

Creative Climate Change II – Final Report

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

Marguerite Nyhan, Michelle Burke, María Ruiz Carreras and Jennifer Ahern



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Creative
Climate Action



University College Cork, Ireland

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Executive Summary

This report presents a comprehensive overview of University College Cork's three-year research-based evaluation of Creative Ireland's *Creative Climate Action Fund* and specifically, the *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* initiative. The *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* initiative funded and supported 42 creative, cultural, and artistic projects that built awareness of climate change while empowering individuals and communities to take meaningful climate action and adopt sustained behavioural change.

The evaluation found that the arts, cultural and creative sectors can act as powerful catalysts for climate action and support Ireland's transition towards a sustainable and net-zero future. Drawing on data collected through project observations, interviews, surveys, and focus groups across 42 projects nationwide, the research demonstrated that creative and participatory approaches can foster meaningful public engagement with climate action while strengthening community capacity, collaboration and social connection.

The initiative strongly supported key objectives of Ireland's *Climate Action Plan*. In relation to citizen engagement aspects of the Climate Action Plan, we found that the projects fostered social dialogue that empowered people, communities, businesses and organisations to pursue effective climate action. A key principle of the *Climate Action Plan's* Just Transition framework is to ensure that social dialogue on climate action is representative of all of Irish society. Our analysis of the projects found them to be highly successful interventions that emphasised fairness, inclusion, community participation, and ensuring that no group is left behind in the transition to a climate-neutral society. The projects successfully engaged diverse audiences, including marginalised and underrepresented groups, through tailored, accessible, and locally relevant approaches that considered participants' capacities, needs, and levels of climate awareness. By creating inclusive and supportive environments for dialogue and co-creation, the programme fostered trust, collective efficacy, and stronger motivation to participate in climate action.

The research findings demonstrate the importance of 'novel spaces' created through arts and creative practices. These spaces enabled enhanced dialogue,

knowledge sharing, collaboration, learning, and emotional engagement with climate issues and helping participants connect climate action to their own lives, communities, and values. Creative activities, storytelling, and artistic expression were found to make climate and sustainability topics relatable, accessible, and inspiring, while trusted messengers such as artists, facilitators, experts, and community leaders played a key role in strengthening engagement and credibility. 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.

The *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* initiative also supported behavioural change by strengthening participants' capacity, motivation, and opportunity to act on climate issues. Participants reported increased confidence, knowledge, skills, and empowerment to pursue sustainable actions within their personal, professional, and community contexts. The initiative also contributed to wider cultural change by influencing participants' mindsets and values, in particular instilling a greater sense of collective efficacy for climate action, and an enhanced value in nature and the environment. Relational change, such as new friendships forming and the strengthening of social and professional networks, further embedded climate action within broader social and cultural settings.

Importantly, the projects generated a range of tangible and lasting outputs, including toolkits, publications, artworks, community infrastructure, and educational resources, which continue to support local engagement, climate dialogue, and sustainability action beyond the duration of the programme. Overall, the findings demonstrate the significant role that arts, culture, and creativity can play in advancing individual engagement, climate action, social inclusion, and the Just Transition objectives of Ireland's *Climate Action Plan*.

Key recommendations include building on the success of *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* by embedding arts, culture and creativity more strategically within Ireland's climate action policy and implementation. The evaluation recommends scaling participatory, arts-based approaches as a means of engaging people and communities in climate action, with a particular emphasis on supporting

a just transition by reaching marginalised and underrepresented groups including people with disabilities. The recommendations also call for stronger whole-of-society collaboration, recognising that creative approaches can strengthen partnerships across communities, organisations, local authorities and other sectors while building the knowledge, confidence and motivation needed for sustained climate action.

The evaluation further recommends recognising arts and creativity as essential drivers of the cultural and behavioural change required to achieve Ireland's net-zero ambitions. It calls for sustained investment in artists, creative practitioners, trusted local leadership and community-based creative spaces, alongside longer-term funding models that enable lasting impact. Collectively, these recommendations provide a framework for embedding creative engagement within climate policy and practice. This will help to foster the cultural, relational and systems change necessary to support an inclusive, resilient and enduring transition to a climate-neutral future.

In our assessment of the first *Creative Climate Action Fund I (2021-2022)*, 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 current report based on *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* 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 Ireland can deliver on key aspects of its *Climate Action Plan*. It is evident from our evaluation that the arts and creative sectors have significant power as transformative agents of change to help foster innovative climate 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. As part of the research, our research team attended 46 *Creative Climate Action Fund II* events hosted by the six selected ‘deep dive’ projects while data was collected through 217 *Creative Climate Action Fund II* project and participant experience surveys, 50 interviews, 27 participant observations, and three focus groups. The following summarises the key findings from the data analyses:

Arts, creativity and novel spaces are catalysts for climate action

The arts, cultural and creative aspects of *Creative Climate Action Fund II* were found to be key catalysts for climate action and provided a unique inspirational frame that connected with participants on a personal and emotional level. The artistic and creative aspects of the projects proved vital in uniting stakeholders across society in impactful climate and sustainability efforts. Central to this was the generation of novel creative and social spaces that fostered greater social investment in climate action. 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.

Creative Climate Action Fund II supported the delivery of Ireland’s Climate Action Plan

The initiative delivered on key aspects of the Government of Ireland’s *Climate Action Plan* through inclusive engagement of participants in collective action at national, regional and community levels. The coordinated effort of 42 projects nationwide was a whole-of-society approach that enabled widescale collaboration, shared learnings, support and action relating to interconnected aspects of climate change. The themes included biodiversity loss, energy use, agriculture and land use, the circular

economy, climate mitigation and climate adaptation. Being part of a 42-project cohort was found to foster a sense of community across sectors, organisations, industry, local authorities and NGOs, as well as through Shared-Island cooperation. The projects engaged diverse audiences through thoughtful, original and creative communications. They showcased exemplars and built capacity for community and organisational climate action.

The *Creative Climate Action Fund II* programme supported an inclusive and just transition

Creative Climate Action Fund II projects were found to support equity, social inclusion and a just transition by tailoring approaches to participants’ capacities, needs, abilities, and levels of climate awareness. These targeted and inclusive approaches achieved high levels of engagement, increased understanding and strengthened motivation to adopt climate-compatible behaviours. This aligns with the *Climate Action Plan*’s focus on a fair, participatory transition that leaves no one behind, through engaging marginalised and underrepresented groups, supporting community action and building trust.

The initiative strengthened citizen, community, business and organisational engagement in climate action

Creative Climate Action Fund II projects were found to foster strong community pride, ownership and engagement, while building the capacity of organisations and communities to transition towards low-carbon futures. This aligns with Ireland’s *Climate Action Plan*, which emphasises empowering people and communities through awareness, dialogue and participation. The initiative also reflects the Plan’s emphasis on organisational leadership and accountability. By supporting knowledge exchange, peer learning and collaboration across sectors, the initiative helped strengthen organisational and business capability and contributed to a coordinated, whole-of-society response to climate change.

The *Creative Climate Action* projects drove deep cultural change and impact across wide spheres of influence

The *Creative Climate Action Fund II* projects were found to contribute significantly to 'scaling deep' by fostering shifts in values, perspectives, relationships and cultural meaning-making, whereby participants develop shared understandings of climate issues through creative and social interaction that underpin long-term systems change. The initiative created foundational conditions for sustained climate action through enabling learning and dialogue, strengthening social connections and embedding climate action within diverse social and cultural contexts. It was also found to extend beyond individual participants and into their spheres of influence, including their wider social and professional networks. Shifts in participants' values, perspectives, knowledge and sense of agency motivated them to share learnings, initiate conversations and apply climate action within their communities and organisations.

***Creative Climate Action* supported behaviour change by strengthening capacity, motivation, and opportunity**

The *Creative Climate Action Fund II* projects were found to effectively support behaviour change by strengthening participants' capacity, motivation and opportunity to act. Capacity was built through learning, skill development and co-creation processes that enhanced participants' knowledge, confidence and sense of agency. Motivation was reinforced through positive emotional engagement, including enjoyment, empowerment and exposure to new perspectives, while opportunity was created through inclusive, collaborative environments that fostered social connection, dialogue and collective action.

Creatives and trusted messengers enabled effective climate engagement

Creatives and project team members played a vital role as mediators, translating climate information into clear, relatable and accessible messages for participants. Engagement was further strengthened through trusted figures, such as expert speakers and community leaders, who enhanced credibility, fostered trust and supported deeper participation in climate action and dialogue.

The *Creative Climate Action* initiative fostered connection with nature

Creative Climate Action Fund II experiences were found to cultivate and enhance 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. Participants reported a sense of improved wellbeing. This was particularly effective in addressing the needs of marginalised and underrepresented groups, including people with disabilities, 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.

***Creative Climate Action Fund II* generated tangible outputs necessary for sustained climate action**

In addition to social and behavioural outcomes, projects produced a range of lasting material and cultural outputs, including toolkits, publications, artworks, and community infrastructure. These tangible outcomes contributed to local place-making, supported ongoing engagement, provided practical resources for future climate action, and extended the visibility and durability of project impacts beyond the life of the project.





2. Recommendations

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

Build on the Creative Climate Action Fund II's success of leveraging arts and creativity to deliver on key aspects of Ireland's Climate Action Plan

Prioritise inclusive arts-based and creative interventions to support the just transition

We recommend that accessible arts-based and creative approaches as demonstrated under the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* are leveraged to engage marginalised and underrepresented groups in climate dialogue and action. The implementation of bespoke, creative and participatory arts-based interventions that connect with marginalised, underrepresented and underserved groups should be recognised as an essential aid in the just transition.

Integrate arts-based and creative approaches for enhanced individual, community and organisational engagement in climate action

We recommend that participatory arts, creative and cultural interventions should be encouraged to engage people, communities and organisations in climate action, as arts and culture connects with people on deep personal and practical levels. Businesses and organisations should be encouraged to consider the effectiveness of the *Creative Climate Action Fund II*, which has demonstrated how arts, culture and creativity can be key drivers in building capacity to achieve a net-zero transition.

Scale whole-of-society engagement models

We recommend that the Government scale and sustain whole-of-society and cross-sector engagement models that co-ordinate and connect communities, organisations, local authorities and industry to enable collaboration, shared learning, support, capacity building and climate action.

Recognise that arts and creativity are key drivers for the culture shift necessary to achieve Ireland's net-zero future

Prioritise participatory arts and creative interventions that contribute to cultural change ('scaling deep')

We recommend that participatory arts, cultural and creative interventions are leveraged to contribute to relational and cultural change which is essential for long-term systems change. We recommend recognising and resourcing initiatives that drive these changes, including shifts in values, norms and perspectives as essential foundations for sustained climate action.

Strategically invest in artists and creative practitioners as part of future climate interventions

We recommend that artists and creative practitioners should be actively funded and supported to participate in future climate and sustainability interventions in order to facilitate engagement, communication and understanding of relevant issues.

Invest in 'novel spaces' for dialogue and participation

We recommend supporting the creation of inclusive, creative and community-based spaces that facilitate dialogue, collaboration and peer learning, recognising their role in building trust, social cohesion and collective climate action.

Provide structured mechanisms for participant interaction and peer exchange

We recommend introducing regular, structured opportunities for interactions between participants, such as facilitated workshops, which have proved valuable for enhancing collaboration, strengthening social connections, peer learning and knowledge sharing.

Leverage existing networks for arts-based and creative interventions to support deep lasting change

We recommend implementing arts-based and creative approaches in networks where trust and rapport are already established, such as between communities and partnerships, local clubs and professional networks. Embedding creative approaches within these networks can further strengthen relationships, knowledge-sharing and learning, which help create cultural conditions necessary for supporting sustained and meaningful climate action.

Engage trusted local and community leadership to drive deep cultural change

We recommend engaging creatives, community leaders and expert speakers with existing community trust and rapport as intermediaries, recognising their critical role in how climate action is understood and adopted. Supporting locally embedded leadership can build credibility, strengthen relationships and foster deeper, place-based engagement helping to shift values, perspectives and collective practices in ways that enable lasting cultural change.

