

Creative Climate Change II

Evaluating the Impact of the Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change Initiative on Climate Change Engagement, Action & Behaviour Change in Ireland

Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change - Report Year 1

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Acknowledgments

We would like to sincerely thank Creative Ireland for commissioning and funding this research. We gratefully acknowledge support from the Creative Ireland team, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and the Department of the Taoiseach. We gratefully acknowledge support from Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick – Dance Limerick, Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities – From Plan to Do, Field Exchange, The Air We Share and The Eco-Makers Workshop. We are particularly grateful to all the participants who took part in Creative Climate Change research activities. We would also like to thank the following people for their assistance and collaboration with the project: Lily Purcell, Daragh Hayes, and Nollaig Power.

Cite as: Nyhan, M., Mac Mahon, J., Burke, M. and Lydon, M. (2025). Creative Climate Change II - Analysing the Impact of the Creative Climate Action II: Agents of Change Initiative on Climate Change Engagement, Action and Behaviour Change in Ireland - Report Year One. University College Cork.

Front cover photo: Wilderland. Image by Elaine Harrington.

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Executive Summary

This Creative Climate Change report presents key insights and learnings from University College Cork's engagement with six Creative Ireland-funded *Creative Climate Action* projects. The six projects are funded as part of the *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* initiative, which supports creative, cultural and artistic projects that build awareness around climate change and empowers citizens to foster meaningful behavioural changes. The projects assessed are Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate; Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick – Dance Limerick; Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities – From Plan to Do; Field Exchange; The Air We Share; and The Eco-Makers Workshop.

The analysis of these six projects found that arts, culture and creativity can be powerful catalysts of climate action. The creative nature of the projects was fundamental in bringing multiple stakeholders and actors across all levels of society together in active and collaborative sustainability dialogue and engagement. By connecting with participants on a deep emotional level, the creative elements of the projects were found to provide a unique inspirational frame that motivated people to adopt and pursue further sustainable actions. Project activities were found to inspire and motivate participants through a sense of fun, awe and enjoyment. Participants felt more confident and empowered to take climate action, as well as a greater sense of collective efficacy through partaking in group activities such as practical workshops, co-creation of artworks and co-design events. *Creative Climate Action* participants were also found to gain new perspectives, knowledge and skills from the artists and creative facilitators, thereby enhancing their understanding of the issues and increasing their capacity to take meaningful actions. Participant engagement in the *Creative*

Climate Action programme was achieved by engaging people on cognitive, emotional and practical levels.

The projects assessed were found to deliver interventions which progress Ireland's *Climate Action Plan*. We found that the projects fostered social dialogue that empowered citizens, communities, businesses and organisations to pursue effective climate action. Through artistic and creative initiatives, the projects also equipped people with the skills, knowledge and affirmative mindset required to participate in and benefit from Ireland's future net-zero economy.

A key principle of the *Climate Action Plan's* just transition framework is to ensure that social dialogue on climate action is representative across all Irish society. The National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) is a key mechanism for facilitating this process at local and national levels. Our analysis of the *Creative Climate Action* projects found them to be highly successful interventions that supported equity, social inclusion, and a just transition. The projects recognised that everyone is not the same and provided provided resources to communicate and engage participants in climate action in a nuanced and inclusive manner.



Puffin Rock Habitats. Image by Cartoon Saloon



The Eco-Makers Workshop. Image by AK Inspired Ability

In our thematic analysis of participant interviews and researcher observations, we found that the formation of novel spaces was a significant factor in the effectiveness of the projects' interventions. This refers to the unique creative and social spaces provided by the projects that helped to foster greater social investment in climate action. The novel spaces enhanced social connection, dialogue, co-generation of solutions and knowledge sharing through creative activities, thereby demonstrating the power of collaboration to participants and increasing their collective ability to pursue climate action. The effectiveness of these spaces assured a sustained degree of local and community engagement, with participants noting a sense of pride and ownership that helped to boost meaningful engagement with their local *Creative Climate Action* initiative. We also found that these initiatives helped to build capacity and know-how which are essential for developing low carbon communities.

The importance of effective and trusted communicators for engaging participants in *Creative Climate Action* projects was a major theme in our analysis. 'Creatives as mediators' refers to the creative personnel, project team members, and facilitators who made information about climate change and sustainability topics clear, relatable and accessible

for their cohorts. By successfully connecting to the cohorts' local identities, place, values, levels of awareness and understanding, they ensured a greater level of engagement. The projects also effectively coupled creative initiatives with insights from trusted messengers such as expert speakers and community figures, assuring greater trust in the climate change and sustainability communications.

Importantly, we also found that the projects cultivated a sense of connection to nature and the environment, thereby motivating participants to apply ecologically sound practices which can help to protect biodiversity and the environment.

This report is also based upon preliminary insights from a *Creative Climate Action* post-experience survey which was designed to provide insight into respondents' underlying perceptions and behaviours in relation to climate change. We found that participants overwhelmingly asserted increased motivation and capacity to take climate action and make changes to their behaviour or lifestyle after attending an event or participating in a project. Over three-quarters of participants felt empowered and supported to take practical actions on environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues. Two-thirds of people who attended the projects in a work capacity acknowledged that the experience gave them additional skills and knowledge to enable them to make practical environmentally sustainable changes in their own work, business or organisation. This shows the importance of *Creative Climate Action* initiatives in not only increasing motivation and building capacity for enabling lower-carbon communities, but also in supporting businesses and organisations in their respective transitions to more sustainable models.




In our assessment of the first *Creative Climate Action Fund*, we noted that 'it is essential to recognise the significant potential of the arts and cultural sector in fostering new and alternative responses to climate change action'. This report reinforces this conclusion further, with our findings demonstrating that arts and creativity can be significant catalysts of climate action and an essential means by which the Government can deliver on key aspects of the *Climate Action Plan*. It is evident from our current evaluation that the arts and creative sectors have significant power as transformative *agents of change* to help foster innovative and locally relevant responses to climate change action.

1. Key Findings

This section includes key findings from our evaluation of *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change*. The research aimed to understand the role of the arts, cultural and creative sectors in supporting climate action and the just transition towards a sustainable and net-zero future in Ireland. In 2024, five of our researchers attended 25 *Creative Climate Action* events hosted by the six selected ‘deep dive’ projects. Data was collected through 90 *Creative Climate Action* experience surveys, 42 interviews and 25 participant observations. The following summarises the key findings from the data analyses.

Key Findings:	
<div>Arts and Creativity - Catalysts of Climate Action</div> <div></div>	<p>Arts and creativity provided a unique inspirational frame to take climate action by connecting with participants on a deep personal and emotional level.</p> <p>The artistic and creative aspects of the projects proved vital in uniting stakeholders across society in impactful climate and sustainability efforts.</p>
<div>Climate Action Plan</div> <div></div>	<p>The initiative delivered on key aspects of the Government's <i>Climate Action Plan</i> through inclusive engagement of participants in climate action at national, regional and community levels.</p> <p>The projects engaged diverse audiences through thoughtful, original and creative communications. They showcased exemplars and built capacity for community-led climate action.</p>



Key Findings:	
<div>Just Transition</div> <div></div>	<p>The projects supported equity, social inclusion, and the just transition by tailoring their approach to participants' capacity, needs, abilities, and climate awareness.</p> <p>Targeted socially inclusive approaches achieved high levels of engagement, increased understanding, and increased uptake and motivation to adopt climate compatible behaviours.</p>
<div>Novel Spaces</div> <div></div>	<p>The initiative generated unique creative and social spaces that fostered greater social investment in climate action.</p> <p>The novel spaces enabled enhanced dialogue, social connection, knowledge-sharing, learning, collaboration and positive feedback mechanisms. The sharing of successful climate action initiatives renewed participants' motivation to adopt climate compatible behaviour.</p>
<div>Community and Organisational Engagement</div> <div></div>	<p><i>Creative Climate Action</i> initiatives fostered community pride and ownership, thereby increasing engagement and motivation for further climate action. The fund also built capacity and expertise for developing low-carbon communities.</p> <p><i>Creative Climate Action</i> initiatives supported businesses and organisations in their respective transitions to more sustainable models. The artistic and creative nature of the projects enabled participants to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in and benefit from the future net-zero economy.</p>




Key Findings:	
<div>Creatives as Mediators and Trusted Messengers</div> <div></div>	<p>Creatives and project team members proved to be highly effective mediators who delivered information about climate change and sustainability in a clear, relatable and accessible manner.</p> <p>To engage stakeholders effectively, projects relied on trusted figures including expert speakers and community leaders in climate action discussions.</p>
<div>Nature and the Environment</div> <div></div>	<p><i>Creative Climate Action</i> experiences cultivated and enhanced a sense of connection to nature, thereby motivating participants to apply ecologically sound practices that help protect biodiversity and the environment. Nature-related activities were important for engaging wider audiences.</p> <p>Participants reported a sense of improved wellbeing. This was particularly effective in addressing the needs of marginalised and underrepresented groups, where ensuring their sense of wellbeing was critical for engagement while also helping to build their resilience. Co-benefits generated by the activities, such as enhanced wellbeing, are important for engaging people in climate action.</p>
<div>Motivation and Capacity to Act</div> <div></div>	<p>Participants overwhelmingly asserted intentions to take climate action or make changes to their behaviour or lifestyle after attending an event or participating in a project.</p> <p>A wide range of participants, including business owners, people from marginalised groups and local communities felt empowered and supported to take practical actions on environmental, climate and/or sustainability issues.</p>
<div>Funding</div> <div></div>	<p>Our assessment found that the short-term nature of the current <i>Creative Climate Action</i> funding model (1-2 years) was an obstacle to long-term impact.</p> <p>Short-term contracts hindered projects' ability to attract talented individuals to key roles. The momentum built by the initiatives waned due to the project funding ending.</p>

Table 1: Key findings from evaluation of Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change



The Air We Share. Image by Ciarán MacChoncarraige



2. Recommendations

This section includes key recommendations from our evaluation of *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change*.

Creative Climate Action delivers key aspects of the Climate Action Plan

- We recommend that the Government continue to fund Creative Ireland's *Creative Climate Action Fund* initiative. This will enable Creative Ireland to build on its success of effectively supporting Ireland's *Climate Action Plan*, particularly in terms of its Citizen Engagement and Just Transition goals.
- All future projects funded as part of a *Creative Climate Action Fund* initiative should integrate a Citizen Engagement Plan into their objectives. Creative Ireland should provide clear guidance on its implementation.

Leverage the power of arts and creativity

- We recommend that participatory arts, creative and cultural interventions should be encouraged to engage citizens in climate action, as they connect with people on deep personal and practical levels.
- The implementation of bespoke, creative and participatory arts-based interventions that connect with marginalised and underserved groups should be recognised as an essential aid in the just transition.
- Artists and creative practitioners should be actively supported to participate in future climate and sustainability interventions in order to facilitate communication and understanding of relevant issues.

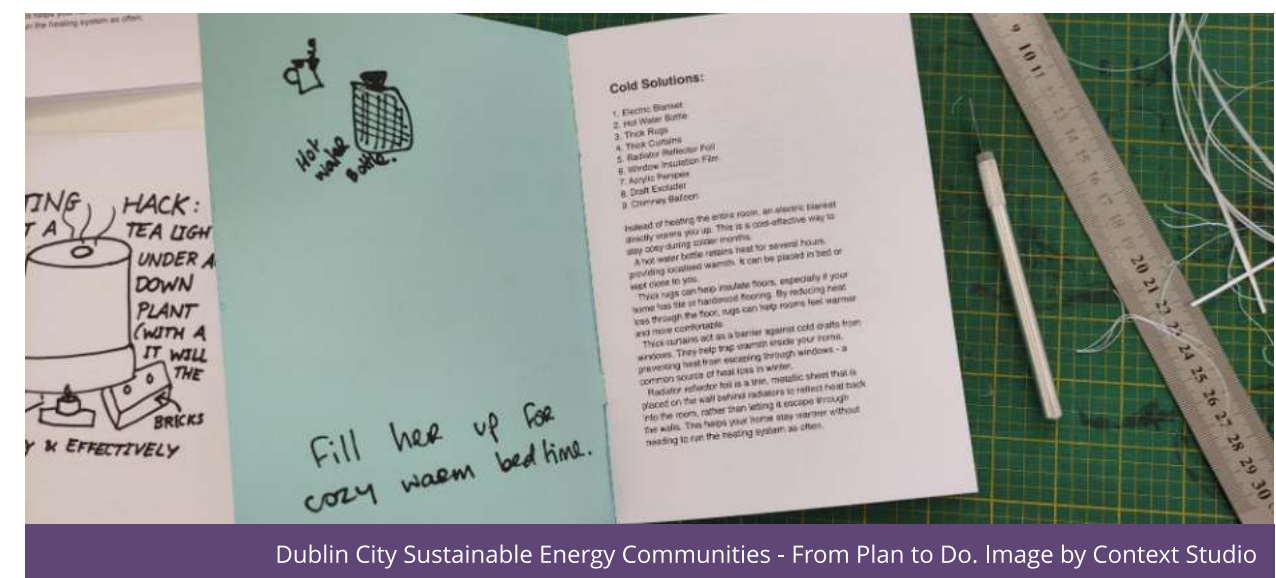
- We recommend the promotion of group activities that involve participatory arts, co-design and co-creation methods to help increase individuals' and communities' sense of efficacy, social investment and motivation to take climate and pro-environmental actions.
- Businesses and organisations should be encouraged to consider the effectiveness of the *Creative Climate Action Fund*, which has demonstrated how arts, culture and creativity can be key drivers in building capacity to achieve a net-zero transition.

Longer term funding needed

- While the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* enables meaningful engagement, we recommend a revision of the current one- and two-year funding model. To enable long-term impact, funding bodies should move away from short-term investments that hinder project stability.
- When implementing funding strategies, Government Departments and agencies should consider the ability of a project to attract skilled professionals when implementing funding strategies. A long-term funding model (3-5 years) would support commitment to project goals, while also strengthening teams and empowering participants.

Leverage local authorities and collective action

- We recommend that all 31 local authorities implement participatory arts, creativity and cultural interventions on climate change in order to raise community engagement levels and inspire collective responses.

