims to develop resilient, inclusive local economies, with high levels of local employment and a diverse business base, ensuring that wealth is locally owned and benefits local people (North Ayrshire Council, 2020a).

Anchor institutions

Anchor institutions are stable organisations with real purchasing power in a community, such as local authorities, hospitals, universities, colleges, trade unions, and large private employers. Depending on the scale and geography of the locality, anchor institutions can also include small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), community organisations and charities (North Ayrshire Council, 2020b). The CWB model views anchor institutions as 'community wealth-builders' (McInroy *et al.,* 2017). The jobs and supply chains connected to anchor institutions carry economic, social and environmental potential to generate and retain wealth in the locality (Guinan & O'Neill 2019).

4.3.1. How does community wealth building work?

In CWB, anchor institutions, alone or partnered together, engage with the local community to achieve sustainable, community-led, community-focused economic, social and environmental development. A community engagement process allows for the identification of relevant, site-specific goals that represent the needs of a locality and its residents, and consider the resources and skills already available.

To ensure that wealth is locally owned and locally retained, CWB employs the following strategies:

- Engaging the community in planning and sustainable development
- Mobilising the financial power of the local public sector through progressive procurement practices: local purchasing, hiring, investment
- Plural ownership of the economy: encouraging and enabling the effective development of cooperatives, community supported agriculture and local food systems
- Harnessing land and assets: using publicly owned land for the common good

Some examples of mechanisms to deliver local wealth building include:

- Community development financial Institutions
- Community land trusts
- Community-owned energy production
- Cooperatives
- Community-supported connectivity

It is evident that such a model would effectively complement a capabilities approach to local development and could utilise climate action itself as an anchor institution to channel the public spend from national responses to climate change into sustainable local development.

4.3.2. How has community wealth building been used?

At present, CWB models can be found in action in seven towns and cities in the UK, and CWB initiatives exist in numerous cities across the USA. The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) is currently supporting the dissemination of CWB ideas in towns and cities across Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. The USA models rely heavily on the funding of foundations, while in the UK local government is the driving force that establishes municipally owned vehicles for investment and return, sometimes in partnership with other anchor institutions (McInroy *et al.,* 2017).

> **Example 1: Preston, Lancashire, United Kingdom (McInroy *et al.,* 2017).**
>
> How was CWB established in Preston?
>
> In 2011 the city of Preston, population 141,818, adopted a CWB model in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. Utilising the expertise of the CLES, Preston City Council recognised the need for a systemic transformation of the local economy that could create a social and local economic dividend by harnessing the spending potential of Preston's anchor institutions.

How does CWB work in Preston?

Preston's CWB model is structured around five strategies: progressive procurement of goods and services, plural ownership of the economy, socially productive use of land and property, making financial power work for local places, and fair employment and just labour markets. Working with six other public sector anchor institutions, Preston City Council initially focused on procurement and aimed to spend more in the locality.

> *"Initial analysis by CLES of the top 300 suppliers for each of the main Preston anchors identified over £1bn of annual procurement spend, of which only a small proportion was being spent in Preston (5%) or wider Lancashire (39%). CLES and Preston then identified where there was scope to 'repatriate' spend by using the local supply base. As a result, between 2012/13 and 2014/15, the City Council alone was able to double the proportion of its local procurement spend from 14% to 28%."*

The council established the Preston Co-operative Network to shift the power and control of finance from corporate to public stakeholders. The council is engaging with existing social networks to transform them into cooperatives, and identifying gaps where cooperatives could provide goods and services. Additionally, Preston has received funding to establish ten new worker co-ops to create an 'ecosystem' to support the development of a cooperative economy. An integral element of this new cooperative economy will be a cooperative education centre located in Preston, linked to the Co-operative College and supported by Mondragón in the Basque Country.

To ensure fair employment and just labour markets for local residents, any new developments within the region are required to attach to their planning permission (for over 30 houses/1000m² commercial space) a skills and employment plan for future residents. Additionally, Preston City Council has committed to paying all its employees a living wage since 2012.

In order to make financial power work for local place, Preston City Council has connected with Lancashire County Council for a public pension fund which invests in the locality. Preston has plans to partner with Liverpool and Wirral Council to establish a Lancashire community bank to support SMEs.

Example 2: Cleveland, Ohio, United States (Democracy Collaborative, 2020)

Since July 2005, a coalition led by the Cleveland Foundation has been developing a strategy to stimulate reinvestment in Cleveland's Greater University Circle (GUC). The focus is on physical infrastructure development, including:

· Housing and retail: Case Western Reserve University, one of Cleveland's major universities, coordinated with a developer to launch a mixed-use project of more than $100 million that includes retail stores, condominiums, apartments and a cultural centre.

· Transport: Reconfiguration and improvement of existing public transport infrastructure in the city.

· Open Space: Develop existing parks to be desirable outdoor spaces that enhance surrounding housing and retail, and link up with public transport.

To achieve economic inclusion and to enhance the district, four strategies were set out:

1. Alter local procurement practices by increasing purchasing and contracting opportunities for GUC businesses;

2. Fair employment opportunities by creating better access to Greater University Circle jobs for GUC residents;

3. Enhance and improve existing public schools in the GUC district;

4. Create strong incentive programmes for mortgage assistance and home repair by developing a standardized incentive program that provides housing incentives to any employee in the GUC Area who wishes to move into the district.

4.3.3. Community wealth building strategies

There is a multitude of strategies employed to deliver community wealth building approaches. This section touches on three – progressive public procurement; cooperatives; and local food systems.

Progressive public procurement

Progressive public procurement recognises that local government procurers make decisions that can have key implications for the sustainability of business, the growth of jobs and the circulation of incomes within communities. Community wealth building transforms public procurement so that it is not purely administrative, but can shape and influence public services, can ensure that public spending reaps maximum local economic, social and environmental benefits, and can be receptive to mitigating climate change (Jackson 2010).

The European Community Treaty covers all public sector procurement contracts. The principles are supported by European directives, which set down procedures and standards (based on openness, non-discrimination and competition) for choosing tenderers and awarding contracts with an estimated value above a set limit or threshold.