Promote group activities that involve participatory arts, co-design and co-creation

We recommend the promotion of 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. Participatory arts, co-design, and co-creation approaches position participants as active contributors, fostering ownership, trust and more meaningful and sustained engagement.

Leverage local authorities for implementing arts-based and creative interventions to inspire collective climate action

We recommend that all 31 local authorities, including city and county councils, implement participatory arts, creativity and cultural interventions on climate change, particularly in their cultural and creativity strategies and climate action plans. We recommend leveraging these for wider community engagement and inspiring collective responses.

Design arts-based and creative climate action initiatives around behaviour change principles

Build capacity for climate action through learning and skill development

We recommend that learning and skill development are embedded in participatory and creative processes to strengthen individuals' knowledge, confidence and sense of agency.

Inspire motivation through emotional and experiential engagement

We recommend engaging people in participatory and creative processes such as storytelling and sharing positive experiences to help foster motivation, reinforce values and make climate action feel relevant, meaningful and achievable.

Create opportunities for translating intent into climate action

We recommend investing in enabling and creative spaces (novel spaces) that nurture dialogue, peer learning and social cohesion. We recommend providing people with practical pathways for sustained engagement such as community initiatives, local networks and organisational supports.

Recognise attitudinal and belief change as foundational outcomes of climate engagement

We recommend that policy frameworks explicitly recognise shifts in attitudes, beliefs, confidence and sense of responsibility as critical early outcomes of climate engagement. These changes form the foundation for longer-term behavioural and systemic change and should be valued and measured accordingly.

Leverage nature-based arts, cultural and creative approaches that deliver co-benefits

We recommend nature-based activities and approaches that deliver co-benefits such as improved wellbeing, biodiversity protection and increased public engagement in climate action. Wellbeing is essential for building resilient communities and climate adaptation. Nature and biodiversity themes can engage wider audiences.

Longer term funding needed

While the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* enables meaningful engagement, we recommend a revision of the current short 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. Longer-term funding models would support commitment to project goals, while also strengthening teams and empowering participants.



Gleann a' Phúca.
Image by Julie Forrester



Neart na Machairi
Image by Domnick Walsh



3. Introduction

The Creative Ireland Programme, based in the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, 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 I (2021-2022)* was launched by Creative Ireland through a collaboration with the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment. This funded fifteen creative and cultural projects that aimed to meaningfully connect people with the profound changes that are happening due to climate change and transform that connection into climate action. In 2023, the *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* initiative was launched, funded by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport in collaboration with the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment and the Department of the Taoiseach.

The *Creative Climate Action Fund II* paired creative minds with experts in climate science, sustainability and biodiversity, and supported 42 projects under two strands, namely Strand 1 entitled Ignite and Strand 2 entitled Spark (see Figure 1 for details). The Ignite strand supported 19 large-scale interdisciplinary projects with extensive public engagement on a national level. 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 of 12 months duration, to demonstrate new ideas for public engagement at a local, community or community-of-practice scale. While all 42 projects are assessed in this report, six ‘deep-dive’ projects were evaluated in detail. The six deep-dive projects included three Ignite projects, namely *Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate*, *Field Exchange* and *The Air We Share, Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick – Dance Limerick, Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities – From Plan to Do* and *The Eco-Makers Workshop*.

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 behaviour (Burke et al., 2018) and note the impact of place-based art in driving local climate action (Smith, McDonagh & Brookes, 2025). Artistic and creative practices act as a transformative mechanism for engaging people with climate change on a deep, emotional and embodied level (de Carvalho, 2025). 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 I (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 our research of the *Creative Climate Action Fund I (2021-2022)* (Nyhan et al., 2023), our three years of research on the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* initiative identifies how the experiences enable potential behavioural change 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 to look beyond the individual or group, integrate a systems-thinking approach and 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.

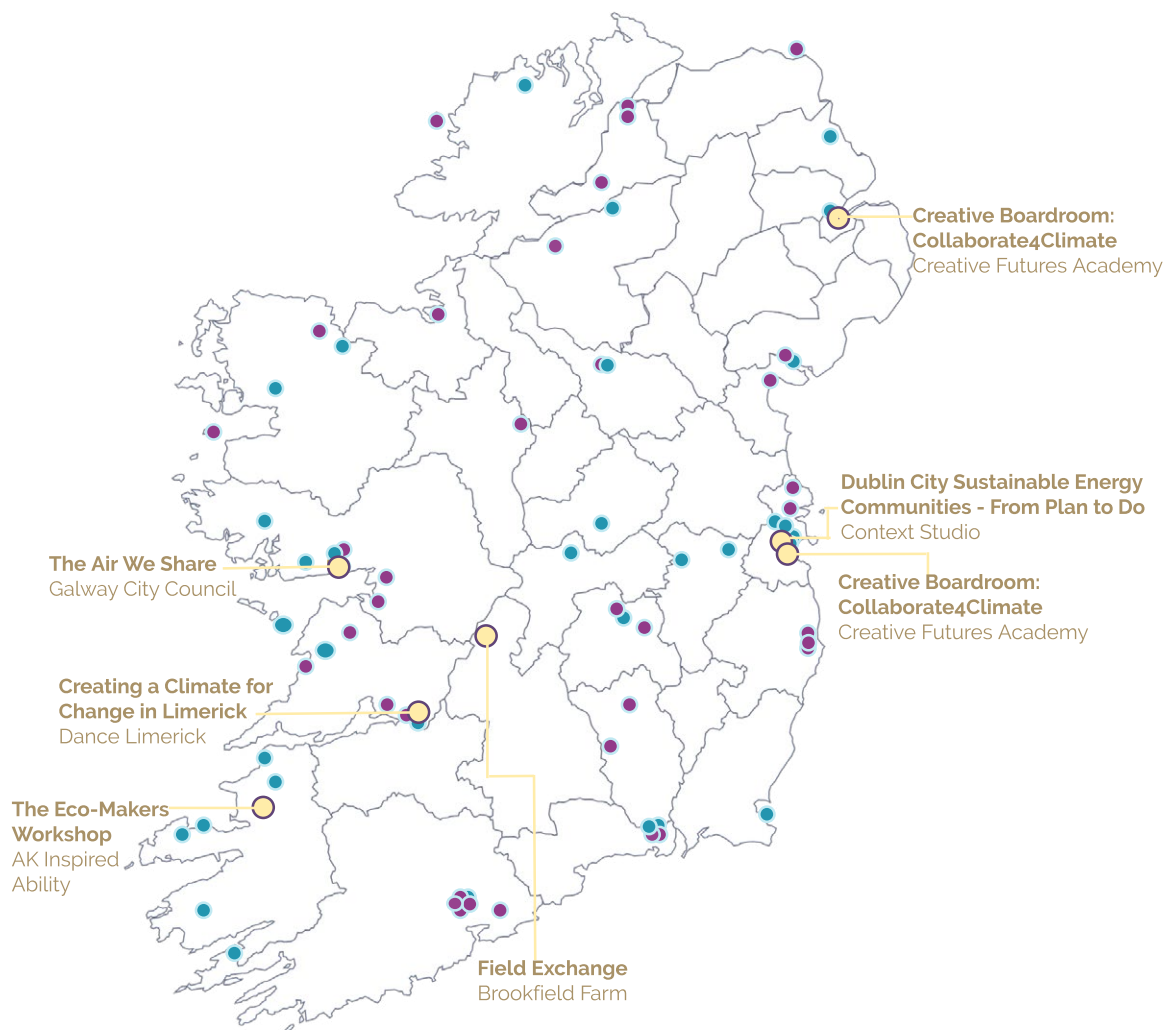


Figure 1. Map showing the geographical distribution of the 42 Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change projects across Ireland.

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/Down/Derry/Londonderry/Galway/Kerry/Cork
 Design Declares Ireland, Nationwide
 Renew Bunnah, 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

Another major challenge that Ireland faces on the path to climate neutrality is ensuring an equitable and just transition to a sustainable future, taking everyone into account, including those from marginalised or disadvantaged communities and people with disabilities. The Government of Ireland's *Climate Action Plan* highlights the need for a just transition which engages all people 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* 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 diverse perspectives are reflected in shaping national *Climate Action Plan* policies and in *Creative Climate Action* initiatives which support these.

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 *Creative Climate Action Fund* and other larger initiatives and partnerships across Europe. The findings from this second phase are presented in this report.



Tern the Tide in Kilcoole.
Image by Brian Burke



'Seaweed Girl'. Waterford Festival of Food.
Image by Patrick Browne



4. Deep Dive Projects

A 'deep dive' evaluation of six of the 42 *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* projects was conducted. This evaluation included an assessment of three Ignite and three Spark projects. An overview of each of the six projects is included below while further information is available on their respective websites and on the [Creative Ireland publications website](#).

Ignite projects

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate

Lead organisation: Creative Futures Academy

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate was a pioneering 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 but also an opportunity for transformative change. Building on the success of the inaugural programme, Phase 2 expanded the initiative through a touring exhibition and workshops across the island of Ireland, further embedding climate leadership and cross-sector collaboration within organisational and boardroom contexts.

creativefuturesacademy.ie/partnerproject/creative-boardroom-collaborate4climate

Field Exchange

Lead organisation: Brookfield Farm

Building on its first iteration in 2022, *Field Exchange 2024-2025* was a project that connected farmers, artists, agri-technical experts and the public. Led by farmer and

agricultural scholar Ailbhe Gerrard, their mission was 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 brought 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 designers Elements of Action. The project centered around two Public Field Exchange Festivals held in 2024 and 2025 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.

www.brookfield.farm/field-exchange

The Air We Share

Lead organisation: Galway City Council

The Air We Share was a two-year project that engaged with the increasingly important issue of air pollution through artistic interventions, participatory science and community action, brought together by an interdisciplinary consortium of local partners. The project was 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 sought to develop creative and innovative responses to climate and environmental issues spanning culture, technology and participatory science in collaboration with the communities of Westside, Galway City. The programme supported three artist residencies who engaged with the communities of Westside and creatively responded to scientific research on air quality and climate conducted by local people and climate scientists from the University of Galway.

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.

dancelimerick.ie/dl-bridge/creating-a-climate-for-change-in-limerick/

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 SECs 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.

www.fromplantodo.ie/

The Eco-Makers Workshop

Lead organisation: AK Inspired Ability, Tralee

The *Eco-Makers Workshop* was a 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. This included using beeswax for candle-making and developing 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>



Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick.
Image by Dance Limerick



Lantern Walk, WILDERLAND.
Image by Ugnius Brazdziunas



5. Research Methods

Surveys, Interviews and Observations

In order to ascertain 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; and focus groups. 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 participant survey was distributed to participants of the six deep-dive projects only, while the project team surveys were distributed to all 42 project teams in two waves (a preliminary survey and a follow-up survey). The participant 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; O'Mahony et al., 2024; European Commission, 2023). 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).