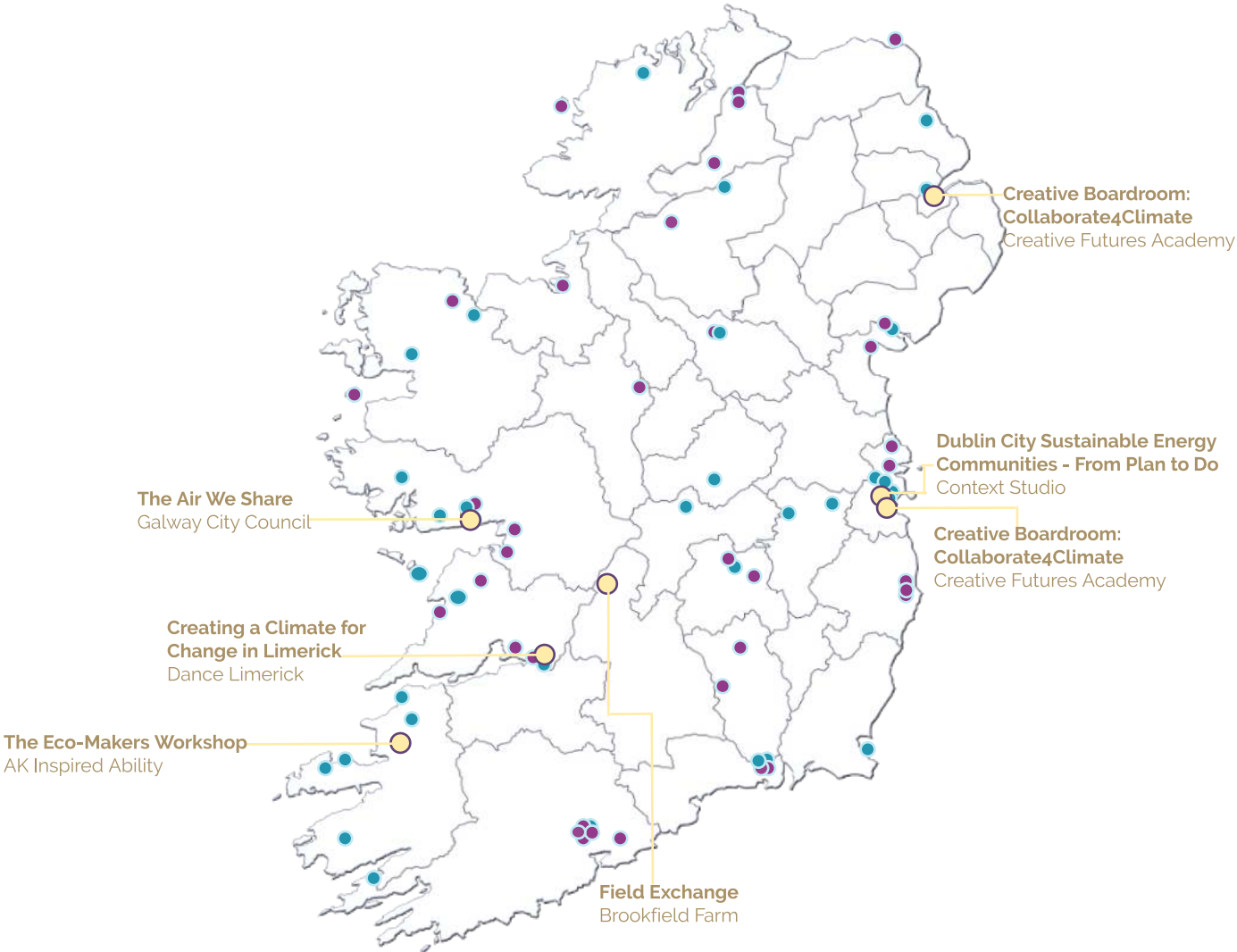


Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do. Image by Context Studio

3. Introduction

The Creative Ireland Programme, based in the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media, is an all-of-government initiative which places creativity at the centre of public policy. The core proposition is that participation in cultural and creative activity promotes individual, community and national wellbeing. In 2021, the *Creative Climate Action Fund* was launched by Creative Ireland through a collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. This funded fifteen creative and cultural projects that aimed to meaningfully connect people with the profound changes that are happening because of climate change and transform that connection into climate action. In 2022, the *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* initiative was launched, funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Department of the Taoiseach.

The *Agents of Change* initiative paired creative minds with experts in climate science, sustainability and biodiversity, and supported 42 projects under two strands: Strand 1, Ignite, and Strand 2, Spark. The Ignite strand supported 19 large-scale interdisciplinary projects with extensive public engagement on a national level, with some of these running into 2025. Three Ignite projects, funded under the Shared Island Initiative and the Department of the Taoiseach, brought people together to take actionable measures around common concerns that would benefit the whole island of Ireland. The Spark strand funded 23 projects which lasted 12 months, to pilot new ideas for public engagement at a local, community, or community-of-practice scale. These were completed by the end of 2024. The projects assessed in this report include three Ignite projects, Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, Field Exchange and The Air We Share, and three Spark projects, namely Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick – Dance Limerick, Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities – From Plan to Do and The Eco-Makers Workshop.



Spark

- Reimagining Mount Mellick's Christmas Tree, Laois
- Youghal Pathways to Building Community Resilience to Climate Change, Cork
- Four Seasons in Cranmore Community Co-op Garden, Sligo
- Turas - Journeys in Stewardship, Clare/Galway
- Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick, Limerick
- The Greenhouse at Theatre Royal, Waterford
- Galway Bay is Calling, Galway
- We Built This City on Rock and Coal, Antrim/Donegal/Mayo/Galway/Kerry/Cork
- Design Declares Ireland, Nationwide
- Renew Bunratty, Clare/Limerick
- Gleann a' Phúca, Cork
- BluePrint, Mayo/Derry
- Plan-it-Play, Wicklow
- Room with a View, Clare
- The Eco-Makers, Kerry
- Kilcoole Creative Little Tern Colony Project, Wicklow
- Puffin Rock Habitat, Kilkenny/Derry/Dublin/Nationwide
- Til' Now, Kilkenny
- Restoring Cavan's Boglands, Cavan
- Cycle to the Sea Wayfinding Sculptures, Cork
- Louth Urban Food Sanctuary, Louth
- Demolition: Who Knows, Who Cares?, Dublin
- Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do, Dublin

Ignite

- Act II Waterford, Waterford
- Bog Bothy, Westmeath/Offaly/Kildare/Nationwide
- Brilliant Ballybunion, Kerry
- Cascade, Mayo
- Climate Design Lab, Kildare
- Creative Coastal Resilience, Kerry
- Dinnseanchas: Envisioning the Uplands, Nationwide
- House on the Beach, Dublin/Antrim/Wexford
- Divergently Together, Laois/Cavan/Fermanagh/Waterford/Galway/Dublin
- Shifting Tides and Sea Change, Louth/Down
- Biodiversity Artist in Residence, Dublin
- Immersion: Experience Climate Action, Nationwide
- WILDERLAND, Mayo
- Field Exchange, Tipperary
- Ballymun is Brilliant, Dublin
- The Air We Share, Galway
- Siolta Glasa, Limerick
- Good Life 2030 Ireland, Cork/Galway/Dublin
- Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, Dublin/Belfast

Fig 1: Map showing the geographical distribution of the 42 Creative Climate Action projects across Ireland. The six deep-dive projects which the research team worked with are highlighted in gold. Spark projects are in purple and Ignite projects are in teal.

The arts and creative communities play an extremely valuable role in enabling dialogue and engaging diverse audiences in new perspectives and action on climate change. Researchers highlight the effectiveness of participatory arts in engaging the public in climate-conscious behavior (Burke et al., 2018) and note the impact of place-based art in driving local climate action (Smith, McDonagh & Brookes, 2023). Artistic and creative practices act as a transformative mechanism for engaging people with climate change on a deep, emotional and personal level (Bentz, 2020). Individual engagement with climate change requires cognitive, emotional and practical engagement (Mac Mahon et al., 2025), with emotional engagement considered critical to climate action (Brosch and Steg, 2021).

In the first phase of research by University College Cork on the *Creative Climate Action Fund 2021/2022* initiative, it was found that the events had a significant impact on audience members and participants in terms of increased awareness, positive engagement and motivation to act in relation to climate change. The experiences enabled participants to approach climate change in new and proactive ways facilitated by the unique knowledge, perspectives and creative practices of artists. Site-specific context enhanced a sense of place and engagement with issues of local relevance, as well as sustainability and climate

action solutions and community connectedness. Experiences also enhanced bottom-up activism and empowerment in relation to climate action.

As with the *Creative Climate Action Fund 2021/2022*, our second phase of research is identifying ways in which the experiences enable potential behavioural change in participants at individual and collective levels. With the pressing urgency of climate change and the risk of failing to meet our national carbon emissions reduction targets, it is essential now to look beyond the individual or group, integrate a systems-thinking approach and begin to identify where *Creative Climate Action* interventions might enable transformative change at a systems and societal level. The overarching aim of this research is to capture the impact of the arts, culture and creativity on climate change engagement, action and behaviour change in Ireland which can inform systems-level change.

Another major challenge that Ireland faces on the path to climate neutrality is ensuring an equitable and just transition to a sustainable future, taking all citizens into account, including those from marginalised or disadvantaged communities and people with intellectual disabilities. The Government of Ireland's *Climate Action Plan* highlights the need for a just transition which engages all citizens in Ireland. The Plan highlights the need for an integrated, structured and evidence-based approach which identifies and responds to just transition needs as they emerge.

In this second phase of research, we sought to understand the broader impact of the *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* initiative and how it can contribute toward wider societal transformation, with interventions that connect people, problems and solutions in an inclusive manner. In response to the *Citizen's Assembly on Climate Change*, *Climate Change in the Irish Mind* and the ongoing National Dialogue on Climate Action, this work also points to the necessity of ensuring that all citizens' needs and voices are reflected and provide a guiding underpinning for future *Creative Climate Action* initiatives. By tracing wider interactions between the arts in climate action in the long-term, this enables a more inclusive integration of this sector into climate change research, including the wider Climate Action Fund programme and other larger initiatives and partnerships across Europe, such as Julie's Bicycle, Creative Carbon Scotland and ACT - Art, Climate, Transition. The findings from this second phase are presented in this report.



Dinnseanchas: Envisioning the Uplands. Image by Hometree



4. The Deep Dive Projects

A "deep dive" review of six of the 42 *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* projects was conducted. This review included an assessment of three Ignite and three Spark projects. An overview of each of the six projects is included below with further information available on their respective websites.

Ignite projects

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate

Lead organisation: Creative Futures Academy

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate was a pioneering Ignite partnership project between The Institute of Directors Ireland, The Institute of Directors Northern Ireland and Creative Futures Academy, also funded under the Shared-Island Initiative of the Department of the Taoiseach. The programme brought together 24 chartered directors with students, artists, designers, entrepreneurs and innovators with the shared ambition of creating actionable solutions for our planet. A key objective was to reshape behaviours and attitudes so that participants felt empowered to promote change within their direct spheres of influence, and beyond their immediate authority, both as leaders and community collaborators. The project culminated in a public exhibition at the NCAD Gallery, and highlighted that the climate crisis is not only a challenge; it is an opportunity for transformative change.

<https://creativefuturesacademy.ie/partnerproject/creative-boardroom-collaborate4climate/>

Field Exchange

Lead organisation: Brookfield Farm

Building on its first iteration in 2022, Field Exchange 2024-2025 is an Ignite project that connects farmers, artists, agri-technical experts and the public. Led by farmer and agricultural scholar Ailbhe Gerrard, their mission is to help agricultural and rural communities become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and use creativity to support their transition to sustainable practices. The project brings together 10 farmers in a community of practice across several 'Exchange Days' to address the biodiversity crisis. Field Exchange partnered with the Irish Agroforestry Ireland Forum (IAF), the Dry-Stone Wall Association of Ireland (DSWAI), internationally renowned artists Ackroyd & Harvey along with designers Elements of Action. In late August, early September 2024, they held a festival on the grounds of Brookfield Farm with agroforestry demonstrations, craft workshops, panel discussions, farm walks, guest speakers, visual arts, music performances, crafts, local food, and site-specific art works. The project will also feature a second Field Exchange Festival.

<https://www.brookfield.farm/field-exchange/>

The Air We Share

Lead organisation: Galway City Council

The Air We Share is a two year Ignite project that engages with the increasingly important issue of air quality and pollution through artistic interventions, citizen science and community action, brought together by an interdisciplinary consortium of local partners. The project is led by Galway City Council along with the Galway Arts Centre, the University of Galway's Centre for Climate and Air Pollution Studies and Physics, the Centre for Creative Technology, the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics, the Galway Culture Company and Westside Resource Centre. The Air We Share seeks to develop creative and innovative responses to climate and environmental issues spanning culture, technology and citizen science in collaboration with the communities of Westside, Galway City. The programme supports three artist residencies. They will engage with the communities of Westside and creatively respond to scientific research on air quality and climate conducted by local citizens and climate scientists from the University of Galway.

<https://www.theairweshare.ie/>

Spark projects

Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick

Lead organisation: Dance Limerick

Throughout 2024 Dance Limerick's Spark project, Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick, aimed to promote just sustainability transitions and behavioural change by enhancing climate literacy and supporting climate awareness and understanding within community development. Led by Dance Limerick's Bridge Artist Katy Hewison - a team of researchers, dancers and visual artists engaged local groups and communities in Limerick city and county through a series of easy-access dance, audio and visual storytelling workshops. Through these creative mediums, human beings' inherent and deep interconnection with nature, as well as the biodiverse systems that we depend on, were contextualised and amplified through engaging and joyful formats. Dance Limerick worked in partnership with Limerick Sports Partnership, Moyross Community Hub, Watch House Cross Library, Limerick City Library, Croom Family Resource Centre, and Limerick Youth Theatre. The project culminated in sharing events at Dance Limerick and Limerick City Gallery of Art, and a booklet is being produced in early 2025 summarising the project's activities, visual artwork and research findings.

<https://dancelimerick.ie/dl-bridge/creating-a-climate-for-change-in-limerick/>



Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate Exhibition. Image by Leon Farrell/Photocall Ireland

Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do

Lead organisation: Context Studio

Launched in Autumn 2023, this Spark project partnered Context Studio with the Cabra Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) in Dublin, Zero Carbon, Dublin City Council, and Codema, to prototype scalable mechanisms that move from intent to action on climate change. Using service design principles as the creative medium, *From Plan to Do* adopted a research, co-design and prototyping approach, thereby directly engaging sustainable energy community members to engage their communities and generate solutions for achieving decarbonisation goals. Their research engaged 27 SEC's nationwide and uncovered valuable insight as to what helps communities achieve meaningful engagement and action. This was followed by a co-design workshop with a cohort of renters in Dublin 7 which resulted in the co-creation of a renters' booklet, with helpful tips and tricks for renters to conserve energy within their homes. *From Plan to Do* produced a website that provides accessible information and helpful advice for budding Sustainable Energy Communities across Ireland to help them take meaningful action and foster changes in the transition to Net Zero.

<https://www.fromplantodo.ie/>

The Eco-Makers Workshop

Lead organisation: AK Inspired Ability, Tralee

The Eco-Makers Workshop was a Spark project that formed part of Inspired's eco-visual arts programme. Through innovative and creative workshops, people with intellectual disabilities were empowered to combine recycled-art with sustainability principles in order to make alternative products which reduce energy use and demand on finite resources. AK Inspired Ability worked with artists and woodworkers in activities that focused on promoting upcycling, zero waste and making sustainable alternatives to everyday items, such as beeswax candle-making, forestry art, and innovative creations using recycled plastics. A series of horticulture and harvesting workshops onsite at Inspired's Biodiversity Learning Hub, enabled participants to understand the interconnection between biodiversity and the sustainable and nutritional value of locally produced organic food. These workshops also enhanced their transferable work skills for future employment opportunities. Participants curated and presented the successful 'A Voice in Climate Change' art exhibition at Siamsa Tíre, Tralee in Spring 2024, which showcased their diverse array of artwork, eco-craft and photography.

<https://www.flipsnack.com/ECA5DA5569B/inspireds-biodiversity-learning-hub/full-view.html>

5. Research Methods

Surveys, Interviews and Observations

In order to discover key insights from the *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* initiative, several sources and data collection methods were employed. A mixed methods approach drawing from qualitative and quantitative data was used. Data requirements included participant observations; structured and semi-structured interviews; surveys and questionnaires. Triangulation of different methods was applied to two (or more) methods to compare and check the results. Data was collected by engaging with project teams, participants in project events, as well as general audiences at events.

The survey developed for this research was a post-experience survey including questions designed to provide insight into respondents' perceptions and behaviours in relation to climate change. Some questions were adapted from the EPA's Climate Change in the Irish Mind survey and recent Eurobarometer surveys (Leiserowitz et al., 2021; European Commission, 2019). In addition, questions were adapted from the Creative Carbon Scotland Beacons Project and relevant projects in the literature (Burke et al., 2018; Curtis, 2006; Sommer et al., 2019, 2021).



