Innovative Methods of Community Engagement:
Towards a Low Carbon Climate Resilient Future Workshop Proceedings

Imagining2050 Project Environmental Research Institute, University College Cork, Ireland
for the National Dialogue on Climate Action Secretariat By Alexandra Revez, Gerard Mullally, May, 2019
Key Messages

These proceedings emphasise the value in understanding community engagement as diverse, evolving and contextually linked to social and institutional settings.

Based on the practical experience of researchers in the field of community engagement in climate action it provides an overview of some existing initiatives and methods employed to engage and mobilise communities.

Rather than drawing attention to a specific approach or rating different techniques as more or less valuable, the key message lies in demonstrating and communicating the value of engaging communities within a greater network of activities, techniques and groups.

Additionally a number of strategies emerged to reach out to more alienated or disengaged groups and these included the value of intermediaries and partnerships, promoting peer-to-peer learning and strengthening strategies through resourcing.
Introduction

The proceedings of the Innovative Methods of Community Engagement: Toward a Low Carbon, Climate Resilient Future workshop have been developed by the Imagining2050 team in UCC and the Secretariat to the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA). The NDCA also funded the workshop running costs. The proceedings offer a set of recommendations and insights into leveraging different community engagement approaches and methodologies in the area of climate action. They draw from interdisciplinary knowledge and experiences of researchers for identifying, mobilizing and mediating communities.

The work presented below derives from a workshop held in the Environmental Research Institute in UCC on the 17th January 2019. These proceedings are complementary to an earlier workshop also funded by the NDCA and run by MaREI in UCC, titled ‘How do we Engage Communities in Climate Action? – Practical Learnings from the Coal Face’. The earlier workshop looked more closely at community development groups and other non-statutory organizations doing work in the area of climate change.

Workshop Aims

This workshop focused on obtaining a deeper understanding of existing examples of community engagement in the area of climate action, with a view to contributing to the NDCA (see box 1). A number of interactive exercises and plenary discussions were facilitated with a group of twenty-four academics and researchers. Discussions focused on the critical use of different methods with illustrations of what works and what is suitable to particular groups or situations. The key objectives were to:

- Map different approaches to community engagement in Ireland;
- Identify best practice in mobilizing and mediating community engagements;
- Find ways to better account for complexity and emergent communities.

The main motivation to run this workshop was to contribute to the aims of the NDCA. It is clear from the aims of the Dialogue that it understands engagement as a continuum working from creating a general sense of awareness of the topic, to engagement and right up to enabling and empowering citizens and communities to act. This spectrum of engagement would indicate a need to consider varying and alternative methods and approaches depending on which aim is being pursued at any given time. The findings below should aid the further development of thinking in this area. The workshop also considered diverse and inclusive discussion within a research context as a way to better understand the usability and applicability of different community engagement tools and research methods.

Focusing on learning from existing or past initiatives we sought to gauge some of the strengths and limitations of different community engagement techniques and to offer practical examples derived from this vast interdisciplinary field of research. The workshop comprised a variety of academics and researchers with direct experience of community engagement working in the field of climate action. Looking to acquire interdisciplinary know-how disciplinary backgrounds were diverse and included: Geography, Sociology, Engineering, Economics, Behavioural Science, Psychology, Environmental Science, International Relations, and Communication.

The role of community engagement in meeting ambitious climate change targets

The most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018) forewarns policy makers that if tangible climate change action is not achieved by limiting global warming to a 1.5°C target, potentially long-lasting and irreversible impacts such as loss of biodiversity and ecosystems can be expected (1). The report further adds that limiting climate change to 1.5°C requires rapid and ambitious societal action and transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching ‘net zero’ around 2050.

To meet this challenge the Irish government has recently published its first statutory National Adaptation Framework (2), and prioritised a number of sectors as well as tasing all 31 local authorities to create climate change adaptation strategies to be revised and renewed on a five-year basis. However, while there has been some progress achieved, evidence suggests that Ireland is only at the beginning of a challenging process of change to a low carbon and climate resilient future (3). This challenge at present includes the development of structures, processes and knowledge that promotes and enhances societal mitigation and adaptation (3).