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 Fund II* 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 research 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 Fund II* events, workshops and experiences were tailored to smaller groups. Although the evaluation of these was time-consuming, it was extremely important to capture the tremendous value and impact that these interventions had on individuals. The research team collected data from 46 different *Creative Climate Action Fund II* 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

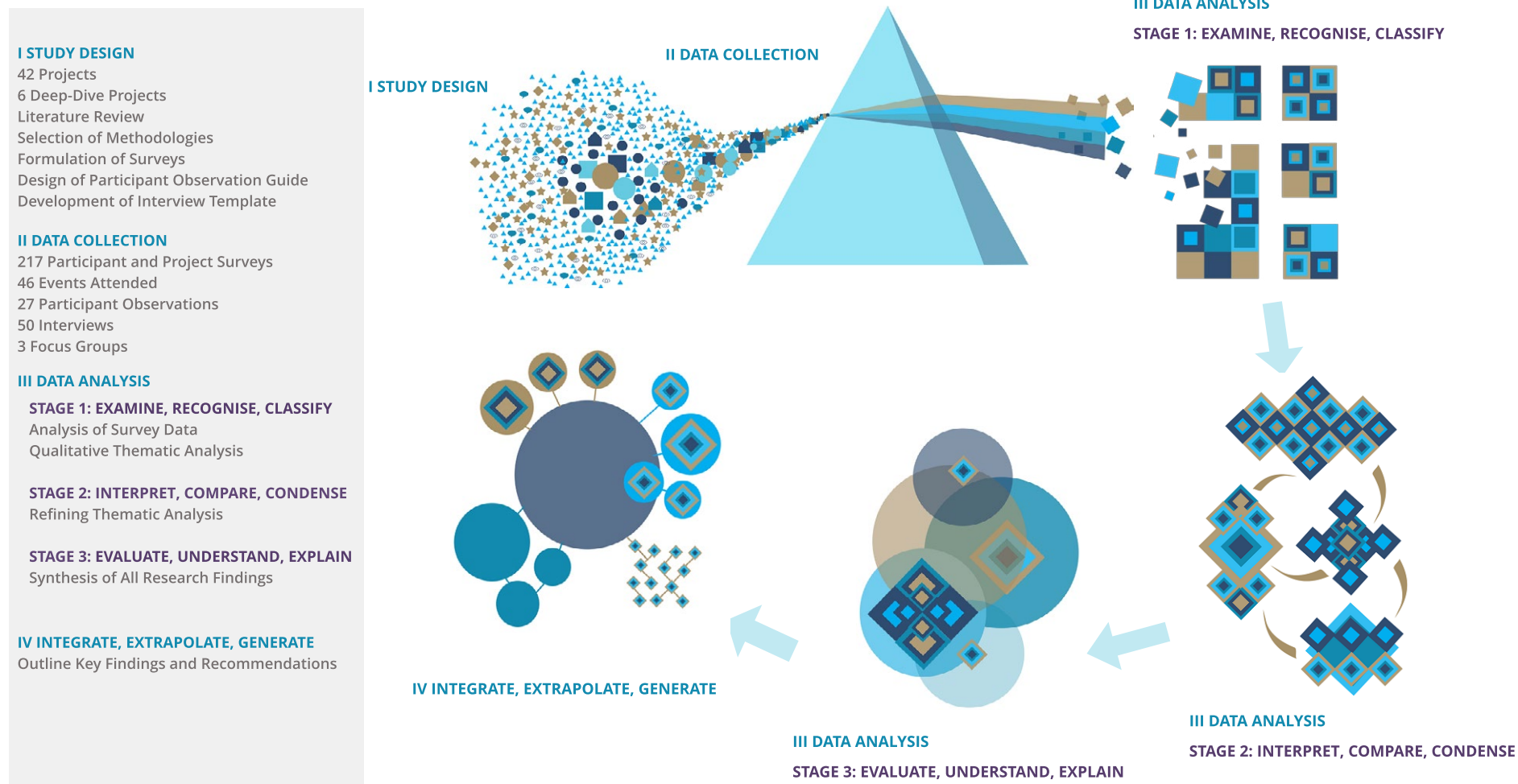


Figure 2. Methodology visualisation illustrates the different stages of the research methodology employed.

Analytical Framework

COM-B Behaviour System Model

Understanding whether the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* initiative brought about behavioural change in the target audience and participants was a key focus area in our research. When conducting analysis of the *Creative Climate Action Fund I (2021-2022)* 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*, 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 many of the findings fell naturally into one, two or all three of the conditions. We refined our analysis further to include the COM-B framework and allocated the appropriate findings from the initial phases of analysis to the relevant behaviour change categories.

Scales of Impact

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). A 'Scales of Impact' dimension was also added to our analytical framework to capture any references from participants and their influence on others that may contribute to transformative change. Figure 3 demonstrates Scales of Impact (Newman & Weber, 2023) showing how *Creative Climate Action Fund II* projects can act as catalysts for transformative change.

'Scaling deep'

Throughout our evaluation there has been an emphasis on how the initiative has inspired behavioural change amongst participants. However, as we progressed through the investigation, there was a resounding view that a certain foundation or 'ground conditions' first needed to be established in order for deep and sustainable behavioural change to occur.

Achieving meaningful transformational change requires that climate adaptation and resilience be embedded within the social and cultural fabric of society, reflecting broader shifts in social norms, values and institutions (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Omann et al., 2020; Fraser, 2023). However, this process is complex and necessitates the involvement of multiple actors and agents of change. The concept of 'scaling' helps explain how successful social innovations can contribute to sustainability transitions through influencing laws and policies (scaling up), spreading across geographic contexts (scaling out) and fostering deeper changes in cultural values and relationships ('scaling deep') (Riddell & Moore, 2015).

'Scaling deep', in particular, has been described as enabling durable systems change through profound personal and cultural transformation (Fraser, 2023), including shifts in social norms (Omann et al., 2020). The 'scaling deep' dimension was incorporated into our analytical framework to capture the 'ground conditions' that underpin wider societal change and climate action. These include shifts in values and relationships, as well as key elements, methods and practices associated with this form of scaling.

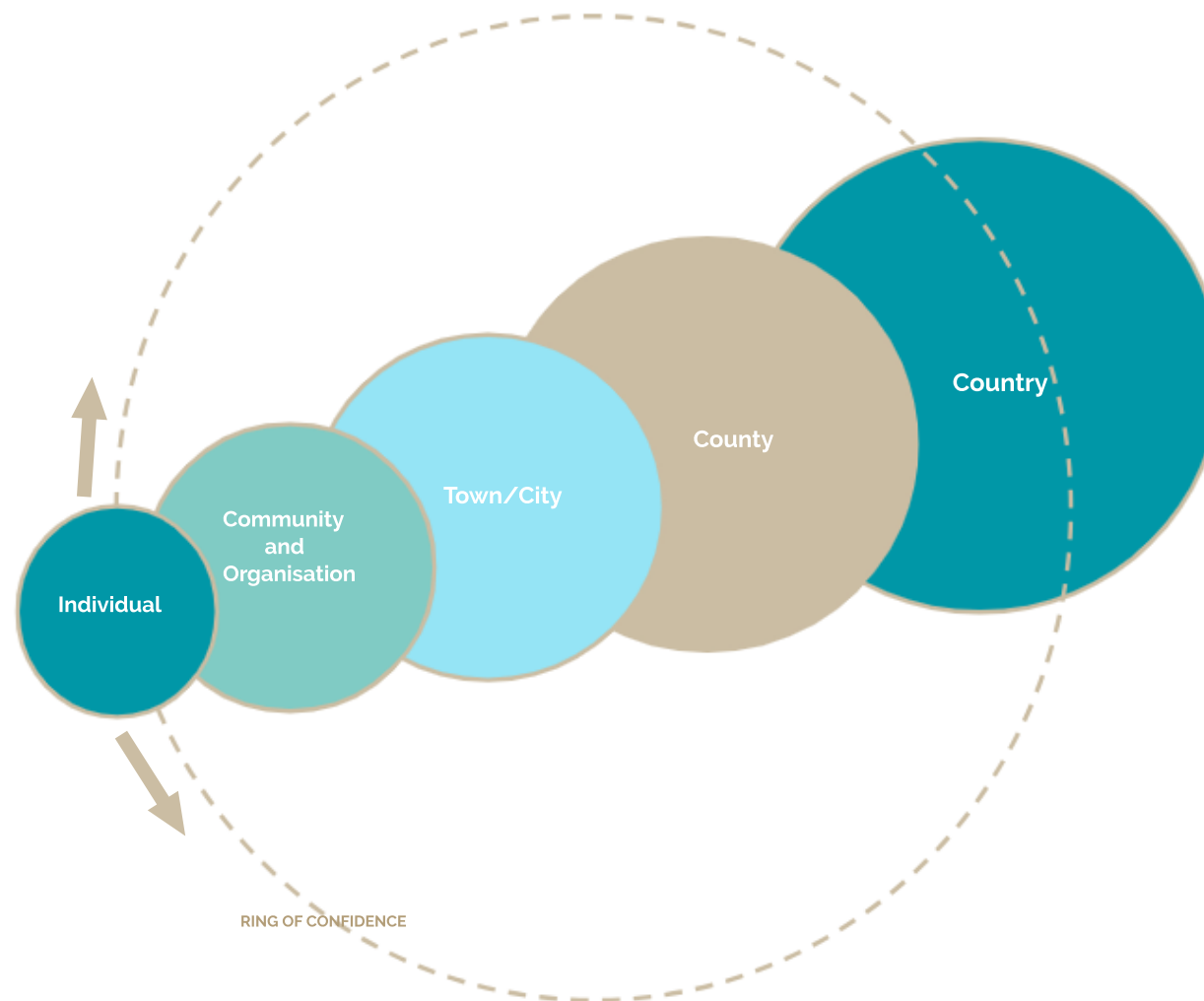


Figure 3. Scales of Impact visual showing how the Creative Climate Action Fund II projects can catalyse transformative change. The impact extends beyond the individual outwards to their 'ring of confidence' that encompasses others across wider society - from family and friends to peers, community and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



Room with a View.

Image by Cracking Light Productions



6. Participant Survey Results

In this section, we summarise our findings from 121 participant surveys. To disseminate surveys and collect responses, researchers attended 46 *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* events including workshops, weekend festivals, summer schools, focus groups and more.

Survey Distribution, Respondent Inclusivity & Layout

Depending on the nature of the event, a sole researcher attended or multiple researchers attended when required. This enabled survey distribution and established 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 Fund II* 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 which consists of five parts with 27 questions.

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

The survey results show that the vast majority of those who attended *Creative Climate Action Fund II* events recognise the pressing nature of climate change, its harmful impacts on future generations and acknowledge that Ireland has a responsibility to take action. Despite participants acknowledging significant structural and systemic barriers to making pro-environmental choices, such as money, time, reliable information and public transport; the evidence shows that after attending the arts/creative experiences, it made them feel inspired and enthusiastic. It also helped them to better understand and to care more about the issues related to the environment and sustainability.

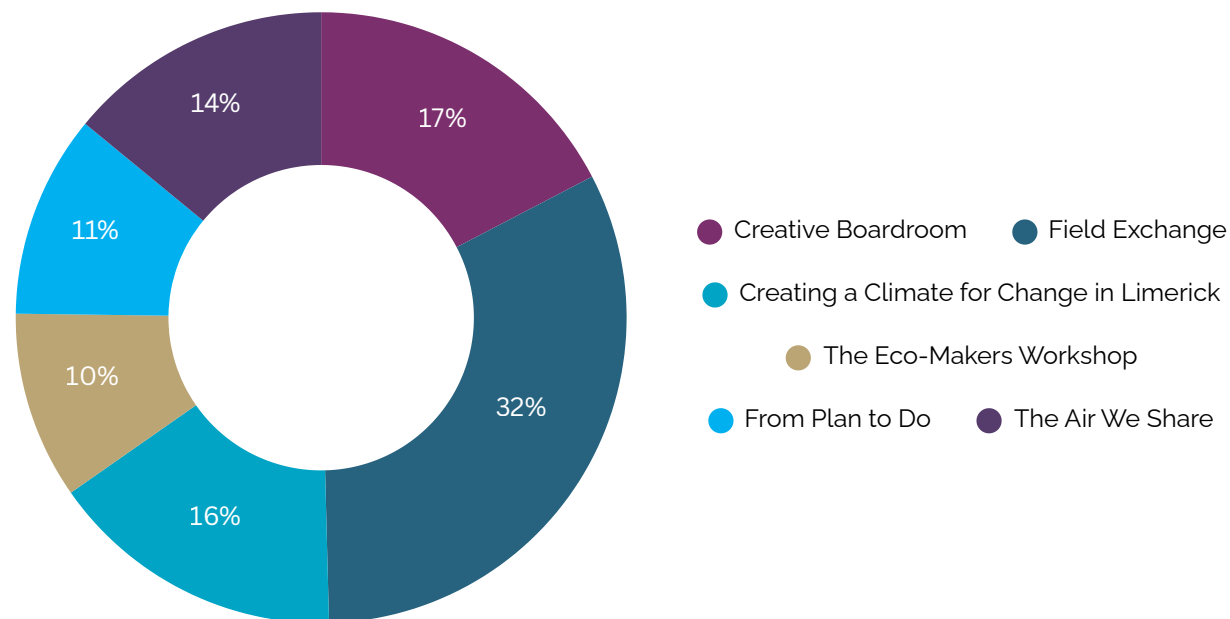
The majority of survey respondents also found that attending creative events helped them make meaningful connections within their communities and an enhanced willingness to do what is right for themselves and their community. They also acknowledged that they felt a strong personal connection to their natural environments.