Four Seasons in Cranmore Community Co-Op Garden. Image by Kids Own



UCC research team members at the Field Exchange Festival. Image by Michelle Burke

Bespoke Approach - Fostering Inclusivity

For data collection, it is important to emphasise that a bespoke approach was required to meet the needs of cohorts who were unable to complete surveys independently. This included people with intellectual disabilities and those from more marginalised groups in society. Recognising this, the research team collected interviews from people who were closely associated with participants, such as parents and support workers, as well as conducting participant observations at the associated *Creative Climate Action* events attended.

It is also crucial to highlight the level of trust-building in communities that takes place between project teams and participants, where continuous engagement and time is poured into ensuring that people feel safe and supported during their participation. To complement our research, the UCC Creative Climate Change team members were greatly assisted by project teams with their own provision of valuable data and evidence gathered as trusted figures from participants during projects.

Some non-public facing *Creative Climate Action* events, workshops and experiences were tailored to smaller groups. Although the evaluation of these was time-consuming, it was however extremely important to capture the tremendous value and impact that these interventions had on individuals (see Figure 4).

Five of our researchers collected data from 25 different *Creative Climate Action* Events including participatory workshops, live demonstrations, community gatherings, festivals, live performances, and presentations. Ethical approval for the research was granted by University College Cork's Social Research Ethics Committee. The methodology visualisation (see Figure 2) illustrates the volume of data we collected, including surveys, participant observations and interviews, as well as the various stages of our research methodology. This consisted of the initial Study Design stage involving elements such as a literature review and data collection methodology formulation, through to the Data Analysis stage of examining, interpreting, and evaluating the data, and finally the generation of key recommendations after synthesising all research findings.

Methodology Visualisation

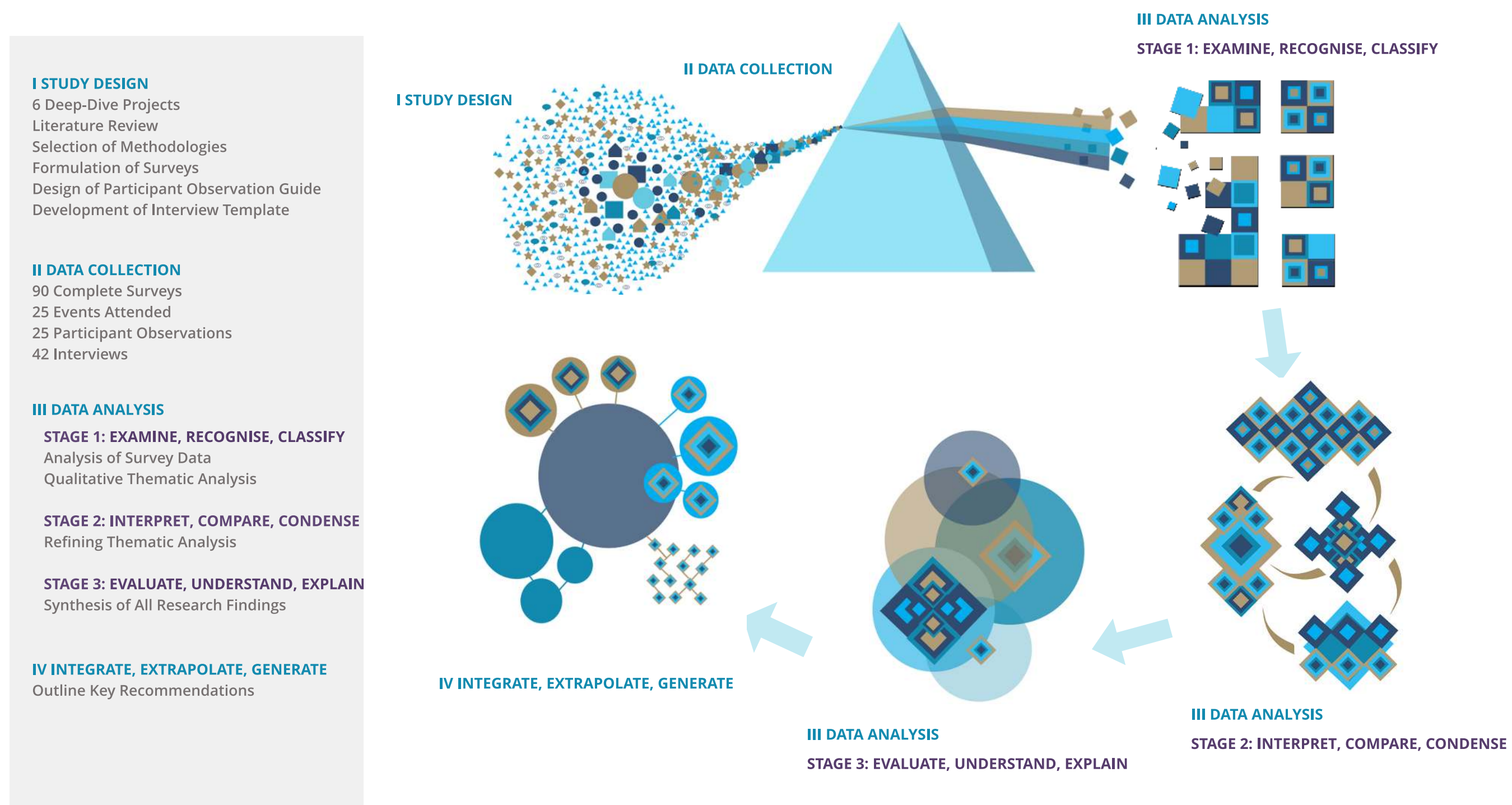


Fig 2: Methodology isualisation illustrates the different stages of the research methodology employed.



Analytical Framework

Understanding whether the *Creative Climate Action* initiative brought about behavioural change in the target audience and participants is a key focus area in our research. When conducting analysis of the first *Creative Climate Action* initiative, the Behaviour Change Wheel from Michie et al.'s (2011) COM-B Behaviour System Model was adopted to establish the analytical strategy (Nyhan et al., 2023). This model was originally produced for public health behaviour change intervention research and has since been adapted to climate mitigation including energy system change (see Axon et al., 2018). The model is framed around interventions aimed at overcoming obstacles in three conditions: motivation, opportunity, and capability/capacity to take action.

For initial data analysis of *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change*, we employed a thematic analysis methodology to uncover strong themes emerging organically from the data, without restricting it to the three conditions from the COM-B model. This enabled us to uncover findings that were not necessarily tied to motivation, opportunity and capability/capacity to change. However, we did notice a trend whereby most of the findings fell naturally into one, two or all three of the conditions. As our research is ongoing, we plan to apply the COM-B model again for further and more detailed data analysis, which will be available in our next report. We will also integrate the COM-B model with a leverage point framework (Meadows, 1999) in order to identify a range of potential access points where *Creative Climate Action* initiatives can contribute toward broader systems-level behavioural and transformative change.

Individual behaviour has been found to be a catalyst for transformative change through channels such as an individual's ring of confidence (including family, social networks, work organisations) and through peer-to-peer communications (Backen and Vollen, 2024). Figure 3. demonstrates Scales of Impact (Newman & Weber, 2023) showing how *Creative Climate Action* projects can act as catalysts for transformative change.

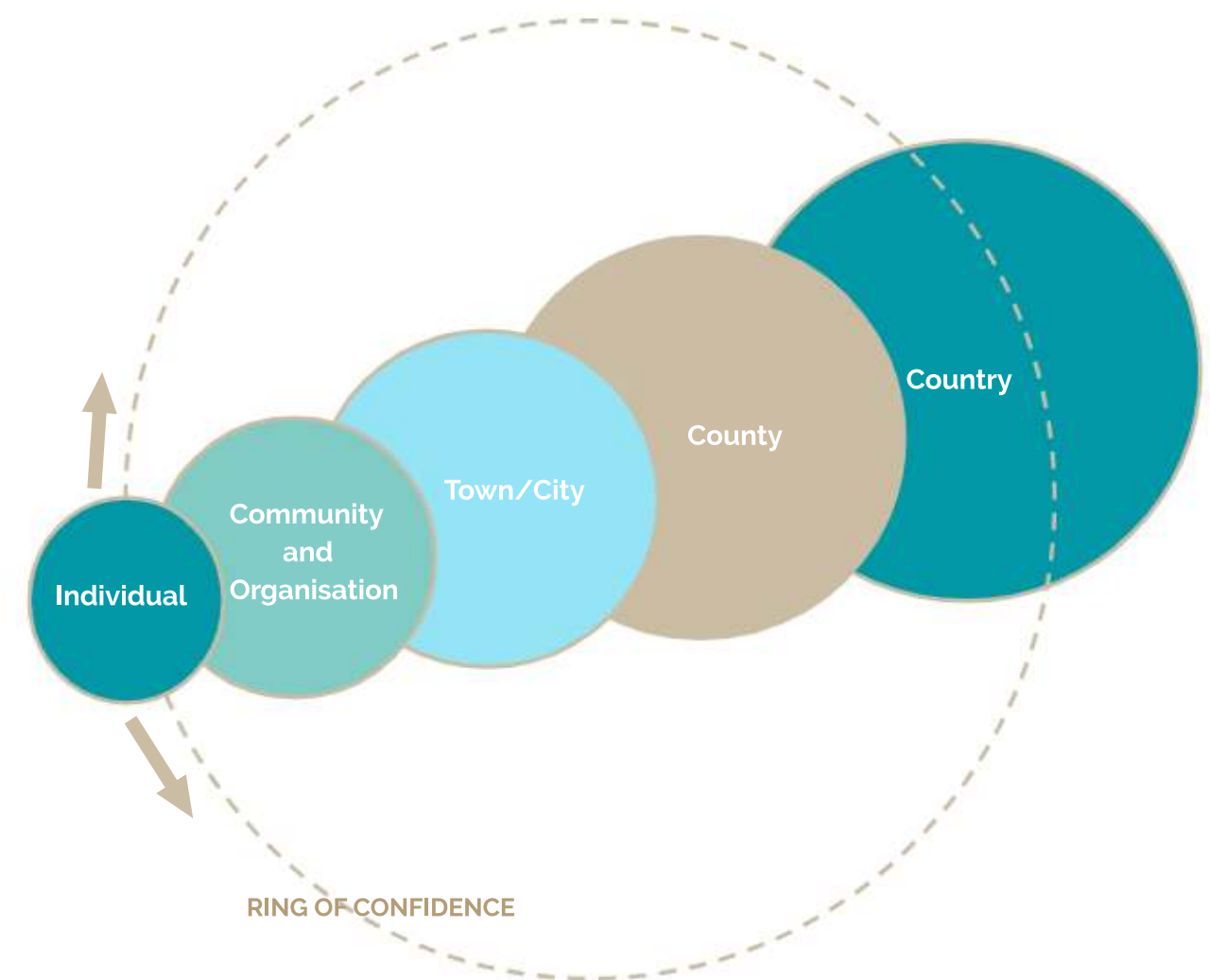


Fig 3. Scales of Impact visual showing how the *Creative Climate Action* projects can catalyse transformative change. The impact extends beyond the individual outwards to their 'ring of confidence' that encompasses others across wider society - from family and friends to peers, community and work organisations, social networks, business and state bodies. This visual has been adopted from Newman and Weber (2023).

6. Survey Results

In this section, we summarise our findings from 90 surveys analysed. For the research presented in this report, Creative Climate Change researchers attended 25 *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* events. These events included public facing workshops, weekend festivals, summer schools, focus groups and more.

Survey Distribution, Respondent Inclusivity & Layout

Depending on the nature of the event attended, a sole researcher attended an event or when required multiple researchers attended. This enabled survey distribution and establishing of contact with project participants and teams. We would like to acknowledge the support of all project teams who facilitated our attendance at events.

The *Creative Climate Action* experience survey was designed to be as inclusive as possible, with both a short-form survey and long-form version distributed to participants depending on the circumstance. The vast majority of surveys collected were of the long form version. However, it must be noted that given the nature of certain projects we were unable to distribute surveys among some participants. This is due to the inclusive nature of some of the projects, notably The Eco-Makers Workshop and Creating a Climate for Change - Dance Limerick, which sought to engage persons with intellectual disabilities and those with literacy difficulties. As outlined throughout the report, we adopted a bespoke approach to data collection to assure valuable insight from those unable to complete surveys was obtained by other means – most notably interviews.

As noted, almost all participants completed the long form version of *Creative Climate Action* experience survey. There are five parts to this survey with 27 questions. In this report, we present results from 14 of these 27 questions. This selective approach best services the needs of this report with a more comprehensive analysis of all survey findings to be presented in the Year 2 report. This analysis will include further surveys that we anticipate will be collected as some projects progress.

To further contextualise the results of the *Creative Climate Action* experience survey, when applicable we present results alongside findings from a survey conducted as part of *Creative C-Change - Analysing the Impact of the Creative Climate Action Initiative on Climate Change Awareness, Engagement & Action in Ireland* and *Climate Change in the Irish Mind: Wave 2, Report 1*.



Turas - Journeys in Stewardship. Image by Eamon Ward



Gleann a' Phúca. Image by Julie Forrester

General Perceptions of Climate Change and Impact of the Arts/Creative Experience

As evident in the survey results, the majority of those who attended *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* events recognise the pressing nature of climate change and acknowledge that actions are required. There is also evidence that those who attended the arts/creative experiences were inspired and enthusiastic for the future and made meaningful connections within their communities. They also acknowledged an enhanced willingness to do what is right for themselves and their community after attending the respective events.

A significant portion of survey respondents noted that they planned to take climate action or make changes to their behaviour or lifestyle after attending an event or participating in the project. These changes include reducing food waste, avoiding buying certain products, reducing energy and fuel consumption in their homes, consuming more food with a low environmental impact, and more.

Over half of survey respondents indicated that they attended events/experiences in a work capacity and agreed that the event was impactful for them in terms of their own work, organisation or business. Two-thirds of those who attended in a work capacity believe that the arts/creative experience gave them skills and knowledge to make practical changes towards sustainability in their own work, business or organisation. Importantly, over three-quarters of respondents felt that applying creative practices can help to change mindsets in relation to climate change and/or sustainability within their business or work. This signals the potential for long-term impacts.

When paired alongside findings from *Creative C-Change - Analysing the Impact of the Creative Climate Action Initiative on Climate Change Awareness, Engagement & Action in Ireland* and *Climate Change in the Irish Mind: Wave 2, Report 1*, the results show that art and creative experiences are an essential means by which to communicate messaging around climate change.