Furthermore, current indicators such as the latest Climate Change Performance index shows that Ireland is not performing well on many categories, including emissions, energy use, policy and renewables. Only a few positive notes were added in this review and they included acknowledgement and appreciation of the Citizens Assembly process and the Divestment Bill (4). To address some of these challenges the Irish government is advancing with a number of initiatives which include, the National Dialogue on Climate Action NDCA.

Box 1

The National Dialogue on Climate Action

The National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) is a Government initiative led by the Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) with Secretariat assistance being provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The vision of the Dialogue is to create a long-term process by which the national objective of transitioning to a low carbon, climate resilient society and economy by 2050 is communicated to all of society in a manner that creates awareness and understanding towards enabling climate actions across all of society and the economy.

The central aims of the Dialogue are to:

- Create awareness and engagement by generating a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities posed by the transition objectives.
- Inspire and motivate society, businesses and communities to collaboratively unlock opportunities for climate change action.
- Enable, co-create and empower the Dialogue process through the engagement and mobilisation of all sectors of society on structures, information flows and events.

The principal beneficiaries of the Dialogue process are citizens and their communities; including ‘communities of practice’ such as farming, commerce, education, youth, social, and sporting, and of course ‘communities of place’. However, the Government, Agencies and Local Authorities also have a key role to play in supporting, facilitating and creating an enabling environment for the level of transformation required. The role therefore for the Dialogue is to act as an intermediary/broker between the top and the bottom levels of activity.
Imagining2050

Engaging, envisioning and co-producing pathways for a low carbon, climate resilient Ireland

Imagining2050 is a transdisciplinary research consortium that seeks to engage with Irish society in all its richness and diversity to explore in a collaborative manner visions and pathways for a sustainable and socially inclusive future.

The Imagining2050 project is a flagship project hosted by the Environmental Research Institute in UCC and the team is composed of highly experienced researchers from diverse backgrounds, with a combination of researchers from University College Cork and Queens University Belfast.

The consortium strives to make use of this expertise to develop a more unified vision, which links different strands of science with various community and local perspectives.

The key objectives of Imagining2050, which is funded by the EPA, are complementary to those advanced by the National Dialogue on Climate Action. The objectives of Imagining 2050 are:

• To develop and implement innovative approaches for climate dialogues using mini-publics to co-construct visions and pathways for a low-carbon and climate resilient society
• To undertake targeted stakeholder engagement with civil society agencies and state agencies
• To generate a series of scenarios and pathways for climate mitigation and resilience for Ireland
• To evaluate novel communication methods to enhance engagement & stimulate dialogue on climate action.

strategy, with the aim of considerably increasing awareness, engagement and motivation to act (locally, regionally and nationally) in relation to the challenges presented by climate change (5). This is a significant call to action, which seeks to mobilise Irish society to meet these ambitious climate change targets.

Community engagement and participation has gained increased attention in current climate change debates and policy strategies at both national and international levels (6-9). This stems from a growing consensus, among researchers and policy makers, on the value of promoting more inclusive climate change strategies that foster dialogue, promote change and innovation (9). However, as ideas about what participation entails are set into practice in different forms of government interventions, programmes, or research activities, there has been a marked increase in contestation and disagreement on how best to pursue and channel processes of participation (9, 10).

Diverging notions co-exist in defining and articulating the role that public engagement can serve in new strategies for climate change transitions (11). For instance, the very terminology used can be problematic as for example all-encompassing notions of ‘citizenship’ or ‘civil-society’ can be too loose and broad in recognizing the complexity of actors falling outside market and government categories (11). Conversely, critiques have also arisen in terms of channelling public engagement into very specific and narrow roles such as consumers, clients, users or beneficiaries (12).

The range of difference and the potential for limitations in providing more fixed definitions is complex and may be linked to socio-economic background, geographical context, gender, age or culture (13). Many of the polarised views that exist in relation to community engagement can be subsumed by two distinct approaches in defining participation. One, which conceptualises community engagement in different forms as ‘real’, measurable and externally identifiable, and the other, which understands community engagement as ‘socially constructed’, fluid and subjective (8, 12). The first approach employs a more fixed view of participation while the later understands participation in a more relational and reflexive manner (14).