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 unnecessary 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. The majority of those who attended in a work capacity indicated that their motivation was the opportunity to network with others who are trying to make sustainability changes at work and an interest in the creative aspects of events. 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.

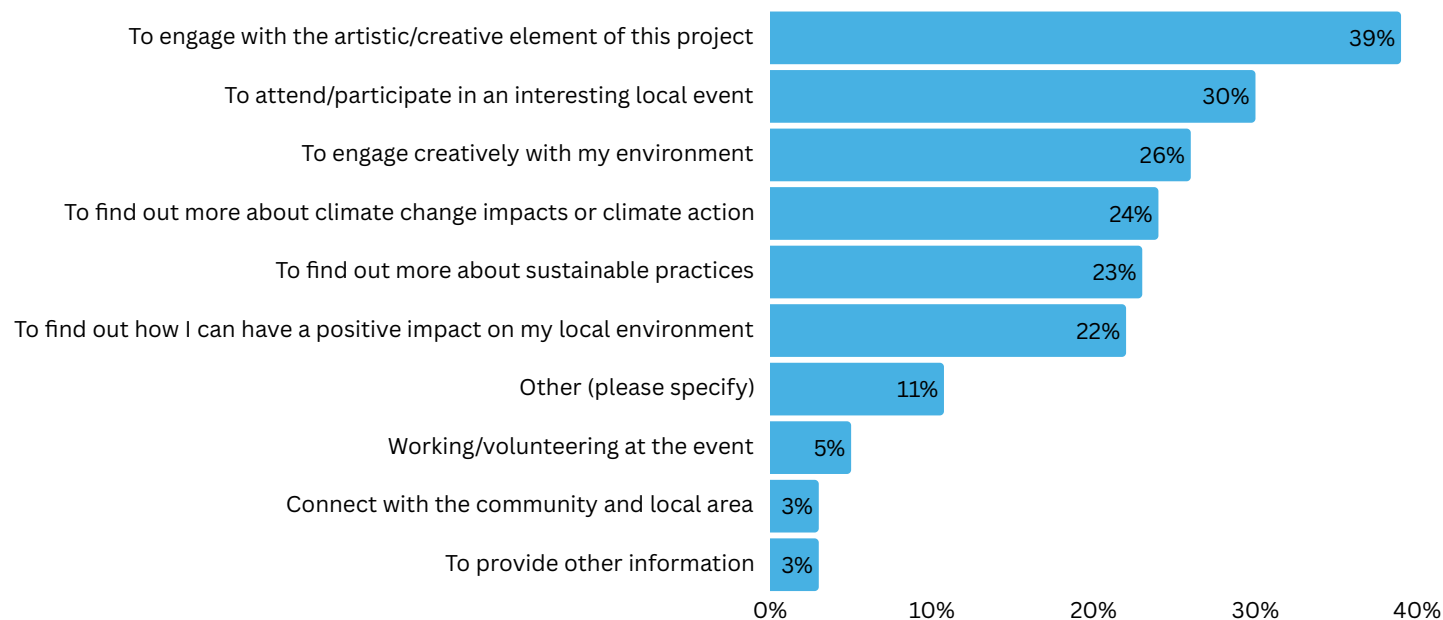
When paired with the findings from our research on the *Creative Climate Action Fund I (2021-2022)* (Nyhan et al., 2023), and *Climate Change in the Irish Mind: Wave 2, Report 1* (O'Mahony et al., 2024), the results show that art and creative experiences are an essential means by which to engage communities on climate action.

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



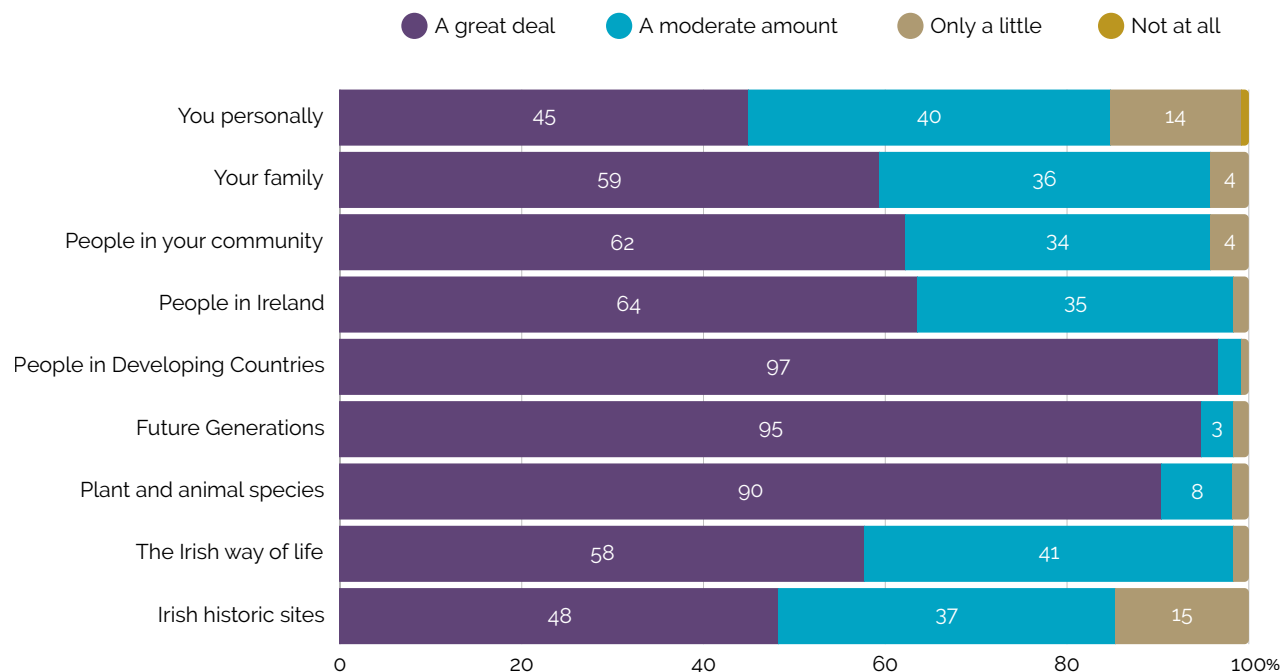
- **Figure 4** shows that 32% of survey respondents participated in or attended *Field Exchange* while 17% attended *Creative Boardroom – Collaborate4Change* and 16% attended *Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick*. 11% attended *Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do*, 10% attended *The Eco-Makers Workshop*, while 14% attended *The Air We Share – Galway City Council*.

Figure 5. **Which best describes the main purpose of your attendance at this event or experience?**
Please choose your TOP TWO options.



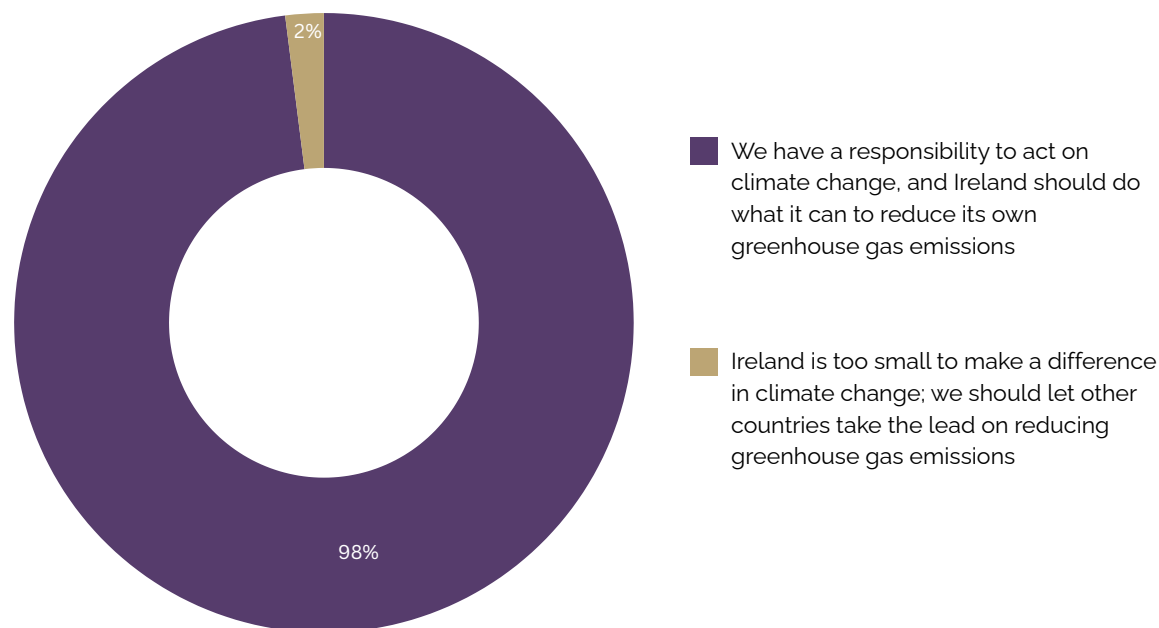
- **Figure 5** shows that to engage with the artistic/creative element of the project was the most popular purpose of attendance (39%), while attending or participating in an interesting local event was chosen by 30% of survey respondents.
- 26% attended to engage creatively with their environment and a slightly smaller percentage (24%) attended to find out more about climate change. 22% wanted to know how they can have a positive impact on their environment while 23% wanted to find out about sustainable practices.
- Other specified purposes for attendance included working or volunteering at the event (5%) or connecting with the local community and area (3%).
- In the first *Creative Climate Action Fund I* experience survey (Nyhan et al., 2023), only 2% of participants attended to learn more about climate change, 16% attended to engage with the artistic/creative element of the project, while 24% were there to attend or participate in an interesting local event.

