



# Community Engagement / Energy Champion

12 May 2020

# About the Contract Research Unit (CRU)

The IT Sligo Contract Research Unit (CRU) as part of the Research Office provides dedicated outreach Research, Development & Innovation support to regional enterprises, communities, individuals and public sector.



# Core competencies

- The skills needed for community energy projects to succeed. As a Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) develops the knowledge and ability grows in these core areas.
- The seven core competencies are:

- **Energy champion**
- Integrated planning
- Strategic financing
- Energy efficiency
- Renewable energy
- Sustainable transport
- Smart energy/smart grid



- The Competencies Evaluation tool helps to plot your progress towards achieving these and guide the direction of your project.

# Key questions for your SEC

## How do I get other stakeholders/ committee members involved?

- What stage are you or your SEC at? Just starting out? Steering committee established? Encourage as many people as is feasible to join so that the work does not fall on one or two people (differing skillsets)
- SECs can approach credit union managers, local businesses, GAA clubs, school principle and/or ‘first movers’ to become committee members
- **Carrot:** Include their buildings in the Energy Master Plan
- Check the SEC network map to reach out to similar size/profile communities e.g. Knocklyon (South Dublin) and Portmarnock (North Dublin)

# Key questions for your SEC

## **How do I get members of the wider community to sign up?**

This can be challenging however some ideas do work well for communities:

- Use SEAI leaflets to leave in the local shop or people's homes
- Hold a public meeting about what you hope to achieve as an SEC and how it will benefit the community (free BERs)
- Hold an Energy Clinic or Energy Workshop (with the help of SEAI/Mentor) 'Meet the expert' & 'How to switch energy supplier'
- Use social media and advertise in local venues or newspapers, parish newsletters (free BERs)
- Spread the word through your friends and family
- Ask your mentor for advice
- Castleblayney SEC

# Sligo Environmental Network

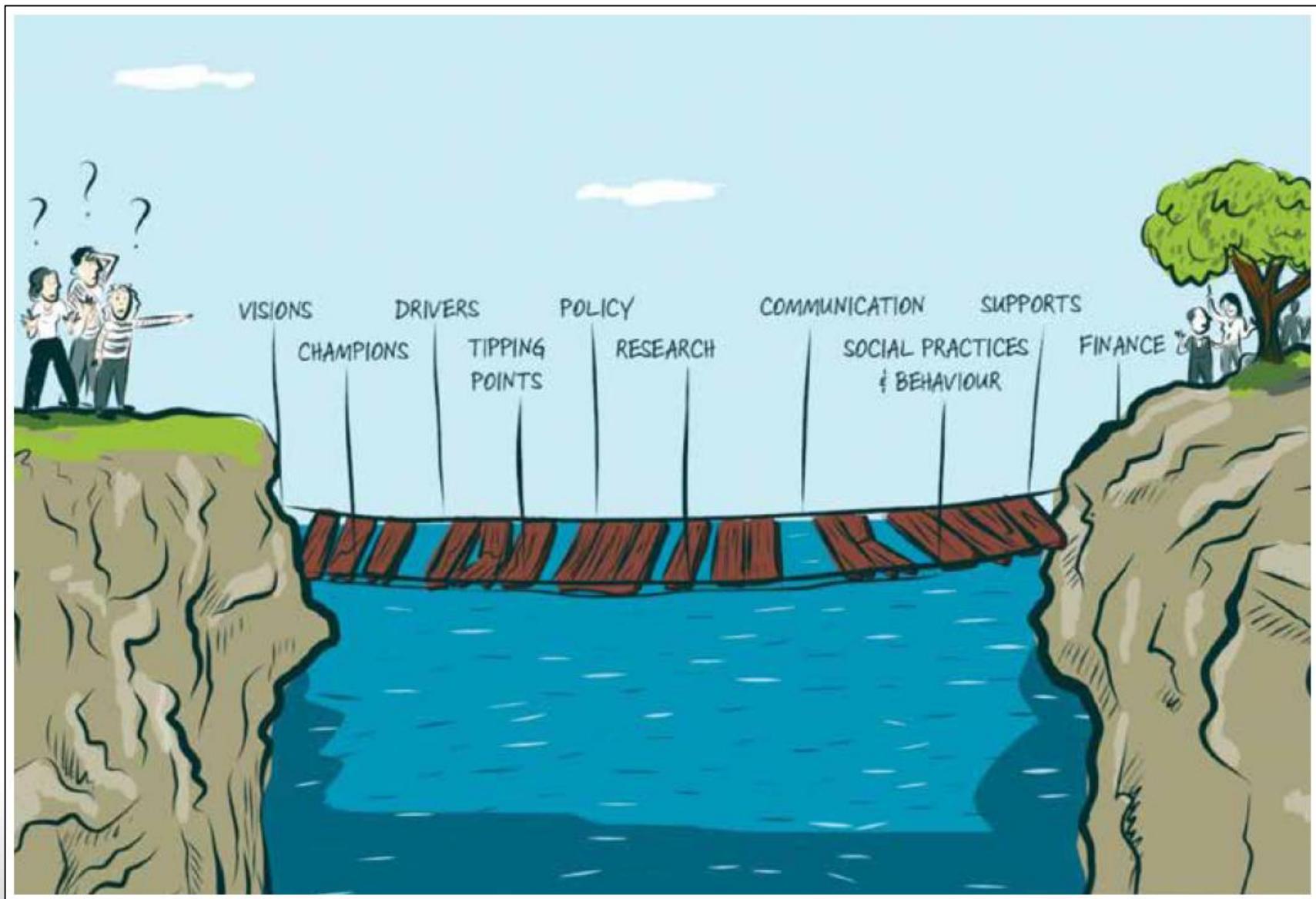
## Climate Action related activities happening over the next few weeks:

