



# COMMUNITY climate coaches

Facilitating local resilience and regeneration



Climate Action Event in West Cork, Eire, Spring 2023. Photo credit: Davie Philip

## COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION GOOD AND EMERGENT PRACTICE GUIDE

May 2023

## Introduction

*If you want to build a ship, don't call people together to gather wood ... but teach them to long for the great wide sea.*

Antoine St-Exupery, French writer and poet.

**The climate and ecological crisis we are in represent an enormous challenge for humanity and at the same time offer tremendous opportunities for our individual and collective learning.**

Worldwide, an increasing number of people are deciding to join forces and self-organise within communities, working together to co-create new models for a resilient and regenerative lifestyle. In gathering, they learn to work together for a common good, regardless of generational differences, cultural backgrounds or attitudes. As part of this transition process from individuality to collectivity, pressing questions requiring self-awareness, (re-)consideration of values, skills, talents and passions are arising. People move from asking 'What is in it for me?' to 'How can I bring my talents for the good of all?'



Across Europe there are thousands of community level experiments in how to co-create these new models. We can learn much from these experiments, both in terms of what works and what doesn't. This Guide shares some of the most successful experiments, with the hope that they will provide inspiration and instruction. In addition, 12 of the most inspiring individuals working in the field are featured in the **case**

**studies section of the CCC website.** The Community Climate Coaches model is underpinned by 3 ethics and 8 principles, described in depth in the **Community Climate Coaches Guide**, which should be read in conjunction with this Good Practice Guide. The good practice examples we have chosen all demonstrate the effective use of both the ethics and the principles.

The Guide is organised in five chapters. Each chapter is a standalone document that can be read without reference to the others, and each can be downloaded as a separate pdf.

1: Good Practice in Community Development and Facilitation

2: Good Practice in Engaging with Local Government

3: Good Practice in Digital Collaboration and Blended Engagement

4: Good Practice in Community Climate Action

5: Good Practice in Inner Transition

# Good Practice in Community Development and Facilitation

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Chris Warburton Brown

## What is a Community Facilitator?

Facilitation is providing leadership without taking the reins. The role of a facilitator for community climate action is to get others to take responsibility, to make decisions, and to take the lead on different tasks that will result in effective group actions to address climate change.

A community facilitator provides the methods and means that enable groups to come up with answers to the complex questions facing their community. Facilitators need to balance the time and energy available, the degree of uncertainty on the issues and the maturity of the community group and then help them find the best possible actions to address their issues. Facilitators must use the right tools in the right places to get the most helpful answer, allowing groups to make decisions and reach a lasting agreement which has commitment and buy-in.

There are generally two different kinds of community groups that will ask a facilitator to support them with climate action. On the one hand, there are community groups that form around a single environmental issue relevant to a neighbourhood; perhaps a climate crisis like a flood, heatwave or drought, or simply the wish for more green spaces, shared gardens and playgrounds. On the other hand, a facilitator will often be invited into an existing community group who now wish to take action on climate change for the first time; in this case, the task is to understand what has ignited their new desire for action.

## What makes a good facilitator?

In this guide, we present a number of facilitators who are working across Europe in diverse contexts and on diverse climate actions. We have chosen inspiring individuals who we feel give a good flavour of the work of community climate facilitator and of the positive impact it can have.

As is clear from the examples we have chosen, there is no one-size-fits-all model of a facilitator. We have included municipal leaders in Catalonia, tree planters in Croatia, and





community organisers in England. They come from different backgrounds, have different skills and experience, and work in different contexts. What unites them is their role as catalysts of climate action in communities. In other words, they are working with communities to envision and then deliver powerful, effective climate action which local people could not do without their help.

These facilitators are demonstrating good practice which others can learn from and copy. In using this good practice, each facilitator will of course need to adapt it to their own context and conditions; no two communities are the same. But we hope that this short guide will provide both inspiration and guidance to new and existing facilitators in their vital work.

## **What is community development?**

The Community Development process, Jeff Palmer, CEO, Baptist Global Response

Community development is a process that groups of people go through together in order to solve their own problems. It is a process in which the community:

- Learns more about its problems
- Identifies key issues that need to be addressed by the community
- Comes up with feasible solutions to the problems
- Implements solutions to the problems

If good community development processes are implemented, good projects emerge. But the good community development process comes from the host community – they identify their problems, they prioritise what to work on and the solutions, they find the resources to implement their identified solutions, and they lead the development of their communities.

If the facilitator ends up “doing projects” for people and communities, they may quickly solve one problem, but if the facilitator – an outsider – identifies the problem and provides the solution, the community does not have a process to solve other problems they face. Moreover, if an outsider identifies and solves problems for a community, outsiders become







the way they learn to solve their problems. Therefore, when they have another problem that arises, guess where they are going to come to find a solution?

So, good community development is not just “doing projects.” It is working through

a process with people and communities to have them identify their strengths, needs, priorities and viable solutions. It does result in “good projects”, but ideally, these projects are initiated, led, and implemented by the people themselves and not outsiders. In the Community Climate Coaches six phase model, two of the phases relate directly to community facilitation and development: Phase 4, *Mapping Bioregional Ecosystems of Resilience* and Phase 5, *Building Community Resilience through Dialogue and Shared Vision*. The exact way that community facilitation and development is delivered across these two phases is up to the individual facilitator, but it is likely most of it will fall under Phase 5.

## **What is the process of community development?**

**There are five stages of the community development process:**

1. Identifying problems and strengths
2. Analysing and prioritising the problems
3. Identifying solutions
4. Implementing solutions
5. Evaluation and celebration... and moving on to the next problem

This isn't a simple step-by-step process, rather it is a circular process. A community starts by addressing one or two simple and achievable problems and then gains confidence and skills to move on to more and more complex issues. They gain abilities and build capacity with each new problem solved. They gain momentum to address more complex issues facing their community.

There are no ‘perfect’ or ‘best practice’ models; each group and each facilitator need to find their own path. But for each stage we have selected 2 or 3 example projects that we feel demonstrate good and effective practice.



## 1. Identifying problems and strengths



When a climate action group first comes together, they will often struggle to articulate and agree clearly what their needs and desires are. Moreover, the people in the room will only be a small percentage of the people living in the community, most of whom have probably never even considered climate action before. When people come together in this way, they are likely to be very aware of the shortcomings of their community or place, and they may be angry or frustrated.

However, it's a good idea to start

with identifying what they appreciate and love in their place before surfacing the problems (hopefully this has already begun to emerge in Phase 3: Connecting with Place and Nature). In some cases, the formation of the group will have been provoked by a single problem; a local climate catastrophe such as a flood event or a drought. But even in these cases, putting the immediate emergency into the context of the community's wider needs is very important. A climate catastrophe is a great opportunity to address other, longer term needs and desires in the community, to deepen relationships between local people, and above all to build local resilience. It is also a key opportunity to discover what strengths the community has; what worked well, how people supported each other, what places and organisations played a crucial role, what sources of resilience came to the fore.



**The People's Transition** in Donegal, Ireland, uses the broad needs expressed by the local community as a springboard for climate action. Their model is built on the view that if these needs can be met through climate action, it will not be a burden to the community but a benefit. They begin by listening intently to the needs expressed in community meetings, school classrooms, focus groups and

targeted interviews, with a specific focus on the most marginalised.