Figure 6. **How much do you think climate change will harm the following?**



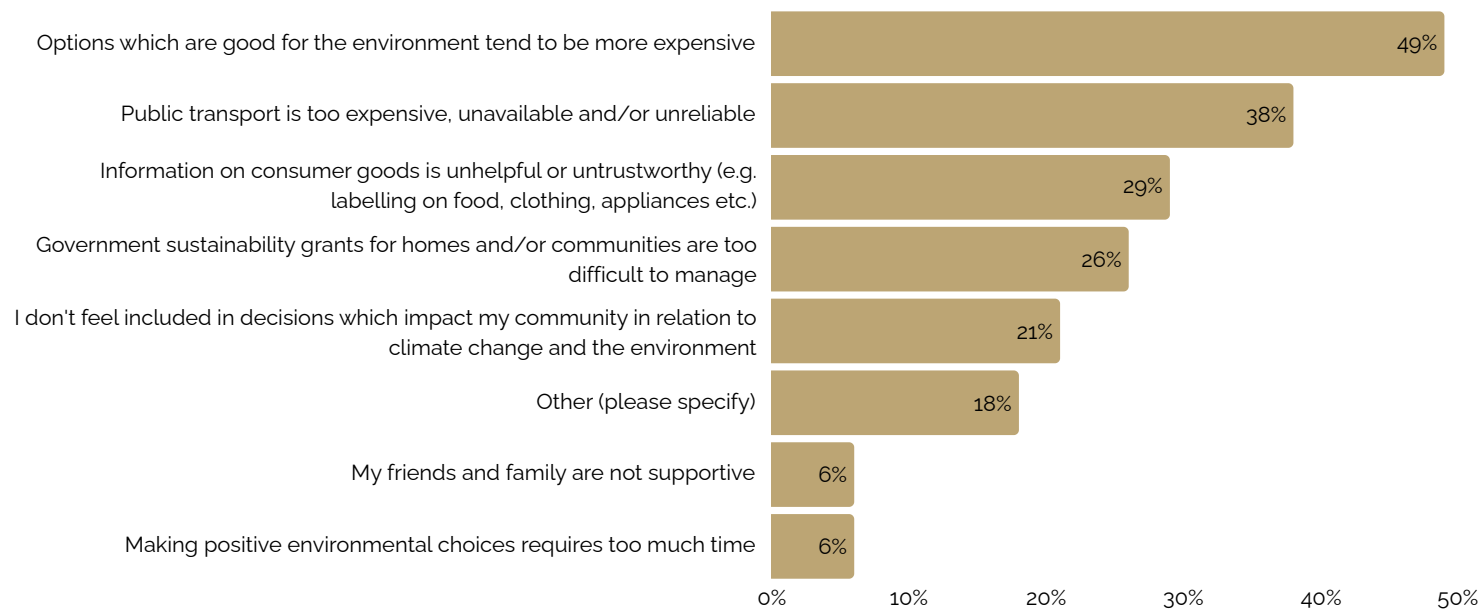
- **Figure 6** shows that the majority of survey participants (99%) believe that climate change will harm people in Ireland a moderate amount or a great deal. The same percentage of people (99%) believe that climate change will harm people in developing countries at least a moderate amount, with a large proportion (97%) believing that it would harm them a great deal.
- 99% of participants think climate change will harm the “Irish way of life”, 98% think it will harm future generations, 98% think it will harm plant and animal species, 95% think that climate change will harm their family and 96% think it will harm people in their community a moderate amount or a great deal. 85% think that climate change will harm them personally while the same percentage (85%) believe that climate change will harm Irish historic sites a moderate amount or a great deal.
- In the first *Creative Climate Action Fund I* experience survey (Nyhan et al., 2023), 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, and 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, Report 1* (O'Mahony et al., 2024), 62% 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 7. Please choose the statement that comes closer to your point of view, accepting that neither option may be perfect.



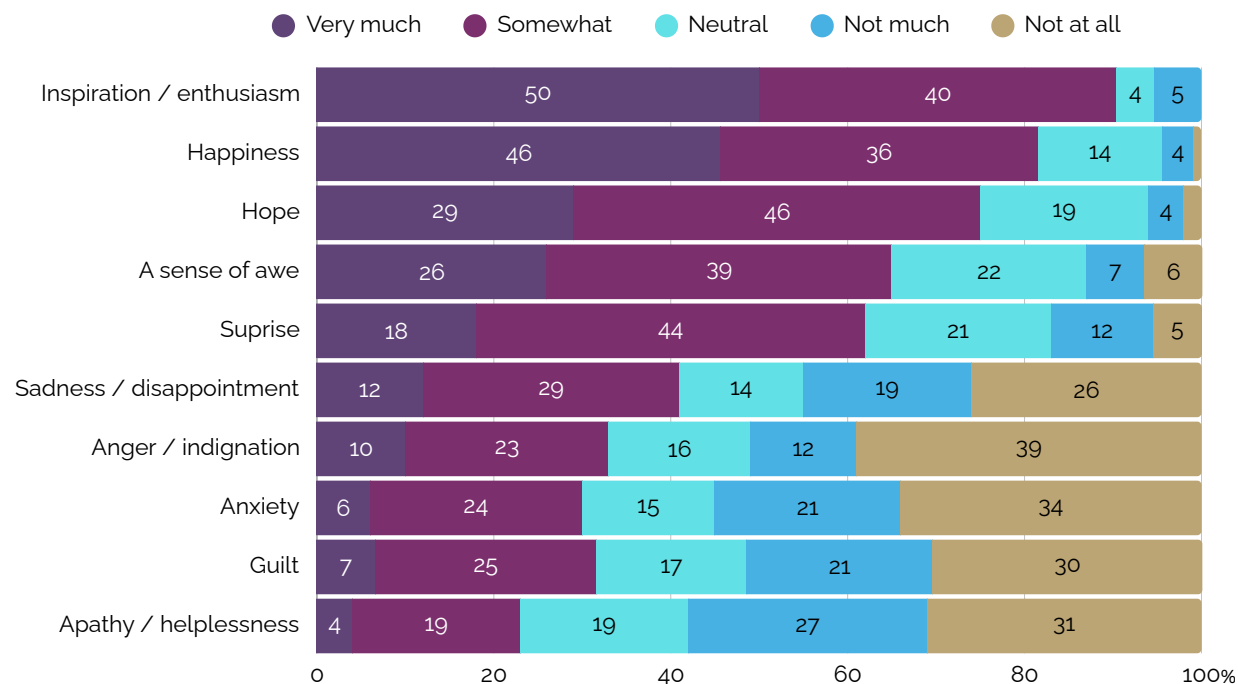
- Overwhelmingly, the people who attended *Creative Climate Action Fund II* events agreed that Ireland should do more to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions. The results from *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2* (O'Mahony et al., 2024) also show a strong belief in Ireland's capacity to do more.
- **Figure 7** shows that the vast majority of survey respondents (98%) 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 2% 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, Report 1* (O'Mahony et al., 2024), 87% felt that we have a responsibility to act on climate change, and Ireland should do what it can to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions. 13% of survey respondents felt that Ireland is too small to make a difference in climate change.

Figure 8. **Which barriers are most significant to you when trying to make positive environmental choices?**
Please choose your TOP TWO options.



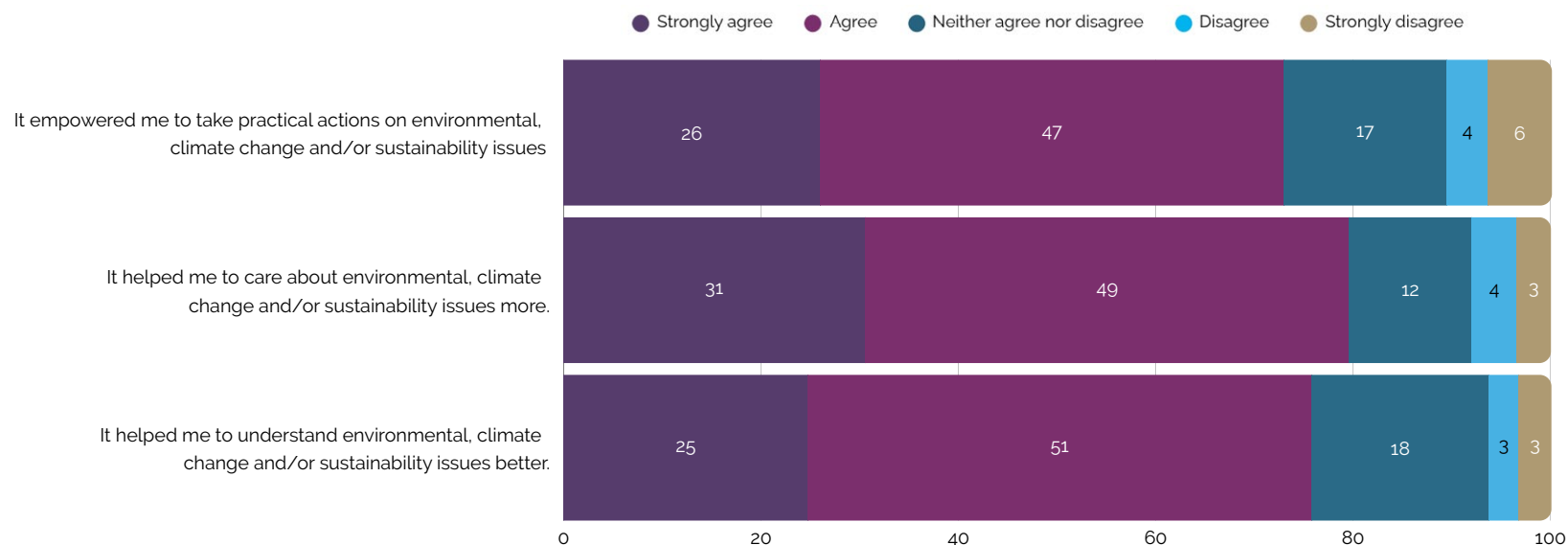
- **Figure 8** shows that nearly half of the survey respondents (49%) indicated that options which are good for the environment tend to be more expensive as a barrier to making positive environmental choices, while 38% indicated that the unreliability and expense of public transport is the next most significant barrier.
- 29% identified untrustworthy information on consumer goods, 26% identified the difficulty of managing government sustainability grants as significant barriers, while 21% don't feel included in decisions on the impacts of climate change on their community.
- 6% reported the barriers of their family and friends not being supportive and that making positive environmental choices requires too much time.
- Other significant barriers specified by 18% of survey respondents included systemic barriers and the need more for radical/systemic change, capitalism and a growth-based economy, and the disparity between individual actions versus industry and government. Political inertia, apathy and a lack of knowledge and motivation were also identified as significant barriers

Figure 9. **To what extent did the creative experience or event bring up each of these feelings within you?**
Please select one response for each.



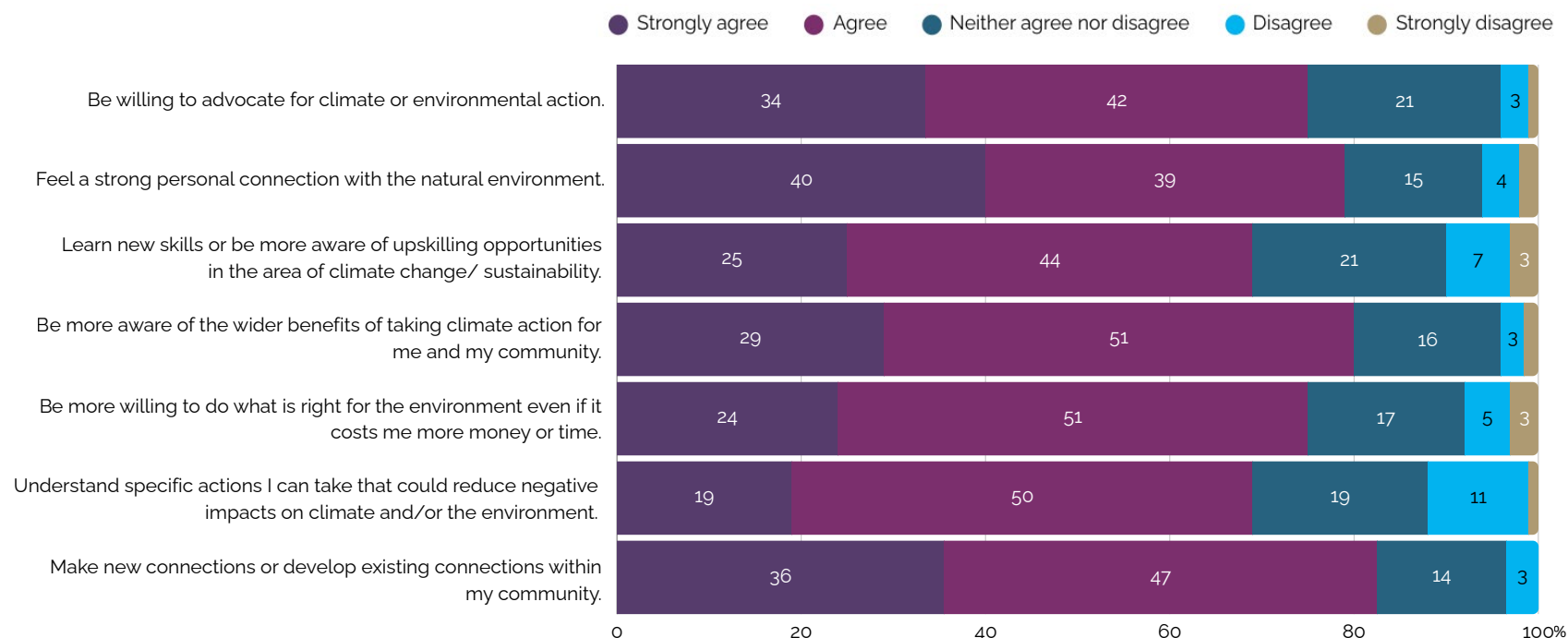
- This survey suggests that the majority of people who attend *Creative Climate Action Fund II* initiatives experience motivational and positive feelings. This is apparent in both this survey and the *Creative Climate Action Fund I* experience survey.
- **Figure 9** shows that 90% felt inspiration or enthusiasm somewhat or very much during/after the creative experiences or events.
- 82% reported feeling happiness, 75% felt hope, 65% felt awe and 62% felt surprise somewhat or very much during/after the experiences.
- A smaller proportion (41%) felt sadness or disappointment, 33% felt anger or indignation and 32% felt guilt somewhat or very much in response to the creative experiences or events.
- When asked a similar question in the *Creative Climate Action Fund I* 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 10. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding the creative event or experience you attended. Choose one response for each.