In approaching participation for these proceedings, we adopt the later approach that we see as a way of considering these processes as co-produced, evolving, multi-faceted, and often inscribed within social and institutional systems. As suggested by Chilvers and Pallet (8) this relational approach provides a means to understand different community engagements in terms of ‘systems of practice’ (15) or ‘ecologies of participation’ (16) which capture a richness in understanding how engagements are mediated, mobilised and situated within particular social, technological and political contexts (17). By doing so we aim to consider the interlinkages between emerging community engagement initiatives in research, their synergies, their differences and their potential connections with the NDCA.

The ‘Book of Abstracts’, (Appendix 1) offers an overview of research from workshop contributors, and it shows that there is a variety of ways in which community engagement has been conceptualised and mobilised in Ireland from coastal communities, energy citizens, local residents, energy users and consumers. Attempting to account for this diversity, we seek to provide a collaborative view of this diversity and its implications for the NDCA. The findings that we offer below provide some direction and support in the continued involvement of the NDCA in this diverse network of activities and communities.
Mapping community engagement in climate action research in Ireland

As a starting point to these discussions the workshop looked at mapping community engagement in climate action research in Ireland. Participants were asked to name and locate their research activities. For the purpose of this exercise a physical map of Ireland was used (map exercise findings in the following page). While there was effort to locate and identify existing research this exercise was premised by an acknowledgement that the map can be a limited way of identifying and relating to existing research initiatives, which might be located in multiple sites, might not be located spatially, or indeed might be best identified as digital or desk-based activities.

Thus, from this exercise arose a plenary discussion, which looked at usability, merits and drawbacks of maps to represent community engagement in climate action projects that are underway. This conversation is particularly valuable in the context of valourising the idea that ‘mapping’ community engagement in some form is beneficial, in both efforts to consolidate networks in community action and understanding some of the potential limitations of mapping techniques. Value was also expressed in terms of offering exposure and learning from other fields of research. The rate of consensus among participants was high in terms of the usability of map representations as a way to capture the diversity of engagements while at the same time acknowledging a broad range of limitations in using this approach. The following Table 1 below offers a brief summary of the ideas raised.

The research map below offers further insights into existing research in community engagement in climate action by looking at projects that were framed locally, nationally and internationally. These maps provide some indication of the context in which different community engagement activities are arising. For instance, while the exercise is not representative of all current research in Ireland there is a marked emphasis on energy projects compared with other dimensions of climate action such as mobility and transport, finance, and natural hazards.

**Benefits**

- Maps are interesting ways to engage with people.
- Maps offer powerful representations of research.
- It’s an accessible way to offer information.
- Significant potential as a tool to connect communities and strengthen networks.
- Crowd sourcing and open source maps as valuable and efficient way to connect and gather further insights into community activities in climate action.

**Drawbacks**

- Communities are not all geo-spatial and there are online communities that don’t recognise maps/spatial identification, communities of interest, etc.
- Only limited and partial representation
- Complexities are often lost
- Language and approach needs to be audience specific
- Classification is a challenge
- Keeping maps up-to-date is an issue
- Ownership and access can be problematic.

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**Figure 1.1 Local, national and international research with a focus on community engagement in climate action**
General key learning points

There were a range of key learning points and shared views common to most of the methods discussed which offer some insights into how different methods work and how they may be applied at community level. For instance, nearly all of the researchers, regardless of technique used conveyed difficulties in engaging communities and especially reaching out to more alienated or disengaged groups, some suggestions were proposed to address these challenges. These suggestions included, valuing the role of intermediaries and partnerships in engaging communities, promoting peer-to-peer networks, and facilitation of dialogue transcending disciplines or specific groups. Another issue that emerged from the identification of different methods was the level of demand that community engagement initiatives place on resources. It was generally acknowledged that community engagement initiatives are usually resource intensive, counter measures include better anticipation of demands on time, cost and expertise. Finally, the issue of continuity and legacy was discussed and highlighted by many of the participants as a significant yet challenging element of community engagement in climate research.

