



# BEST PRACTICE IN ADULT EDUCATION FOR A JUST TRANSITION

## Community Climate Coaches

Creating a Community of Trained  
Activists Supporting Citizens

**JULY 2024**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# Community Climate Coaches

## – Creating a Community of Trained Activists Supporting Citizens

### Context and Initiative Details

Name of the initiative	Community Climate Coaches – led by Cultivate, the Sustainable Ireland Cooperative
Geographical scope	Local (Co. Tipperary)
Sources of funding	Community Climate Action Fund Strand 2
Duration of the initiative	1 year pilot programme
Target audience	Community workers and activists, with particular emphasis on targeting those from groups more often excluded from such training opportunities
Social justice focus area	Just Transitions, climate resilience, community building
Goals of the initiative	<p>Through this tailored programme the capacity of the coaches is developed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist citizens in connecting to nature and their locality – through mapping make people aware of what exists locally</li> <li>• Communicate the climate emergency and the need for a low-carbon and just transition</li> <li>• Host participatory events to engage communities</li> <li>• Facilitate conversations that reimagine our places and strengthen local resilience</li> <li>• Reduce emissions and increase livelihood opportunities through sustainable initiatives</li> <li>• Design climate resilience programmes.</li> </ul>

### Good Practices Description

#### Stakeholder engagement in the process

The funding insisted on co-production but this was in keeping with the ethos of Cultivate. Ongoing conversations with the participants and local communities have informed the programme throughout. A goal was to create a local sustainable and sustaining network across the county.

#### Methodology used

The programme was informed by Community Climate Coaches – an Erasmus+ funded project in which Cultivate led a consortium from across Europe to develop resources for supporting community action to build climate resilience – see <http://cultivate.ie/archive/ccc/>

The emphasis is on community building – a community of motivated and trained activists and communities across the county engaging in local actions, leading to greater well-being and resilience.

The approach is action learning based with the programme concluding with participants working together in their respective communities to design climate resilience projects. The programme is also producing a toolbox which will be available for others to use.

### Teaching approaches

There were three in-person days where participants learned more about climate action from various experts: the three themes were – nature & place connection; mapping stories and strengths; and community conversations on climate resilience. There were also five online sessions to deepen learning. While that had comprised the original design, the trainers recognized a need for more skills in community engagement and the facilitation of often challenging conversations, and so devised a supplementary programme accordingly – this has become an additional output of the programme and will also be available for others to use.

### Challenges and outcomes

#### Key factors contributing to success

- Responsive to the group's needs
- Centering on wellbeing and growing resilience
- Keeping a local focus throughout
- Emphasis on stronger communities needed to create the necessary change
- Built on the community engagement work of Tipperary Public Participation Network, a partner in the programme (along with two local development companies).

#### Encountered difficulties and challenges

Participants varied in their previous knowledge and experience and so the programme needed to cater to varying needs. As this was an adaptation of the earlier EU project, there was the challenge of translating the language used there which was understood by activists at a national and international level to what was appropriate at more grassroots levels.

#### Recommendations

At the macro level there needs to be more recognition of the importance of working through local community development, but that this should not be expected to be carried through voluntarism, but requires funded posts. At the meso level, educational programmes should include more training in mediation and facilitation skills so that activists are better able to deal with challenging language and behaviour.

#### Impact

40 individuals were recruited to this pilot programme with balanced coverage across the county. This in itself has created the basis of a new local network offering peer support.

At the time of writing the programme has not ended and so learner and community impacts cannot be recorded. However these will be posted (along with the toolbox and facilitation course) on Cultivate's website - <http://cultivate.ie/>