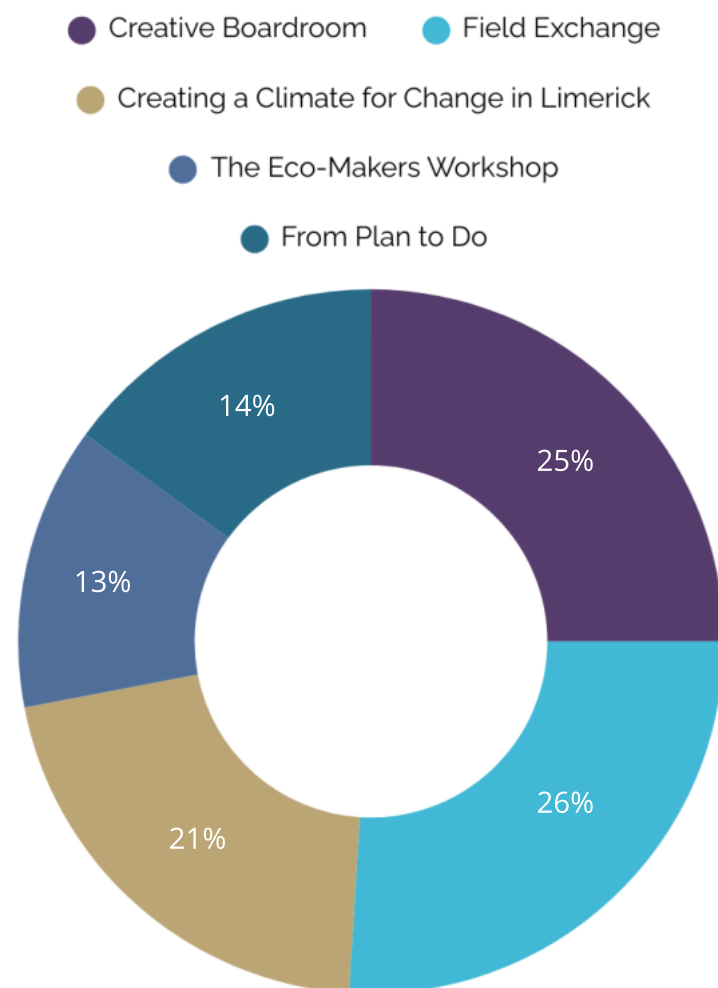
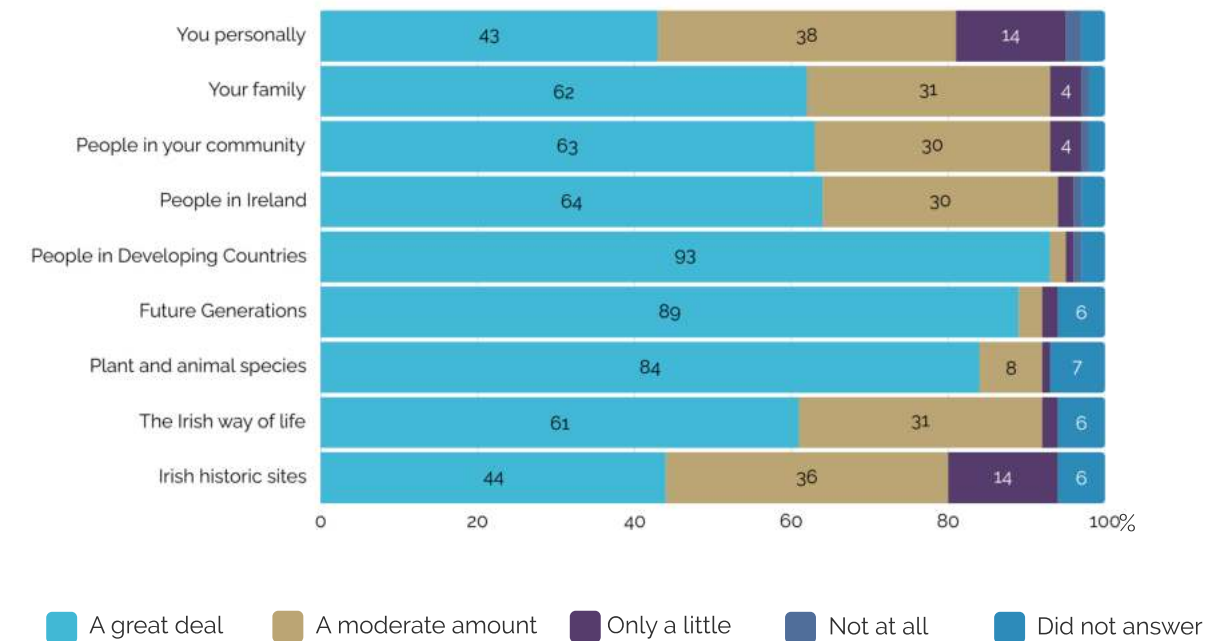
Figure 4. Please indicate which *Creative Climate Action* project you participated in or attended.

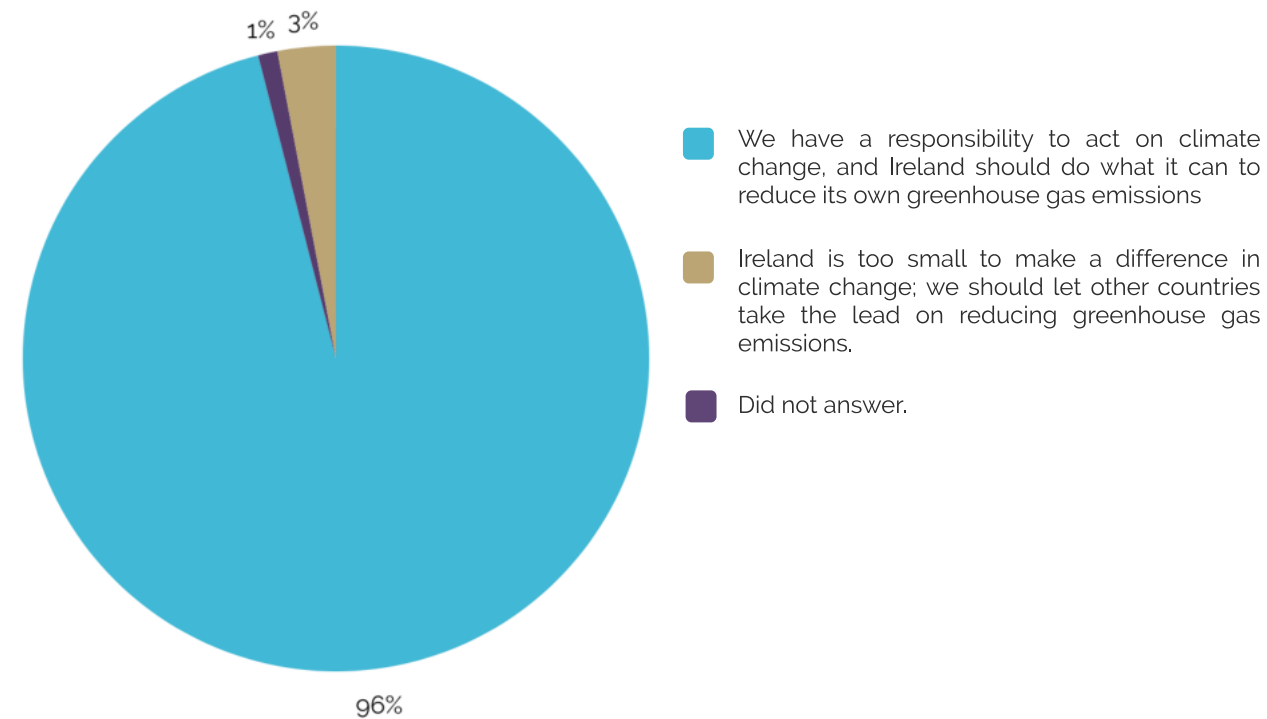
Figure 4 shows that the largest proportion (26%) of survey respondents participated in or attended *Field Exchange*. 25% attended *Creative Boardroom - Collaborate4Change*. 21% attended *Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick*. 14% attended *Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities- From Plan to Do*, while 13% attended *The Eco-Makers Workshop*.

Figure 5. How much do you think climate change will harm the following?



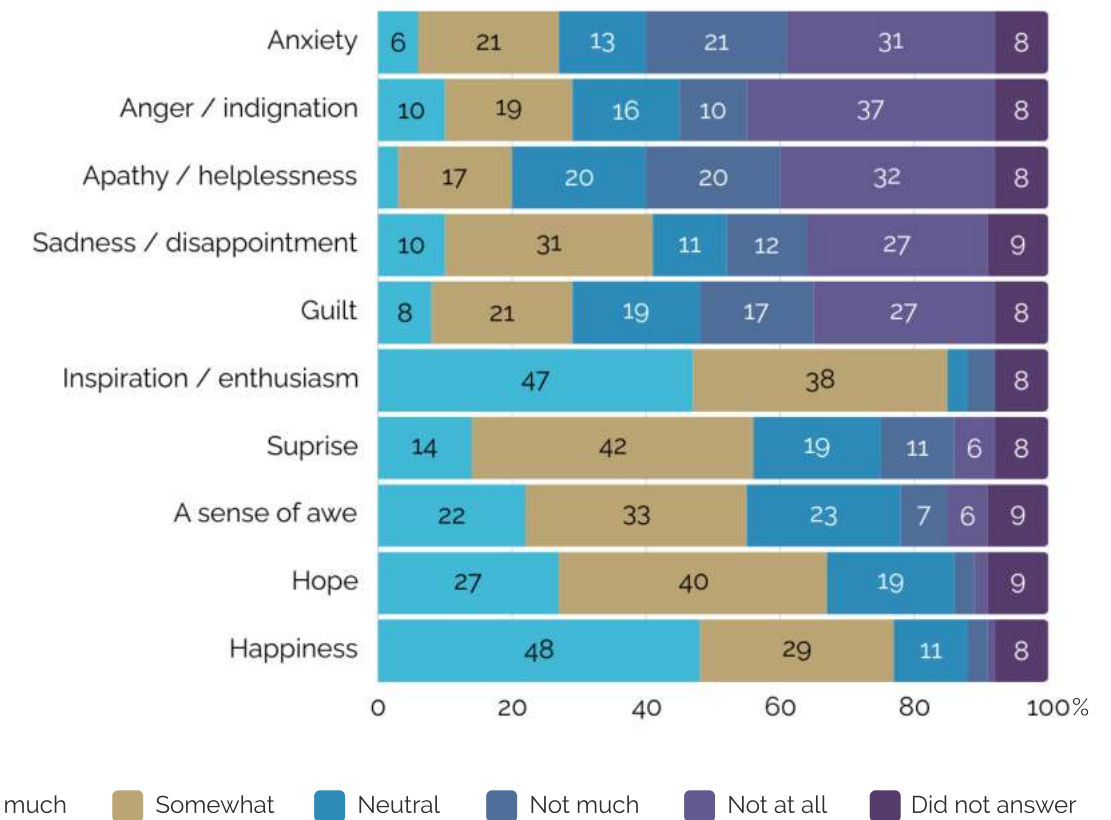
- **Figure 5** shows that the majority of survey participants (94%) believe that climate change will harm people in Ireland. A slightly larger percentage of people (96%) believe that climate change will harm people in developing countries “a moderate amount” or “a great deal”.
- Most participants (93%) think that climate change will harm their family, and harm people in their community. 92% think that climate change will also harm the “Irish way of life”. Yet, 80% think that climate change will harm them personally with a similar percentage (80%) believing that climate change will harm Irish historic sites.
- 92% of survey participants think that climate change will harm both future generations and plant and animal species.
- In the first *Creative C-Change* experience survey, when asked the same question, 99% of participants believed it will harm future generations. 98% believed it will harm plant and animal species. 96% believed it will harm people in developing countries. 95% thought that climate change will harm people in their community. 92% of survey respondents believed that climate change will harm them and their family a moderate amount or a great deal.
- In *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2* 83% of respondents felt that they will be harmed, 79% of respondents felt it will harm the “Irish way of life”, while 77% believed it will harm their family with the same percentage, (77%), believing it will harm people in their community.

Figure 6. Please choose the statement that comes closer to your point of view, accepting that neither option may be perfect.



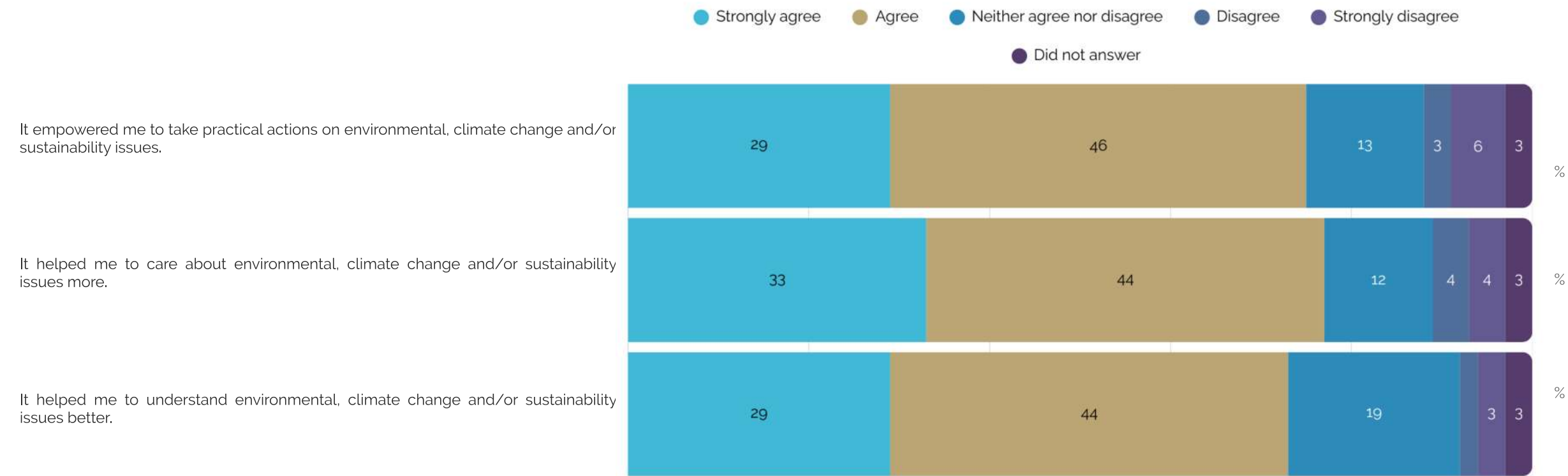
- Overwhelmingly, the people who attended *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* events agreed that Ireland should do more to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions. The results from *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2* also show a strong belief in Ireland's capacity to do more.
- Figure 6** shows that the vast majority of survey respondents (96%) think that we have a responsibility to act on climate change, and Ireland should do what it can to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions. Only 3% of respondents think that Ireland is too small to make a difference in climate change and that we should let other countries take the lead on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- In *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2*, 87% think that we have a responsibility to act on climate change, and Ireland should do what it can to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions. While 13% of survey respondents felt that Ireland is too small to make a difference in climate change.

Figure 7. To what extent did the creative experience or event bring up each of these feelings within you?