Methods Identified

A range of methods were identified in the workshop (see box 4 below). While participation is a key component within these strategies, there are arguably different driving motivations in the development and implementation of these techniques (18). For instance, some approaches such as the Citizens’ Assembly and Citizens’ Juries are largely concerned with strengthening social and environmental justice and place emphasis on strengthening the legitimacy of decision-making processes through deliberative and inclusive processes. Other techniques such as Participatory action research are grounded on self-determination principles, which place value on the capacity of different stakeholders to act on their behalf. Methods such as LivingLabs, Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping, Q-Method, Longitudinal Studies and Behaviour Interventions are traditionally more focused on translating knowledge into action. Drivers such as seeking innovation and greater social acceptance of climate change transitions appear common to many of these techniques.

Methods of community engagement in climate action research

The workshop findings presented in this section are central in identifying specific practices and methodologies for engaging communities. Some of the research activities identified have worked towards refining community engagement practices, where others have focused on evaluating reach and applicability. As already suggested by the mapping exercise showed above, there is a variety of ways of identifying and engaging with people, which are often tailored for specific contexts and achieve different results. The richness and diversity of these approaches and the manner in which they are adapted to specific purposes makes it challenging to present a roadmap or toolkit on how community engagement is best achieved. Furthermore, it could be argued that it is in grasping this complexity that lessons can be drawn on how best to situate specific strategies for community engagement within a wider system of communities, networks and practices already active in this area as well as determine how some groups remain disengaged. 

BOX 3

Brief overview of community engagement methodologies

Citizens’ Assemblies and Citizens’ Juries: closely aligned with a deliberative democracy ethos, it brings together a small representative groups of ‘citizens’, usually stratified in terms of gender, age and socio-economic status to capture the views and ideas of the group on topics of public and social interest (19-23). Deliberations are encouraged using a mix of information and deliberation: Both methods invite ‘experts’ to share ideas, which are subsequently debated leading to a set of clear recommendations (e.g. ENTRUST, Imagining2050, Citizens’ Climate, DC3).

Participatory Action Research (PAR): PAR techniques encourage active participant engagement in research activities from co-design, implementation and evaluation (22, 23). Seeking to facilitate and empower horizontal and reflexive engagement practices, it promotes more even communication spaces as a way to deepen collective understanding of issues. (e.g. ENTRUST, Role of Communities in Environmental Governance, Galway).

New media and digital databases: Environmental data such as that generated by “smart city” initiatives offer considerable scope for public engagement (e.g. C-SMART); broadly speaking, these data are extensive and generated by novel research or industry-led projects, and thus readily lend themselves to novel visualisations and representations of urban environments. This framing can be of considerable value in provoking and stimulating debate.

Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (FCM): FCM is a participatory modelling method which seeks to bridge the gap between qualitative and quantitative approaches and define a problem space according to the preferences and values of individuals and stakeholders groups (24). In doing so, FCM brings together individuals and stakeholders to develop a structured and shared understanding of complex and uncertain environmental issues, and provides a platform for stakeholder deliberation and testing of management solutions.

Participatory Climate Change Modelling and Scenarios: This approach entails the adaptation of traditional scenario development and modelling techniques, commonly carried out in laboratories and research centres to adapted methods that include participatory procedures. These modified techniques seek to better integrate and translate community inputs and experiential local knowledge in order to promote stronger links between science, policy and local communities. (25) (e.g. Imagining2050)

Living Labs: Living Labs are approaches or tools to drive sustainable development by providing spaces for innovative experimentation, by facilitating systematic monitoring and learning, and by involving various actors and users as co-creators of knowledge in real-world settings (26) (e.g. Washlabs in the CONSENSUS project www.conensus.ie or ENERGISE Living Labs (ELL) www.energise-project.eu) and EnergyPolities.

Behaviour Interventions: This is a broad area of research which encompasses a wide number of different approaches seeking to influence or understand behaviour patterns among the population (27, 28). Approaches include behavioural economics (29), social marketing (30) and social practice (31). Common practical applications include development of a mix of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms such as providing information; awareness raising campaigns; financial incentives and behavioural economic interventions (28, 32) (e.g. ENTRUST project).

Longitudinal Studies: Longitudinal surveys employ a cyclical approach to research whereby interviews or surveys are repeated over a period of time with a sample of respondents to 1) determine factors affecting behaviour 2) processes of change 3) evaluate interventions or test casual hypotheses (33). In terms of environmental studies, Longitudinal surveys have been used to monitor time use and resource consumption with a focus on life course trajectories and life events (34, 35).