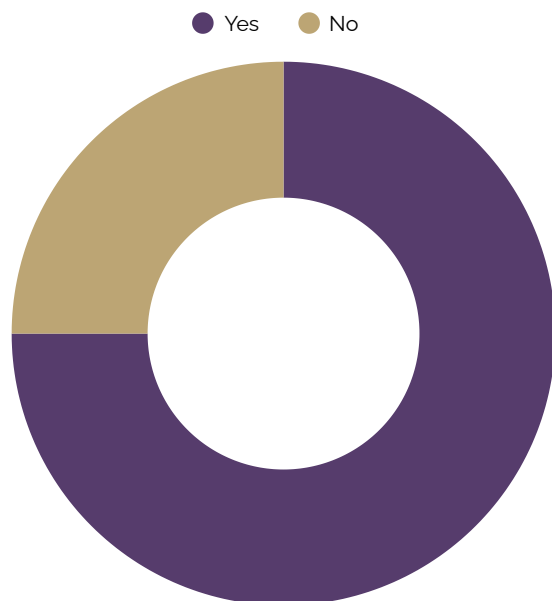
- **Figure 10** shows that 73% of people agreed or strongly agreed that the creative events they attended empowered and supported them to take practical actions on environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues.
- 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the event or experience they attended helped them to care more about environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues.
- 76% of people agreed or strongly agreed that attending the event or experience helped them to better understand environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues.

Figure 11. Which of the following has this creative event or experience helped you to do?
Please select one response for each statement.



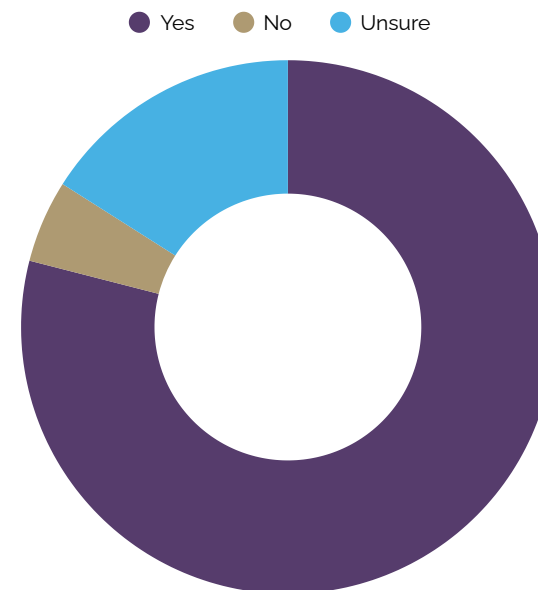
- *Creative Climate Action Fund II* events and experiences have been found to help people to take practical actions on environmental, climate change and/or sustainability issues. **Figure 11** shows that 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that attending a creative event or experience helped them to make new connections or develop existing connections within their communities, while 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were more willing to do what is right for themselves and their community after attending events.
- 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a strong personal connection with the natural environment as a result of attending an event while 76% at least agreed that the events made them feel more willing to advocate for climate or environmental action.
- 75% of respondents were more willing to do what is right for the environment even if it costs more money, while 69% better understood specific actions that they could take to reduce negative impacts on climate and/or the environment.
- 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they learned new skills and are more aware of up-skilling opportunities in the area of climate change/sustainability.

Figure 12. 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?



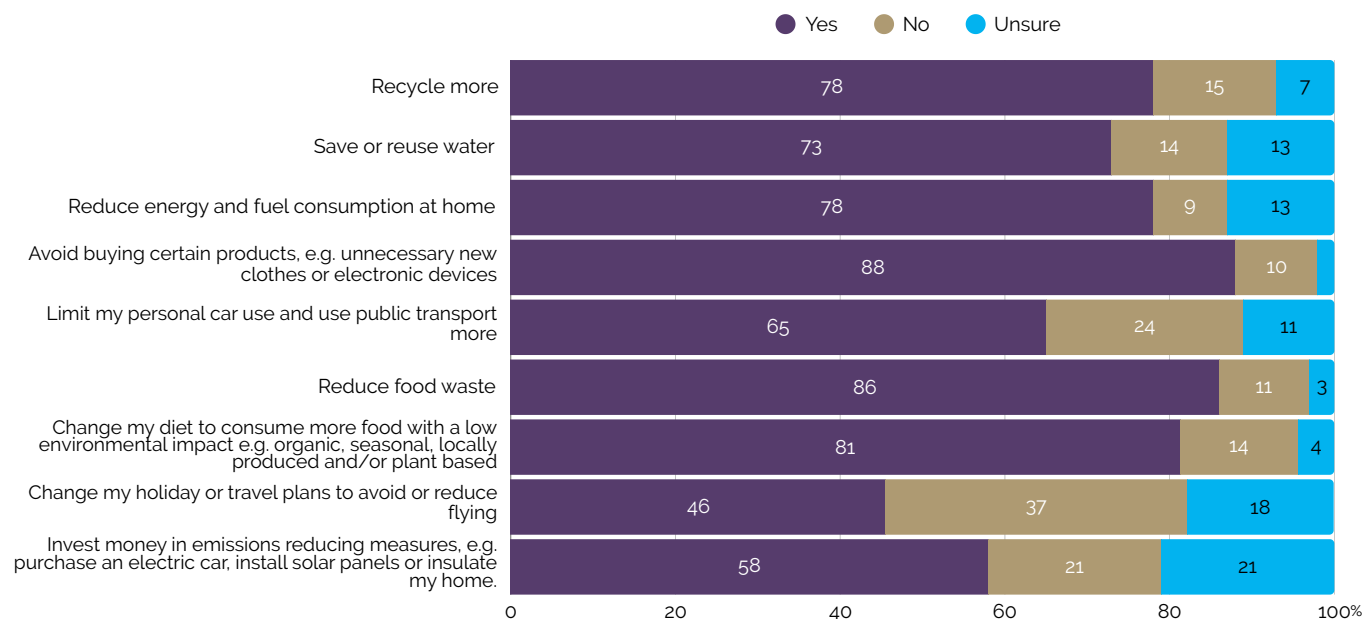
- **Figure 12** shows that three quarters of people who attended *Creative Climate Action Fund II* events experienced a new perspective on climate change and importantly recognised a need for urgent action. In *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2, Report 1* (O'Mahony et. al., 2024) it is notable 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.
- 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.
- 25% indicated they did not attain a new perspective on climate change or the urgency to take action by attending the event.

Figure 13. 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?



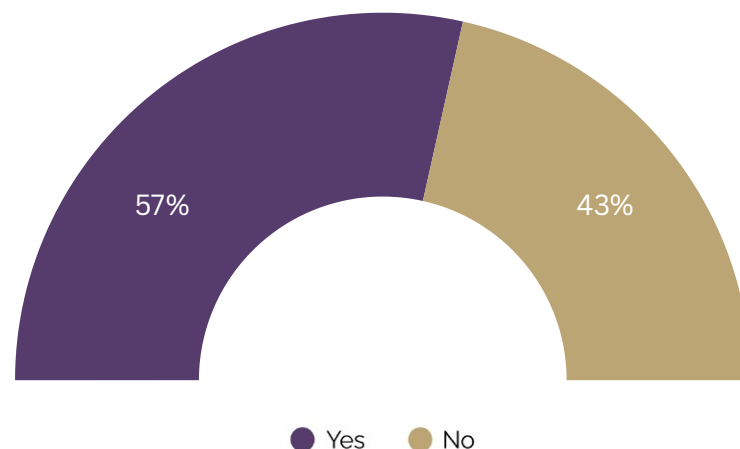
- To further emphasise the potential for behavioural changes following attendance at the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* initiatives, over three quarters of survey participants signalled that they would take climate action or make changes to their behaviour or lifestyle. In the *Creative Climate Action Fund I* survey (Nyhan et al., 2023), just over three quarters of participants felt the same way. These findings support the effectiveness of *Creative Climate Action Fund I* initiatives and the potential for behavioural or lifestyle change.
- **Figure 13** shows that 79% of respondents planned to take climate action or make changes to their behaviour or lifestyle after attending the event or participating in the project.
- 5% indicated they would not while 16% were unsure.

Figure 14. **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 Fund II* 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 signalling 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 Climate Action Fund I* survey. This suggests that the projects under assessment in this report were more effective in terms of potential behavioural change.
- **Figure 14** shows which actions survey respondents were planning on taking in the 12 months following the event/experience. 86% were planning to reduce food waste, 88% planned to avoid buying certain products, e.g. unnecessary new clothes or electronic devices, while 78% planned to reduce energy and fuel consumption in their homes.
- 81% planned to change their diet to consume more food with a low environmental impact, while 78% planned to recycle more.
- At the lower end of the scale, 58% planned to invest money in emissions reduction measures, while 46% planned to change holiday or travel plans to avoid or reduce flying.
- In the *Creative Climate Action Fund I* survey (Nyhan *et al.* 2023), 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.

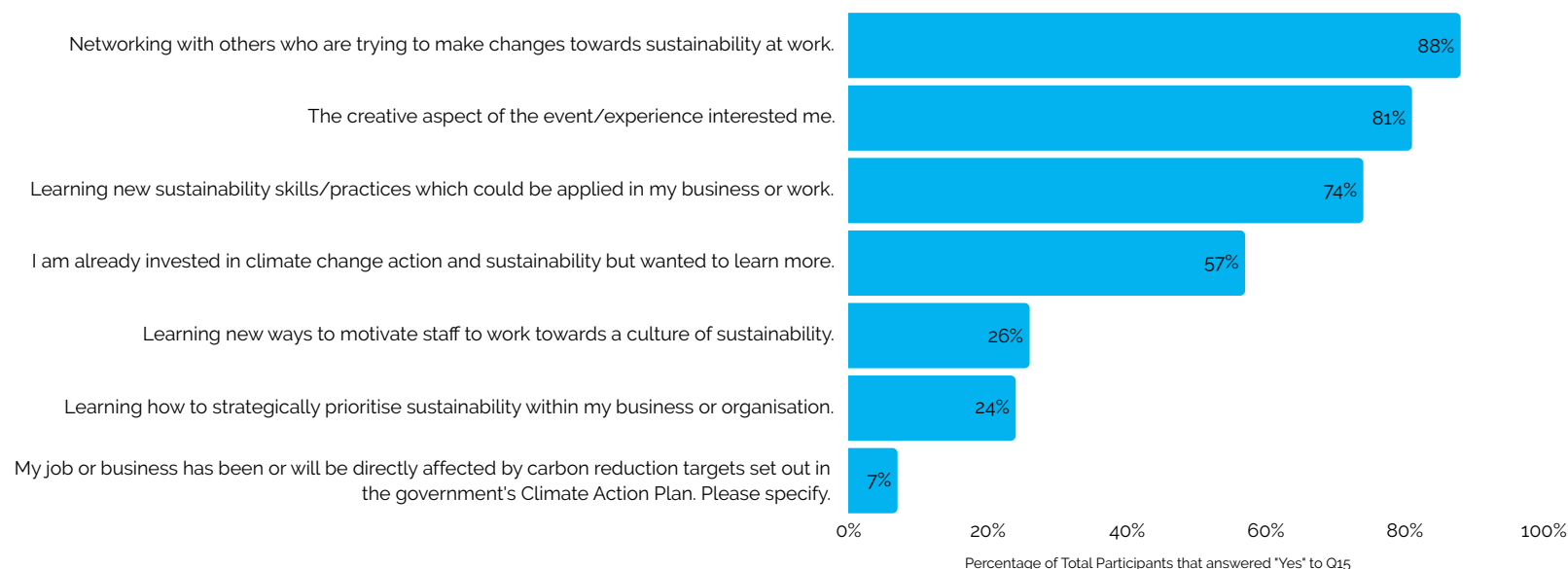
Figure 15. Have you attended this creative event or experience in a work capacity, or could this event have impacts for you in terms of your own work, organisation or business?