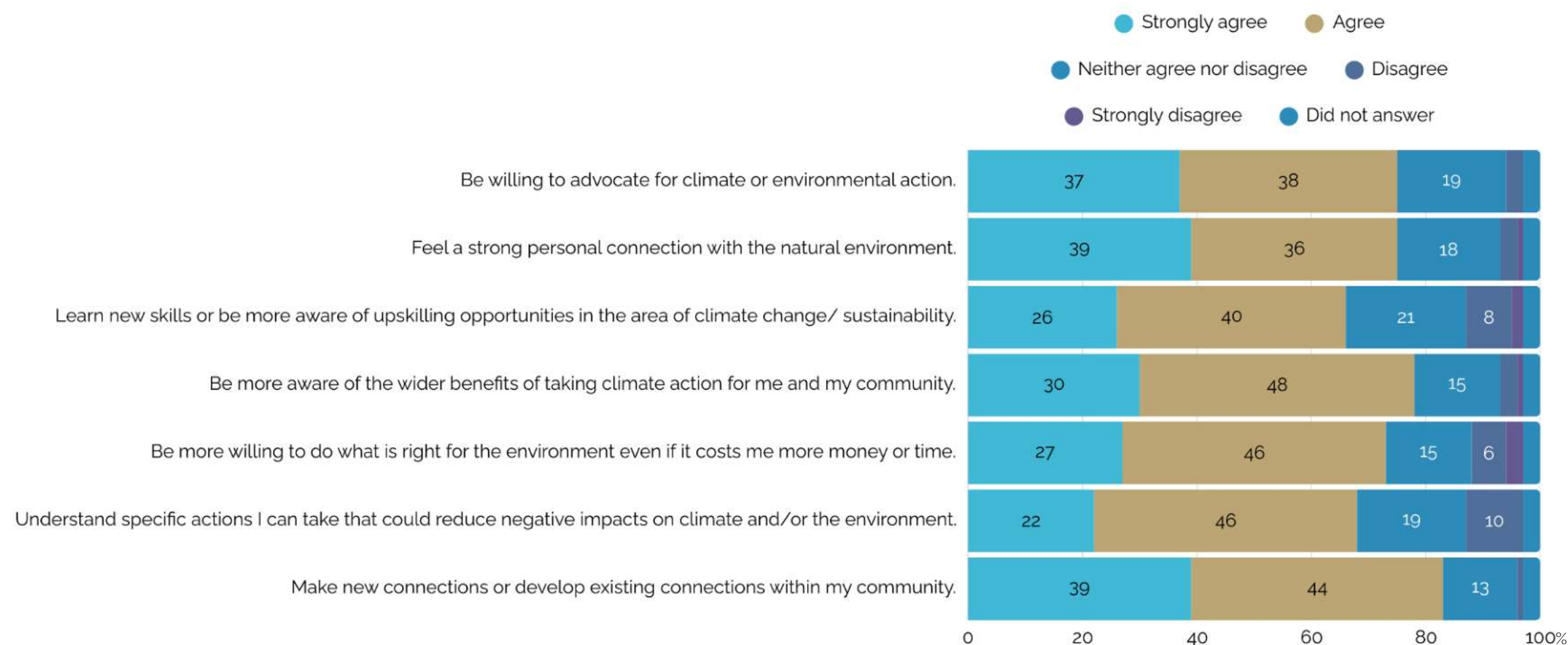
- This survey suggests that the majority of people who attend *Creative Climate Action* initiatives experience motivational and positive feelings. This is apparent in both this survey and the *Creative C-Change experience* survey.
- Figure 7** shows that 84% felt inspiration or enthusiasm during/after the creative experience events, with a majority (77%) feeling happiness to some extent during/after the experience. 67% of participants experienced hope.
- A smaller proportion (41%) felt sadness or disappointment during/after the creative experience events, while only 29% reported experiencing guilt and the same percentage indicating they felt anger or indignation.
- When asked a similar question in the *Creative C-Change experience* survey, participants answered that: 78% felt happiness, 76% felt hope, 66% felt awe, while 60% felt surprise in response to the experiences or events they attended or participated in. On the other hand, 18% felt guilt, 20% felt sadness, 14% felt apathy or helplessness, 13% felt anger while 19% felt anxiety in response to the experience or event.

Figure 8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding the creative event or experience you attended.



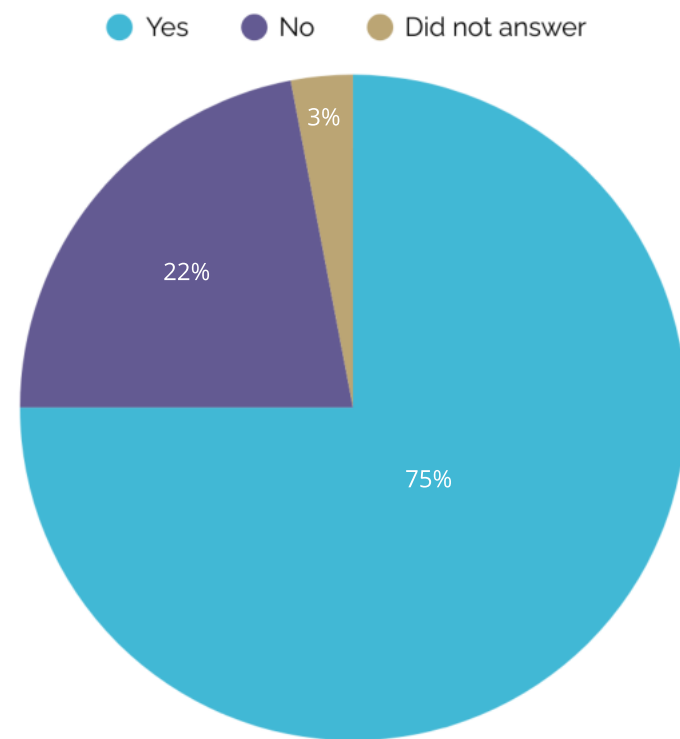
- Results from both this survey and the *Creative C-Change* survey show that around three-quarters of people who attended *Creative Climate Action* initiatives felt empowered and supported to take practical actions on environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues.
- **Figure 8** shows that 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the event or experience they attended helped them to care about environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues more.
- 74% of people think that attending the event/experience empowered them to take practical actions on environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues, while 73% of people believed it helped them to understand environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues better.
- In the *Creative C-Change* survey, participants were asked to agree or disagree with following: “The creative aspect of this project made me feel more engaged with climate action”. 73% of respondents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed.

Figure 9. Which of the following, if any, has this creative event or experience helped you to do?



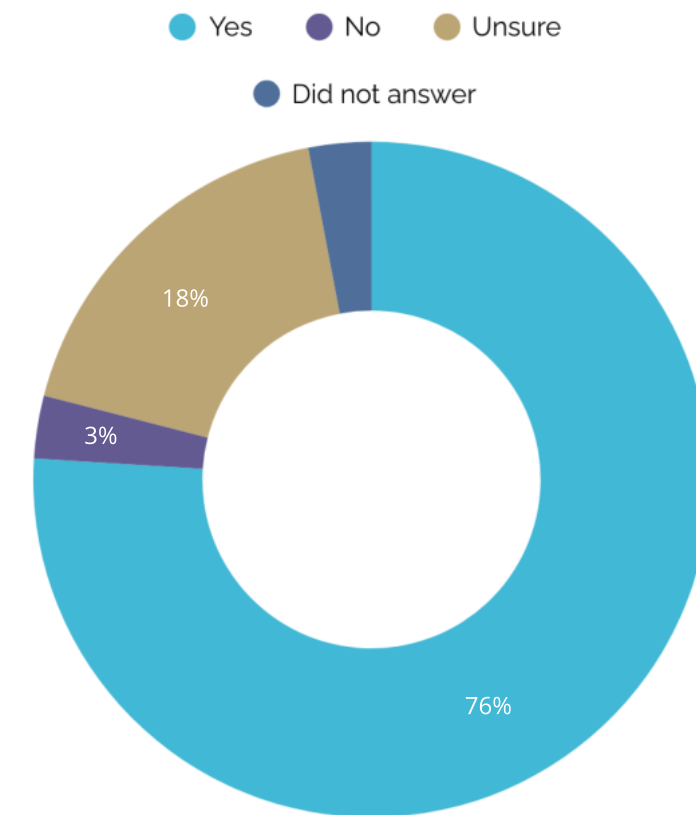
- People who attend *Creative Climate Action* events and experiences have been found to feel more empowered and supported to take practical actions on environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues. To a lesser extent, respondents felt they learned new skills or were up-skilled to support their new-found empowerment.
- **Figure 9** shows that 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that attending a creative event or experience helped them to make new connections or develop existing connections within their communities, while 78% of respondents think that they are more willing to do what is right for themselves and their community from attending the respective events.
- 74% said that the events made them feel more willing to advocate for climate or environmental action. Similarly, 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a strong personal connection with the natural environment as a result of attending an event.
- 72% of survey respondents felt more willing to do what is right for the environment even if it costs more money, while two-thirds (67%) think that they understand specific actions that they can take that could reduce negative impacts on climate and/or the environment.
- 66% of respondents felt that they learned new skills and are more aware of up-skilling opportunities in the area of climate change/sustainability.

Figure 10. Did the creative aspect of the event or experience you attended give you a new perspective on climate change and the urgency to take action?



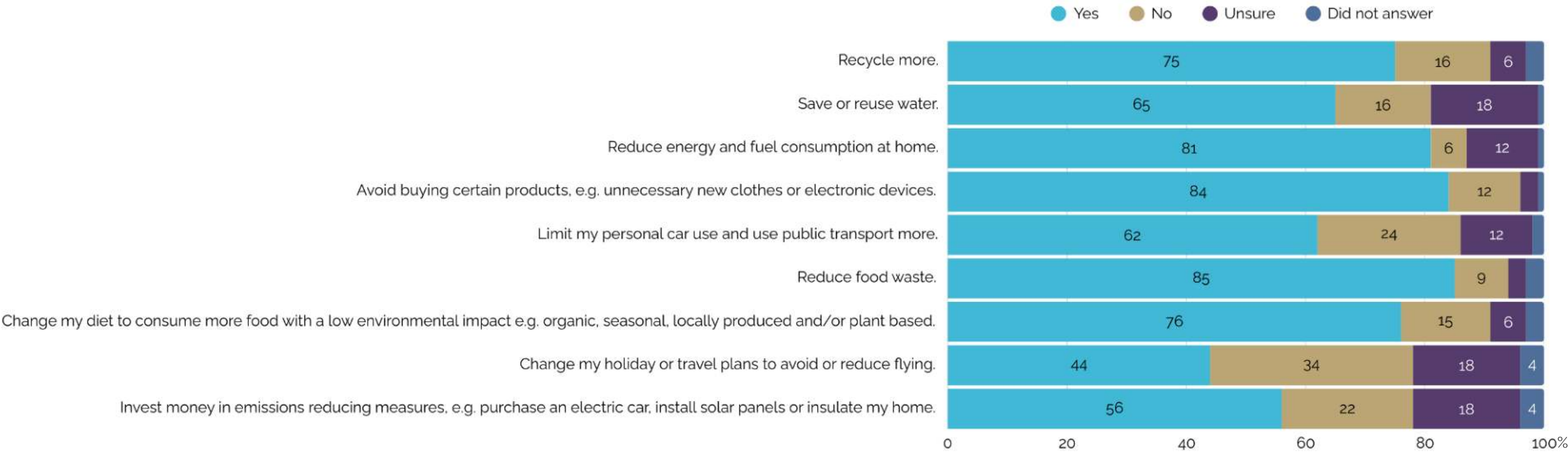
- **Figure 10** shows that three quarters of people who attended *Creative Climate Action* events experienced a new perspective on climate change and importantly recognised a need for urgent action. In *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2*, it is notable that survey participants are not directly asked on the need for urgent climate action. However, over half of the participants believed that climate change is harming people in Ireland now and 88% of participants believed that weather in Ireland is affected by climate change.
- **Figure 10** shows that three-quarters (75%) of respondents agreed that the creative aspect of the event that they attended gave them a new perspective on climate change and the urgency to take action.
- 22% indicated they did not attain a new perspective on climate change or the urgency to take action by attending the event.

Figure 11. Do you plan on taking action or making changes to your personal behaviour or lifestyle as a result of attending this creative event or participating in this creative project?



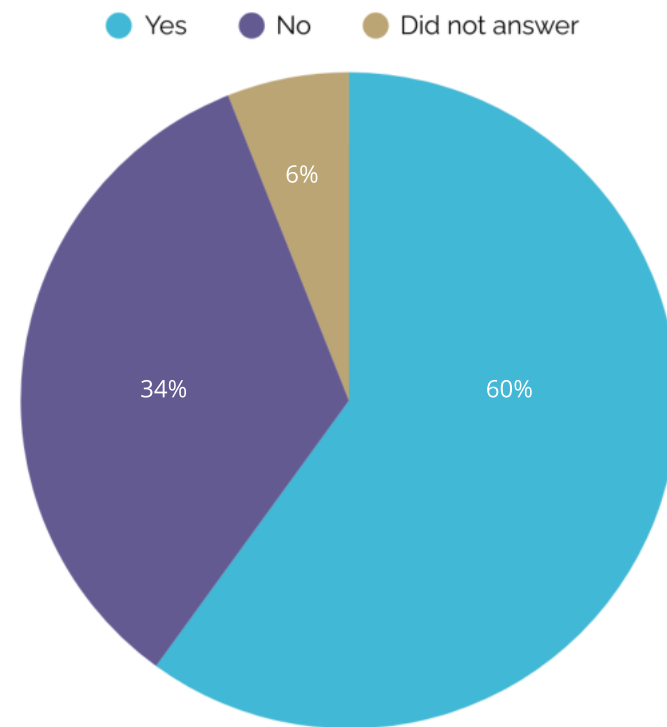
- To further emphasise the potential for behavioural changes following attendance at the *Creative Climate Action* initiatives, over three quarters of survey participants signaled that they would take climate action or make changes to their behaviour or lifestyle. In the *Creative C-Change* survey, just over three quarters of participants felt the same way. These findings support the effectiveness of *Creative Climate Action* initiatives and the potential for behavioural or lifestyle change.
- **Figure 11** shows that 76% of respondents planned to take climate action or make changes to their behaviour or lifestyle after attending the event or participating in the project.
- 3% indicated they would not while 18% were unsure.

Figure 12. If you answered YES above, has the experience increased your intentions to take any of the following measures in the next 12 months, in an effort to reduce negative environmental impacts?



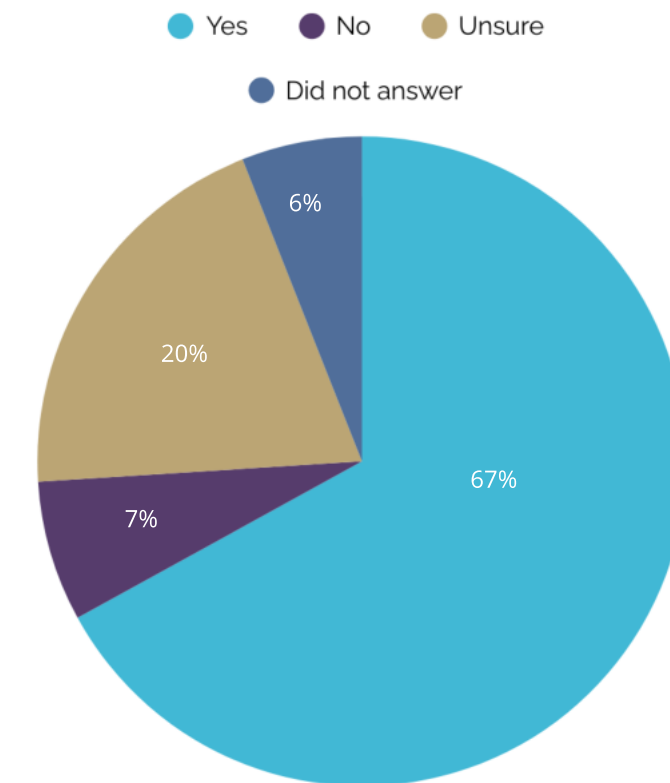
- The importance of *Creative Climate Action* initiatives on behaviour change is further evidenced by respondents noting a willingness to take specific actions to reduce negative environmental impacts. This includes a majority of respondents signaling that they planned to reduce food waste, avoid buying certain products and reduce energy and fuel consumption in their homes. It is notable that the figures are higher than those in *Creative C-Change* survey. This suggests that the projects under assessment in this report were more effective in terms of potential behavioural change.
- **Figure 12** shows which actions survey respondents were planning on taking in the 12 months following the event/experience. 85% were planning to reduce food waste, 84% planned to avoid buying certain products, e.g. unnecessary new clothes or electronic devices, while 81% planned to reduce energy and fuel consumption in their homes.
- 76% planned to change their diet to consume more food with a low environmental impact, while 75% planned to recycle more.
- At the lower end of the scale, 56% planned to invest money in emissions reduction measures, while 44% planned to change holiday or travel plans to avoid or reduce flying.
- In the *Creative C-Change* survey, when asked a similar question, 58% of survey respondents noted that they planned on reducing household waste and recycling more, 55% planned to purchase less non-essential items, and 50% planned to buy second-hand goods where possible.

Figure 13. Have you attended this creative event or experience in a work capacity, or could this event have impacts for you in terms of your own work, business or organisation?