Q-Method: This method has its origins in applied psychology and employs structured and statistical analysis to explore subjectivity within a particular thematic area or domain. The underlying focus is an ordering and finding patterns or categories of themes within larger domains, to better grasp the range of ideas dominating these thematic areas. It has been suggested as a useful tool to employ in grasping the range and diversity of voices in environmental areas where there is considerable debate or contestation (36-38).
Community engagement and change

Different techniques and versions of community engagement can be complicated and difficult to situate. For this purpose we have adapted a ‘conceptual map’ previously proposed by Hopwood et al (39) (see figure 2 below) to help situate existing strategies. The community-engagement axis looks at levels of participation within existing community engagement practices. This is in recognition that community engagement is promoted within a wide spectrum of possibilities from more passive, non-participatory relationships to fully engaged and collaborative alliances. The resource axis on the other hand looks at anticipated resource demands in pursuing different community climate action initiatives. The central overlaid category looks at the type of change, typically promoted within these current practices.

The workshop findings provided only partial information to facilitate the development of this conceptual map, thus we note that most of these categorizations are limited and open to further scrutiny. The conceptual mapping also works with the assumption that methods seeking greater levels of participation aim for more drastic levels and transformative change than those who seek more moderate levels of engagement. Thus, while there are limitations to the conceptual map, we argue that this visualization exercise provides a means to explore the relationship between levels of engagement, commitment to resources and desired levels of change. It tentatively shows that most community engagement practices in research in Ireland have moved beyond seeking minor adjustments to societal structures and they aspire to seek out reform or transformation through the development and promotion of community engagement in climate actions knowledge and techniques. It also shows that many of these activities are resource intensive and that there is a link between promotion of participatory strategies and resource intensity. Furthermore, many participants suggested that the biggest challenge in the promotion of participatory strategies was ensuring that these engagements offer clear benefits for communities taking part in the form of a legacy of compensation for time dedicated to activities.
The section that follows presents the main findings from an interactive exercise carried out in the workshop, which explored the ostensible, yet oftentimes illusive, gap between our present-day reality and the aspired goal of gearing society towards a low carbon, climate resilient future.

This exploratory and interactive exercise tried to understand and determine the characteristics of this ‘gap’ or space between our present circumstances and a sustainable future and plot out the vital elements of this ‘journey’ towards sustainability. Premising the exercise with the idea that oftentimes this gap is characterised by a high degree of uncertainty, coercion, instability and confusion participants were asked to think about achieving community engagement in climate action as similar to ‘walking the plank’. As a visually engaging activity, we tried to demonstrate that the positioning of the plank itself can have an effect on how the gap is perceived. For instance, the contrast between having the plank placed on solid ground or walking the plank when placed higher up. The exercise thus asked participants to explore this idea of the ‘gap’ and determine how it can measured, what is needed to overcome the challenges that it poses and ultimately what are the necessary conditions to get across.

1. Visions
Many of the participants identified as a determinant for community engagement the use of visions in the sense of having distinct ideals, goals, objectives, foresight which would allow for a clearer understanding of the trajectory and destination in this transition. The need to ‘see the other side’ and ‘knowing where you are going’ as well as ‘how to re-imagine’ this future was highlighted as important. The notion of ‘shared visions’ was also identified.

2. Champions
The role of champions was underlined numerous times as a way of prompting and encouraging community engagement. Different terms such as ‘pioneers’, ‘first movers’, ‘early adopters’ and ‘champions’ were all featured as significant. A number of added ideas were attached to the notion of champions. For instance, the idea that champions oftentimes are the driving force behind making real, imagined alternatives, and that champions are critical for signalling tipping points for change. In this context, it was noted that champions at different levels are needed, for different people (i.e. small businesses, shop owners, local citizens, young people), and that ‘changing the conversation requires a champion–multiple ways across the board’. A number of limitations in terms of the role of champions was also signaled. Cautionary notes highlighted that ‘championing has pitfalls’ and it is often ‘more charismatic than coherent’ and for some champions it can lead to championing fatigue. Finally, it was noted that it is very difficult, yet critical, to find the right champion, particularly in the fluid and emergent context of transition.