- 11 September 8 pm, The Glasshouse, Sligo: Green Party Public Meeting on a sustainable future and food diversification
- 14 September 2 pm. Easkey Street Festival. Come over to our table in the environmental corner and say hi!
- 17 September 7 pm, The Riverside Hotel, Sligo: GLAN Sligo - Public Information Meeting. GLAN is an environmental initiative for communities and businesses
- 20 September 'Fridays For Future' school strike for the Global Climate Strike
- 20 September 6 pm Courthouse Sligo: Culture Night. Please join us for a first preliminary event of our 'Sligo Climate Wisdom' project.
- 21 September 12pm, The Glasshouse, Sligo: People Before Profit Eco-socialist workshop.
- 23 September Sligo Cathedral Parish: 'A Mission with a Mission, An invitation to talk about our planet'.
- 29 September Northside Community Centre, Sligo: Extinction Rebellion (XR) seminar
- 3 October 6 pm, Radisson Blu Hotel, Sligo: 'Climate Change in Sligo' PPN event (Guest speaker Prof. John Sweeney)
- 5 October The Nest, Custom House Quay, Sligo: Skills for Facilitating Climate Action Groups, hosted by Friends of the Earth
- 12 October 10-4 pm, Carrick-on-Shannon: Climate Crisis Symposium. Galilee Spirituality Centre

# Innovative Methods of Community Engagement

- Imagining2050 team in UCC and the Secretariat to the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) – 2019 Workshop
- Recommendations and insights into leveraging different community engagement approaches in relation to climate action
- NDCA recognises 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
- Community participation has gained increased attention in current climate change debates and policy strategies at both national and international levels (CAP / RESS)
- Importance of placing value on the role of intermediaries and partnerships in engaging communities, promoting peer-to-peer networks, and facilitation of dialogue transcending disciplines or specific groups
- **Identify the determinants and conditions for community engagement in Climate Action, i.e. Bridging the Gap**

# Bridging the Gap



# Bridging the Gap

## 1. Visions

A key determinant for community engagement which allows 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’ the future, ‘shared visions’ (Community Charter)

## 2. Champions

Essential to prompt and encourage community engagement; ‘pioneers’, ‘first movers’, ‘early adopters’ and ‘champions’ critical for signalling tipping points for change. ‘Champions’ at different levels are needed, for different people (i.e. small businesses, shop owners, local citizens, young people) e.g. Soren Hermansen

## 3. Drivers

Social factors such as trust, justice, acceptance, perceptions of change and contingency planning. The journey (transition) is necessarily dependent on people ‘wanting to cross’, ‘being able to cross’, and ‘battling old thinking’. ‘Involve people in not just the solutions but also deciding the problem’. (Electric Vehicles)

## 4. Tipping Points

Change is oftentimes reactive and ‘driven by urgency’. A Crisis is more imminent for some people or communities and not for others with the consequence of delaying engagement and creating fractured responses to change. (Covid 19)

# Bridging the Gap

## 5. Policy

Institutional issues such as Policy silos or Disengaged policy makers.

Policy approach issues such as Balancing ‘punitive measures with other supportive measures’ and Clear leadership

Prioritisation issues such as Climate action prioritisation and National dialogue and participation

## 6. Research

The role of research and academia in acknowledging their common goals and act more like a community. Strengthening research impact and having a more engaged approach to research.

## 7. Communication

How the ‘message’ is delivered and disseminated to communities. Negative, scary and recriminatory messages are not useful and can often be counterproductive. Instead objective, consistent, supportive and culturally sensitive messaging is more suitable.

## 8. Social Practices and Behaviour

Develop and expand behavioural change strategies such as energy consumption and mobility practices. Be mindful of these ‘nudge’ strategies whereby it can be perceived that they are overlooking the structurally and socially constrained manner in which social behaviour and practices are embedded, i.e. wider societal issues

# Bridging the Gap

## 9. Supports

Valuable determinants in generating community engagement with climate action:

- Awareness
- Knowledge transfer
- Appropriate language
- Technical skills
- Education at early stage
- Needs based/tailored supports
- Experts based supports
- Safety net

## 10. Finance

Important determinants for supporting climate change action:

- New business models
- Innovation
- How resources are managed
- Re-skilling and training
- Re-branding
- New opportunities
- Incentives
- Ability to access funds
- Insurance
- Improved efficiencies

# Example: Community Energy Hub

## Overall aims and objectives

A natural starting point is to decide what you want to achieve from the project.