EU law sets minimum harmonised rules for tenders whose monetary value exceeds a certain amount and which are presumed to be of cross-border interest. The European rules ensure that the award of contracts of higher value for the provision of public goods and services must be fair, equitable, transparent and non-discriminatory.

Member states of the European Union are also party to the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). This opens the public procurement market on a reciprocal basis to many of the world's leading economies including Canada, the United States and Japan.

Below the Official Journal of the European Union thresholds, all public sector bodies will have internal procedures or standing orders which will determine how the procurement process is handled. Typically, this will set out a number of thresholds the value of which will vary from organisation to organisation, as follows:

Direct Purchase threshold

Goods or services below this value may be sourced from wherever convenient by the end user without having to obtain written or verbal quotations.

<u>Quotation threshold</u>

The purchaser is required to obtain a minimum number of quotations, normally three, for the goods or services before selecting the most appropriate. For lower value purchases, a verbal quotation is sometimes acceptable but quotations are normally required in writing for anything over a few hundred euros.

<u>Tender threshold</u>

As the value of the purchase increases it becomes increasingly important to demonstrate that value for money has been achieved and that any offers received have been evaluated objectively. Once the relevant financial threshold has been reached, the tender process will be subject to the detailed procedural rules of the European legislation. Below the threshold, the requirements may be less stringent but will still follow the same pattern.

Cooperatives

Cooperatives are member-owned enterprises engaged in the production and/or distribution of goods. "While direct economic opportunities may arise from cooperatives, they also allow for sustainable economic development in areas that traditionally have had little opportunity to engage such processes" (Bendick & Egan, 1995; Fairbairn, 2001; Madane, 2002; Gordon, 2004; Brennan & Luloff, 2005). Tangible benefits of using cooperatives in this setting include increased economic traffic and employment opportunities, potential declines in outmigration, and support for essential community components (McCarthy & Ward, 2001; Madane, 2002; Gordon, 2004; Brennan & Luloff, 2005). The use of cooperatives can also have a direct impact on community cohesion and development (Luloff & Bridger, 2003; Brennan & Luloff, 2005).

The benefits of cooperative approaches were detailed in *Framing the New Progressive Narrative: A Mutual and Cooperative Approach to the Economy and Society* by Hunt and Willetts (2017) which emphasises that, through cooperative approaches, communities can counterbalance the negative effects of globalisation, share wealth and challenge inequality, establish an economy that prioritises people's interests and ensure meaningful work. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a renewed focus on corporate plurality and the role of cooperative and mutual businesses through appropriate policy, legislative and regulatory actions would help to ensure the recovery is shared and inclusive.

Cooperatives have played a central role in the development of communities and culture in rural Ireland. In his book, *Civilizing Rural Ireland. The cooperative movement, development and the nation-state 1889 – 1939*, Patrick Doyle highlights how, before and following independence, critical ideas about the nation emanated from the sphere of economic and social organisation, where the cooperative movement held sway. Doyle's conclusion contains echoes of today, with communities of producers facing social and economic transitions and the challenges that come with of globalised food systems:

> *"The co-operative movement's evolution in Ireland demonstrated long social and cultural continuities. The establishment of the IAOS in the late nineteenth century led to a considered response by social reformers to long-term and tumultuous social adjustments instigated by the Great Famine. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the rural economy was*

characterised by emigration, which complemented a move from subsistence farming to more commercialised agricultural practices. As Irish farmers were integrated into a global capitalist economy, the rise of international competition left them vulnerable. Informed by economic developments in Britain and Denmark, figures like Horace Plunkett concluded that co-operative societies offered farmers one way of mediating the significant transitions experienced throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Doyle, 2019)."

Cooperative approaches continued to provide the social and economic bedrock for rural communities for much of the 20th century. In meeting farmers throughout Ireland during research for this report, many lamented the closure of the local cooperative creameries, marts and markets. Many felt that the amalgamation of cooperative creameries into larger PLC companies, had sounded a 'death-knell' for rural communities as cooperative principles were undermined, livelihoods were diminished, and local jobs sacrificed. There is certainly still a positive sentiment towards cooperatives, and the values they represent, among the farming communities.

While cooperative agricultural approaches have waned in agriculture, there continues to be a strong cooperative presence in Ireland. The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) includes over 150,000 members and counts among its member organisations dairy, livestock, trade, service and community-oriented cooperatives. Other cooperatives around the country include housing cooperatives (Co-operative Housing Ireland, 2020), food cooperatives such as Dublin Food Co-op and Quay Co-op in Cork, energy cooperatives such as the Aran Islands Energy Cooperative, and the Donegal Woodland Owners Society.

Box 6: Example: The Cooperative Movement in the Basque Country (Charlotte Heales *et al.,* 2017)

The Mondragón Co-operative Corporation is a highly successful business-based socio-economic initiative rooted in the Basque Country, created for and by people. It is the largest industrial workers' co-operative group in the world, the largest business group in the Basque Country, and the tenth largest in Spain. Its headquarters and a significant part of its operations remain in the Basque Country.

It is a network of worker-owned ventures, with more than 260 different companies and subsidiaries, 75,000 workers in 35 countries and annual revenues of over €12 billion. It is a heterogeneous and complex business group with co-operatives operating at varying scales within a range of different sectors.

Intra-cooperation is a significant feature of Mondragón's group. Intra-cooperation refers to cooperation and solidarity among the individual members of a given cooperative. Inter-cooperation is of equal importance, cooperatives take a non-competitive approach internally and provide services to other cooperatives in the group as well as externally.

Intra- and inter-cooperation would be hugely important for the re-emergence of small scale dairy, abattoir, grain or textile cooperatives across rural Ireland, as these concepts would focus the distribution of produce locally, encourage cooperatives in different localities to learn from each other — rather than compete for contracts and customers leading to low prices and quality — and for members to feel part of a countrywide community while being embedded in the local community.

Community supported agriculture and local food systems

In recent years, there has been increased interest in alternative food networks (AFNs) in response to dissatisfaction with the industrial-type distribution system which has proliferated across Europe over recent decades (Di Pierro, 2017). Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is one increasingly popular approach to meet communities needs while also promoting the local economy and environment.

There is significant variation across Europe in how CSA is defined and practiced, though a definition agreed by consensus is outlined in the 2016 European CSA Declaration:

"Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership based on the human relationship between people and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreemen. (Volz et al., 2016)."