3. Drivers
Under the theme of drivers we highlight a number of social factors and processes which were deemed essential in promoting engagement. These include factors such as trust, justice, acceptance, perceptions of change and contingency.
planning. In essence determining that the journey is necessarily dependent on people ‘wanting to cross’, being able to cross, and ‘battling old thinking’. The community engagement process itself was noted as critical with an emphasis on ‘inv[ol]ving people in not just the solutions but also deciding the problem’, getting a mix of people who work well together and engaging in ‘systemic wide-ranging change’. Other drivers include the development of solutions, which embrace nature-based solutions, climate resilience and indigenous based strategies.

4. Tipping Points
Discussion on tipping-points in this exercise questioned and debated the fact that change is oftentimes reactive and ‘driven by urgency’. One participant highlighted the fact that crisis is more imminent for some people or communities and not for others. Thus, imminent crisis and sense of urgency prompts reactive change in an uneven way and has many obvious problematic consequences in delaying engagement and creating fractured responses to change. Within this context smaller incremental change approaches often feed into these reactive patterns. It was highlighted that transformational and systemic change approaches would counter this more reactive engagement with change.

5. Policy
Issues relating to policy appeared as a significant element of this discussion with suggestions doubling compared with other themes. There were a number of dimensions to the ideas that emerged, which included institutional issues, policy approaches and prioritizations. With regard, institutional issues a number of concerns were identified which included:
• Institutional memory;
• Overstretched civil service;
• Policy silos;
• Disengaged policy makers;
• Constrained policy implementation powers.

In terms of policy approaches ideas included:
• balancing ‘punitive measures . . . with other supportive measures’;
• understanding the need for policy acceptance;
• Clear leadership

6. Research
A number of factors pertaining to the role of research and academia in determining adequate community engagement was identified. It was suggested that there is a need for researchers and scientists to acknowledge their common goals and act more like a community. Suggestions to achieve this include moving away from individualised researcher focus, which lead to the creation of silos, strengthening research impact, dissemination of work, and having a more engaged approach to research. It was also noted that climate scientists and experts need better media training to handle disruptive media narratives, which feed into erroneous sense of vagueness and ambiguity towards the impacts of climate change in society.

7. Communication
A significant theme in this exercise was the element of communication and how it is delivered and disseminated to communities. A range of suggestions emerged in terms of the content of messages that seek to prompt engagement. It was noted that negative, scary and recriminatory messages are not useful. There was a degree of consensus that messages seeking to blame and scare people as a call for action are often counterproductive. Alternatives such as objective, consistent, supportive and culturally sensitive messaging were advanced as more suitable. Marketing was earmarked a number of times as a ‘social lever’ whereby peer-to-peer networks, community belonging, learning and social responsibility can be advanced.

8. Social Practices and Behaviour
A variety of elements emerged centrally linked to social practices and behaviour. This included a number of suggestions to develop and expand behavioural change strategies such as energy consumption and mobility practices. However, there were also more critical ideas emerging, which questioned the value and desirability of behaviour change, or ‘nudge’ strategies (46). This critique emphasised the fact that these strategies often overlook the structurally and socially constrained manner in which social behaviour and practices are embedded. In essence leading to a misplaced and harmful burden on individual practices as if they were chiefly a matter of choice and not determined by converging forces stemming from wider societal systems.

9. Supports
A diverse list of various supports emerged from the exercise as valuable determinants in generating community engagement with climate action. These include:
• Awareness
• Knowledge transfer
• Appropriate language
• Technical skills
• Education at early stage
• Needs based/tailored supports
• Experts based supports
• Safety net
• Media support

10. Finance
The final overarching theme we have identified through this exercise related to financial issues. A number of specific elements were highlighted as important determinants for supporting climate change action. These include:
• New business models
• Innovation
• How resources are managed
• Re-skilling and training
• Re-branding
• New opportunities
• Incentives
• Ability to access funds
• Insurance
• Improved efficiencies
Concluding remarks

These proceedings have attempted to summarise and generate learning from the practical knowledge of researchers in Ireland in engaging with communities in climate action. The summary highlights a number of techniques and methodologies that can be used to fruitfully engage with communities at various junctures.