*"The aim of this project is to develop a community owned solar PV installation on a community building, with part ownership of the installation by the local community group"*

The next step would be to establish how and why you want to engage with the community and what outcomes you expect from an engagement plan.

*"The aim of the community engagement project is to raise awareness of the project and collect feedback from the community on the plans"*

A review of the evolution of community energy business models for solar PV systems  
[https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/prod-wl-cee/resources/files/2020\\_Nolden - Community\\_energy\\_BM\\_evolution.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/prod-wl-cee/resources/files/2020_Nolden - Community_energy_BM_evolution.pdf)

# Identifying stakeholders

	Stakeholders		Stakeholders
1	Energy/Environmental Champion	10	Exemplar/model communities
2	Religious groups	11	Business actors
3	Community/local groups	12	Networks (business, etc.)
4	Neighbours, friends, family	13	Bridging Organisations
5	Project manager	14	Government agencies
6	Local Authorities	15	European/Global actors
7	First and Second level educators	16	Social Media
8	Higher Education Institutes	17	Skilled facilitators
9	Further Education Providers		

**It is important to understand how each of these groups might be affected by the project and consider using a tailored approach for each group.**

# Approaches to engagement and communication

**Local TV and radio campaigns** - likely to reach a large number of people quickly. Cost has to be considered.

**Leafleting and flyers** - direct targeting of houses ensures that people in specific areas receive relevant information.

**Newsletters** - these can be created monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly and provided either via paper copy or e-mail.

**Community surveys** - these can be used to gauge the needs and views of a large number of people in the community. Good for obtaining quantitative data and encouraging people to engage with a project.

**Public meetings** - enables large numbers of people to have their say and provides an open forum for people to receive information and gather feedback in return. *Meetings can demonstrate that a project has taken into account people's views and enables participants to develop networks and discuss ideas with other members of the community.*

**Community mapping** - maps and photographs of an area are particularly useful for renewable energy developments. It enables people to visualise the final project, explore issues, build consensus and identify areas of conflict.

**Web-based engagement** - social media and web based engagement is a powerful tool for community engagement. It is cost effective and can encourage a broad range of people to participate due to the lower barrier for entry.

# Mulranny SEC

MULRANNY COMMUNITY FUTURES  
Created dynamic community groups

- The Mulranny Community Futures '*Arena*' was opened in 2011
- Some 30 new volunteers entered the arena!
- Futures Steering Group was made up of one rep from each group – co-option



- Green Schools
- Bulb Exchange
- BER workshop

# Samso Islanders



# Drombane Upperchurch Energy Team

1. In the recession, emigration had hit Drombane Upperchurch.
2. Upperchurch-Drombane GAA club had lost many players
3. Motivation: need to create local jobs and reverse emigration
- 4. Local home retrofits, energy money saved stayed in local economy, local jobs retrofitting nationwide
5. Here citizens have taken a more constructive approach by seeking to develop technological and social solutions to their local circumstances and the problems that concern them.

<https://www.sparkchange.ie/project/drombane-upperchurch-energy-team-duet/>

# References

Sustainable Energy Communities Programme Handbook

<https://www.seai.ie/publications/Sustainable%20Energy%20Communities%20Handbook.pdf>

SEC Network Map

<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/sec-map/>

Castleblayney Energy Show

<https://castleblayney.ie/index.php/news/593-energy-show-in-castleblayney-22nd-february>

A Guide to Building Energy Rating for Homeowners

<https://www.seai.ie/publications/Your-Guide-to-Building-Energy-Rating.pdf>

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

[https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/projectsandcentres/imagining2050/InnovativeMethodsofCommunityEngagement\(lowres\).pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/projectsandcentres/imagining2050/InnovativeMethodsofCommunityEngagement(lowres).pdf)

Climate Action Plan 2019 To Tackle Climate Breakdown

<https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Climate%20Action%20Plan%202019.pdf>

Community Energy Hub

<https://hub.communityenergyengland.org/resources/community-engagement/>

Behavioural insights on energy efficiency in the residential sector

<https://www.seai.ie/publications/Behavioural-insights-on-energy-efficiency-in-the-residential-sector.pdf>

# Useful insights

Behavioural insights on energy efficiency in the residential sector

<https://www.seai.ie/publications/Behavioural-insights-on-energy-efficiency-in-the-residential-sector.pdf>

Changing energy behaviour – what works?

<https://www.seai.ie/publications/Changing-Energy-Behaviour.-What-Works..pdf>



# Thank you