- Just under two thirds of the survey respondents attended a *Creative Climate Action Fund II* 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, Report 1* (O'Mahony et al., 2024) point to the need for businesses to do more to address climate action. These results suggest that *Creative Climate Action Fund II* initiatives can be effective in bringing about positive and impactful change in the business sector.
- **Figure 15** shows that 57% 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 43% did not agree.
- In *Climate Change in the Irish Mind Wave 2, Report 1*, 87% of respondents said businesses needed to do more to address climate change (O'Mahony et. al., 2024). This signals the importance of engaging businesses in *Creative Climate Action Fund* initiatives.

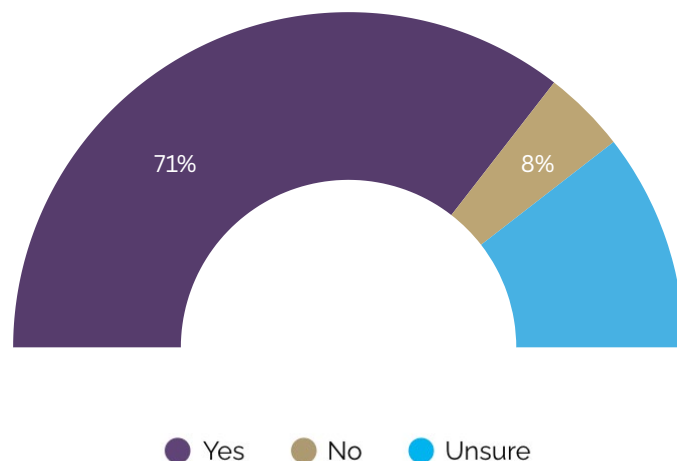
NOTE: Questions 16-20 are based on those who answered yes to Q15

Figure 16. **What motivated you to take part in this creative experience, event or series of events? You can choose more than one option.**



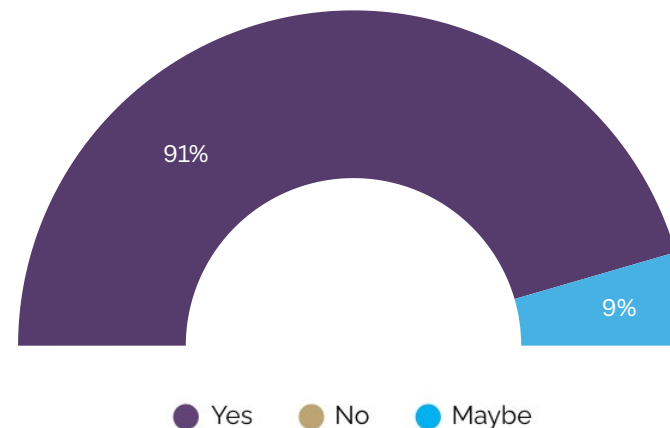
- When asked to select their motivation for taking part in the creative experience, event or series of events, **Figure 16** shows that 88% of respondents were motivated by networking with others who are trying to make sustainability changes at work
- Most survey respondents (81%) were also motivated by the creative aspect of the event or experience, and almost two-thirds (74%) were there to learn new sustainability skills/practices that could be applied in their business or work.
- 57% were there to learn more even though they were already invested in climate action and sustainability and 7% indicated that their job or business will be directly affected by the Government's *Climate Action Plan*.
- 26% attended so they could learn new ways of motivating staff towards a culture of sustainability at work and 24% wanted to learn to strategically prioritise sustainability within their business or organisation.

Figure 17. **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?**



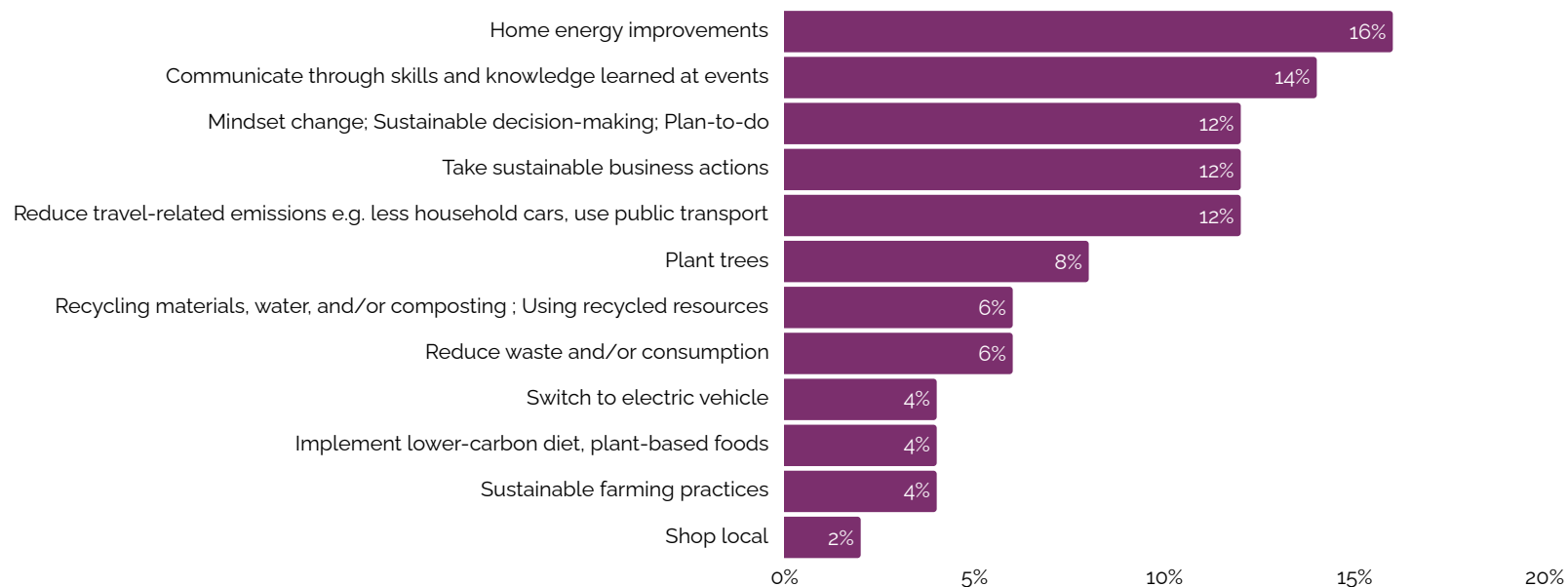
- The *Climate Action Plan* highlights the importance of equipping people with the right skills to be able to participate in and benefit from the future net-zero economy. Crucially, two-thirds of participants who attended *Creative Climate Action Fund II* events and/or experiences in a work capacity 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 Fund II* initiatives for knowledge sharing and highlights the potential benefits for a cross section of working practices, businesses and organisations.
- **Figure 17** shows that 71% of survey respondents reported that attending the creative event gave them skills and knowledge to make practical changes towards sustainability in their own work, business or organisation.
- 8% reported they did not gain new skills or knowledge, while 21% were unsure.

Figure 18.1. **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?**



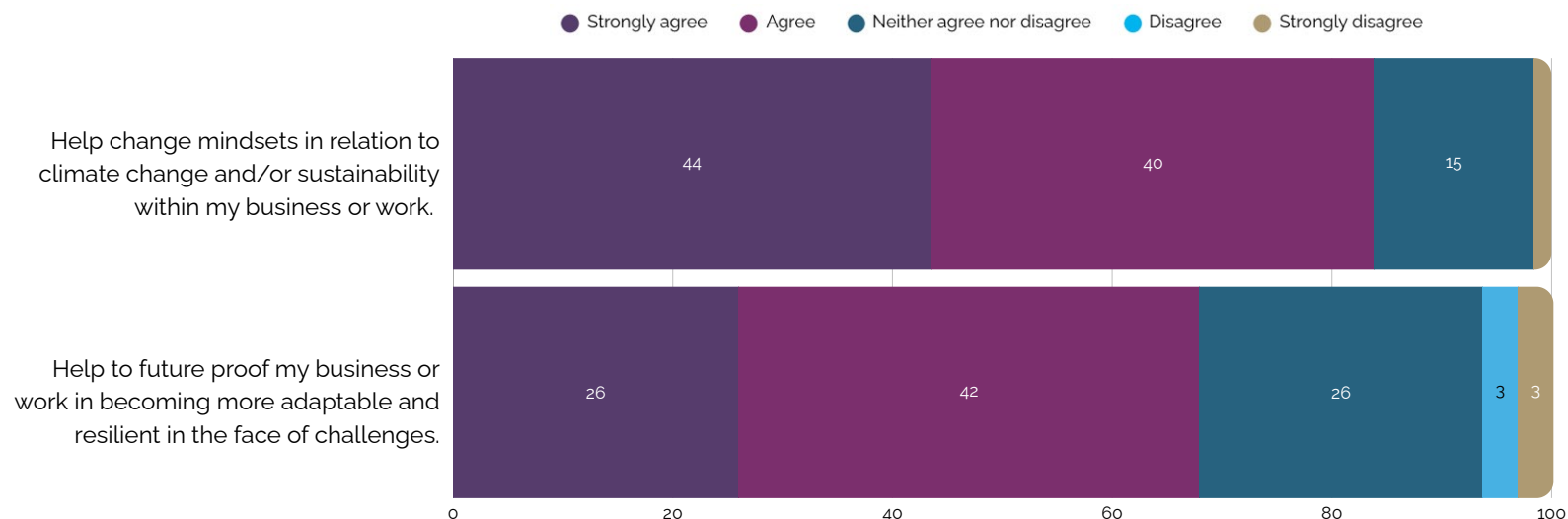
- The *Climate Action Plan* notes the need for Ireland to make changes to reduce carbon emissions. Participants that responded to this question signalled that they plan to make changes to reduce carbon emissions. This highlights how these enterprises may support the transition to a low carbon economy.
- **Figure 18.1** shows that 91% 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. 9% of respondents answered “maybe”.

Figure 18.2. Please specify which changes you are planning.