In Northern England **Climate Action Leeds** are working with 8 diverse communities across the city. Each of these 8 communities has a Community Development Worker, which they fund, and a local community organisation as the convener. The role of the Community Development Worker is to help develop a local Climate Action Plan and to start conversations. The first phase of work was not about climate

change, it was about recognising local needs and identifying local leadership. Part of the project is about working with different kinds of communities, recognising the big diversity in needs and facilities across the city. The initial 8 groups will then become peer to peer support for the next generation of communities to come in.

Meanwhile in Luxembourg **The Centre for Environment Learning Luxembourg (CELL)** is boosting citizen participation in local climate actions being taken by municipalities. They support co-creation of these initiatives and programmes. CELL begins engagement through local showings of the movie “Eng Aerd” (one earth) which shows transition initiatives in Luxembourg. Straight after the showing Community Catalyzers assess local needs and aspirations through citizen feedback. By starting with the audience’s agenda and slowly adding more ambitious proposals and initiatives, CELL takes the audience from where they are and moves them to where they want them to be. Their narrative is adapted to the audience they are talking to i.e. young people are addressed in a more personal proactive way with concrete projects and the results have to be experienced in a short period of time.



Looking further afield, in 2015 **Baltimore, Maryland** won the American Prize for Progress in Adaptation for its Disaster Preparedness Plan. City staff gathered input from numerous local communities and acted on what residents told them. Flooding, extreme heat, and storms were





identified as the greatest threats.

It's important to acknowledge that discussing the realities of climate change can have a serious impact on participant's mental health. This can happen in three main ways: general anxiety about the state of the planet and its future (termed climate anxiety, climate grief or climate depression); trauma caused by climate catastrophes like flooding and hurricanes; and burnout caused by over-commitment to climate activism. On the other hand, there is a solid body of research that shows the best way to restore active hope is by linking up with others and taking strong actions which affirm personal power. You can read more about this here: <https://www.52climateactions.com/look-after-your-mental-health/full>



Gavin Harte, of **Communities 4 Climate Action** in Ireland, recognises the difficult emotions that this stage of the process can throw up: Within the program, we try to have an open and honest conversation about climate, there's no sugar-coating around it. Behind that, there would be a strong sense that people can share that emotional journey with others, and this comes back to the need for community. If climate action is left as an individual journey then people will become more and more isolated. It's only

through the sense that we might be able to tackle it in a more shared way that we can solve it.

#### **Key features:**

- Recognise that every community has broad needs, not just climate action needs. Find out how the broader needs are systemically interlinked with climate action
- Help the community recognise its strengths and identify the key people, organisations and places that provide resilience and leadership.
- Build the climate action community group like you would build any other community group.
- Acknowledge that discussion of climate change can arouse strong emotions and controversial opinions.

## **2. Analysing and prioritising the problems**

Every community has many complex needs. Not all of these are linked to climate change, and not all of them are amenable to deliverable solutions. Having established the problems in a community, therefore, the facilitator needs to lead the group through a process of prioritising those problems. This requires helping the community explore the balance between the motivation it has to tackle a problem with the power it has to actually solve that problem. The ideal outcome is the identifying of a problem, or problems, which the community is both highly motivated to tackle and has the power to solve.

**Climate Action Leeds** in the UK puts a big emphasis on using community organising to





inspire individual action, as City Hub Lead Andy Goldring describes: *'We focus on real actions and what we can do; where is our agency, and how does that help us in our everyday lives. So promoting home energy efficiency has never been easier, because energy costs have rocketed for everyone. I can show people they can reduce their gas usage in half, so if prices have doubled, their costs haven't gone up! It's all about practical problem solving.'* The communities they work with are developing local Climate Action Plans, which include a mix of things they can do themselves and things that they need bigger help with eg: public transport. This allows communities to recognise where they have agency at the local level, and also flags up the systemic changes which are needed at the city level.



Many of the needs identified by **The People's Transition** in Donegal are not easily impacted by climate action, so they are sifted and selected when they have potential to be met through a climate action. For communities, climate action is a low priority in comparison with health care, housing and secure employment, but solutions such as a community biochar company tackle both employment and climate needs. Community Activation Coordinator Suzie Kahn says: *'When we go back to the community with proposed solutions people understand that those solutions have a double impact. They have the impact of showing what a climate solution it is. But more importantly it has benefits for the community directly in terms of the needs they identified.'*



**The Association for Rural Culture and Education** in Finland supports a huge diversity of climate action projects around biodiversity, circular economy, climate entrepreneurship, waste management, waterways, landscapes, and local traditions. Their goal is to make climate action part of the normal community routine. Information is collected from the villagers to get their wishes, thoughts, ideas, interest and targets on the climate action. Joint practical voluntary work and shared meals helps this process. Community-spirit comes through listening and then doing together. Rita Ronko, Community Development worker, says: *My know-how has steadily increased on local development work and climate issues. You learn what makes happen or triggers action in a community. Community resilience rises from having a clear target and participants motivated to reach it. We have moved from talking to more action, creating a climate team and the weight has been increasing with time.*

A small survey of LEADER projects across Europe suggests that food, energy, building renovation, circular economy, nature restoration/ biodiversity and training/education are the most common areas that community climate action groups choose to focus on. Around one third of groups were self-organising, one third had a facilitator from an NGO and one third had a facilitator from a local municipality or a government agency.



## Key factors:

- Identify those problems that the group are most highly motivated to solve
- Prioritise problems that have obvious solutions
- Establish what the community can do by itself and what they need help with from other agencies

## 3. Identifying solutions



Once a community action group has identified their key priorities, they need to create a Climate Action Plan which sets out the solutions they want to implement. Climate Action Plans outline solutions in two areas: 1) Adaptation: identifying the climate risks facing a community and proposing actions to

be taken to reduce and to cope with that risk, 2) Mitigation: setting out a clear pathway to significantly reduce the climate footprint of the community by changing emissions and lifestyles.

CAPs need to ensure that local people are listened to and included in the writing of the plan, and that local people's needs and concerns are directly addressed by the proposed climate actions. Simply providing the community with a list of actions and asking them to pick one is unlikely to be successful; group members need to feel a sense of inspiration and ownership of the action they select if they are to follow through to delivery. They also need to adapt actions to match their local situation and audience; this is something they are likely to understand much better than an outside facilitator.



**Red Cross South Australia** works with communities in the Adelaide area to implement climate action. They provide lots of strong, positive examples of effective solutions; some from Project Drawdown (see below) and some from around Australia. By showing what can

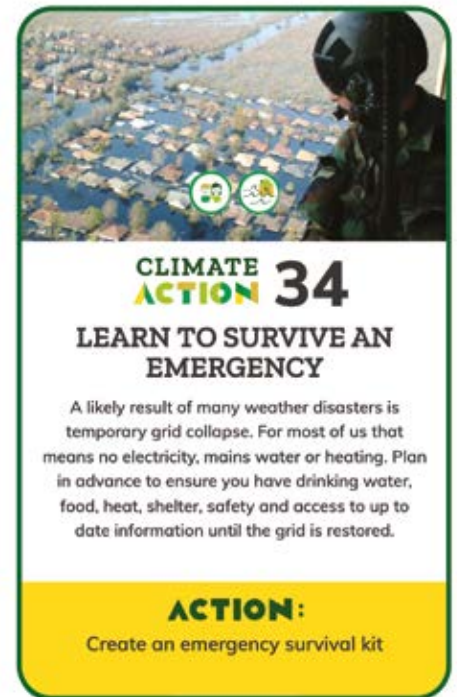
be achieved, they build enthusiasm for taking action. They then get the group to design a community action programme together. They also share the Red Cross resources for making emergency plans, which focus on household planning type of actions. In most cases the group won't have the power or resources to fully deliver this plan; the main purpose is simply to get them to think about the risks and possibilities in their community. They can then



move on to thinking about which parts of the plan they can deliver themselves, and whose help they need to deliver the rest.