CSA farms across Europe operate within different environmental, economic, and agricultural contexts, therefore the declaration recognises that 'CSA is not a static model', outlining a set of guiding principles as 'our common ground', which include the responsible care of land and food sources, decommodification of food, leveraging local capacities, fair and quality work, year-round accessibility of food, and long-term social solidarity (Urgenci, 2013).

CSAs seek to evoke fair and sustainable markets for farmers and consumers to **produce, buy, and scale-up as a community** rather than as two sides of a market transaction:

"By involving citizen-consumers as active participants and coproducers, CSAs create new local market outlets for organic and agroecological products. CSAs increasingly serve to remunerate farmers as well as support and scale up agroecological models of production in rural, peri-urban, and urban spaces. CSAs which enable and support agroecological production also reflect a strong commitment to sustainable, territorially based development in Europe (Volz et al., 2016)."

By their activities, CSAs counter dominant ideals of economy and markets by showcasing alternative ways of organising economic exchange. These alternatives appear to resonate with a growing number of people, with a conservative estimate of one million participants in CSA across Europe in 2015.

Urgenci, an international CSA network, identifies four different types of CSA based on the number of producers involved, degree of member participation, and degree of economic trust (summarised from Urgenci, 2013):

- **farmer-driven**: typically organised by the farmer, to whom the members financially subscribe, with little other involvement

- **community/consumer-driven**: consumers participate in or may even run the scheme working closely with the farmer who produces what they want

- **farmer co-operative**: farmer-driven CSA where two or more farms co-operate to supply its members with a greater variety of produce, and permits greater specialisation

- **farmer-consumer co-operative**: farmers develop cooperative networks to access a variety of products but there is greater commitment by the consumers, for example by co-owning land and other resources, and producing and distributing food together.

The increased autonomy of farmers further empowers the local workers and their communities to collaborate, experiment, and innovate:

> *"The short chain thus makes it possible to experiment with new forms of marketing, modulated in relation to the interests of producers and consumers, and with positive effects for the collective/local community, shifting emphasis to the territory, the quality of production processes and consumption, and a rural development model based on multi-functionality and sustainability. These forms of sales, in fact, are part of a virtuous circle of local development that includes rural tourism, educational activities, the promotion of local products, transformation and processing of agricultural products on the spot and on the farm, and various opportunities which refer to the productive, ecological, scenic, cultural and social importance of agriculture, and the diversification of activities and sources of income; without forgetting that shortening the distance food travels from the place of production to consumption can reduce environmental impacts in terms of packaging, transport and energy (Guica, 2013)."*

There are noticeable social benefits for both consumers and producers alike, as well as helping to build community solidarity. In particular, knowing the farmer and/or where the produce is coming from can help to form connections. In many CSAs, consumers can visit and 42% collect their share directly from the farm. Some CSA farms facilitate social functions, members can visit the farm and also give feedback or become involved in the operation. Members can also become educated on food production through workshops at the farm or directly participate in the harvest.

However, proactive approaches must be adopted to ensure CSA membership models are inclusive and accessible to all. CSA farms are often found in urban settings or among rapidly growing populations. Areas with low population densities are less able to support CSAs, therefore a wider geographic area might be needed. However, widening the geographic area might contradict the 'local' dimension of CSA. Some studies point to members of CSA farms being disproportionately white, college-educated and less likely to live in areas with higher poverty rates (Schnell, 2007). Additionally, elderly groups were underrepresented, potentially due to barriers arising from the use of digital platforms and inflexible payment schedules. However, these barriers can be addressed in the design of CSAs.

4.4 Framework 3: Community-owned approaches

The transformative potential of the transition can be realised through the redistribution of power and wealth through genuine, community-owned approaches. This serves to build public support for climate measures and uplift standards of living and well-being for communities, particularly those in situations of disadvantage. In this section, participatory budgeting and community business models are discussed. It does not explore the potential of social enterprise models as these are well documented elsewhere and such approaches align with traditional market-based approaches.

4.4.1 Participatory budgeting

Before exploring the role of climate action as an anchor institution, it is important to highlight the potential of participatory budgeting to stimulate interest in local climate action and build a sense of community ownership for initiatives. Participatory climate budgeting could be operationalised faster than broader community wealth building strategies and, while being a valuable instrument of community-led climate action in and of itself, proliferation of participatory budgeting would also serve to whet the appetite for greater community participation in climate action.

Participatory budgeting is a fiscal decision-making mechanism which involves citizens in the discussion of municipal budgets and/or the allocation of municipal funding. Residents may identify spending priorities, elect delegates to represent different communities on local authority budgeting committees and initiate local community projects. Participatory budgeting could result in a direct, stronger, participative relationship between citizens and local authorities, better public spending decisions, enhanced transparency and accountability, and a greater understanding among citizens of the financial circumstances within which local authorities must operate.

Participatory budgeting has been common across Europe in recent decades, with ample examples to be found in diverse jurisdictions such as in Spain (Frances *et al.*, 2018), Italy (Magliacani, 2020), Germany (Schneider & Busse, 2019) and Poland (Leśniewska-Napierała & Napierała, 2020). Ireland has been a relative latecomer to experiment with the concept. Examples such as the 300k Have Your Say initiative, run by Dublin City Council since 2017, the Unheard Voices Scheme, based in Cork, and Have Your Say Budgeting Survey in Louth have all represented various levels of experimentation into participatory grant-making.

A feasibility study (IPA, 2019) into enabling further citizen engagement in the local authority budgeting process in Ireland suggested that local authorities may feel they do not have the capacity to implement such participative processes. This is primarily due to a challenging environment caused by increasing demands from citizens, constraints on budgets and finances, and a lack of leadership and buy-in at the local level. The study makes six robust recommendations for further participatory budgeting in Ireland based on experiences to date and international best practice. They include:

- Ensuring that participatory budgeting solutions are locally-led and tailored to meet local needs
- Producing guidance on the values and principles for citizen engagement in decision-making
- Clarifying the aims and objectives of participatory budgeting
- Establishing good governance frameworks
- Reviewing current structures and practices of citizen engagement
- Piloting processes in local authorities with support from central government

For inspiration for paths forward, recent developments in Scotland are noteworthy with the announced commitment in 2017 that at least 1% of local government budgets would be decided through participatory budgeting by the end of 2021, alongside transitioning from grant-making to a mainstream model. While the European experience is broadly characterised by the first three models detailed above, deliberative models are utilised in some instances and would offer a more analogous community experience to that strived for in community wealth building.