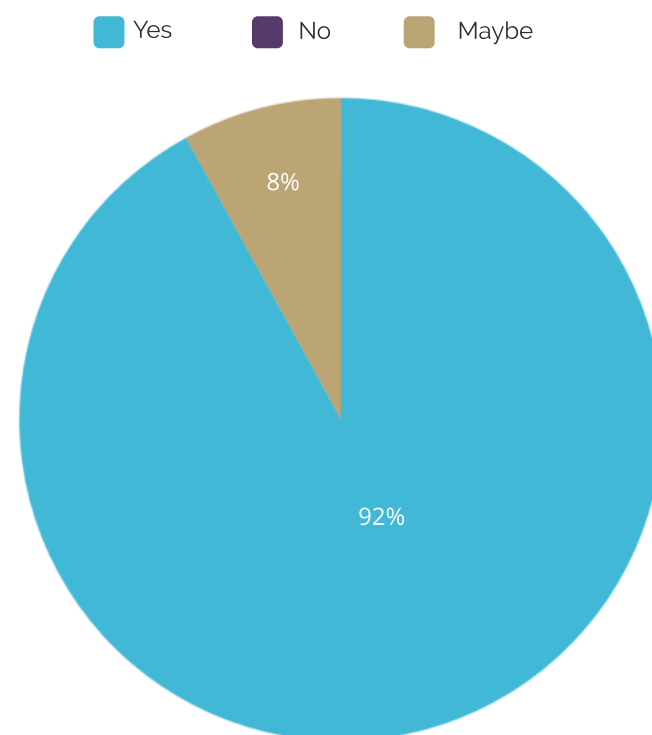
- Just under two thirds of the survey respondents attended a *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* event and/or experience in a work capacity and noted that the event was impactful. This is significant as a majority of respondents to *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2* point to the need for businesses to do more to address climate action. These results suggest that *Creative Climate Action* initiatives can be effective in bringing about positive and impactful change in the business sector.
- **Figure 13** shows that 60% of respondents attended events/experiences in a work capacity or agreed that the event was impactful for them in terms of their own work, organisation or business while 34% did not agree.
- In *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2*, 87% of respondents said businesses needed to do more to address climate change. This signals the importance of engaging businesses in *Creative Climate Action* initiatives.

Figure 14. Has participation in this creative experience, event or series of events given you skills and knowledge to make practical changes towards sustainability in your own work, business or organisation?



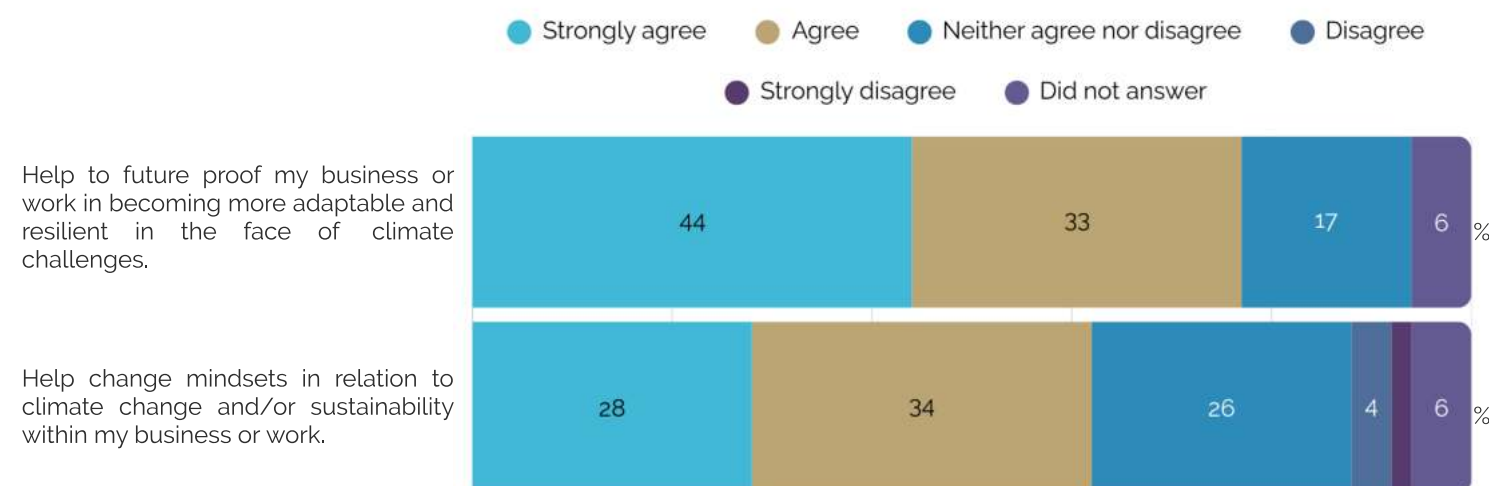
- The *Climate Action Plan* highlights the importance of equipping people with the right skills to be able to participate in and benefit from the future net-zero economy. Crucially, two-thirds of participants who attended of the *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* events and/or experiences in a work capacity gained new skills and knowledge that could potentially impact their own work, business or organisation. This is significant as it shows the benefits of *Creative Climate Action* initiatives for knowledge sharing and highlights the potential benefits for a cross section of working practices, businesses and organisations.
- **Figure 14** shows that 67% of survey respondents agreed that attending the creative event gave them skills and knowledge to make practical changes towards sustainability in their own work, business or organisation.
- 7% think they did not gain new skills or knowledge, while 20% were unsure.

**Figure 15. If you answered YES to the above question, do you plan to make any changes which could reduce carbon emissions or have other benefits for the environment?
Please specify which changes you are planning.**



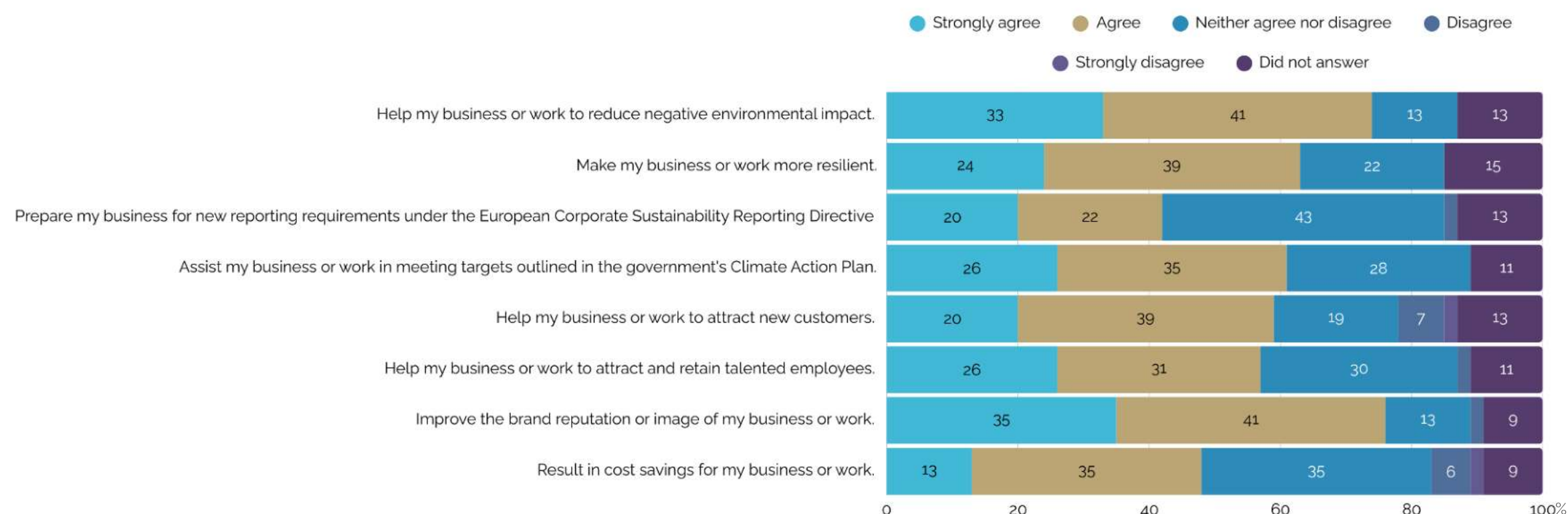
- The *Climate Action Plan* notes the need for Ireland to make changes to reduce carbon emissions. Participants that responded to this question signaled that they plan to make changes to reduce carbon emissions. This highlights how these enterprises may support the transition these enterprises support the transition to a low carbon economy.
- Figure 15** shows that 92% of survey respondents who answered "Yes" to the above question are planning on making changes to reduce carbon emissions or which would have other benefits for the environment. 8% of respondents answered "Maybe".

Figure 16. After attending this creative experience, event or series of events, to what extent do you agree with the following statements. Please select one response for each statement. "Applying creative practices can...."



- To further emphasise the important role *Creative Climate Action* initiatives can have in supporting the transition to a low carbon economy, 78% of survey respondents who attended an event and/or experience in a work capacity felt that applying creative practices can help change mindsets in relation to climate change and/or sustainability within their business or work. Furthermore, just under two thirds of respondents felt that applying creative practices can help to future proof their business or work in becoming more adaptable and resilient in the face of climate challenges.
- Figure 16** shows that, having attended an event(s)/experience(s), 78% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that applying creative practices helped to change mindsets in relation to climate change and/or sustainability within their business or work.
- 63% indicated that applying creative practices can help to future proof their business or work in becoming more adaptable and resilient in the face of climate challenges.

Figure 17. After attending this creative experience, event or series of events, to what extent do you agree with the following statements. Please select one response for each statement. "Applying sustainable business practices can....."

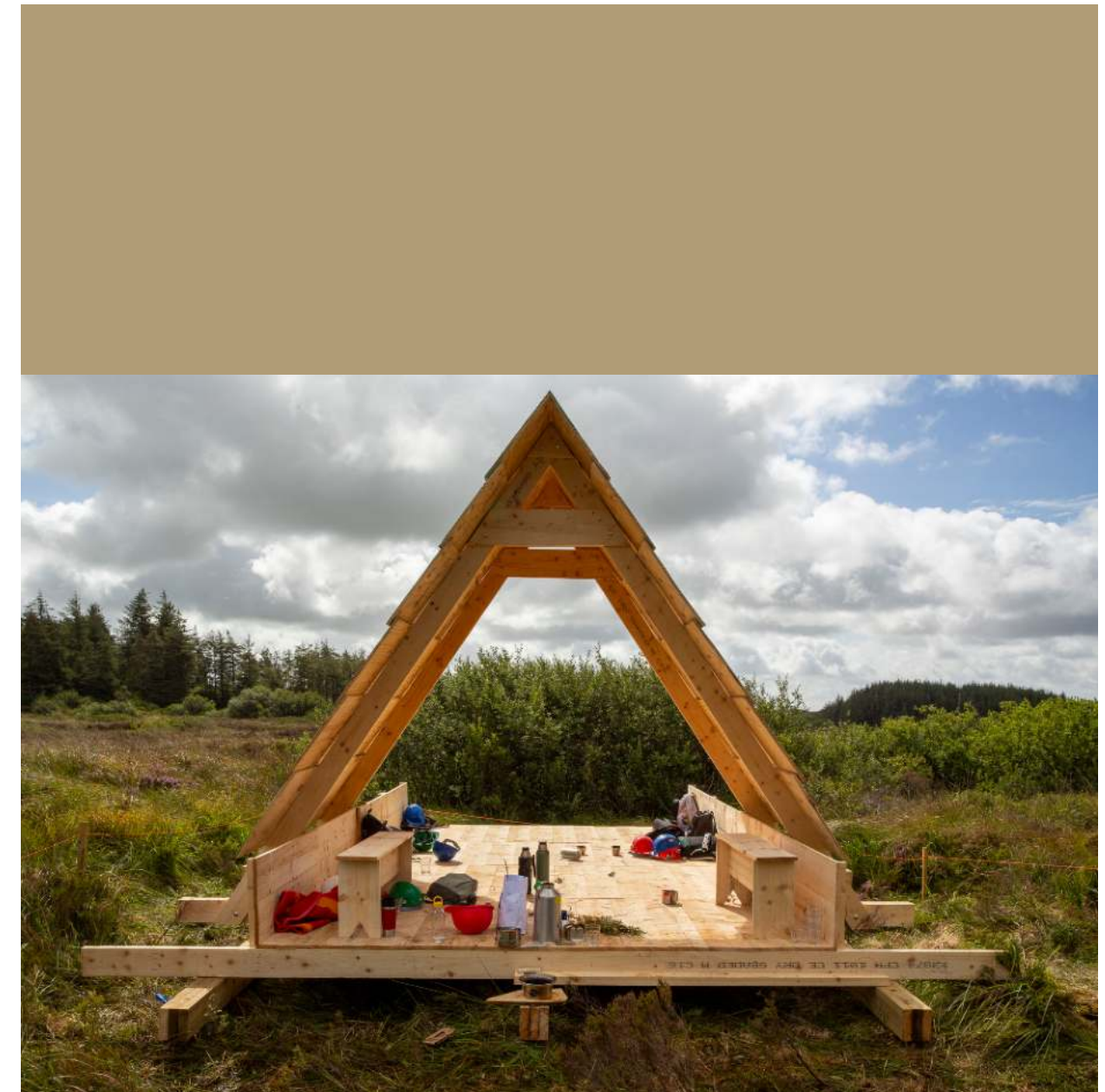


- The importance of *Creative Climate Action* initiatives for sustainable business is evident with the majority of respondents noting that applying sustainable business practices can improve their brand reputation or image while also helping to reduce negative environmental impact. Significantly, two thirds of respondents believe that this application can also assist businesses in meeting targets outlined in the government's *Climate Action Plan*.
- **Figure 17** shows that after attending this creative experience, event or series of events, 84% of survey respondents strongly agreed (39%) or agreed (45%) that "Applying sustainable business practices can improve the brand reputation or image of my business or work".
- 82% of respondents strongly agreed (37%) or agreed (45%) that "Applying sustainable business practices can help my business or work to reduce negative environmental impact".
- 70% of respondents strongly agreed (27%) or agreed (43%) that "Applying sustainable business practices can make my business or work more resilient".
- 68% of respondents strongly agreed (29%) or agreed (39%) that "Applying sustainable business practices can assist my business or work in meeting targets outlined in the government's *Climate Action Plan*".
- 65% of respondents strongly agreed (22%) or agreed (43%) that "Applying sustainable business practices can help my business or work to attract new customers".
- 39% of respondents agreed that "Applying sustainable business practices can result in cost savings for my business or work", 39% of respondents also neither agreed nor disagreed to the same point.
- Finally, 47% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that "Applying sustainable business practices can prepare my business for new reporting requirements under the European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive".

7. Themes from Qualitative Analysis

Participant interviews and observations

In this section, 12 major themes are summarised from initial qualitative data analysis of 42 participant interviews and 25 participant observations. Figure 18 on page 29 illustrates the 12 themes, with a more detailed description of each in the following pages.



Bog Bothy. Image by Shane Hynan



Fig 18. 12 major themes emerged from participant interviews and researcher observations.

Novel Spaces

The *Creative Climate Action Fund* is the first, all-of-government initiative in Ireland that unites the arts, culture and creative sectors with climate science, research, community-driven action and a diverse range of stakeholders at local, community and national level to generate solutions to climate change. This approach convenes people with a common goal and shared appreciation of creativity has generated a distinct, innovative space for fostering new and alternative responses to climate change. Within our analysis, we found 285 references to recurrent themes demonstrating the advantage of facilitating such a unique space that places both creativity and pro-environmental behaviour at its core. These themes combine to form the novel space - a unique platform for promoting greater emotional and social investment in a sustainable future for Ireland.