Solution libraries can be a key resource in helping a community create its CAP.

**52climateactions.com** is one such library which sets out 52 of the most effective climate actions for individuals and communities. The actions are powerful, realistic, upbeat and fun. Actions fall into three categories: those to reduce carbon footprint (mitigation); those to help with the effects of climate change (adaptation); and those that change mindsets (thinking differently). The actions are divided into 16 themes such as 'Love Trees', 'Travel Wisely' and 'Respect Food'. Each action offers a range of possible things that can be done alone or with a group; for no, little or considerable financial cost; and over the short, medium or long term. Each action has a downloadable, printable pdf to use in group training, and there is a detailed set of lesson plans showing how they can be used to inspire community climate action.



**Project Drawdown** is another library which presents 100 powerful solutions to climate change, but in this case aimed at governments and corporations. Their website [www.drawdown.org/solutions](http://www.drawdown.org/solutions) can be used with communities who want to explore some of the big-scale solutions to the climate crisis, and to understand how their local actions contribute to the national and international fight against climate change. The process of

agreeing solutions can be a difficult one. **The NEXUS Futures** project in Luxembourg brings together academics, landowners and local people to create regeneration schemes for soil, water and biodiversity. The project facilitators begin with interviews which enquire about people's feelings and which identify contradictions between diverse viewpoints. Workshops are then conducted which provide spaces for using these contradictions to create new, collective, ways of thinking and doing. They begin by asking for past experiences so that people from different walks of life can come to understand each other. The workshops are







facilitated in a way where people feel they are in a secure space and can express what they think and feel. Nevertheless, emotions often run high and the facilitators can find this a draining experience. One of the key learnings of this project is that although experts claim their models and solutions are universal, in reality solutions must always

be co-designed to fit the particular local situation and people. Just because something has worked well in another community, there is no guarantee it will work here if it isn't adapted to the local context.

#### **Key factors:**

- Help identify realistic actions that are achievable
- Look for actions with multiple benefits and rewards, not just climate related ones
- Co-design actions that are tailored to the local situation and needs
- Work together to create a written community climate action plan

## **4. Implementing solutions**

Once a CAP has been created and agreed, the community needs to begin its implementation. This will be over a long period and will generally involve the facilitator stepping back somewhat, handing control of delivery to community members. Crucially, a facilitator needs to identify and build up likely leaders or stewards within a community; those people whose commitment will go beyond initial aspiration and become long term, deep, and inspiring to others. The organisation **'Plant a Tree, Don't be a Stump'** in Croatia does one climate action and one alone; tree planting. But in order to make this a success, they need to understand where the local community wants trees planted and why, and identify those in the community who will care for the trees long term as named *Tree Stewards* or *Tree Adopters*. Central to their work is "Planting and growing a community"; they know that without a strong and enthusiastic local community the trees will be neglected and may even die. They therefore design systems in the community to care for trees sustainably, promote the benefits, and spread skills of both tree care and self-organisation. Often the communities they work with are dismissive of climate change and yet are still excited to plant trees. *'What motivates us?'* asks Regional Organiser Ana Ruk Kalendar; *'Collective spirit, positivity, and a sense of belonging to a bigger movement. Also, quickly visible results!'*





In **Baltimore, Maryland**, following an in-depth survey of community needs, the city quickly implemented vulnerability reduction actions. These included a new floodplain code, flood-proofing of multiple structures, adopting the International Green Construction Code citywide, developing the Growing Green Initiative to transform vacant land, requiring all departments to explain how they tackle climate change, planting

thousands of trees, and delivering local adaptation grants. They also created Neighbourhood Resiliency Hubs, providing education to help local residents prepare for extreme events.

#### **Key factors:**

- Identify and build up potential leaders and stewards
- Choose a first action that will provide a quick win
- Identify and work with local municipalities, statutory agencies, schools, businesses, community groups and NGOs that can help deliver the chosen solutions

## **5. Evaluation and celebration**

A key part of community climate action is making shared commitments to real action, and completing any of these commitments is a cause for celebration. Members of the group can invite friends, family and work colleagues to a public celebration of what they've achieved and encourage them to do the same. They can cut a ribbon, unveil a plaque, share a meal or crack open a bottle of champagne. Alternatively, a wider community can be invited to both help complete a climate action and celebrate it in a single event; something like planting an orchard, retrofitting a community building or restoring neglected green space.

Taking time to celebrate and share success in this way is crucial to motivating the next stage of delivery, where the community moves on to the next action or project on their list. Another crucial part of community development is visiting and learning from other successful projects, and having them visit and learn from you.



**Nexus Futures** in Luxembourg has created a Transformation Laboratory that helps to co-design place based actions across a wide network. This allows communities to learn from each other from different places and different scales. Communities can come together to tell their success stories and to engage in social learning from different initiatives and places.



**PVN Albania** builds environmental skills and resilience in young people by providing volunteering opportunities in high quality projects across Europe. They have recently run youth exchanges with Austria (on sustainable travel), with Belgium (on nature conservation) and with Kosovo (on sustainable building). Activities are made enjoyable to participants through a high degree of participation and co-design; by spreading responsibility across the group, engagement and satisfaction is higher. The learning is not limited to young people: local mayors have visited work camps, and taken part

in training on human rights, peace and promoting volunteering. In May 2022, 8 mayors from Albania went on a study trip to Norway.

A small survey of LEADER projects across Europe asked why actions were successful. High community motivation and fulfilling a clearly identified need were identified as the most important reasons, with good facilitation and securing funding close behind.

#### **Key factors:**

- Take time to celebrate success, as publicly as possible!
- Involve local media in publicising success
- Share achievements with others, by going to speak with them or inviting them to visit
- Learn from others' achievements, by inviting them as speakers or going to visit
- Join networks of community climate groups





# Good Practice in Engaging with Local Government

Cristina Castellena and Sophie Zuang

## Example 1: The Fem Garrotxa Story

In the beginning...



Image 01: Drawing by Vanessa Freixa Ribá

La Garrotxa, a rural region located close to the pyrenees in Catalonia, 350,000 years ago was a land of active volcanoes and constant eruptions that birthed the geographical landscape we know today. The last volcanic eruption took place 11,500 years ago, when Croscat's lava tongues swept away the territory, destroying several ecosystems.

The geological and biochemical activity that took place during those centuries, nourished the same ecosystems it had previously destroyed, feeding the soil with the ingredients for the generation of life and the development of animal and plant species. As a result, La Garrotxa - in Catalan meaning "rough, broken, hard to walk on land" - is today a protected area of 30 volcanoes, with great geological interest and lush forests, born from the energy and richness that emerged from the deepest parts of our planet centuries ago.

The same fiery and abundant energy that gave birth to the rich land we see today, also had a deep impact on the nature and character of its people. The Garrotxins have historically been sensitive to social, economic and ecological challenges and the region is well-known for its historical and extensive social fabric, and experience in initiatives for social, ecological, educational, economic and touristic transformation.

