

A group of people are gathered in a forest, looking towards the right. A network diagram with colored dots and connecting lines is overlaid on the image. The text is presented in two stacked colored boxes: a red box for the first line and an orange box for the second line.

A COMMUNITY-LED TRANSITION IN EUROPE: LOCAL ACTION TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT, LOW-CARBON FUTURE

ECOLISE

EUROPEAN NETWORK
FOR COMMUNITY-LED
INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE
AND SUSTAINABILITY

www.ecolise.eu

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AT A GLANCE

THERE IS A GROWING, vibrant movement of community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability. People throughout Europe and the world are taking action in all facets of their lives. They are inspired by regenerative design principles, by participatory decision-making and by a desire to create solutions to the great challenges of our time – climate change, social inequality and environmental degradation.

While these community-led initiatives are vastly diverse – from shared gardens to local currencies, energy cooperatives to repair cafés – they have much in common. They are explicitly ethically-grounded, holistically-oriented, place-based, self-organising and rooted in cyclic and open-ended processes of collective learning.

These characteristics are broadly shared by members of the ECOLISE network – which encompass the ecovillage, Transition and permaculture movements, amongst others. These transformative movements have a global network incorporating:

- **Twelve hundred** Transition initiatives in 48 countries
- **Fifteen thousand** ecovillage communities on six continents
- **Three million** permaculture practitioners in 140 countries

As the movements have grown and expanded, so too has the knowledge and inspiration generated, which is increasingly the subject of international research, including some EU-funded projects.

This research demonstrates the positive impacts of community-led action: studies of CO₂ emissions in Danish ecovillages, for example, find they are 60 per cent lower than the national average while Findhorn ecovillage in Scotland has the lowest documented ecological footprint of any settlement in the industrial world.

Transition initiatives are also achieving impressive results. The Transition Streets project in Totnes, England, involves 468 households, each saving at least 1.3 tonnes of carbon annually.

Just as significant as the direct carbon savings, however, are the wider environmental impacts, the awareness raising, the social cohesion, the creation of local livelihoods and retention of wealth in local economies and the feeling of empowerment that citizens experience by working together to bring about change.

In the context of the Paris Agreement (COP21) and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which represent a global consensus on human collaboration for survival, citizen participation is essential.

In order to increase the positive impacts of community-led action ECOLISE aims to create a common platform for initiatives, researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders to work together to share knowledge, tools and good practices.

By focusing on people and communities, and by reshaping norms and behaviours through local action, community-led initiatives provide a necessary complement to higher level action.

With suitable policy frameworks, and under appropriate structural conditions – political, economic, financial, legislative, infrastructural – these proven and effective pathways to a low-carbon society provide considerable potential for replication and growth.



COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES AND GROWING COLLABORATION

A DEFINING FEATURE OF COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES is that they are citizen-driven, or bottom-up. Invariably, they are also centres of experimentation and innovation, seeking to create new models of agriculture, energy production, education, construction, economy, decision-making and collaboration.

In many instances, links and collaborations are being made with other, established bodies such as universities, researchers and government authorities, which are responding positively to the leadership shown by local communities.

ECOLISE, a Europe-wide network of networks, is testament to the desire amongst disparate local groups and their regional, national and international networks, to nurture their collective energy in order to increase their visibility, improve learning and exchange, and influence policy making at European and national levels.

ECOLISE

ECOLISE's 38 member organisations bring together the ecovillage, Transition, permaculture and other movements, as well as specialist organisations – research and educational bodies, and policy networks such as ICLEI, the association of local governments for sustainability.

ECOVILLAGES

Many ecovillages are members of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), which defines an ecovillage as an intentional, traditional or urban community that is consciously designed through locally owned, participatory processes in all four dimensions of sustainability – social, cultural, ecological and economic – to regenerate their social and natural environments. GEN facilitates the exchange of experiences among these communities and supports wider learning for sustainability within and beyond ecovillages. GEN Europe has 72 member ecovillages and 56 aspiring members.

www.gen-europe.org

In France, the popular citizens' movement Colibris, initiated by agroecology pioneer and philosopher Pierre Rabhi, counts more than 150 'oases' among its network. Oases are defined as places – similar to ecovillages – that embody ecology and sharing.