Box 7: Deliberative participatory budgeting in Antwerp

Antwerp has developed a unique approach to participatory budgeting that gives citizens autonomy to spend public funds of €1.1m a year. By focusing on face-to-face debate, consensus decision-making and hard-to-reach residents, the city has been able to activate individuals and connect communities to help realise bright ideas for enhancing all aspects of city life.

The city decided to introduce a democratic process in which the 190,000 inhabitants of the central district of Antwerp would choose how 10% of the public budget is spent each year on roads, culture, sport and parks. Determined to make the process transparent and truly empowering so as to overcome past problems, the participation team worked with the University of Antwerp and a panel of experts to research, test and refine a process based not on online votes but a series of live events.

Everyone in the district is invited to take part in these events. People come together to talk, learn about each other's needs and unanimously agree how to spend the money. At the first event, participants sit together in small groups to agree the topics they think are most important from the city's selection of 93. These include themes such as better cycling lanes, youth training, help for the elderly and art in the community. The 12 most popular are taken forward to the district forum where poker-style 'chips' are used by participants to apportion the €1.1m across the topics.

Participatory budgeting for climate action

There are numerous projects which, if selected to advance through deliberative participatory budgeting approaches, would stimulate rich conversation about local climate action. For example, asking the public to decide between levels of investment in active travel or car-based transport, or investment in the development of local food markets would challenge communities to consider the type of community they want to live in and the impact it will have on the environment.

Participatory budgeting can offer an effective means of improving understanding between citizens and local government concerning climate change and, because it is inherently a dialogue, avoids many of the pitfalls of more orthodox attempts to effect behaviour change. It may help citizens to appreciate the nature of the challenge and the role of local government in responding. This may in turn provide authority stakeholders with increased confidence in the scope to implement pro-environmental agendas without meeting significant resistance (Cohen, 2012).

4.4.2 Community business

Community businesses are enterprises that are owned and run democratically by members of the community, on behalf of the community. They come in many forms, including shops, pubs, woodlands and anything that lends itself to community ownership (Plunket Foundation, 2020). These community businesses are diverse in their focus, but share a common thread of local people taking ownership and control. Community businesses go beyond the remit of community development or the definition of social enterprise. Started and run by a local company, community businesses derive their strength from being rooted in a physical place and the primary purpose is to generate social value for the local community (Swersky & Plunkett, 2015).

Coupled with community wealth building approaches, community business can help to alleviate social issues while maintaining wealth within a community. A recent report by Power to Change, studying the

value of the community business model through the COVID-19 pandemic discovered that community businesses have reduced social isolation; enhanced community health and well-being and improve the local environment through the productive use of green spaces; provide better access to services and improves employability in deprived areas (Miller, 2020).

In the sphere of climate action, the most common manifestation of community business-type models exists in local and community-owned renewable energy initiatives. While initially hugely popular and demonstrating transformative potential, recent policy changes have placed community energy in Europe into a pattern of decline. The removal of subsidies—particularly the 'feed-in tariffs' (FiTs)— and the preference for investor-focused climate policy has led to a dramatic slowdown in the numbers of new local energy initiatives and cooperatives, and has threatened those that have already been established (TUED, 2020).

4.5 Combining frameworks: Conceptualising climate action as an anchor institution for community wealth building

Anchor institutions in community wealth building models are so-called because they are permanent or enduring municipal operations around which the community wealth building model can flourish. They are institutions such as universities, hospitals, public libraries, credit unions, arts facilities or sports clubs — generally speaking, institutions not found in significant density in rural areas. It is for this reason that viable models for rural community wealth building have been slow to emerge.

Rural wealth building models have emerged, as with WealthWorks[20] in the USA, based primarily on cooperating farming, forestry, biofuels, recreation or other similar initiatives — pulling together local stakeholders to leverage their natural capital to build a more diverse and resilient economy on a regional basis.

In Ireland, there are some opportunities for local provisioning in the rural hinterlands surrounding cities and towns. For example, third level education facilities in Dublin, Cork or Galway could partner with local growers in order to supply food for canteens and other food outlets on their campuses. There are some challenges connected to: a) most of these institutions contract out food services so such a measure would require either taking these services in-house or establishing the arrangement through the contractor; b) seasonality would require flexible menus that change with the supply from the growers; and c) a bedding in period would likely mean some uncertainty in supply until supply and demand would harmonise. However, in the long run, these measures would result in enhanced local economies, more sustainable food supply chains and advance food sovereignty[21].

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20   More information on WealthWorks can be found at https://www.wealthworks.org/

21   Food Sovereignty was defined in the Declaration of Nyéléni at the Forum for Food Sovereignty in Sélingué, Mali, 27 February 2007, as:
Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

In April 2008, the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), an intergovernmental panel under the United Nations and the World Bank, adopted the following definition: "Food sovereignty is defined as the right of peoples and sovereign states to democratically determine their own agricultural and food policies."

However, beyond such examples of low hanging fruit, there are some basic obstacles which must be overcome in order to enable meaningful community wealth building models to flourish in Ireland, and particularly in communities in rural areas.

Box 8: Potential for community wealth building approaches to climate action in Ireland

Any community wealth building model is predicated upon influenceable government spend, typically procurement, as the primary resource lever to enable the development of cooperatives and community business in response to a stimulated demand. Ireland spends, on average, between €50 and €60 billion on procurement each year.

In the Irish context, public procurement guidelines and rules apply to all public sector bodies, such as government departments/offices, local and regional authorities, health authorities, commercial and non-commercial state bodies. Also, most works and related services contracts awarded by a private entity, which are subsidised 50% or more by a public body, are covered by the EU Directives if they exceed the EU thresholds.