Today, La Garrotxa is a rural region of about 56,000 people in 21 municipalities. It has over 500 diverse community initiatives that work together with the public administration

to sustain the historical resilience of the territory and its people, making it a pioneer in collaboration among different actors in a nested and networked system. Resilience here is understood as the capacity of the elements of a system to adapt to change, drawing on the quality of their inter-relationships.

Thus the presence and interrelation of these territorial agents, the history of social and labour movements, the current political and environmental situation, the recent significant changes in the governance of municipalities, the connection to art and creativity, and the dialogue within the margins, have stimulated the awareness of its people and generated a social movement, catalysing the territory to a change of paradigm towards sustainable change.

## The emergence of Fem Garrotxa

A resilient territory can be understood as something that emerges through a process of interaction between a resilient society and the other elements of the territory (Luhmann, 1996). The stage that the territory has reached in this process can be analysed through the Cycle of Adaptive Change, a good framework for understanding the phases of resilience.

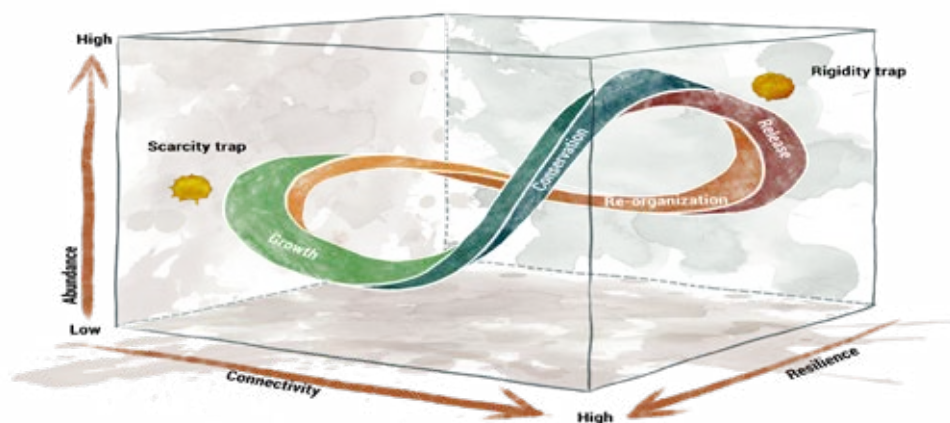


Image 02: Cycle of adaptive Change (Holling, 1986; Stockholm Resilience Centre, 2013) with adaptations form Resilience.Earth in terms of dimensions 3D (Resilience.Earth, 2019)

In this case, Fem Garrotxa was born in a readaptation phase, the spark of which dates back to 2018 when Municipalities in Transition proposed the 'Garrotxa Resilient Territory'. This concept was promoted by the cooperative Resilience Earth and the public

administration ADRINOC, aiming to put into practice a new way of connecting municipal public administration with their local communities.

As the links between public sector, private individuals and civil society consolidated, they became the critical yeast that pushed the region towards a new model of decentralised governance, leading to a participatory process with over 6500 people, 11% of the population, known as the Fem Garrotxa.



The goal of Fem Garrotxa was to generate a strategic document to improve the governance of the territory, in coordination with all the agents present, in a transparent way, and with as much consensus as possible. The process was in line with the United Nations' definition of Good Governance; participative, consent oriented, holding people accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable and following the laws.

The first step was to establish the Strategic Commission of La Garrotxa (CEG), representative of the region's diversity and made up of 7 people (3 directors of consortiums, and 4 consultants), and the Civil Commission in charge of following and evaluating the participatory process (CSA). Throughout the process, special attention was paid to the diversity found in local organisations and with the priority of ensuring accessibility to people living in the region, especially those on the social margins.

The second phase was a participatory diagnosis led by the CEG, which developed the analysis of the state of the region and a virtual survey with over 2200 participants. The diagnosis was made according to 5 spheres of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Planet, People, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. This allowed for a systemic vision of reality, as it serves as a tool for global goals for 2030, and has a universal application from which to evaluate the proposals in a general framework and compare them with other territories.

During the participatory sessions, 16 virtual cross-sectoral tables were held, involving almost 600 people from civil society organisations, unions, health workers, artists, teachers, technicians, politicians, social and environmental movements, and the private sector. These tables translated into 17 meetings (one per SDG) which created a battery of more than 400 indicators of the state of the territory. The CEG and the CSA synthesised more than 1,000 strategic proposals from the process and translated the 17 SDGs into 21 ODGs (Development Goals of La Garrotxa), representing the leverage points of the territory.

Finally, a large event was held for the technical validation of the results, where more than 50 technical people participated, along with an open meeting for citizen validation, with more than 100 people, and a virtual political event with the 21 mayoralties of La Garrotxa.

As Resilience Earth defines it, governance is “the ability of a community to have a decentralised dialogue at the service of the territory, from a structural and functional perspective, to solve collective needs. In addition, this dialogue must include, as a learning process, both permanent disagreement and creative conflict.”





## The Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan that emerged from Fem Garrotxa was aimed at defining a system built on trust and collaboration between different agents. This allows for shared decision-making in a context of territorial equilibrium, sustainability, resilience and good life, making the decisions widely accepted and shared among all agents.



Image 03: Participatory process in the Garrotxa region that involves 21 municipalities and the different sectors of the region, (design: Resilience.Earth)

The strategic plan born from bottom-up participatory processes was built in line with the principles of resilience, respecting the complexity of the territory, and with specific, objective and evaluative goals, to guide us towards evolving into a more resilient territory.

The Strategic Plan of the Fem Garrotxa project cannot be understood as a traditional strategic plan, with specific actions to deliver, their time frame and their expected

costs. What this plan contains are the aspirations of the Garrotxins towards the future, representing the diversity of the territory: administration, associations, private companies, groups of influence and individuals. Aspirations that are collected in the Strategic Plan's objectives, challenges and purpose; aspirations that are well connected to the historical past, the energy of volcanoes and life; aspirations that are to be a guide that allows progress in facing our problems and our future.

## Conclusion

A territory is formed by the interaction and overlap of many processes of change, both spatial and temporal. From a geological perspective, a territory is a space defined by a specific pattern of the lithosphere, hydrosphere and geomorphology; in the ecological field, a territory is the area that an organism or a community of organisms defends for the



purpose of reproducing, nesting or feeding; in the cultural field, a territory is an identity concept that evolves over time and across space.

The process of Fem Garrotxa is built from a resilient and systemic approach upon the essence of the La Garrotxa territory and its people. It has followed what Donella Meadows (MIT, 1982) explored as an accompaniment of the locals to “...develop and express their own capacities to solve their own problems, in ways consistent with their own needs and those of their ecosystems. And to do it through expanding the power within the same cultures and communities, to combine intellectual and intuitive knowledge, reflecting on the earth and ways of life consistent with natural rhythms”.

**Resources:**

[Estudi sobre els Patrons de la Resiliència Territorial](#)

[Fem Garrotxa, Anexo 2 per OIDP](#)

[Fem Garrotxa Fitxa Candidatura](#)



Image 04: Drawing by Vanesa Freixa Riba

## Example 2: The Luxembourg Climate Pact



### What is it?

The Climate Pact is a cooperative agreement through which local governments commit to implement certain environment- and climate-related measures. In return, they receive government financial and technical assistance, as well as an environmental certification. The Climate Pact has helped improve coordination between the central and local governments and encouraged municipalities to take actions in line with national climate mitigation commitments.