www.colibris-lemouvement.org

IRELAND'S MODEL ECOVILLAGE

'Cloughjordan ecovillage was established in 1999 by a group of people who came together to create an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable community on a 27 hectare farm. The community now has 50 families who live in low-energy homes that rely on renewable energy, allotments for individual growing and research, a farm, an enterprise centre, a performance space, a hostel and numerous educational offerings. The EU-funded Milesecure research programme identified Cloughjordan ecovillage as one of Europe's leading 'anticipatory experiences' of the transition towards a low-carbon society.'

www.thevillage.ie

TRANSITION INITIATIVES Originating in 2005, this is a growing global movement of communities coming together to imagine and build a post-carbon society, starting at the local level. Transition groups are reclaiming the economy, sparking entrepreneurship, reimagining work, reskilling themselves and weaving webs of connection and support across the globe. In Europe there are thousands of groups – in towns, villages, cities, universities and schools – with Transition hubs in 19 European countries.

www.transitionnetwork.org

***Liège en Transition** (Belgium) was launched by about 70 people at a meeting in 2011. They subsequently self-organised into thematic working groups that grew into a number of projects including: the Ceinture Aliment-Terre Liégeoise (CATL), a radical plan to create a sustainable food supply in the province of Liège – community supported farms are already up-and-running and the local authority has started issuing licences to grow food on the streets of Liège – and the Valeureux, Liège's local currency, which was launched in 2014 as a way of nurturing the local economy.*

www.reseautransition.be
www.catl.be
www.valeureux.be

PERMACULTURE Many local, community groups working for sustainability around the world are influenced by, and sometimes work closely with, the permaculture movement. Permaculture is a practical method of designing systems, both material and social, that are ecologically harmonious, efficient and productive. The European Permaculture Network was launched in 2016, bringing together 24 permaculture practitioner member organisations from 20 countries.

www.permaculturecouncil.eu

***Balkan Ecology**, Bulgaria is a permaculture-inspired project that is devoted to the design and exploration of ecologically-sound human habitats. It serves as a demonstration and education site for visitors from all over the world by providing tried and tested models of quality ecological food production that can be replicated easily in terms of the skills required and the financial investment needed. The family-run enterprise also sells fruit and nut trees, seeds, plants and organic fruit and vegetables.*

www.balkep.org

OTHER MOVEMENTS OF COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

Scottish Communities Climate Action Network (SCCAN), a grassroots network of over 150 community groups taking action on climate change.

The Quartiers Durables initiative in Brussels, Belgium, in which citizens work together on everything from energy saving to waste reduction and biodiversity.

The community-supported agriculture (CSA) movement which supports small-scale organic farming and helps achieve local food sovereignty.

The Slow Food movement which aims to create a food system based on the pleasure and sharing of good, clean and fair food.

Community energy initiatives in which people are taking ownership of renewable energy generation and distribution, and promoting energy efficiency.

Collectif pour une Transition Citoyenne in France and Mycelium in Belgium representing 10,000s of people

The commons, peer-to-peer, solidarity economy, blue economy, degrowth and postgrowth movements and many others that support local change-makers.

A GROWING KNOWLEDGE BASE

TO DATE, THERE HAS BEEN no comprehensive Europe-wide study of community-led movements, but over the last five years, it has increasingly become the focus of academic research, with the EU funding several international projects. These projects provide useful new insights into the nature, scope and potential of community-led action on climate change and sustainability.

The EU-funded TESS project, for example, examined the actual and potential contributions to carbon emission reductions of 62 community-led initiatives in six EU countries. Its analysis concluded that:

if five percent of the EU were to engage in effective community-led climate mitigation initiatives, the carbon savings would be sufficient for nearly 85 percent of EU-28 countries to achieve their 2020 emissions reduction targets.

The ARTS project studied six EU city-regions and showed that the prospects for rapid transitions to sustainability are highest where municipal authorities and businesses collaborate constructively with diverse community-led initiatives working on different topics.

Similarly, the EU TRANSIT project identified ecovillages and transition initiatives as key sources of the social innovation necessary for transitions to sustainability.

PATHWAYS considered the respective possibilities and implications of different transition pathways, based on technological substitution within existing societal, business and governance structures on the one hand, and accompanied by wider processes of structural change on the other. The project concluded that while structural change can encounter considerable initial resistance, and may be slower to produce visible results, it provides better long-term prospects of deeper and sustained transition, with community-led initiatives often providing models for how such change could be brought about.