Contracts below €25,000 can be filled through direct invitation. Contracts with an estimated value above €25,000 and below the relevant European Union (EU) threshold[22] must be filled through open procedure which could disadvantage start-up community-led initiatives or simply dissuade them from participating. The scope for creative tendering processes to facilitate community wealth building is not utilised in Ireland. Procurement processes often forgo the opportunity to assess tenders based on quality, which could include labour, environmental and local economy standards, in favour of a simple lowest price only approach.

In 2019, the Public Authorities and Utility Undertakings (Contract Preparation and Award Criteria) Bill sought to make the price-quality ratio the default assessment for public procurement contracts, requiring all companies bidding for public contracts to compete on quality as well as price. However, the bill did not pass into law.

Further to this, there is no centralised database of public procurement contracts in Ireland that would allow for an analysis of sums procured between the thresholds. Such an analysis would shed light on the numbers and volumes of public contracts awarded that could be directed towards anchor institutions. This would allow for a genuine assessment of existent market opportunities for the development of a social economy while also shedding light on opportunities to divide tenders to better suit social economy engagement.

It follows also that if no centralised clearing house for data on public procurement exists, there is then no ability to assess how much current public procurement could be classified as climate action. However, as a result of the Climate Action Plan 2019, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

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22   As of January 1st 2020, these thresholds are as follows:
Works
 €5,350,000 – Government Departments, Local and Regional Authorities and public bodies;
Supplies and services
€139,000 – Government Departments and Offices
€214,000 – Local and Regional Authorities and public bodies outside the Utilities sector
€750,000 – light touch regime – social and other specific services listed in Annex XIV of the EU Directive 2014/24/EU.
Utilities
Works contracts – €5,350,000
Supplies and services – €428,000

For further information see: https://ogp.gov.ie/859-2/

has issued a circular promoting green procurement and linking public procurement to the delivery of social goods (DPER, 2019). This provides a strong basis from which to advance community wealth building models through the delivery of climate action.

Potential gains from combining climate action and rural development

Climate action holds significant potential for job creation in Ireland. Retrofitting alone could deliver as many as 32,000 building industry jobs (Curtin, 2009). For every billion spent on public transport, some 22,000 direct and indirect jobs are sustained (Nugent & Goldrick-Kelly, 2019).

One area where the collective ownership of climate action is better understood is in renewable energy generation. In Ireland, Community Power is an energy company comprised of a partnership of community energy groups working for a sustainable energy future for Ireland, which grew out of Ireland's first community-owned wind farm, Templederry Wind Farm, in Co Tipperary.

There is an assumption that the cost of climate action is such that it is necessary to mobilise private capital to realise the transition. This forms the basis of influential reports such as those produced by the New Climate Economy[23] and this thinking is clear to see in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly through Sustainable Development Goal 17, and it's financing plan, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda UN (2015). Similarly, the Paris Agreement reflected this belief – that the private sector must be involved in order to move climate finance from 'billions to trillions' (Tanaka, 2019).

Indeed, the European Green Deal and the Sustainable European Investment Plan which accompanies it, aims to mobilise €1 trillion by leveraging private sector capital (European Commission, 2019b). This leveraging will likely involve using public finances to de-risk private sector investments in low-carbon projects. It is unclear how such an approach is superior to a Green New Deal which would explicitly set out to reverse the concentration of private power. An alternative approach would be to couple the European Green Deal with a tax justice model to raise revenue for climate action that could be co-created with local communities to ensure social approval for more effective implementation. This approach for raising revenues for climate action has been proposed by Socialists and Democrats Group MEP Pierre Larrouturou in his Climate and Jobs Pact.

Considering how finance channelled through procurement might be mobilised, in the Irish context, to serve the dual purpose of local economic development and climate action, it is clear how treating climate action as a type of 'temporary anchor institution' could be transformative. Channelling spending for climate action through community-owned businesses and cooperatives would ensure that the enormous public investment in climate action stayed in communities and facilitated local development. Such collaborative and collective action would require cooperation within and across levels of community and governance. The inherent complexity could be utilised to build interdependence and overcome parochial issues or conflict between communities. As climate action advances, more and more government procurement will align with climate objectives. Current estimates in Ireland forecast that 20% of government investments between now and 2040 will be in climate action (Government of Ireland, 2018) and this figure will need to increase if the 1.5°C target set out in the Paris Agreement is to be achieved[24]. By creating local infrastructure now, communities will benefit from accelerated action.

23   For example, see Financing Change: How to Mobilize Private Sector Financing for Sustainable Infrastructure, a working paper produced under the New Climate Economy in 2016.
24   The European Commission has estimated that achieving the current 2030 climate and energy targets will require EUR 260 billion of additional annual investment, about 1.5% of 2018 GDP. This excludes the investment needs for climate adaptation or for other environmental challenges, such as biodiversity.

Figure 9: Comparison of committed funding to Just Transition, Rural Development and Climate Action in Ireland with the average annual spend on public procurement. As climate action becomes mainstreamed across government actions, it should be possible to align more and more public procurement with positive climate actions and thus significantly increase climate spending.

5. The People's Transition model

5. The People's Transition model

If social approval is central to a fast and fair transition to a zero-carbon future, and expanding the capabilities of a community is a means to ensure that social approval, then it is inescapable that the basis of climate action must be meaningful community empowerment. In Ireland, like much of Europe, this means a fundamental shift in governance and an unprecedented decentralising of power and decision making. This was summed up by van der Zwet & Bachtler in their paper on new implementation mechanisms for integrated development strategies in ESIF as follows:

> "If citizens are to make a meaningful contribution to the design and implementation of the strategies, national and subnational authorities need to prioritise support for local and community leadership and involvement in CLLD initiatives through techniques such as consultative planning, citizens' juries, participatory budgeting, consensus conferences and open fora. Technical assistance should be used to build local capacity and expertise (Zwet & Bachtler, 2018)."

This section gives an overview of the proposed People's Transition model and discusses core components of the model.

5.1 The model

Figure 10: The People's Transition Model

The model itself is based on a central pillar of community empowerment, seeking to combine context appropriate education and participative fora to build community capacity to co-create and own climate solutions. By aligning funding behind such a community empowerment module, decision makers can enable the development of climate action that advances local development and addresses local needs and priorities, thus expanding the choices available within a community and facilitating a just transition.