The Pact is supported by the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development, which has entrusted Klima-Agence, the national structure for the promotion of a sustainable energy transition, with project management and technical support.

Luxembourg municipalities (communes) are responsible for several policies that can have an impact on climate mitigation and adaptation, including local land use, mobility and waste management. They enjoy substantial autonomy, leading to different practices across the country. There is a need to further improve coordination between the central government and communes and encourage local governments to take actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

### The Climate Pact is a cooperative agreement.

1. Each participating municipality commits to hire a climate adviser; it also commits to implement an energy management system and a number of the 64 measures in a catalogue.
2. A catalogue of 64 measures is used to guide municipalities towards sustainable policies in energy, climate change and mobility. There are six categories of measures: spatial planning; municipal buildings; resource management; mobility; internal organization; and co-operation.
3. Municipalities can be awarded a certification based on the number of





implemented measures. There are four levels of certification: 40%, 50%, 65% and 75% of the maximum score.

4. The government provides financial assistance and technical support, through myenergy (a government body providing information and assistance on energy efficiency and renewables).
5. The state covers the costs of climate advisers and technical assistance. The Environmental Protection Fund subsidises municipal projects linked to the pact. Municipalities receive an annual subsidy of between EUR 10-45 per inhabitant depending on their certification level.
6. All 102 of Luxembourg's municipalities signed the first version of the Climate Pact. As of 2019, 94 municipalities had received certification (7 at 40%, 78 at 50% and 9 at 75%).
7. The Pact has improved coordination on climate policy between central and local governments.
8. It has improved local capacity to implement climate mitigation measures and encouraged municipalities to take actions in line with national mitigation targets. The second phase of the Pact came into force in January 2021; 101 of the 102 municipalities have joined the programme.



### **New axes within climate pact 2020**

Based on the experience gained and with a view to the goals of the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (PNEC), three development axes were identified and defined:

- Measurements based on key performance indicators.
- Improving the scope of action of the municipalities
- More consistent involvement of citizens, businesses, and other local actors.

Most of the municipalities in the Climate Pact underwent an audit, giving them a better insight into the state of implementation of the measures and a structured outline of the potential for improvement.



## Certification in 2022

- 11 municipalities certified in category 4 (75%).
- 11 municipalities certified in category 3 (65 %)
- 17 municipalities certified in category 2 (50 %)

## Partners



The Climate Pact partners CELL, EBL, IMS and Climate Alliance play a central role within the programme. They promote the participation of local citizens, businesses and other actors through their knowledge and presence on the ground, and they support municipalities with their methodological and thematic expertise to help them

succeed in engaging with the different measures.

**CELL** promotes the consistent involvement of citizens and municipalities in ecological change. In the face of the climate crisis and increasing scarcity of resources, they aim to show that solutions exist all over the world that can inspire us to get pioneering projects rolling and to support municipalities and citizens in their initiatives. The aim is to prove through concrete and positive actions that we are all capable of acting, being creative and demonstrating skills. This includes citizen projects such as community gardens, relocated economic activities, sustainable building projects, repair cafés and energy co-ops.

**Emweltberodung Lëtzebuerg (EBL)** is a non-profit association that brings together environmental experts, civil society actors and professional associations. EBL is primarily concerned with the coordination of nationwide and inter-municipal projects, the development of campaigns and awareness-raising tools, and the organisation of tailor-made professional training. Fields of activity include circular economy, green digitalisation, sustainable public procurement, local biodiversity, energy, waste management and exchange of competences between sector experts.

**Inspiring More Sustainability (IMS)** has been the leading network of Luxembourg companies committed to Corporate Social Responsibility for over 10 years. Its mission is to encourage national economic actors to adopt responsible policies and practices. IMS supports its members through cooperation projects and the promotion of dialogue. Within the Climate Pact, IMS serves municipalities and national companies in cooperating and communicating, and builds alliances for pioneering, positive and sustainable projects.





# CLIMATE EMERGENCY UK

**Climate Alliance** is a European network of cities that has been working for the world's climate with its indigenous rainforest partners for 30 years. Currently, 40 municipalities are in the Alliance. It combines local action with global responsibility through cooperation with indigenous peoples, awareness-raising campaigns and tools for climate protection planning. Fields of action cover: Energy efficiency; Renewable energies; Municipal CO2 balancing; Soil protection; Municipal procurement; Sustainable events; Adaptation to climate change; Climate change in the global south.

## **Example 3: Assessing Municipal Climate Action Plans**

In 2021, [Climate Emergency UK](#) took on the mammoth task of reading and marking all UK councils Climate Action Plans to create the [Council Climate Plan Scorecards](#). The plans were assessed by a team of over 120 volunteers, trained and overseen by Climate Emergency UK.

The 28 questions they asked included: whether the climate actions are costed; do the actions have a clear goal; are local residents being engaged with climate action; does the Plan include strategies to decarbonise waste, planning, homes and other services that the council is responsible for; does it go beyond cutting the council's own emissions and plan to work with others to cut the whole area's emissions, and does the Plan cover areas such as re-skilling the workforce, climate education, governance and funding for climate action.

Each council was marked against these criteria and given a right to reply before the scores underwent a final audit. You can download the questions for adaptation to your own local context here: <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/climate-action-plan-checklist/>





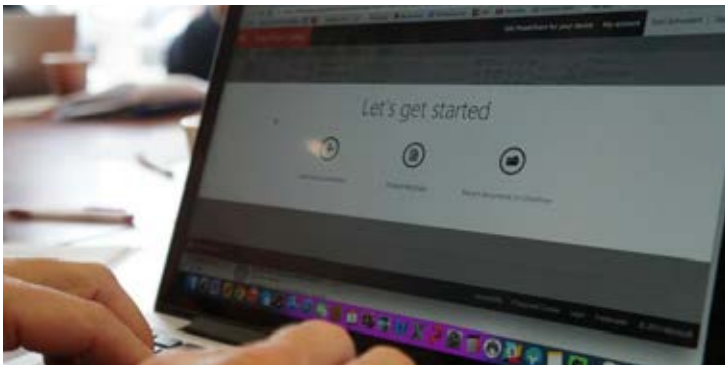
# Good Practice in Digital Collaboration and Blended Engagement

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Nenad Maljković

## Introduction

The modern urban or rural lifestyle in every part of Europe these days assumes that citizens, regardless of their age, take time daily to use their devices (phones, tablets, computers, smart TVs...) not only to passively consume content available through various internet services, but also to actively communicate and collaborate with other people. They communicate and collaborate digitally not only across organisational and geographical boundaries, but also with their family members and in their local communities, with their neighbours.



The mainstreaming of remote and hybrid work can be attributed to the global Covid-19 pandemic. This extraordinary challenging period in recent global history has led to an acceleration in social learning with regards to digital collaboration and has given rise to numerous experiments in remote, mediated, and hybrid

communication and work. As a result it appears that many individuals, including students and teachers, employees and managers, even parents and children, have improved their digital collaboration skills and now have better understanding of digital collaboration and blended engagement good practices.

It may be that more people now realise one of the remote work and digital collaboration advantages – potentially smaller environmental footprint of a more localised lifestyle with less or no commuting and travel. This is not to say that devices we use and the internet infrastructure don't have an environmental footprint – they certainly do.

## Living with digital overload

On a social side of things, attention economy, information overload and collaboration overload are still prominent as everyday experiences by many people.