In this publication we give a snapshot of the broad geographical and thematic scope of these initiatives. It is important to note that evidence suggests interactions across different thematic areas – for example food, energy, housing – are among the most important factors affecting prospects of successful local transitions to more sustainable, low-carbon societies. In many cases, communities start out with a focus on one particular theme, but later broaden their perspectives and understanding.

For example, the Tamera Ecovillage in Portugal has moved from an initial focus on peace and conflict resolution to large-scale landscape restoration or energy autonomy.

www.tamera.org

FOOD

“All over Europe, people are coming together to take control of our food systems, from production to distribution to consumption. We are building systems centred on our local communities. We are joining forces to achieve food sovereignty, by claiming our right to define our own food and agricultural systems.”

European CSA Declaration, 2016

Food – nutritious, local, organic food and gastronomy – is the focus of many community-led initiatives in Europe, which are often guided by permaculture and agroecology.

Food sovereignty – the right of people who produce, distribute, and consume food to control the mechanisms and policies of food production and distribution – is often the inspiration for community action.

Food-focused community-led initiatives range from innovative partnerships between farmers and consumers to the creation of community gardens and farms, in both urban and rural areas, the planting of heritage fruit trees in public spaces and the preservation of local culinary heritage.

These communities are not simply focused on changing mechanisms of food production, they are also reconfiguring the ways that people organise around and hence conceive food. This is helping to create an empowered citizenry, capable of delivering much more participatory forms of governance.

Community Supported Agriculture in Europe has been growing steadily since the mid 2000s. A 2016 report by Urgenci, the

International Network of Community Supported Agriculture, concluded that 6,300 broadly-defined CSA initiatives in 22 European countries were producing food for about 1 million people. The vast majority of CSA groups surveyed were initiated either by consumers (41%), by farmers (33%) or by both (18%).

COoperativa Romana AGRicoltura GIOvani, Co.r.ag.gio is an agricultural cooperative of young activists with a passion for community agriculture. Through a persistent and creative five-year-long campaign they succeeded in securing 22 hectares of abandoned public land in the north of Rome for multi-functional farms which produce food and provide services such as agricultural training.

www.coop-coraggio.it

Kartoffelkombinat is a food cooperative in Munich, Germany in which an existing farm was transformed following the principles of community supported agriculture. After four-and-a-half years of existence, Kartoffelkombinat has almost 1000 cooperative members who receive a weekly vegetable box.

www.kartoffelkombinat.de



ENERGY

COMMUNITIES ACROSS EUROPE are finding innovative ways of reducing their energy use, designing new ways to harness passive energy, and taking control of the production and distribution of the energy and electricity they consume. These initiatives are making a valuable contribution to EU climate and energy goals, as well as to the UN's SDG 'to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all'.

According to REScoop, the European Federation of Renewable Energy Cooperatives, there are currently about 2,400 renewable energy cooperatives in Europe, located mainly in western European countries.

The federation believes that, with the right support, half of the EU's population could become energy citizens – people who produce their own energy – and deliver 45% of Europe's electricity demand by 2050.

Sieben Linden ecovillage in Germany collectively owns its electricity generation system and supplies wood for heating from its own regeneratively-managed forests. Residents pay a flat rate per adult towards energy, regardless of actual levels of energy use. This socialises the financial costs of having children and supports collective examination and decision-making about energy production and consumption.
www.siebenlinden.org

Som Energia is a consumers' cooperative that produces and sells 100% renewable energy. Founded in Barcelona in 2011 it grew rapidly and now has over 36,000 members throughout Spain. One member of the coop's management team attributes this rapid growth to the fact that society is 'thirsty for alternatives'.
www.somenergia.coop



www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk/communities/existing/earth-heart

HOUSING

HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION are the focus of many community-led initiatives in Europe. Community-led projects treat housing in a holistic, integrated fashion, taking account of community and social relations, food and energy sovereignty, economics and affordability, and the location and nature of work.

The design process involved – defining a collective vision, planning, construction and celebration – nurtures community and personal development.

Aardehuis, the Netherlands is a much-visited ecovillage developed in close cooperation with nearby Transition Deventer and completed in the summer of 2015. It consists of 23 houses and a community building, and was built by residents and volunteers through a partnership with the municipality of Olst, a social housing provider and a recycling company. Most of the materials used in the construction were sourced from within 50 kilometres. Today, 100% of residents' energy needs are met onsite.
www.aardehuis.nl

Earth Heart Housing Co-operative, UK is a rural co-housing community of over 20 people developed around a traditional farmhouse on 8 hectares of organic land.
A permaculture demonstration site, this multi-purpose project encompasses heritage and nature conservation, building and soil regeneration, agriculture, gardening and community building. Homes are heated by a biomass boiler and wastewater is treated through a reed bed system.