Participant feedback:

I think what happens is that through these events people realise that farmers are doing their bit and then farmers realise actually maybe environmentalists aren't that bad. And I think whenever people feel that kind of change, open mindedness, that's where there's the opportunity for change. And so yeah, for everyone who attends, I think everyone leaves with a certain seed of thought. Like, 'oh, I should do this a bit differently.'

Participant, Field Exchange

This space provided by the *Creative Climate Action* initiative, has been found to allow an exchange of fresh ideas and new perspectives from both the artists and participants that enhance knowledge, open minds and explore new opportunities for increasing awareness and tackling of climate change. An element of fun or enjoyment has been strongly expressed by interviewees through engaging in creative processes and mediums such as dance (Creating a Climate for Change – Dance Limerick), jewellery-making (The Eco-Makers Workshop), dry-stone wall building (Field Exchange) and prototyping (From Plan to Do, Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate).

There is mounting evidence that activities which elicit positive emotions support productive engagement with climate change (Schneider et al., 2021). Enjoyment and fun in activities that engage citizens with climate action have also been linked to increased understanding of climate change issues, which in turn increase individual or community intent to foster behavioural changes (Fogg-Rogers et al., 2024). Stakeholders at *Creative Climate Action* experiences felt re-energised and re-charged with a renewed motivation to take positive environmental actions. Fun and enjoyable activities helped to draw more participants to events by word of mouth. Fun and enjoyment were crucial for inclusion, especially for some people with intellectual disabilities. It was important to focus on fun, positive climate actions with these participants and steer away from darker dialogue about climate change that could cause an immediate sense of alarm or threat. *Creative Climate Action* experiences were reported to enhance a sense of wellbeing through connection to nature, social connection and physical movement. Personal wellbeing was viewed as foundational to extending care outwards to others and the environment.



The Eco-Makers Workshop. Image by AK Inspired Ability

The novel space was found to enhance a feeling of social connection and community belonging. Interviewees expressed an appreciation for art and creativity. They felt supported and not alone in their motivation, goals and actions after meeting others with similar values and concerns. Participants felt that the space provided a safe forum for discussion and open dialogue, where there were no agendas or worries about expressing viewpoints. *Creative Climate Action* experiences enabled a diverse range of stakeholders to meet in one place and be given equal footing for contributing views, insights, knowledge sharing and stories. Participants were found to have enhanced mental and physical wellbeing through taking part in *Creative Climate Action* experiences, which is significant for individual and community resilience in the face of climate change challenges.



Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate. Image by Creative Futures Academy

Individual engagement with climate change requires cognitive, affective and practical engagement (Mac Mahon et al., 2025). This refers to understanding, emotional connection and practical actions. The novel space provided by the initiatives was found to be highly effective for engaging people on these three levels - 'Head, Heart, Hands' (Wolf and Moser, 2011). Climate messaging and communications were tailored to suit audiences and increase understanding and awareness (see *creatives as mediators* theme below). *Creative Climate Action* experiences engaged people emotionally, particularly through positive engagement and an element of fun or enjoyment, and participants were practically engaged through interactive, educational and new skill workshops, co-design and prototyping processes, and the build and design of individual and co-created artworks. The theme of novel space is closely interconnected with the following identified themes: *inclusivity, training and education, trusted figures, creatives as mediators, and local and community pride*. The *Creative Climate Action* initiatives facilitated multiple stakeholder engagement including people from marginalised groups, provided training and education on climate change and sustainable practices, allocated trusted messengers and mediators to communicate accessible information, as well as providing a platform that enhanced a collective sense of community pride.



Participant feedback:

The boardroom can be dominated by what's called 'Best Governance', which tends to be legal type rules. It also can be a forum, that regulates itself either through group think or some element of dysfunctional behaviour. When you step into a boardroom, you're almost stepping into a family that has coalesced and regulated itself through its own behaviour. And therefore, the thing about the Creative Boardroom - is it sort of removes all that and then you start talking about a different way of looking at things, a different way of people engaging different parts of their brain, and team-building.

Participant, Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate

Creatives as Mediators

Creatives as mediators refers to the creative personnel, project team members and facilitators of *Creative Climate Action* project teams who have been found to utilise highly effective practices for climate change communications and engagement. Within data analysis, we found 113 references to the effective dissemination methods by which project teams have been communicating their message about climate change or related issues, as well as engaging their audience effectively through cognitive, emotional and practical engagement. This analysis is supported by observations from our researchers who attended the *Creative Climate Action* events.

Project teams have successfully communicated their messaging and achieved high levels of engagement. In turn, they aligned with stated objectives of the National Campaign of Communication and Engagement on Climate, a campaign that is outlined in the Government's *Climate Action Plan*. These objectives include: delivering clear and cohesive messaging tailored specifically to their audiences; engaging their audiences by employing thoughtful, original and creative communications; and meeting people where they are in terms of their identities, values, levels of awareness and understanding. This is particularly salient across Creating a Climate for Change – Dance Limerick and The Eco-Makers Workshop, where universal learning methods were applied for raising awareness and understanding in different ways, such as through visual learning, auditory learning,



Participant feedback:

I can't think at the moment of anything quite like that that I've been involved in anyway... I was saying before, you know, I work in communications and I feel that one of the areas that really needs looking at with climate is communications. And I think this really sort of ticks that. Ticks that box.

Participant, Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do

movement (kinaesthetic) and storytelling. Issues of local relevance have been clearly communicated in *The Air We Share*, where air pollution levels are of local interest to the community of Westside Galway, and in *From Plan to Do*, where solutions for ensuring cosier and more energy-efficient homes for a cohort of renters in Dublin 7 communities were highlighted. Field Exchange emphasised the urgent need for more local food production in communities in order to diversify food supplies and build resilience in the face of climate change challenges. Messaging was made relevant and local to audiences with accessible, clear or non-technical information and effective visuals. The creative mediators helped facilitate social interaction within the novel space where participants could exchange new perspectives, knowledge, insights and positive stories of taking action (see *positive feedback mechanism* theme below).

Engagement through the 'Head, Heart, Hands' trifecta (Wolf and Moser, 2011) has been achieved by all projects evaluated. Teams tailored their messaging to achieve understanding; emotionally connected to their cohort through activities that generated an element of fun or enjoyment; and enabled participation in 'hands on' events such as co-design workshops. By enabling participation in the co-design processes, the creative mediators empowered participants with a sense of agency where they felt their input and contributions were recognised as valuable and important.



Design Declares. Image by IDI Institute of Designers in Ireland



Room with a View. Image by Cracking Light Productions

Creativity as a tool was a strong sub-theme to emerge from analysis of Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, From Plan to Do, and Field Exchange, where interviewees were highly engaged in topics related to design-thinking, service design and eco-design. This gave participants a new appreciation of how skills in these areas are applied to solve real world problems and effect positive change. This focus on solutions is also a key factor in climate change communications and proved to be effective where participants felt motivated to apply these skills in their own work or life. The use of research and evidence-based approaches by project teams was also evident. From Plan to Do illustrated this best practice approach, where research, co-design and prototyping were a tried and tested means for effective engagement.

Another crucial component of effective climate communications is having trusted messengers delivering relevant messages to the audience. This was evident across all the projects evaluated where a major theme of *trusted figures* (see below) emerged from analysis of the interviews and observations. This included community stewardship, where trusted figures from the project teams and creative mediators assured a greater degree of stakeholder engagement. Participants at Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate and Field Exchange commended the involvement of expert speakers. Interviewees felt that guest speakers offered valuable expert insight into project-related themes such as doughnut economics and agroforestry, ensuring greater interest and participant engagement.



Participant feedback:

A lot of my work would be very cerebral, actually reading reports and writing reports. And this is lovely. This is something completely different. And it is engaging with a topic that I find is very rarely engaged with at the level of the body and also then at the level of emotion, because usually at some point during our sessions I have found actually some emotion will arise due to the topic. I might not even be aware of it until after the session, so there is a lasting impression somehow that lingers. And that doesn't linger when I read reports, you know?

Participant, Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick

Inclusivity

Within our analysis, the theme of *inclusivity* emerged on 56 occasions. This analysis is heavily supported by observations made by our researchers while attending project events. The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) has emphasised that equity, social inclusion and just transition are crucial considerations in climate policy (EPA, 2022). Our analysis signals that all projects support equity, social inclusion and just transition.

The theme of *inclusivity* was particularly evident at the creative workshops run by The Eco-Makers Workshop, where people with intellectual disabilities were empowered to bring recycled-art and sustainability principles together to make alternative products. This not only taught the cohort about reducing energy use and demand on finite resources but crucially offered participants experience in work with an environmental sustainability ethos. The theme of *inclusivity* was also heavily evident in Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick – Dance Limerick and From Plan to Do, with both projects identifying and engaging with communities affected by high levels of poverty and unemployment. With Field Exchange there was a focused engagement with farming communities. The EPA have identified farming and rural communities as requiring particular emphasis as they feel that they are neglected in discussions around climate action, with the EPA noting the potential for ‘farmers to be seen as part of the climate solution’ in engagement efforts. Finally, the

shared island aspect of Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate also supports an island wide approach to climate action that could potentially enable equity and social inclusion. Despite the limited data available for analysis, initial observations made at The Air we Share events signal the potential to effectively incorporate issues of equity and social inclusion. The importance of *inclusivity* is shown to be crucial in both engaging new stakeholders and re-energising existing stakeholders. The theme is interconnected with the following identified themes: *novel space*; *trusted figures*; and *local and community pride*.

Positive Feedback Mechanism

The theme of *positive feedback mechanism* emerged on 95 occasions. This analysis is supported by observations made by our researchers while attending the events. Celebrating achievements and positive feedback mechanisms are essential for motivation, engagement and empowerment of people and communities to make meaningful changes towards sustainable practices. Participants felt encouraged, 'powered-up', inspired and re-energised in their motivation to act when meeting others at *Creative Climate Action* experiences, through sharing of success stories and hearing positive feedback in terms of adopting new practices. This was particularly evident at Field Exchange, where creative farming ambassadors felt they could exchange learnings and knowledge from their own experience of adopting sustainable agricultural practices, and positively influence each other to take more meaningful action.

A strong sub-theme of *re-energise and re-charge* emerged which highlighted the *Creative Climate Action* experiences as places where stakeholders felt reinvigorated in their motivation to change behaviours, through meeting others and feeling supported in shared visions and goals. At From Plan to Do, participants felt that the shared community and group experiences gave a collective sense of empowerment and agency and increased their drive to achieve sustainable energy goals. The *Creative Climate Action* events enhanced participants' sense of both individual and group efficacy. Individuals felt more empowered and confident in their own ability to take meaningful action, while the power of a group of people coming together with their diverse range of experiences, energy and insights to effect change was referenced throughout Field Exchange, Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, From Plan to Do and Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick.



Field Exchange. Image by Michelle Burke

The theme of *positive feedback mechanism* is closely interlinked with *knowledge sharing* and *trusted figures*, where successful adoption of sustainable practices, knowledge and advice was communicated by either peers, community stewards or experts. The *novel space* is a fundamental platform for enabling positive feedback mechanisms, as well as creative mediators who facilitate and encourage that dialogue.



Participant feedback:

Through all of the skills, and through all the conversations that the farmers are having and learning about the various schemes and programmes that you can get involved with, like with the agroforestry forum, for example, it makes you feel really inspired and gives you lots of ideas for what you can do in your own work as well.

Participant, Field Exchange



Trusted Figures

The theme of *trusted figures* emerged from thematic analysis on 75 occasions. This refers to people involved in the projects whom participants felt they could trust either as messengers/communicators of climate change or sustainability issues and solutions, or as role models/inspirational figures that could motivate participants to effect change. This analysis is supported by observations made by our researchers while attending project events. The sub-themes of *community stewardship* and *expert speakers* are evident across our findings. *Community stewardship* refers to people in a community who take on responsibility for the wellbeing of the environment e.g., Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) volunteers or farmers who adopt sustainable farming practices.

The importance of *community stewardship* is evident across all projects where trusted figures from within project teams and creative mediators assured a greater degree of stakeholder engagement. This is particularly evident in The Eco-Makers Workshop, Creating a Climate for Change - Dance Limerick, Field Exchange and From Plan to Do, where interviewees spoke of the importance of project teams and other community stewards in assuring that communities underrepresented in the discussion around climate action were made to feel included. These groups include persons with intellectual disabilities, communities affected by high levels of poverty and unemployment, and renters.

The importance of expert speakers or guidance is clear in our analysis of all projects but is particularly evident in Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate and Field Exchange. In these projects, interviewees commended the use of guest speakers who offered expert insight into project related themes, which in turn enabled a greater degree of informed conversation among participants at subsequent sessions. Crucially, the interviewees also spoke of using the learnings obtained from experts within their respective communities. As invested and informed stakeholders, chartered directors and creative farming ambassadors could potentially fulfill a key role in community stewardship within their respective organisations/communities. The importance of trusted figures is shown to be crucial in engaging new stakeholders and re-energising existing stakeholders. The theme of *trusted figures* is closely interconnected with the following themes: *novel space*; *inclusivity*; *positive feedback mechanism*; *training and education*; and *knowledge sharing*.



Participant feedback:

I suppose you trust the people who are organising that event, because they're from the area as well, like as far as the SEC's go, like Connecting Cabra [Dublin based SEC], you know that they know what's best for Cabra because they're from Cabra and their kids go to school in Cabra.

Participant, Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do

Co-design

The concept of *co-design* was a strong theme to emerge from analysis of the interviews and participant observations, with references on 30 occasions. It was particularly evident in From Plan to Do, Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate and Field Exchange where it was found to be a highly effective way of engaging people at *Creative Climate Action* experiences. At Field Exchange, creative farming ambassadors worked together with artists to co-design

and build a dry-stone wall seat on the Brookfield Farm site. Participants remarked on the power of collaboration and bringing a diverse range of experiences and wisdom together when developing the structure. They felt involved and invested in the process by being given a sense of agency. An element of fun and enjoyment was strongly expressed by the participants, as well as feeling a sense of pride.



Participant feedback:

Co-design workshops allow people in the room to be heard. And it's not just your voice. It's not just your research. And people feel valued, and they feel they're part of a project. And I think with that comes a bit of ownership with the audience, and especially if the audience has been part of the workshops all the way from the beginning then. And you become almost like a bit of a family in a way. But there's definitely a sense of ownership and pride when you see something of value coming to the forefront from co-design workshops.

Participant, Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do

At Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate and From Plan to Do, the process of involving people in generating solutions to issues that directly affect them was deemed an effective and important means of engaging people. Creative Boardroom participants noted the novelty of convening a diversity of stakeholders. This included the intergenerational aspect of having design students and directors work together. It also included the cross-border involvement of the Institute of Directors Ireland and the Institute of Directors Northern Ireland. This was seen as a positive step towards diverse groups working together to address climate change.

Co-design is a theme closely interlinked with *creatives as mediators*, *novel space* and *knowledge sharing*, where the *Creative Climate Action* experiences facilitate diverse groups to step out of silos, work together, exchange views, and share knowledge and new perspectives in a safe, more informal setting. Participants in From Plan to Do felt a

collective sense of empowerment with other community members when co-designing a renter's booklet that gives helpful hints for renters to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy bills in their homes. They felt they were given ownership and a sense of agency, and they expressed a feeling of group efficacy where they found brainstorming and collaborating was effective in terms of generating something meaningful.



Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do. Image by Context Studio

Training and Education

The theme of training and education emerged on 67 occasions. This analysis is supported by observations made by our researchers while attending project events. The sub-themes of *new knowledge* and *new skills* are evident across our findings. The theme is closely related to *new perspectives* which emerged on a further 67 occasions.