**Attention economics** refers to the concept that our personal attention is a scarce resource, and that in a world where we are constantly bombarded with information, the ability to capture and hold someone’s attention is extremely valuable. This has led information and content providers to focus on creating attention-grabbing content and strategies for capturing and retaining the attention of individuals, often at the expense of other important factors such as depth, relevance or accuracy. Any community-led initiative, particularly if co-created by a group of volunteers, is in competition with this attention-grabbing content.

**Information overload** is the state of being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information that is available, often resulting in an inability to process or effectively use the information that is presented. This can lead to a sense of stress, frustration, and a decreased ability to make effective decisions. It is very easy to create a sense of information overload by using digital tools in a way that’s not particularly helpful.

**Collaboration overload** refers to the situation where individuals are expected to collaborate with others on a regular basis, resulting in an excessive amount of time spent in meetings, responding to emails, and other collaborative activities. This can lead to a sense of burnout, decreased productivity, and a lack of time for individual work and reflection. Community organisers and facilitators working with neighbourhood volunteers, and volunteers themselves, may be prone to that too.

In today’s world, attention is scarce, information is abundant, and collaboration is a key to success. Managing these challenges is critical for thriving. Knowing what are the good practises helping to address this triple challenge in community learning and action is critical. Let’s explore that context some more before listing some tried and tested good practises and solutions.

## Connecting different times and different places

In digital collaboration and blended engagement within community we are combining considerations of time and place:

<b>Different time</b>	Asynchronous (async), mediated communication	Asynchronous (async), mediated communication
<b>Same time</b>	Synchronous (sync), in person, live communication	Synchronous (sync), online audio or video communication (including typed chat)
	<b>Same place</b>	<b>Different place</b>

**Mediated communication** happens through an intermediary like phone calls, emails, or



typed messages or posts, separating sender and receiver by time and space. It comes in text, audio, and video-based forms. Benefits include communicating across distances, times, or larger groups, but the lack of nonverbal cues may lead to message misinterpretation. It may also mean a lack of general social chat and 'getting to know you'. Choosing the proper channel, style, and meeting people's needs is essential to share, collaborate, and connect.

Good practises will foster **continuity of synchronous and asynchronous communication and collaboration** over time. That's the ability of a group to maintain effective communication and collaboration over an extended period. This is important because many projects or initiatives require ongoing collaboration, and effective communication is critical for ensuring that everyone stays on the same page.



For **synchronous communication**, continuity might involve setting regular meeting times, check-ins or coworking time boxes to ensure that all team or group members are able to participate and share updates, sense-make, co-create and make decisions

together. This can help to build a sense of momentum and keep everyone engaged and informed.

For **asynchronous communication**, continuity might involve establishing clear protocols for sharing updates or progress reports, and ensuring that everyone is aware of the expectations around response times. This can help to prevent delays or miscommunications and ensure that everyone has the information they need to move forward with their work.

In both cases, it's important to establish a culture of open communication and collaboration, where team or group members feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas and asking for help or clarification when needed. This can help to build trust and ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals.

Effective continuity of synchronous and asynchronous communication and collaboration over time requires ongoing effort and attention. It's important to regularly review communication and collaboration protocols to ensure that they are working effectively and make adjustments as needed. By prioritising effective communication and collaboration, teams and groups can work together more effectively and achieve their goals more efficiently over the long term.





## Addressing different learning styles

Another important aspect in community learning and action context is that we are all different people, with different personalities and different learning and communication preferences.

VARK is a popular model of perceptive or learning modalities that was developed by Neil Fleming in the late 1980s. The VARK model identifies four primary modes of learning.

**Visual (V):** Visual learners prefer to learn through the use of visual aids, such as diagrams, charts, and videos. They often have strong spatial awareness and prefer to see information presented in a clear and organised way.

**Auditory (A):** Auditory learners prefer to learn through listening, whether that's by participating in discussions or listening to lectures. They may benefit from recorded lectures or audiobooks, and often have strong auditory memories.

**Read/Write (R):** Read/write learners prefer to learn through written words, such as textbooks, notes, and written instructions. They often have strong literacy skills and may benefit from note-taking or summarising information in their own words.

**Kinesthetic (K):** Kinesthetic learners prefer to learn through hands-on experiences, such as experiments or interactive activities. They often have strong physical coordination and may benefit from role-playing or other forms of experiential learning.

It's important to note that many people have a mix of these learning modalities, rather than a single dominant modality. The VARK model can be useful for understanding how different individuals may prefer to communicate and learn, and for tailoring training or collaboration methods to meet these preferences.

In addition to these primary modalities, the VARK model also includes a category called **"multimodal" (M)**, which refers to individuals who prefer to communicate and learn through a combination of these modalities. This category reflects the fact that many people have multiple preferred communication and learning styles, and that effective communication or training often involves a combination of different modalities.

## Some good practises

There are many good practices in digital collaboration and blended engagement that communities can apply in their efforts to create more resilient and regenerative lifestyles.



Here are some examples – this list is not exhaustive:

**Never impose a digital tool:** good results in terms of response rates and engagement will be more likely if people in a group are using tools they are already using on a daily basis and don't need to learn how to use. Take time to survey the group, find out what's popular and facilitate an agreement about using what most of the people already use. Support individuals that are not using a tool of choice so that everyone uses the same. Move to some other tool only if and when needed.

**Utilise blended engagement:** While digital tools are important, it is critical to have face-to-face interactions and engage in offline activities. Blended engagement involves combining digital communication and collaboration with in-person interactions, such as meetups or workshops. This can help build stronger relationships and create a sense of community within the group.

**Hold virtual meetings:** Virtual meetings and coworking sessions can be held using video conferencing tools of choice. These meetings and sessions provide a platform for everyone to communicate and collaborate effectively, regardless of location.

**Establish clear communication channels:** Ensure that everyone is aware of the communication channels that will be used, such as email, messaging apps, or video conferencing tools. Make sure that everyone knows how to communicate with each other and which channels to use for different types of communication. For example, use email for longer messages or announcements, and instant messaging for quick questions. Use clear and concise language, and establish guidelines for appropriate behaviour in digital communication.

**Use collaborative tools:** There are several digital tools available that can aid in collaboration, such as shared online documents and calendars, project management software, and collaborative whiteboards. Use these tools to keep everyone informed and working together effectively.

**Use a variety of digital tools:** Different tools are suitable for different tasks, and using a variety of tools can help to support effective collaboration. For example, video conferencing tools can be useful for real-time conversations, while shared online documents and project management tools can help to track progress and coordinate efforts.

**Set clear goals and expectations:** It's important to have a shared understanding of what you are trying to achieve, and what each person's role and responsibilities are. This can help to avoid confusion and ensure that everyone is working towards the same objectives. Take time at the start of an online meeting to identify a chair or facilitator, a note taker and a timekeeper, and make it clear how people can make an intervention or ask a question.



**Foster trust and collaboration:** Communities that work together effectively often have a strong sense of trust and collaboration. Encouraging open communication, active listening, and empathy can help to build these qualities. Ensure that everyone has a voice and is included in discussions, both digitally and face-to-face. Make an effort to include people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, as this can lead to more creative and effective solutions. When you look at the membership of your group, ask ‘who isn’t represented here?’.

**Encourage participation:** Everyone should have a chance to participate and contribute their ideas, both face-to-face and digitally. Encourage feedback and open discussion, and create a safe and inclusive space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts.