Some techniques such as citizens juries are well suited for strengthening social and environmental justice and are appropriate to most communities particularly in areas where there is significant distrust or inequality. Other techniques driven by self-determination motivations such as Participatory Action Research leverage community and grassroots capacities and are well suited to empower communities to change. Finally, the necessity to integrate different knowledges and translate these into more practical and actionable outcomes can be pursued by applying techniques such as Q-method, fuzzy cognitive mapping and behaviour interventions, among others.

The proceedings have also provided an overview of some of the conditions and determinants that will initiate, mobilise and mediate community engagement through the ‘bridging the gap exercise’. The range of different determinants and conditions reinforce the notion that there is a complex range of elements shaping community interactions. Anticipation and development of these will help promote deeper engagements. The book of abstracts offered below in Appendix 1 offers further opportunity for engaging with methods and practice of community engagement as they relate to research they highlight the range of problems and possibilities of accounting for community agency, developing spaces and opportunities for engagement and promoting deeper levels of participation and knowledge creation.

These findings should be particularly useful for the continued roll out of the NDCA as it moves from the more general level regional meetings to the more specific local level meetings. They emphasise the need to know the applicability and degree of interaction enabled through each technique. They also place value on context and diversity and suggest that any action is best placed within a deeper understanding of existing networks and a consideration of strengths and weakness determining ongoing climate action interactions.
Overall participants were largely positive about the manner in which the workshop was organized and the opportunity for networking with peers researchers. The rating in terms of drawing out knowledge about innovation in research into community engagement in climate action?

How successful was the workshop at capturing and mapping different approaches?

Participant evaluation of the workshop

Overall participants were largely positive about the manner in which the workshop was organized and the opportunity for networking with peers researchers. The rating in terms of drawing out knowledge about innovation in research into community engagement in climate action?

How well organised and run was the workshop?

How did the workshop facilitate a conversation on best practice and innovation in research into community engagement in climate action?

How valuable did you find the opportunity provided by the workshop for networking with the others researching in climate engagement in climate action?

How successful was the workshop at capturing and mapping different approaches in research in community engagement in climate action?

List of References

1. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Global Warming of 1.5 °C: An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty. 2018.


Appendix 1: Book of abstracts

### Name/affiliation

**Heather Stagni, Geogaphy, Trinity College Dublin**

**Abstract:** The proposed research programme is based primarily on the concept of “Serious Games” as a mechanism for educating young people about climate change. The project will explore the effect of games in different learning settings, including online and offline, and will examine the impact of games on students’ attitudes towards climate change and their willingness to engage in actions that mitigate climate change. The research will also explore the potential of games to foster the development of critical thinking skills and promote sustainability awareness. The project will be evaluated through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and the findings will contribute to the development of effective educational strategies for climate change education.

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**John Morrissey, Geography, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, South Circular Road, Limerick, Ireland, V94 VN26**

**Abstract:** The research project seeks to investigate the relationship between climate change and the socio-economic impacts on local communities. The study will examine the effects of climate change on infrastructure, agriculture, and public health, and will assess the resilience of local communities in adapting to these changes. The research will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by local communities and the potential solutions for adaptation.

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**John O’Dwyer and Stephen Flood**

**Abstract:** The research project aims to enhance local knowledge to reduce the vulnerability of climate change impacts. The study will employ a participatory approach, engaging local communities in the collection and analysis of data related to climate change impacts. The project will also develop a tool for assessing the vulnerability of local communities and will provide recommendations for adaptation actions. The research will be evaluated through qualitative and quantitative data collection and will contribute to the development of effective adaptation strategies for local communities.

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**Dr. Laura Devaney, DCU School of Law and Government**

**Prof. Pat Berereton, DCU School of Communications**

**Name/affiliation**

**Dr. Diarmuid Torney, DCU School of Law and Government**

**Prof. Pat Berereton, DCU School of Communications**

**Dr. Laura Devaney, DCU School of Law and Government**

**Timeline**

January–October 2019

**Abstract:** The Citizens’ Climate Research Project aimed to empower citizens to become active participants in the design and implementation of measures to address climate change. The project used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection, to understand the views and experiences of citizens. The research was evaluated through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and the findings were used to inform policy and practice.