This section explores how to enable a People's Transition approach through the channelling of finance through community structures; turning the tables and listening to communities; developing context-appropriate education and capacity building methods; training facilitators; and conducting **People's Transition Community Dialogues**. It draws on examples from Ireland to illustrate particular elements of the process.

5.2 Funding community-led initiatives

Unprecedented levels of support for participatory approaches and local climate action will be required to realise a successful transition to a zero-emissions future. Ensuring ample resources are available for community-led approaches will be central to realising the potential of bottom-up approaches. This will necessitate adequate provision at both the EU and national level. One way to do this at the EU level would be to make new and additional Just Transition Fund resources accessible to climate-based community-led local development initiatives via the ESIF for the 2021 – 2027 Multiannual Financial Framework. Similarly, the EC could conduct a review of procurement directives to explore how community wealth building in member states could be encouraged, particularly as it pertains to climate action.

At the national level, it is essential to allocate sufficient funding for the training of community facilitators, context-appropriate education initiatives and hosting of People's Transition Community Dialogues. Innovative financial supports, such as the development of a community business catalyst fund, could provide start-up grants to community-led businesses and cooperative climate action initiatives. However, this would need to be accompanied by robust capacity building exercises (see section 5.4) in order to ensure communities were both in a position to make use of the funding and had the necessary training to ensure sustainability of these initiatives.

Finally, national governments should conduct a review of local and national procurement practices, particularly with regard to planning for public spends on climate action, to understand how community wealth building approaches could be adopted and proliferated, and how these approaches could maximise coherence with other sources of funding for rural/regional development (e.g. community-led local development/LEADER).

5.3 Turning the tables and trusting in the agency of communities

To realise climate justice at a local level requires channelling hitherto unprecedented resources into participative and community-led approaches. The mission of the model is not simply to deliver local development or climate action, but also to actively rebuild trust in participative approaches and thus social approval for climate action. This effort must start by working with those who have earned the trust of the communities that the initiatives hope to reach. These champions will be individuals or organisations who have a track record of supporting local development and working on behalf of the community. A given implementation of the model may require reaching and building trust with several diverse communities and so each may require a different trusted actor to engage with. Indeed, some communities may not have trusted actors and so the process of building trust begins from square one.

For those that do, trusted actors must be involved in every step of the design in the People's Transition approach — from selecting appropriate venues for meetings through to informing the planning of educational approaches or the design of participative fora.

It goes without saying, but participatory processes like this are not new and efforts to deliver it should not reinvent the wheel. Throughout Europe, there are community groups, organisations and individuals already addressing the challenges this model seeks to address, often using techniques this model seeks to promote. Adopting a comprehensive community-led approach to climate action and a just transition should empower and promote these actors, not seek to bypass them. Of note here is the work of communities in the Transition Network and that of ECOLISE and its members.

A prerequisite of establishing any People's Transition initiative includes a comprehensive mapping of existing actors and organisations working on relevant issues in each region and the communities they serve. This process will also allow for gaining an understanding of the communities not served by current initiatives and help guide and target additional community building efforts.

5.4 Context appropriate education and capacity building

Community-based capacity building should seek to empower participants to play an active role in their community and its response to the climate crisis. This would serve to enhance the experience of the People's Transition Community Dialogues, to be discussed in the next section.

While local contexts should ultimately inform the design of community-based education and the topics to be covered, this education should cover four key areas:

- Empowerment evaluation, namely tools for assessing the planning, implementation, and self-evaluation of their program[25].

- Concepts of climate justice and the just transition.

- Rights-based approaches to climate action, and specifically, the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

- Practical guidance to establishing collaborative, socially valuable, approaches to climate action, including cooperatives, community business and social enterprises.

In its recent report, the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) has comprehensively addressed and provided strategic recommendations for the continuous and pre-emptive development of the Irish workforce, supports for enterprise and high-impact funding to navigate the transition to a zero-carbon and more digital, automated future. Beyond reskilling for roles, a broader education programme could be adopted to empower communities to take advantage of available resources and equip them with the skills to establish cooperative business models. This would be intensive upskilling and would require bespoke design depending on the context but a range of flexible delivery methods for worker and community training can be employed and should be utilised. Further, training for consensus building practitioners and community capacity building practitioners should be a priority as part of the broader

25   Empowerment evaluation is a stakeholder involvement approach designed to provide groups with the tools and knowledge they need to monitor and evaluate their own performance and accomplish their goals. It is also used to help groups accomplish their goals. Empowerment evaluation focuses on fostering self-determination and sustainability. It is particularly suited to the evaluation of comprehensive community–based or place-based initiatives. A full consideration of empowerment evaluation can be found in Fetterman *et al.,* (1996)

transition efforts in order to ensure capacity exists for a broad roll-out of People's Transition Community Dialogues (see section on consensus building practitioners below).

Other topics to cover could include:

- Establishing community businesses or social enterprises,
- Climate action,
- Cooperative approaches to climate mitigation and adaptation,
- Renewable energy communities,
- Supply chains and engaging SMEs in procurement,
- Municipalism and the commons.

Train consensus building practitioners for community capacity building

The training of consensus building practitioners to support the People's Transition approach will be central to ensuring that the initiatives successfully build and maintain social confidence. Traditional program delivery facilitation, rooted in the transfer of information from teacher to client through rote learning or demonstration, will not suffice. Rather, the focus of facilitators/project managers should be on community capacity-building facilitation that realises the agency of a community or group by bringing people together, supporting the identification of existing capacity and expertise, and initiating action from within the community.

Much has been written about the role of consensus building (Elliott, 1999; deHaven-Smith & Wodraska, 1999; Donnais, 2012) in delivering local development outcomes. Appropriate facilitation for the People's Transition will depend on social and cultural contexts. However, the focus on training facilitators should be as important to national climate actions as ensuring graduates capable of working in the green economy or developing apprenticeships for retrofitting. Consensus building practitioners will not only be charged with ensuring that a culture of trust is developed and maintained through delivering the conditions for a conducive environment discussed previously, but they will also be required to (Briggs et al., 2005):

- Ensure all stakeholders share a common understanding of the plans, processes and desired outcomes.
- Engage in strategies to resolve mutually exclusive individual goals that may exist within a community.
- Resolve difference between community members perceptions of cause and effect, constructively challenging underlying assumptions and biases.
- Resolve differences of information relevant to judgements of instrumentality.
- Resolve differences in tastes and preferences.