Overall, effective digital collaboration and blended engagement require clear communication, shared goals, and a sense of trust and collaboration. By applying these good practices, communities can work together more effectively to create more resilient and regenerative lifestyles.

## **Example:**

### **Participatory Concepts Design Workshop by Citizen Initiative for Creating an Eco-neighborhood in Prozorje, Dugo Selo, Croatia**

This citizen initiative was started in **December 2022** by a Croatian architect focused on creating an eco-neighborhood in Prozorje, Dugo Selo in Croatia. The initiative is participatory and aimed at promoting sustainable living practices, reducing environmental impact, and creating a community focused on environmental stewardship.

The process started by a [public call for expression of interest](#) followed by a video conference at the beginning of **January 2023**, attended by around 40 registered participants, to present a [preliminary project assignment](#), answer clarifying questions and agree on the site visit. Project assignment is a comprehensive document that outlines the scope, objectives, requirements, and constraints of an architectural project, and it serves as a guide for the design process. This document was prepared collaboratively in a shared document format, ready for sharing, for a workshop that was planned as participatory design workshop to develop several eco-neighborhood concepts.

This was followed by a half a day in person site visit at the end of **January 2023** by a group of 26 participants that surveyed possible sites, and had lunch together in a near-by equestrian club. Assisted by a skilled facilitator, the group agreed to start proposing concept ideas in a shared working document, asynchronously. The agreement was that initiators will enter their ideas and then the workshop participants will opt-in to work collaboratively on concepts of



their choice and interest, in a self-organised manner. Agreed constraint was that each team needed to have at least one architect and one permaculture designer on board.

Check-in video conference was scheduled **mid-February** to synchronously finalise this asynchronously done workshop phase. Nine different concept ideas were presented. This check-in video conference was followed by a one-hour online presentation of a similar project in the Netherlands, in English language. This video conference was a blend of coworking and learning sessions, and a blend of local and trans-national experiences.



After this video conference six concepts were developed by six working groups in a participatory and self-organised way, with minimum sharing of email reminders by the workshop facilitator. The group met in person at the end of **February** with online participation enabled so that remote participants could present and contribute too. This hybrid session

was to present all six concepts and get feedback from everyone. Decision was made to co-create an unified concept. This was followed by a video conference at the beginning of **March** to discuss input into an unified concept and to select the working group that will prepare the unified concept. A team of three architects was selected using sociocratic election by consent process. Right after this video conference a collaborative document was used to collect ideas from everyone in the group, as informative and generative questions, instead of doing synchronous or in person brainstorming sessions.

Regular check-in call at the end of **March** was combined with a one-hour online presentation of similar projects in Belgium, in English language. The working group designed a survey that was shared to collect more input from everyone, asynchronously.

The working group met several times in **April** and their proposal was presented to the whole group and tested for consent at the beginning of **May 2023**.

The overall pattern of the workshop process was that in-person gathering is followed by one or more video conferences, with asynchronous work in collaborative documents in the meantime. The large group was broken down into smaller working groups to be productive in doing tasks. Communication channel was email, mainly from a workshop facilitator to participants. Everyone was contributing in volunteer capacity, according to their intrinsic motivation. Due to carefully designed and facilitated digital collaboration and blended in-person and online engagement this community group achieved quite a lot within a period of 6 months.





# Good practice in community climate action

**Chris Warburton Brown**

Ultimately, the whole CCC process is only successful when it results in actual climate action. A community may come up with its own desired action/s, indeed it may have come together in the first place to deliver one specific action such as a community energy scheme. However, it may also be very useful for the CCC to have a clear idea of what sort of climate actions are available to the community and to present these to the community at quite an early stage. The website [52climateactions.com](http://52climateactions.com) presents a wide range of community climate actions. These actions, and the suggestions for further reading they contain, provide a strong basis for communities to develop specific climate actions in their local context. Below, 24 of the best community climate actions are presented in 4 different categories.

Classic community climate action projects include community gardens, car shares, renewable energy schemes, awareness raising campaigns, community-supported regenerative farms, lobbying/ partnerships with local government, and community repair cafes. If your group needs inspiration or new skills, find and visit nearby demonstration sites that can nurture and inspire, connect and show the way, and motivate you and your group to take climate action.

You can find pre-made lesson plans and slides for two half-day group sessions choosing appropriate community climate actions [here](#). These have been specially created for use by CCCs.

## Community Activities

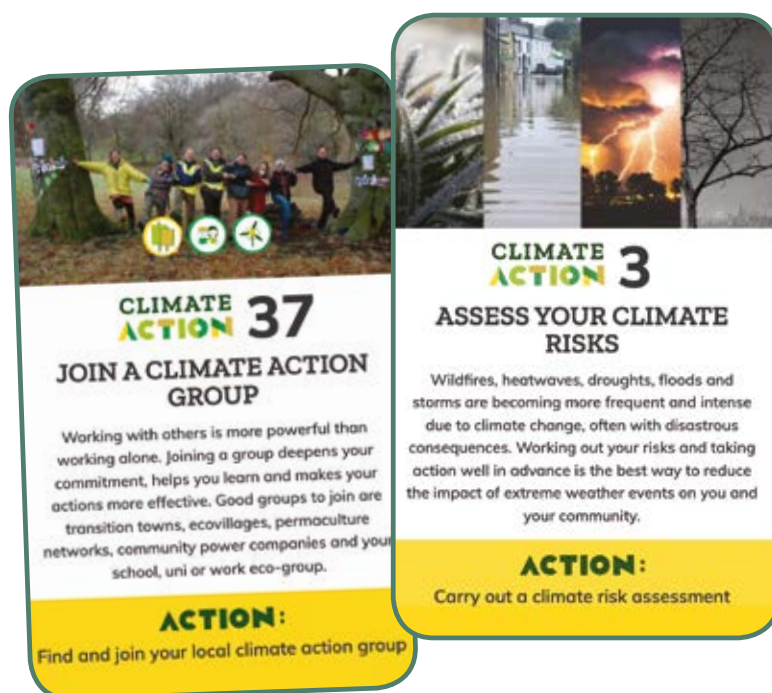
These are really pre-actions; they suggest ways in which you can bring your community together to think about, and talk about, possible community climate action. They also suggest how you can pool your skills and knowledge, understand each others' perspectives, and carry out an assessment of your climate risks.

[49. Campaign for Local Adaptation](#)

[37. Join a Climate Action Group](#)

[14. Hold a party](#)

[25. Start a Conversation](#)



- 35. Listen, Share and Learn
- 3. Assess your Climate Risks

## Community Adaptation Actions

These actions are focussed on reducing the threat to your community from climate catastrophes like floods, drought, hurricanes, heatwaves and wildfires. Communities who come together to plan and look out for each other are more resilient and can bounce back quickly, while strong, prepared communities will have fewer fatalities in an emergency.

- 50. Design for Floods
- 22. Design for High Winds
- 32. Design for Wildfires
- 13. Manage Water in the Landscape
- 34. Learn to Survive an Emergency
- 28. Keep Your Cool

## Simple Community Mitigation Actions

These actions are mostly about changing personal habits. They become much more effective (and fun) when you work with others to achieve them, maybe through a regular meetup or some kind of membership scheme. They can also be the basis for an awareness-raising campaign that mobilises local community to mass action.