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**Name/affiliation**

**Barry O’Dwyer and Stephen Flood**

**MEIE Centre, UCC**

**Abstract:** The project focused on the use of participatory methods to enhance local knowledge and reduce the vulnerability of climate change impacts. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection, to understand the views and experiences of local communities. The research was evaluated through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and the findings were used to inform policy and practice.

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**Name/affiliation**

**Dr. John Morrissey, Geography, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, South Circular Road, Limerick, Ireland, V94 VN26**

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**Name/affiliation**

**Dr. Frances Fahy on behalf of the ENERGISE Research Team School of Geography and Archaeology, NUI Galway**

**Abstract:** The research project aimed to enhance local knowledge to reduce the vulnerability of climate change impacts. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection, to understand the views and experiences of local communities. The research was evaluated through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and the findings were used to inform policy and practice.
**Name/affiliation**
Prof Dr Mary Green, School of Geography and Archaeology, NUI Galway
**Abstract:** Case study of community engagement: Transition Galway

Transition Galway is a community-based organisation focused on engaging the community around environmental change. It is a local-based initiative that forms part of a larger national network, The Transition Town Network. Founded in 2011 by a group of local residents, Transition Galway has been involved in community visioning engagement activities that involved creating a space for members of the local community to articulate their vision for a more sustainable and resilient Galway in 2050. The results of this process were published in a publicly accessible handbook ‘A vision for Galway 2050’ and accompanying short summary videos available online at galwaytransition.wordpress.com. Material and projects from this process was included in the successful Galway 2020 cultural capital bid application and Galway City Council Development Plan. Since its inception, TG has worked to actively participate as a key player in the environmental governance landscape in Galway and Ireland more broadly. To this end, forging relations with a range of governance actors, including Galway City Council, Galway Chamber, the arts community, schools, local community and other environmental and community development groups in Galway and beyond. Barriers to community engagement experienced by the group include: the lack of a clear vision, the lack of a visible plan, the low level of appreciation, comfort or just “doing the right thing”? The relative importance of these factors varies across the community of Galway. It is all important in designing information policies to promote energy efficiency. However, there are likely many other knowledge gaps at play, too. For example, are there certain demographics within society who do not understand all the elements in the consumption-emission-warning chain? and would filling these gaps change investment behaviour today? Knowledge gaps are also evident in policies related to information provision. For example, when information is included limited information cost by cost-saving, etc. There is also a lack of public appreciation and communication, all of which are an important in designing information policies to promote energy efficiency.

Name/affiliation
Prof Brian O’Callachoir, School of Engineering and Environmental Research Institute, MaREI Centre, UCC
**Abstract:** Knowledge gaps in household energy investments

There are likely multiple layers of information which affect the uptake of more energy efficient products. Energy and climate information reaches the household through social and personal networks, technology (smart meters, for example), labels (the BER, for example) and through the media (IPCC reports, for example). Such information affects different aspects of household energy investments in different ways. For example, a growing body of research from across Europe shows that the willingness-to-pay for energy efficiency upgrades is increased when households are shown long-term energy cost comparisons between alternatives at the point of sale. Such findings highlight a clear knowledge gap, with negative implications for household energy investments.

**Name/affiliation**
Dr Clare Watson (PhD researcher), Department of Sociology and Environmental Research Institute, MaREI Centre, UCC
**Abstract:** Mentoring in community development and community engagement

Mentoring in community development and community engagement has been an extensive area of participatory and deliberative tools in transitions and adaptation management with a range of stakeholders using deliberative tools in transitions and adaptation management with a range of stakeholders using deliberative tools in transitions and adaptation management. The focus of this paper is on the development of community engagement in climate action, the testing out of innovative communication and engagement methods and the co- development of scenarios of future Irish society. Keywords: socio-technical transitions, Ireland, Civic engagement, Citizen juries, Deliberative democracy.

**Name/affiliation**
Dr Ger Mullally, Department of Sociology and Environmental Research Institute, MaREI Centre, UCC
**Abstract:** Knowledge gaps in household energy investments

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Prof John Brady, National University of Ireland, Galway
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Prof Barry O’Connor, National University of Ireland, Galway
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**Name/affiliation**
Dr Shamshed Fredian Narr, Trinity College Dublin
**Abstract:** Knowledge gaps in household energy investments

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**Name/affiliation**
Dr Cyril Smyth, Trinity College Dublin
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