All this must be delivered while maintaining an accessible and pleasant experience for participants such that high levels of participation are maintained.

5.5 The People's Transition Community Dialogue

At the heart of the People's Transition model is the People's Transition Community Dialogue (PTCD). The PTCD would be an integrated programme, running over three to four months[26] in a given community[27], that would seek to mobilise that community behind climate action by seeking to distil out community priorities and engaging the necessary expertise in order to identify opportunities to address these priorities using cooperative approaches that respond to the demands of climate action.

In terms of structure, the PTCD format will borrow from aspects proven in the citizens' assembly and other methods of deliberative fora, in order to provide a catalyst for community wealth building approaches. However the operationalisation of PTCD will not strictly abide by the citizens' assembly model as to do so would entail a high cost and a level of complexity that would be burdensome for local communities.

An example of where PTCD would deviate from the citizens' assembly format is by using volunteer participants that are closely representative of the local population rather than recruiting via scientific sampling methods. It is important to note, however, that for the internal discussion format and engagement with policymakers and the public, PTCD will a follow the examples set by the citizens' assembly.

The dialogue itself would take place over the course of four weeks during the second phase of the programme. The initial six-week phase would encompass initial preparatory work and the development of a tailored strategy for the dialogue in the region. The final four to six weeks would involve the development of a strategy document - a People's Transition Local Action Plan — based on the output of the PTCD. Throughout all phases, three interrelated streams will be running in parallel:

- The community stream will focus on mobilising the community to participate in the PTCD and the co-creation of the People's Transition Local Action Plan.

- The political stream will focus on building support from local and national political actors and relevant decision makers to ensure that the dialogue is engaged with in good faith and the finalised People's Transition Local Action Plan is realisable and acted upon.

- The communications stream will focus on raising awareness of the PTCD locally in order to enhance participation, and nationally, in order to generate demand for PTCDs in other communities.

While circumstances will vary based on jurisdiction, it would seem logical that the local authority would fund the PTCD up to the stage of the development of the local People's Transition Local Action Plan. At that point, EU and national funding support would be required to bring various community-owned strategies into existence.

It is envisioned that two core staff are required in order to successfully deliver a PTCD. These are a consensus building practitioner and community capacity building practitioner. The consensus building practitioner will be primarily focused on delivering a successfully facilitated dialogue that is

26   Early prototypes should budget for longer than four months as to allow for initial teething issues or unforeseen challenges. It is anticipated that, as experience in delivering the PTCD is gained by consensus building and community capacity building practitioners, it should be possible to condense the process down to under four months.

27   The definition of what constitutes a community for the purposes of a PTCD is left intentionally vague so as to be interpretable based on context. Parameters that might influence the demarcation of a community area might include the density of population, the local resources or the prevalence of anchor institutions. However, given the goal of localisation, it is recommended that a PTCD would not cover an area greater in size than a local election area.

representative of the community, builds trust in the process, and correctly identifies the community's needs and priorities as well as connecting the process to political actors and decision makers. The capacity building practitioner will be primarily responsible for learning components of the dialogue and the development of the People's Transition Local Action Plan based on the output of the dialogue, including the identification of the necessary expertise to augment capacity in either.

Phase 1: The preparatory phase (6-8 weeks)

The preparatory phase will develop a commencement strategy for the PTCD and lay the groundwork for the PTCD through:

I. Stakeholder mapping and relationship development

- Engaging with community groups, local development companies, business groups and NGOs.

- Identifying underrepresented communities and establishing connections.

- Engaging with local decision makers, local authorities and other relevant decision-making stakeholders to secure support for and proactive engagement with the PTCD.

II. Developing a comprehensive map of the community, community needs and community resources.

III. Identifying local barriers to participation and developing plans to circumvent[28].

IV. Engaging with local media to raise awareness of, and popularise, the PTCD.

V. Selecting a representative group of community members to participate in the PTCD.

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28   For example, a potential barrier to participation might be that the community is primarily a farming or fishing community, so the timing of the PTCD should be planned to accommodate these schedules. Or the community may have a high proportion of single mothers with limited access to childcare, so childcare would have to be provided in order to ensure they could participate.

Figure 10: Schematic diagram of the processes surrounding a People's Transition Community Dialogue

PREPARATORY WORK

Relationship development.

- Engaging with community groups, local development companies, business groups and NGOs

- Enhancing reputation as a trusted broker interfacing between communities and decision makers

- Engaging with key experts to participate in the PTCD in a capacity building role.

Landscape and stakeholder mapping.

- Identification of partner organisations for PTCD

- Identification of supportive policy makers and political allies

- Identification of key opportunities for policy influencing

- Identification of sympathetic journalists and media outlets.

FINALISED COMMENCEMENT STRATEGY FOR PEOPLE'S TRANSITION COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Community Stream

Objective: To successfully mobilise communities to participate in the People's Transition Community Dialogues.

Selection of sites for PTCD and securing support from trusted community actors

Community engagement and selection of participants

Political Stream

Objective: To build support from local and national political actors to ensure the outcome of the Dialogues is acted upon

Securing buy-in from local decision makers and climate action decision makers.

Political outreach and identification of decision-maker participants

Communications Stream

Objective: To raise awareness of the dialogues, enhance participation and build a constituency of demand for more

via
- Local radio Interviews
- Local newspaper articles

PEOPLE'S TRANSITION COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

4 sessions in each community

Community-led decision making approach

Capacity building provided by expert contributors

Output:

1. A detailed documentation of local development needs and desired solutions, informed by local knowledge.

Outcomes

1. Local capacity to understand the need for climate action and a just transition enhanced.

2. Community buy-in to the process and ownership over the future development of the People's Transition Local Action Plan.

3. Political buy-in to the process and commitment to engage with the finalised Local Action Plan.

Post Dialogue processing of findings and development of People's Transition Local Action Plans

Objective: To transform findings from community dialogue into strategy document that address local development needs and incorporate climate action into development of communities desired solutions.

Output: Consultative draft of People's Transition Local Action Plan to be presented to community for finalisation.

Final Dialogue Session with community to present and fine tune Local Action Plan.

