

## **ERP Mid-Term Event**

### **Breakout Group 1 - Climate change – communities as instruments of transition**

#### **Davie Philip ECOLISE Presentation**

The next 10 years are critical in addressing climate change and the loss of biodiversity. We urgently need to mitigate and adapt to climate breakdown and build the resilience of our local regions.

There is a need for transformative change, not just a greening! And the challenge of transitioning to a Low Carbon Climate Resilient Society requires action at national and international levels but, most importantly, it requires ongoing, long-term, deep engagement at the local community level.

We are seeing the emergence of local responses supporting 'transition' in Europe's rural communities - we need more stories of these community-led initiatives in the media and more awareness of their potential with all actors.

Integrated local, community-led and territorial development is essential. This is a bottom-up - place-based, people-centred development.

As we have heard today, support is coming to local areas for CLLD through the EU - the European Green Deal (EGD), new CAP, Smart Villages, Just Transition Fund etc. This emphasis on local and relocalisation is now considered by many to be an essential element of the transformation needed to achieve the ambitious targets set out in the EGD.

These EU programmes and initiatives present an important opportunity to support transition processes at the local community level.

#### **Needs**

A just transition - a partnership of those most impacted. We need diversity and no one can be left behind. We need policy and funding frameworks that will accelerate the transformation of rural areas, similarly, we need rural and urban synergies, and move quickly to a well-being economy - prosperity without growth - living within the carrying capacity of our planet.

Need a shift away from the current economic 'business as usual' model to transformative social innovation in rural regions.

Need to act locally in the global context.

#### **Awareness**

Information and awareness-raising is essential.

Systemic understanding of the converging challenges needed - Education and training for communities in rural areas - what actions and supports are possible.

In Ireland, we deliver a training course for local development companies called C4CA - Communities for Climate Action - 6 modules highlighting climate initiatives that local citizens might apply for Leader funding

Support the mainstreaming of community-led climate action by improving access by local communities to funding and support available

It is important to understand what green and digital transition highlighted and what European Green Deal mean- moving from green to a regenerative and resilient approach - understanding the threats and opportunities of digitalisation for rural regions.

What new livelihoods are possible through actions to localise food, energy, local transport initiatives, restoring ecosystems, rewetting peat bogs, reforestation, regeneration communities and rural areas through bottom-up strategies and CLLD

### **Engagement**

We need civic engagement that informs and increases ambition for climate action and measures that are going to be taken.

The most marginalised and impacted need to be included in participatory community dialogues and in the development of local action plans. We cannot afford to leave anyone behind.

The burdens and opportunities of responding to the crisis must be shared. Dialogue and the new processes that we see emerging in civic engagement will be needed.

### **Action**

European, national and local authorities, we are seeing, support for CLLD - and yes, communities are ready to make a difference, but there are lots of barriers and it is unclear to citizens what actions are actually needed.

Developing and supporting local Climate Action Networks which are emerging.

Enabling and funding community-led initiatives and really looking at community ownership.

**In food**, some examples might include community-supported agriculture, or community orchards and gardens - one of the projects is for example Open Food Network - a community/ user-owned digital platform that enables the local economy. We need to shorten vulnerable/long supply chains, strengthen local food webs, support local organic/ regenerative farmers directly and we need to be looking at livelihood diversification

New **land-use** approaches to restore ecosystems, draw down carbon.

**In energy**, we are seeing a lot of energy efficiency measures - that could be promoted by local community power at a local level. What we are really seeing emerge is the idea of community power, the rooftop revolution, community energy generation that brings not only energy security but actually financial resources to local places.

**In mobility**, we need to enable walking, cycling, public transport, community transport, in Ireland we have Local Link - a Door to Door Bus Services for people living in rural areas who might otherwise have no way to access public transport.

**There is an opportunity in** supporting the concept of community wealth building that we are seeing in cities like Cleveland, in rural regions. This 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. Through changing the procurement practices of big institutions, local authorities and government are redirecting their spending to the local economy, and in doing so strengthen resilience, help us reduce emissions, ensure local wellbeing and bring economic security to our regions.

### **To conclude....**

We need to recognise that the transition can't be top-down and can't be fragmented. We need a systemic approach that tackles inequality, raises standards of living for all, regenerates rural communities and all of this could be done through the delivery of climate actions through Community-Led Local Development.