**CLIMATE ACTION 28**  
**KEEP YOUR COOL**

Manage high summer heat without energy-hungry air conditioning. Adapt your home with tree shade, ventilation, insulation, thermal mass and a cool roof. Adapt your behaviour by using your coolest rooms, shutting blinds, slowing down, wearing less, getting into water and having a siesta.

**ACTION:**  
Implement a range of improvements to keep your home cool



**CLIMATE ACTION 32**  
**DESIGN FOR WILDFIRES**

Hotter, drier summers and stronger winds mean more intense wildfires, more often. Action is needed to reduce risk to property, self, habitat and wildlife. Areas that were not previously considered at risk will become fire-prone, but housing and habitat security is possible through careful design.

**ACTION:**  
Take positive steps to protect against wildfire



**CLIMATE ACTION 11**  
**REFUSE, REDUCE, REUSE, REPAIR & RECYCLE**

Recycling gets a lot of attention, but it's the least effective of the 5Rs. We need to be doing more refusing, whether it's excess packaging, cheap goods that won't last, or just simply something we don't need. Take what you have already and make it last, or give it a new lease of life.

**ACTION:**  
Always carry a re-useable cup and cutlery with you



**CLIMATE ACTION 30**  
**SHARE YOUR RIDE**

Cars cause a sixth of US and EU carbon emissions. A great way to reduce this is by ride sharing. Three passengers in a car quarters the congestion, travel costs and emissions. If you commute by car, share your ride, or sell the car and take the bus.

**ACTION:**  
Find an alternative to your solo car commute



- 42. Eat Local, Seasonal Food
- 11. Refuse, Reduce, Reuse Repair, Recycle
- 51. Buy Less, Make More
- 46. Parent Consciously
- 30. Share Your Ride
- 21. Pay Producers Properly

## **Ambitious Community Mitigation Actions**

These actions require well-organised community projects, such as a community woodland, a community power scheme, a community conservation group, a community composting project or a household retrofitting scheme.

- 26. Protect and Restore Forests
- 5. Protect and Restore Wetlands
- 10. Generate Your Own Electricity
- 12. Plant an Edible Forest Garden
- 31. Choose Green Building Standards
- 19. Make Compost





# Good Practice in Inner Transition

Sophie Zuang

## Introduction

### What?

Inner transition: creating space for inner and outer connection and inter-being. Nature connection, well-being, work-life balance, conscious transformation.



### Why?

We are living in challenging times both at individual and collective levels. Inner transition helps you to develop an inner compass for navigating these challenging times and for the transformations ahead. It gives you concrete support to re-connect to your inner wisdom and nature. It helps you to understand yourself, others and life in general at a deeper level and supports you in developing inner and outer resilience.

### For whom?

For everyone who is interested in

- getting to know yourself and develop a broader understanding of life
- choosing a resilient approach to overcome challenging situations
- transforming your disturbing habits and negative emotions

## Preparation

Get into contact with an inner transition circle. They exist at local, regional and global levels, see [here](#).

Find a personal awareness practice that fits your personality such as meditation, breathing exercises, nature connection, yoga, chi gong, etc. Decide for yourself to allocate time and a space dedicated to your awareness practice if possible on a daily basis (if only for 5 – 10 min).

You might like to join a practice group in your local area to meditate or to follow another practice that suits you. It will give you the opportunity to share your experiences with others.



## Embed inner transition activities in your meetings

*Start your meeting with something uplifting (5-10 mins)*

Start every meeting with a go-round where everyone says a few words about how they are, and something they enjoy. Change it for every meeting. Make it positive, fun and creative. Here are some suggestions (use one at the start of a meeting – and add your own!):

- Something you're enjoying about this time of year
- Something you love about living in this place
- Something you'd like to pass on to the next generation
- Something you're grateful for
- Something enjoyable that happened since the last meeting
- Something you learnt from an elder
- Something creative you do
- A place in nature you love

These questions help us opening the meeting well by connecting with things we love and enjoy, giving us energy as well as seeing each other as whole human beings!

*Finish your meeting with a short reflection (10 mins)*



Leave 10 minutes at the end of every meeting to reflect together on how the meeting was run - not what you did but on the process, think about:

- What went well, did everyone feel included, that they understood what was happening and could contribute?
- Do you feel you have made good decisions which are clear to all?
- Is there anything that you want to change about how you run meetings for next time, or anything you want to talk about more as a group?
- Reflect together on how you are working is key to creating good meetings. Without such shared reflections there is no way to find out whether people are feeling frustrated, excluded or confused - or anything else. It also creates a space to thank those whose good work helped the meeting go well.
- Make sure this process ends with appreciations (see below!) - thanking those who took notes, made tea, brought snacks, chaired and so on.

*Make your meetings positive and energising (20-30 mins)*





Do this when you've had a few meetings and are ready to really improve the quality of how they work. Or if you've been going a while and find meetings are a bit dull or tiring. Read the following together, and discuss whether you feel it's important to include in your meetings. If so, how will you do this?

Feeling seen and valued is a large part of what many people get from

volunteering in a group. Research shows that groups (and companies, and marriages!) where at least 3 positive things are said for every negative, are the ones that people love being part of. A ratio of 5 positives to 1 negative is even better. (See <https://hbr.org/2013/03/the-ideal-praise-to-criticism/> as an example of this research).

#### **Here are four things groups can do to stay positive:**

- Take every opportunity to celebrate in your meetings – an event, publicity, success, a decision made, something resolved, completing the agenda on time!
- Take time in meetings to value each person's contribution, go round and ask everyone to appreciate one thing that a person or the group has done. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but notice if the meeting feels more energised after (in some cultures noticing individuals may not be appropriate, though!)
- If people are becoming tired then do something energising (fun and physical) or have a break
- Pause the meeting if the discussion becomes charged or critical, and address this, often using steps like this: What feelings are present (tension, frustration, anxiety, sadness, others?) What needs might be beneath these feelings? How can we address this and bring ourselves back to a state of feeling connected and open?



At every Transition Network meeting we appoint a "Keeper of the Heart" whose job is to look after these four things – as well as everyone taking responsibility for what they notice (source: Transition Network).



## Some general guidelines for inner transition practices

Listen from the Heart - avoid judgement or thinking in counterpoints.

Share from the Heart - feel free to say whatever is true for you, with space for vulnerability and not-knowing.

Be lean of word – try not to ramble - you're speaking as a part of the whole and for the whole's evolution, rather than just for yourself.

Be spontaneous – try not to plan what you're going to say.

Speak only for yourself - within and outside of a group - which also means keeping what's said on a personal level in a group confidential.

## The value of continued practice

What are the capacities that can be developed through inner transition? If you pursue your Inner Transition pathway, you will become more open and ready for a deeper kind of change to happen, best described by the word transformation. Transformation implies that the underlying characteristics of the situation or system, community or individual, are changing significantly in a positive way. The new capacities include increasing levels of self- and other awareness:

## Further reading

Individual level: <https://transitionnetwork.org/do-transition/inner/personal-resilience-resources/>

Group level: <https://www.u-school.org/resources/>  
<https://www.systemsfieldbook.org/tools>

Movement level: <https://cultural-emergence.com/>  
<https://ulexproject.org/>

The Inner Development Goals:

As a complement to the Sustainable Development Goals that almost exclusively address the external world, an initiative has developed these: <https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/>, while also collecting tools for developing them: <https://idg.tools/>

Mini-guides by CELL: (other language versions or other topics), see <https://www.cell.lu/toolbox>