Key Output Finalised
People's Transition Local Action Plan

People's Transition Local Action Plan presented to decision makers by community actors

Post Dialogue

Community members and local decision makers engage in communications work to promote the process

Development of Constituency of Demand

Targeted media engagement to promote the strategy as the outcome of the dialogue in order to drive demand for proliferation of PTCD model across Ireland.

OUTCOMES

Process Documented

The PTCD process is documented to fine tune and enhance future dialogues.

Climate Policy Influenced

The People's Transition Local Action Plan is incorporated into local development plans.

Demand increased

A number of communities and councils are calling for People's Transition Community Dialogues in their locality.

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVE

To accelerate fast and fair climate action through participative approaches and bottom-up just transition planning.

Phase 2: The dialogue phase (4-6 weeks)

The dialogue phase has three desired outcomes:

a. Local capacity to understand the need for climate action and a just transition is enhanced.

b. The community realise their agency to affect change, trust in the process and take ownership over the development of People's Transition Local Action Plan.

c. Political actors engage with the process and commitment to support the delivery with the finalised People's Transition Local Action Plan.

It is also important to emphasise that the dialogue phase has one critical output, and that is the detailed distillation of local development needs and priorities, informed by local knowledge. The purpose of the dialogue is not to deliberate on what climate action is necessary in the community, but rather to help the community realise their agency and build knowledge of community wealth building, cooperative structures and community business and how this could be employed for climate action.

While the exact format of the dialogue phase will be decided by local context and circumstance, it should seek to enable four weekly day-long sessions of deliberation and capacity building, with the community leading on identifying key local development needs and priorities. The consensus building practitioner should facilitate the distillation of those needs and priorities, with the community capacity building practitioner utilising break-out sessions to address issues of climate justice and just transition, rights-based approaches, empowerment evaluation and guidance on establishing community-owned structures for delivering development outcomes. Should a specific capacity need arise in a community, the community capacity building practitioner should be resourced to engage additional expertise.

Phase 3: The processing phase (4-6 weeks)

Taking the distillation of key needs and priorities in phase 2, the team, working with the necessary expertise when appropriate, will seek to identify implementable development actions that will deliver a triple win:

1. Advancing climate action by either mitigating emissions or building adaptive capacity

2. Addressing an immediate development priority or need

3. Delivering opportunities for community wealth building

While it is understandable that not all three attributes will be achievable in every community or with every initiative, the focus should be on achieving social approval by, at the very least, co-creating initiatives that deliver the goal of climate action with one of the other two priorities. Sufficient resources and expertise should be available at this stage to help inform the identification of these development options.

The post dialogue processing of findings will produce a consultative draft of a People's Transition Local Action Plan that includes:

a. The stakeholder, landscape and resource mapping of the community conducted in the preparatory phase.

b. The distillation of community development needs and priorities surfaced during the dialogue phase.

    c.   A set of time bound and costed strategy options for community wealth building initiatives that enable climate action and address community needs.

A final convening of the community group will then finalise the document before submitting it to local decision makers for implementation. The documentation of each PTCD and inclusion in a central information clearing house would be essential to ensure continuous improvement of the process and to encourage participation in other communities. Following the PTCD, continued community engagement ensures the necessary supports are available to implement the People's Transition Local Action Plan.

5.6 Project manager and implementation steering committee

Once the local people's transition strategy has been agreed, a project manager will be appointed to oversee the implementation of the strategy and an implementation steering committee should be assembled comprising local businesses, civil society representatives, community members and decision makers. These platforms will be provided a secretariat by the local authority and will be tasked with overseeing the implementation of the provisions within the LPTS. The secretariat would oversee all LPTS covered by that local authority. Among the responsibilities of the steering committee should be ensuring the ongoing consideration of equity in the roll out of the LPTS, identifying priorities and monitoring risks, monitoring timelines, providing advice on allocation of resources and providing advice about potential changes as the rollout progresses that stay true to the intent of the original strategy. The project manager will normally attend meetings of the steering committee to report on progress and answer any questions raised by members.

Conclusion

6. Conclusion

The challenge of the transition that awaits the European Union and its people, if it is to successfully and urgently wean our economies from fossil fuels, is not just the technological complexity but also the multi-faceted social challenge that must ensure communities in vulnerable situations are not marginalised or left behind. A commitment to reach the furthest behind first both recognises the moral imperative of protecting rights and dignity in the transition but is also of practical significance. By ensuring that climate action shares benefits widely, enhances livelihood options and improves standards of living, decision makers will avoid issues of social resistance to climate measures which risk delaying or undermining progress on climate action.

When considering the implementation of policies to avert climate breakdown or biodiversity collapse, it is easy to get caught up in the need for urgency, the desire to just get what needs to be done, done. In this framing, fairness is sometimes seen as a woolly concept, difficult to operationalise, perhaps beyond the remit of environmental policy making. Many think the ultimate fairness is just to act, because a planet scarred by climate catastrophe or biodiversity collapse cannot be fair. However, it is a lack of fairness under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that has delayed and diminished ambition on climate action for almost three decades. It was a lack of fairness that collapsed the Copenhagen negotiations and delayed what would become the Paris Agreement by six years. At the national level too, environmental actions without fairness are diminished or fail.

If we put fairness at the heart of policy making, then we stand a fighting chance. Because fairness builds social approval. The most meaningful way to achieve this is through climate action that seeks to address local development needs and priorities as a primary objective. Such action can only be successfully designed if it is co-created with local communities. This report has sought to conceptualise a model which could be deployed to enable bottom-up approaches to climate policy making. If fully implemented, this model would give real power and resources to communities to determine their own future, while being supported by the necessary expertise to ensure that the actions undertaken to reach that future are of benefit to a stable climate.

Therefore we present the People's Transition: Community-led development for climate justice. It is hoped that this study can serve as a framework for designing and implementing policies that realise an enabling environment for a just transition by expanding the capabilities of individuals and communities facing transition.

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FEPS (Foundation for European Progressive Studies) works in close collaboration with social democratic organisations, and in particular national foundations and think tanks across Europe, to tackle the challenges that Europe faces today.

TASC (Think tank for Action on Social Change) is an independent progressive think-tank whose core focus is addressing inequality and sustaining democracy.