MOBILITY

REDUCING GREENHOUSE gas emissions and other environmental impacts associated with transport, and promoting healthier lifestyles, are the focus of most community-led mobility initiatives in Europe.

Transport represents almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions and is the main cause of air pollution in cities. Reducing transport emissions has proven more difficult than emission reductions in other sectors – they remain higher than in 1990.

Community-led initiatives are closely aligned with the European Strategy for low-emission mobility: 'encouraging active travel (cycling and walking), public transport and bicycle and car-sharing /pooling schemes to reduce congestion and pollution.'

The Million Miles project organised by Transition Black Isle, Scotland, encouraged

people to change their travel behaviour and reduce car use. They ran over 450 events with around 5300 participants and 16 cycle trainers, delivering cycle skills training, mapping local cycling infrastructure and encouraging the setting up of social cycling groups. Over the three years of the project (2012-2015) they reduced car use by an estimated 2.1 million kilometres, saving 718 tonnes of CO₂ emissions. Other outcomes included a 23% increase in the number of people lift sharing.

www.transitionblackisle.org

The Fahrwerk Kurierkollektiv courier service in Berlin, Germany, was founded in 2009 as a sustainable, self-organising cooperative. It handles some 17,000 deliveries each year by bicycle, freight bike and electric car. The EU-funded TESS research project concluded that the service saves 85% of CO₂ emissions compared to a standard petrol or diesel car courier service. This equates to about 95 tonnes of annual CO₂ emissions, which is equivalent to the annual carbon footprint of 10 European citizens.

www.fahrwerk-berlin.de

ECONOMY

FROM ONE PERSPECTIVE, all the work of community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability is about reconfiguring economic relations, in a broad sense, and the economy in its more conventional sense.

Local food, energy, transport or building projects that connect people with local producers are localising the economy and reskilling communities.

Community-led initiatives are also at the forefront of the circular economy, encouraging a shift away from unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and promoting in their place new activities based around the sharing of assets and resources, and the repair, reuse or recycling of products reaching their end of life.

A key driver of community-led initiatives, however, is also the desire to create a better work-life balance and promote a move away

from materialistic lifestyles, with the focus instead on reconnecting communities, strengthening friendships and discovering new and more constructive ways of using our time and money.

In this regard, many community-led initiatives are exploring alternative economic models, which measure success not in terms of GDP but by means of other indicators of human well-being and happiness.

Within the permaculture movement there is support for people who want to start or develop small firms based on the principles of ecological design and sustainable living and the third permaculture principle of 'fair share', setting limits and redistributing surplus.

Transition's REconomy project also supports community-led economic change, helping to transform local economies and inspire enterprises that are more sustainable and fair, as well as being financially viable. The project documented how the benefits of relocalising economic activity are already being mobilised by the UK's top twenty 'Transition oriented' social enterprises. At the time of the report, in 2013, these enterprises had a combined annual turnover of £3.5 million and provided paid employment for more than 100 people.

<http://reconomy.org/what-you-can-do/inspiring-enterprises/>

Such enterprises could be the building blocks of a new economy because, in addition to their direct benefits, they return more money to the local economy via the local multiplier effect.

According to think tank the New Economics Foundation, money spent with local businesses can be worth as much as 400 per cent more to the local economy than if the same sum goes to large chains or corporations.

www.neweconomics.org

Yet other communities are designing and creating local currency systems, providing a mechanism for citizens to use their own assets to solve local problems, meet local needs and achieve local goals.

The Bristol Pound, a local currency in the UK, is bringing large numbers of local businesses and residents into conversations about localisation and the transition to a low-carbon economy, while also supporting local energy co-ops and food provision.

www.bristolpound.org

Le Stück, France, is a local currency that was launched after three years of preparation in October 2015. In June 2017 70,000 Stücks were in circulation in roughly a 50km zone around Strasbourg, supported by 14 currency exchange offices. A network of 206 professionals, operating in a variety of different sectors, accept the Stücks. The seed for the Stück project was planted at a June 2012 forum organised by Colibris on how to put people and nature back at the heart of society.

www.lestuck.eu

'We believe the evidence is clear; achieving a low or carbon negative society requires localised, more transparent economies based on local ownership. The Bristol Pound is a powerful systemic driver that shortens supply chains, reducing dependence on the fossil fuel intensive transport infrastructure.