The importance of training and education is evident across all projects where trusted figures from within project teams, creative mediators and expert speakers imparted new knowledge and skills which enabled a greater degree of stakeholder engagement. This is particularly evident in Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, Field Exchange, From Plan to Do, and The Eco-Makers Workshop. With Creative Boardroom, Field Exchange and From Plan to Do, interviewees spoke of the benefits of organised intermittent information sessions that ran throughout the projects. They spoke about the importance of these sessions in reassured engagement on their part. Importantly, the participants noted that this confidence could aid their ability to share newly acquired knowledge and skills with their respective communities. As informed stakeholders, this could potentially enable chartered directors, creative farming ambassadors and representatives from SECs to fulfill a key role in community stewardship within their respective organisations/communities.



Participant feedback:

Interviewer: Why is it important to you to recycle plastic to make jewellery?

Participant: I suppose to save the sea mammals.

Interviewer: Why is important to save the sea mammals?

Participant: So they don't eat plastic ... Sea mammals choke on the plastic, and they don't like plastic.

Interviewer: Have you learned that as part of the project?

Participant: I sure did!

Participant, The Eco-Makers Workshop

Given the nature of The Eco-Makers Workshop, learning and training for participants was conducted on an ongoing basis. This guidance was delivered with particular care and skill by the staff, and expert insight was provided by an onsite horticulturist. Initial analysis signals that this continuous approach of passing on knowledge and skills is of particular benefit to persons with intellectual disabilities thereby assuring inclusivity.

The importance of training and education is shown to be a decisive factor in engaging new stakeholders and rekindling a passion for climate action in demoralised stakeholders. The theme of *training and education* is closely interconnected with the following themes: *novel spaces*; *inclusivity*; *trusted figures*; *knowledge sharing*; and *adaptation*. Although closely related, our initial analysis shows a difference between *training and education* and *knowledge sharing*. This difference is outlined in *knowledge sharing* section below.



Participant feedback:

I have learned new, what would I say, sort of business practice or business teaching. Sort of a new way of addressing problems is probably the best way of putting it and addressing them in a creative way.

Participant, Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate



The Air We Share. Image by Mark Stedman

Knowledge Sharing

The theme of *knowledge sharing* emerged from analysis on 50 occasions. The sub-themes of *frontline narratives*, *new knowledge*, and *new skills* are evident across our findings. The theme is closely related to *learning and training*, but initial analysis signals that participants not only acquired insights from learning and training but also from each other. This knowledge sharing is shown to have enabled a community of practice within each project.

The importance of knowledge sharing is evident across all projects but is particularly evident in Field Exchange and From Plan to Do. With Field Exchange, interviews with creative farming ambassadors show the importance of collaborative thinking to the acceptance of other ideas. This significantly aided the creation of a community of farmers who were willing to share their existing knowledge and skills. At workshops for both renters and SEC members, From Plan to Do shared relevant advice relating to energy efficiency. This in turn assured not only newly invested stakeholders, but several SEC members who spoke of the importance of this sharing in terms of re-energising their commitment. A representative from Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland who attended a SEC workshop noted that: *"I suppose there's maybe a little bit of a gap between us sometimes and the SECs... Hearing the insights directly from SECs, I thought was really beneficial"*. This further illustrates the importance of knowledge sharing opportunities in bridging knowledge gaps and assuring a greater degree of cohesion among communities of practice.



Participant feedback:

You're passing on what's that, transfer knowledge or knowledge transfer? Yeah, that's what we see is the really, really important part of this.

Participant, Field Exchange



Galway Bay is Calling. Image by Marc O'Sullivan



Participant feedback:

There were also like 20 or so people who were renting and talking about swapping tips. And there were, you know, things that I learned there that I didn't know before.

Participant, From Plan to Do

As with training and education, the importance of knowledge sharing is vital in both participant engagement and re-energising disheartened stakeholders. The theme of *knowledge sharing* is closely interconnected with the following themes: *novel space*; *inclusivity*; *trusted figures*; *learning and training*; *local and community pride* and *adaptation*. Our initial analysis shows that knowledge sharing has the potential to serve as a significant leverage point for future systems and societal change.

Relationship to Nature

The thematic analysis uncovered a strong theme related to nature, with 62 references extracted so far. Participants were found to have high biospheric values or care for the environment and natural world. While this high value for nature and the environment already appeared inherent in the participants involved, *Creative Climate Action* experiences helped to re-energise their motivation for adopting eco-friendly practices. This was highly evident at Field Exchange, where creative farming ambassadors spoke of adapting their land through agroforestry, building dry-stone walls and reducing fertiliser usage to increase biodiversity, provide shelter for animals and minimise damage to ecosystems. The sub-theme of *land stewardship* emerged from Field Exchange, where participants felt a responsibility to manage their land in ways that preserve the environment, as well as ensuring it is passed on with care to future generations.



Participant feedback:

I actually reduced a lot of my fertiliser usage in trying to grow grass and ever since I kinda got into the Field Exchange, and kind of got tied up with Ailbhe a bit, I kind of saw different ways of doing things and learned things. One of my own fields now this year and next year over the Winter into Spring - I have the field divided with fences and we're going to plant hedges down along each fence. Do you know just to introduce a bit of wildlife. Do you know a bit of shelter for things in the future.

Participant, Field Exchange

Relating again to people's biospheric values, the topics of nature and biodiversity peaked interest and drew engagement at *Creative Climate Action* events, which was very evident with participants at the Field Exchange Festival. Activities related to biodiversity were also seen as an effective way of keeping people engaged in SECs at From Plan to Do, where it was deemed important by SEC members to cater for a range of interests and values within their communities, instead of a sole focus on sustainable energy.

An enhanced appreciation, motivation to care for and connection to nature was strongly evident from interviews and observational analysis of Field Exchange, The Eco-Makers Workshop and Creating a Climate for Change – Dance Limerick. Participants viewed nature as a fundamental component of wellbeing, viewing it as restorative, a place for retreat and recreation, and a source of inspiration. Taking a more holistic approach, Limerick Sports Partnership tutors (Creating a Climate for Change – Dance Limerick) deemed personal wellbeing as foundational to extending care outwards to others and the environment.

There is extensive research in environmental psychology that observing and engaging with nature provides affective, cognitive and behavioural benefits including reductions in psychological stress, and increases in wellbeing and the promotion of pro-environmental behaviour (Salonen et al., 2023). From interview and observational analysis of The Eco-Makers Workshop it was highly evident that participants had increased emotional wellbeing from being immersed in the natural surrounds of Inspired's Biodiversity Learning Hub. The participants reported feeling less anxiety and increased confidence, and reported generally enjoying activities including harvesting of fruits and vegetables, grown locally at the hub. They were found to make healthier food choices after taking part in the horticulture activities of the project and understood the connection between their plastic beach combing for making recycled plastic jewellery, and its positive impact on the local ecosystem.

At Creating a Climate for Change – Dance Limerick, participants reported having improved levels of physical and mental wellbeing after partaking in the dance workshops. Participants reported feeling a connection to nature after engaging in activities such as nature visualisations through movement, for example through a 'Web of Life' exercise that demonstrated the fragility and interconnection of nature and biodiversity, and through storytelling about their own experiences of nature. *Relationship to nature* is closely interconnected with the themes of *novel space*, *creatives as mediators*, *learning and training* and *knowledge sharing*.



Kilcoole Creative Little Tern Colony Project. Image by Birdwatch Ireland

Nutrition and Health

Within our analysis, the theme of *nutrition and health* emerged on 43 occasions. This analysis is supported by observations made by our researchers while attending project events. The sub-themes of *nutrition and food*, *old ways of food production* and *mental wellbeing* are evident across our findings.

The importance of nutrition and food emerged from The Eco-Makers Workshop and Field Exchange but was also discussed by interviewees who participated in From Plan to Do and Creative Boardroom events. With The Eco-Makers Workshop, a connection was drawn between nutrition and both physical and mental health. This is shown in interviews with participants who spoke of the enjoyment of growing, selling and eating organic produce. It was also evident in interviews with parents and guardians of participants, who spoke of a perceived improvement in the physical and mental health of participants. This theme also emerged in Field Exchange, where interviewees spoke of the importance of nutrition and food to their physical and mental wellbeing. A limited number of interviewees also spoke of the possible learnings that could be extracted from old ways of food production.



Cycle to the Sea. Image by Nohe Roche



Participant feedback:

Yeah we were happy, we were talking to each other, we were eating veg.

Participant, The Eco-Makers Workshop

In other projects, the perceived connection between nutrition, physical activities, and mental wellbeing was noted in interviews of participants. This theme was found in interviews conducted with not only workshop participants, but also with Sports Partnership Tutors who worked with members of the Moyross community at Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick events. Several participants, particularly SEC representatives who took part in From Plan to Do workshops, also spoke of how projects re-energised their commitment to climate action. The theme of *nutrition and health* is shown to be important in both engaging new stakeholders and re-energising existing stakeholders. The theme of *nutrition and health* is interconnected with the following themes: *novel space*; *inclusivity*; *trusted figures*; *training and education*; *knowledge sharing*; and *adaptation*.

Local and Community Pride

The theme of *local and community pride* emerged on 50 occasions. This analysis is strongly supported by observations made by our researchers while attending project events. The sub-themes of *local resilience*, *community connection*, *connecting with people*, and *sense of group ability or efficacy* are evident across our findings.

The importance of local and community pride was observed across all projects even though the communities varied widely. This variation attests to the ability of climate action initiatives to both create new communities and reenergise existing ones. The variety of local and community groups reached in the projects include chartered directors from the Institute of Directors Ireland and the Institute of Directors Northern Ireland; rural and farming communities; persons with intellectual disabilities and their supporting network(s); SEC members; communities seen as affected by high levels of poverty and unemployment;



Participant feedback:

I think you need a sort of local basis. I think that you don't automatically link in with people just because you're doing something that you have in common. You don't have a network as such, or you don't have a way of, you know it's different when you're going to school or college or whatever. You're with those people, but when you're doing something like this to a certain extent because you're very busy doing it, you're kind of head down, backside up, going at it. You know, whereas when you take your head up and when you meet others, and you realise, yeah, there is a whole community of people doing this type of thing, whether it's in the immediate locality or an extended version of that. There's huge merit, huge learning and huge longevity in projects as well!

Participant, Field Exchange

and participants who attended project specific festivals. In our analysis of interviews and our observations, we found a strong sense of pride which enables local and community resilience building.

Given the variation of local and community groups, further analysis is required to outline project specific findings. Nonetheless, interviewees from all projects attested to the tangibility of local and community climate action with many highlighting the importance of relatable, grassroots-level connections. Several interviewees spoke of the need for local and community climate action to both entice new volunteers and re-energise existing ones. This is crucial for growing and reinforcing existing stakeholder engagement. In the interviews, a connection between pride and ownership signalled the importance of local and community climate action.

In a recent report on energy in Ireland, Walsh (SEAI, CEO) emphasised the significance of 'winning hearts and minds' and working with communities (2024). The projects assessed in this report achieved this by instilling local and community pride. The theme of local and community pride is interconnected with the following themes: *novel space; inclusivity; trusted figures; knowledge sharing; relationship to nature; and adaptation.*

Adaptation

Adaptation was a prominent theme to emerge from analysis of the 42 interviews with 34 references related to the topic. The analysis is supported by observations from our researchers who attended the events.

At Field Exchange, creative farming ambassadors were motivated to adopt new land management practices in the face of current and future challenges posed by climate change. This was aided by the knowledge sharing, new skills, learning and training they experienced during creative farming ambassador workshops. These practices included planting more trees to sequester carbon, improving water absorption, soil health and reducing soil erosion; integrating dry-stone wall building into wind breaks for shelter on the farm; planting more moss for carbon sequestration; and using dry-stone walling as a foundation for structures made from sustainable building materials, such as cob building. Participants were highly interested and engaged in learning about nature-based solutions for adaptation. They also discussed incorporating more sustainable farm practices such as agroforestry into their own farming enterprises, in order to attract agritourism visitors wishing to learn about sustainable farming practices.



Participant feedback:

I'm composting now and you know not in a way that I was trying before, but I've now researched it properly and understand how to do it properly. And I'm absolutely trying to do things that will have an impact. I've gone all out for pollinator plants and you know, natural environments and to let the grass grow in the back garden and try to build habitats for the bees and the insects for the winter.

Participant, Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate

Across Field Exchange and The Eco-Makers Workshop, there was a major emphasis on the importance and urgency needed of more local food production. Participants highlighted its urgency in building resilience in communities by diversifying food supplies/not relying heavily on imports. They also highlighted improvements to nutrition and wellbeing from growing and eating food with typically less chemicals than industrial produce. The theme of *adaptation* was also heavily reflected in From Plan to Do, where community stakeholders were engaged

in activities to reduce energy use and build towards more resilient SECs.

A major sub-theme to emerge from adaptation was *small changes*, whereby participants expressed how small changes in behaviour at an individual level can have an accumulative effect. Participants from From Plan to Do expressed how the success of adopting one small change towards pro-climate behaviour can motivate a person to keep building upon that success and take further actions. After partaking in *Creative Climate Action* Experiences, participants from Creative Boardroom, Field Exchange, Creating a Climate for Change - Dance Limerick, From Plan to Do and The Eco-Makers Workshop were found to be making changes at an individual level including less air travel, reducing food waste, composting more, rewilding for biodiversity, swapping to organic food products, installing solar panels, reducing fast fashion and switching to EVs. These actions could accumulate towards impactful climate action over time.



"I certainly believe that the arts, and the creative part of our society has a huge role to play. For years we've been kind of waiting for the arts to come in, for the media to come in, for the whole area of music, which can be so powerful. Drama, film. I think it can be transforming. It can help people to get the message in a way that we don't seem to be getting it."

Participant, Field Exchange

8. Conclusion and Year Two Research

This report shows the significant potential of the arts and creative sectors in fostering new and alternative responses to climate change action. As outlined in Key Findings, our assessment of six *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* projects found them to be highly successful interventions that support equity, social inclusion and a just transition to a sustainable and net-zero future. Our findings suggest that arts and creativity can be significant catalysts of climate action and an essential means by which the Government can deliver on key aspects of the *Climate Action Plan*.

In this report, we present research which was completed in the first year of the project. This quantitative and qualitative research was conducted through attendance at a large number of events held by both Spark and Ignite projects. This report presents a collective assessment of these six projects. In the second year of Creative Climate Change II we will pursue further analysis of the six projects. This includes further analysis on the theme of Just Transition with a specific focus on The Eco-Makers Workshop, Creating a Climate for Change - Dance Limerick and From Plan to Do. The theme of replicability and scalability will be examined further in relation to the six projects, with a more detailed analysis of Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, Field Exchange and The Air We Share. This analysis will be aided by project specific focus groups for both Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate and Field Exchange.

Although Spark projects will not be running in year two, we will continue to pursue opportunities to distribute surveys among project participants and conduct further interviews. During the second year, we will continue our engagement with the Ignite projects Field Exchange and The Air we Share. This will involve attending project-specific creative experiences and events. We will engage with projects to disseminate further surveys and conduct additional interviews.

As noted in the Analytical Framework, in our second year of research the COM B model will be integrated with a leverage point framework (Meadows, 1999) in order to identify a range of potential access points where *Creative Climate Action* initiatives can contribute toward broader systems level behavioural and transformative change. This will enable us to identify impactful models for scalable community climate action which can be replicated across the country.

In the first year of this project, we were fortunate to work closely with six project teams who supported our research at every opportunity. We thank all of these teams and look forward to continuing this engagement. To date, the UCC research team has identified the importance of arts and creativity in fostering new and alternative responses to climate change action. As the project continues, the team looks forward to identifying further insights into arts- and culture-based community climate action and the potential of the *Creative Climate Action* initiative to support the delivery of Ireland's *Climate Action Plan*.



Demolition Take Down. Image by Brian Cregan

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