It also sends a message about what the economy is there to serve.

It's empowering, democratic and delivering change here in Bristol'.

Director of the Bristol Pound





WASTE

MANY COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES in Europe are establishing innovative ways of reducing or reusing waste, while also encouraging more sustainable production and consumption patterns.

From bike repair workshops to World Clean Up days, where thousands of people come together to clean up illegal waste, there are numerous initiatives which counter disposable consumption.

The Fishguard Transition Cafe in Wales turns surplus food donated by local businesses – around 850kg a month – into nutritious low cost meals. The idea for the social enterprise was born when local Transition members realised how much good food was being thrown away by local shops. ‘The project is more than just a way of reducing food waste. It’s an experiment – an attempt to put carbon reduction, sustainability and community resilience at the heart of a social enterprise and to make it a viable business suitable for a low growth, sustainable society,’ according to Transition Fishguard.

www.transitionbrogwaun.org.uk/transition-cafe/

Helsinki Metropolitan Recycling Centre, Finland, is a community-based social enterprise that offers an alternative to single-use culture by selling donated goods (that are repaired if necessary) at very low cost and by providing information on environmentally-friendly consumer choices. In 2015, over 3 million items were recirculated through the centre’s shops – from bicycles and clothes to electrical goods and furniture.

www.kierratyskeskus.fi

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

BEYOND ENVIRONMENTAL and economic benefits, community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability also benefit engaged citizens and society in other ways that are often hard to measure. By reconnecting people locally around positive projects that bring hope and meaningful and measurable differences to their lives, these projects build social resilience.

The EU-funded TESS project found that community initiatives provide numerous and diverse intangible local benefits such as building social capital, strengthening networking, improving well-being, skills development and empowerment. These benefits are less easy to record and measure but are often highlighted by participants as their most important impacts.

Considerable experience and expertise have also been developed within the movement in areas such as personal and group development, conflict resolution, and participatory decision making, all of which are essential prerequisites for stable, successful communities.



According to Transition Network, the most thriving community groups are those that pay as much attention to their culture, processes, structures and relationships as they do to their practical projects, activities and outputs. Transition Network has developed a suite of resources on so-called ‘inner transition’, designed to help individuals and groups to care for such needs and to become effective catalysts for positive change.

Other tools for personal development and reskilling that have emerged from and are used by community-led movements, include the Transformation Game – a board game which offers a playful yet substantial way of understanding and transforming key issues in one’s life – and the Dragon Dreaming tool which offers methods for the realisation of creative, collaborative and sustainable projects and organisations.

Il Fiore del Deserto, Italy is a project that grew from caring for children to also caring for nature. It was founded in 2000 to promote social rehabilitation of vulnerable young women but then began to encompass sustainability through organic agriculture and environmental education. It places great importance on community as a supportive network to enable sustainable lifestyles and concrete paths for social development and inclusion, in particular for children who are the victims of abuse.

www.ilfioredeldeserto.it

INCREASING THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY-LED ACTION

EXISTING COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES, and their proven successes, are an important source of inspiration for other communities. The EU-funded TESS project found that:

'About 63 per cent of the surveyed CBIs (community-based initiatives) have been replicated elsewhere, and 49 per cent emerged using the blueprints of similar ones. Hence potential to up-scale such initiatives is high.'

ECOLISE and its members are working to support this process with tools, training and facilitation available to communities across Europe. At present demand for such support greatly outstrips supply and more resources are required if such support is to be provided on a larger scale.

Furthermore, barriers to local action exist in countries across the EU. Long working hours limit the capacity of citizens to participate in local, community initiatives; restrictions on grid or market access hamper the development of community energy; food produced locally to high environmental standards often faces unfair competition from industrially produced food; and EU or local regulations can also be an impediment to low-tech and social innovation, which is often a feature of community-led action.

GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES NEED FLEXIBLE AND RELIABLE GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT

In the short term, financial support is essential. Many initiatives are currently totally or largely reliant on volunteers. This is not sustainable and is a serious limiting factor to the growth and replication of initiatives. Modest but targeted public support could have an immediate and significant impact. However, as highlighted by the TESS project, any public support for grassroots, community-led action must be based on

ALIGNING EU FUNDING WITH CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

The EU currently provides funding for Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) through the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), and notably through programmes such as LEADER, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. However, the use of such instruments is often optional for Member States, with some opting not to apply such approaches in urban areas. Priority objectives and evaluation criteria often favour interventions other than those focused on climate change and sustainability. New ways of setting priorities and criteria are therefore needed to mobilise the potential of communities to engage citizens in reshaping their local economies, building social capital, reducing carbon emissions and promoting long term behaviour change.

adaptable measures that enhance creativity and engagement rather than stifle it.

For example, financial support for grassroots action should foster a wider range of activities, with more diverse objectives and intended aims that take account of the manifold social as well as environmental outcomes of such initiatives, rather than focusing purely on the reduction of carbon emissions.

In the medium and longer term, an enabling policy framework is needed, which recognises the multiple benefits of initiatives that actively engage citizens in finding local solutions to global problems.

ECOLISE is working to bring together researchers, practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders to create an open dialogue on the development of such a framework, which must go beyond the identification of policy issues to also finding credible policy responses.

PIONEERING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

BRUSSELS' SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Since 2008, the Brussels-Capital region has been supporting community-led initiatives, through a programme called Quartiers Durables Citoyens (Citizen Sustainable Neighbourhoods).

Over 30 neighbourhoods, spread across the city, are currently participating in the programme. Its supports include: coaching in how to build local capacity and facilitate good collaboration with municipalities; project development assistance; networking and exchange of knowledge with other neighbourhoods; and financial support. Participating communities can access a start-up fund of up to €400 and up to €15,000 for project implementation.

An evaluation of the first 20 participating neighbourhoods in 2014 identified:

- 200 projects underway, with many more in the pipeline
- 600 people involved directly in the projects
- 3,900 people indirectly involved
- 150 local or thematic partners

THE GOVERNMENT OF SCOTLAND'S CLIMATE CHALLENGE FUND (CCF)

This provides grants and support for community-led projects that reduce local

carbon emissions. Community-led organisations are invited to apply for grants of up to £150,000 per organisation, per year for projects taking place between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2020.

Since its inception in 2008, the CCF has provided grants totalling £66.2 million to almost 1000 projects in 549 communities across Scotland. These include energy efficiency improvements, community-owned buildings, lower carbon travel options and community schemes to tackle waste.

Analysis of data from 132 projects supported in the period 2012-2015 shows a total estimated lifetime emissions reduction of 179,796 tonnes of CO₂, with an actual reduction during the projects of 54,209 tonnes of CO₂.

In addition CCF-funded projects had many additional positive environmental, social and economic outcomes including engaging a total of 78,835 people, including 3,586 volunteers. Participant feedback shows that this experience boosted people's confidence and belief in their ability to tackle climate change.

As a result of the CCF there is now a network - Scottish Communities Climate Action Network (SCCAN) - of committed community organisations across Scotland engaged in activities to reduce carbon emissions.



ECOLISE, the European network for community-led initiatives

on climate change and sustainability, is a coalition of 38 member organisations engaged in promoting and supporting local communities across Europe in their efforts to build pathways to a sustainable future.

The members of ECOLISE include international networks of community-led initiatives such as the Transition Network (representing over 1200 Transition initiatives), the Global Ecovillage Network (15,000 ecovillages) and the Permaculture movement (3 million practitioners globally); ICLEI, the association of local governments for sustainability; national and regional networks; and other specialist bodies engaged in European-level research, training and communications.

By bringing these organisations together, ECOLISE seeks to establish a common, Europe-wide agenda and a platform for collective action. ECOLISE is registered as an international non-profit association under Belgian law (AISBL). The activities of members extend to all EU member states, as well as internationally.

The European Day of Sustainable Communities

is an ECOLISE initiative, organised in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

The 23rd September 2017 marks the first such day, when individuals, communities and organisations across Europe are being invited to celebrate together and organise events that showcase their pioneering efforts to create new models for sustainable living. Ecovillages, Transition initiatives, permaculture projects, the agroecology movement, and many others will open their doors and invite the public to observe, discuss and be inspired by a diverse range of projects, covering everything from community energy to local food, sustainable mobility, resource management and much more.

Photo: Matias Biglieri

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