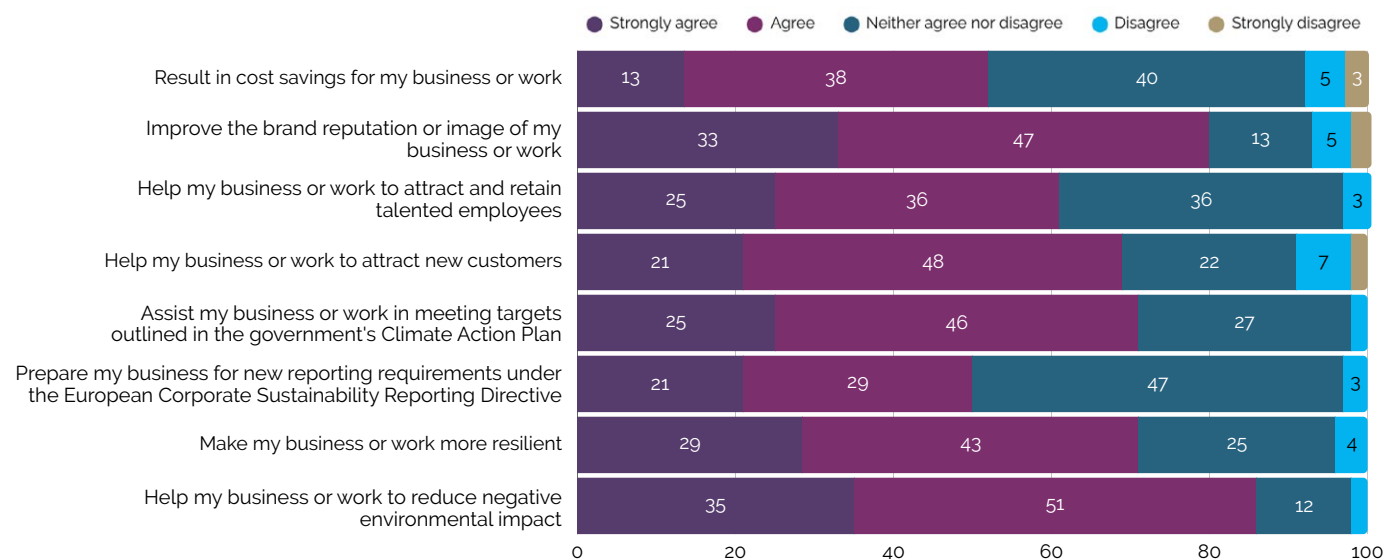
- **Figure 18.2** shows that out of the 91% of survey respondents who answered “yes” to making changes to reduce carbon emissions, 16% are planning to make home improvements and 14% plan to communicate through the skills and knowledge they learned at the *Creative Action Fund II* events.
- 12% experienced a mindset change to more sustainable decision-making and the same percentage (12%) plan to take sustainable business actions and reduce travel related emissions.
- 8% plan to plant trees, while 6% plan to reduce waste and the same percentage again (6%) plan to recycle materials. 4% said they plan to switch to electric vehicles, implement a lower carbon diet and change to more sustainable farming practices. 2% said they plan to shop local.

Figure 19. **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.**



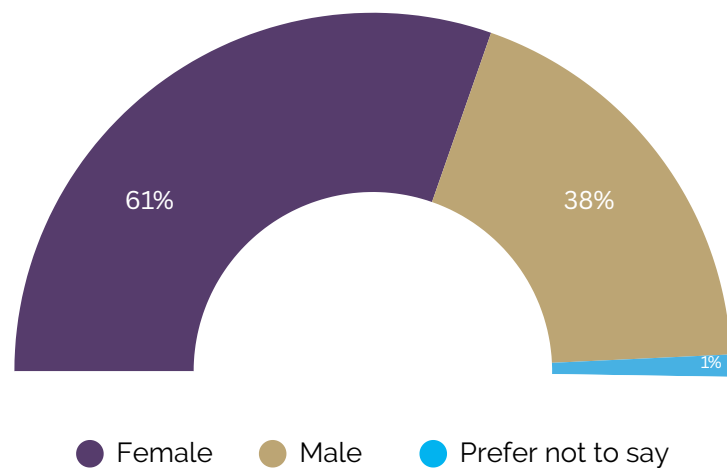
- To further emphasise the important role Creative Climate Action Fund II initiatives can have in supporting the transition to a low carbon economy, **Figure 19** shows that following attendance at events or experiences, 84% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that applying creative practices helped to change mindsets in relation to climate change and/or sustainability within their business or work.

Figure 20. **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...”**



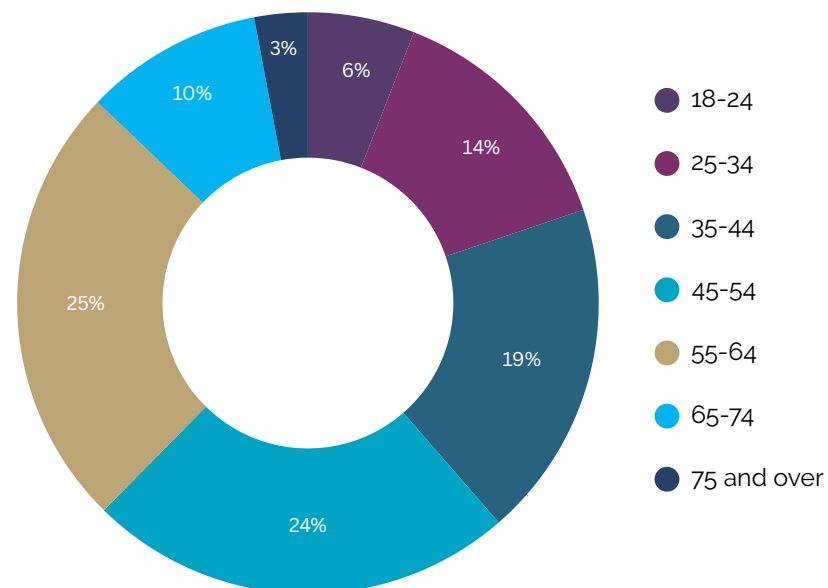
- The importance of *Creative Climate Action Fund II* initiatives for sustainable business is evident with the majority of respondents noting that applying sustainable business practices can improve their brand reputation or image while also helping to reduce negative environmental impact. Significantly, two thirds of respondents believe that this application can also assist businesses in meeting targets outlined in the Government's *Climate Action Plan*.
- **Figure 20** shows that after attending this creative experience, event or series of events, 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “applying sustainable business practices can help my business or work to reduce negative environmental impact”.
- 80% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “applying sustainable business practices can improve the brand reputation or image of my business or work”.
- 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “applying sustainable business practices can make my business or work more resilient”.
- 71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “applying sustainable business practices can assist my business or work in meeting targets outlined in the Government's *Climate Action Plan*”.
- 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “applying sustainable business practices can help my business or work to attract new customers”.
- 51% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “applying sustainable business practices can result in cost savings for my business or work”.

Figure 21. Are you female, male or would you prefer not to say?



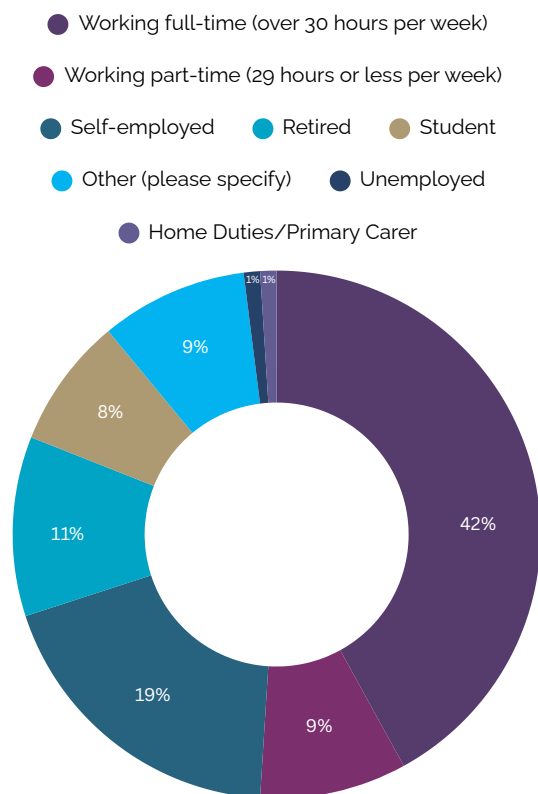
- **Figure 21** shows that 61% of the respondents were female, 38% were male and about 1% preferred not to say.

Figure 22. What is your age?



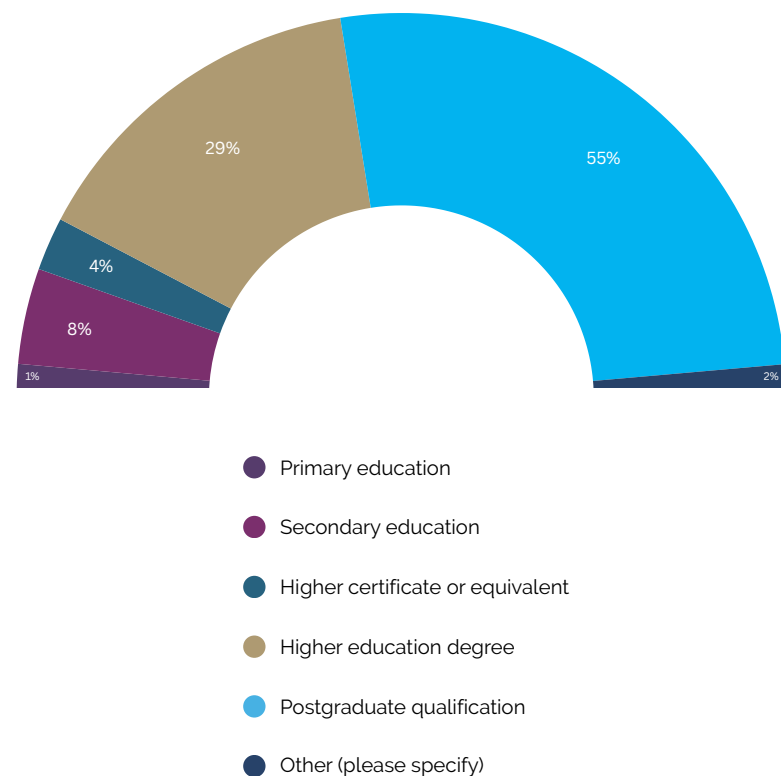
- **Figure 22** shows that 25% of respondents were aged between 55 and 64 years.
- 24% were aged between 45 and 54, 19% were aged between 35 and 44 years, 14% were aged between 25 and 34 years and 10% were aged between 65 and 74 years.
- 6% were aged between 18 and 24 years and 3% were aged 75 years or older.

Figure 23. **What is your current working status?**



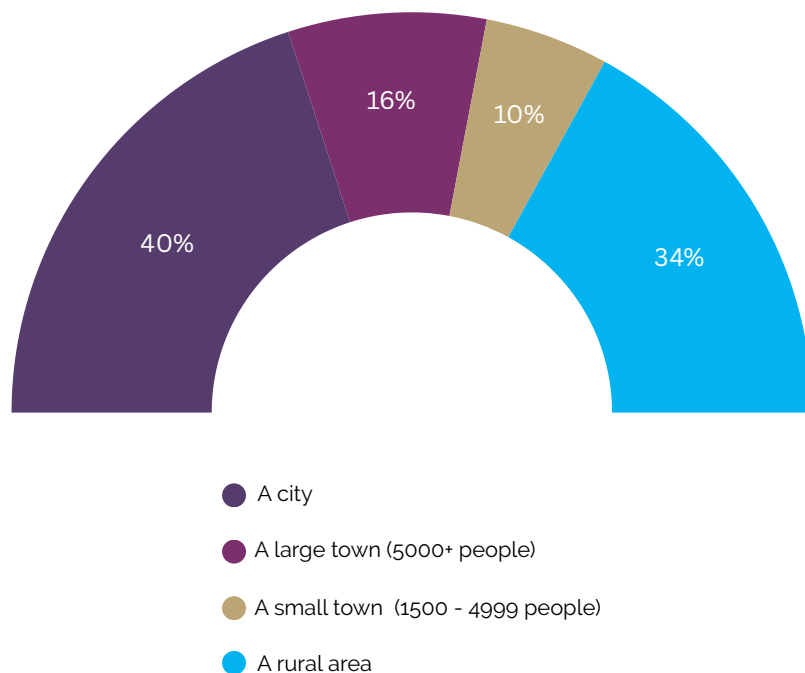
- **Figure 23** shows that 42% of respondents were working full time while 19% were self-employed.
- These were followed by those who were retired (11%) or working part-time (9%).
- The remainder of the survey respondents comprised students (8%), home duties/ primary carers (1%), unemployed persons (1%).
- Of those respondents employed (data not shown here), 18% reported that they worked in the private sector, 18% in the NGO sector, 15% in the public sector, 14% in a senior management role and 3% in a middle management role.

Figure 24. **What is the highest level of education you have completed to date?**



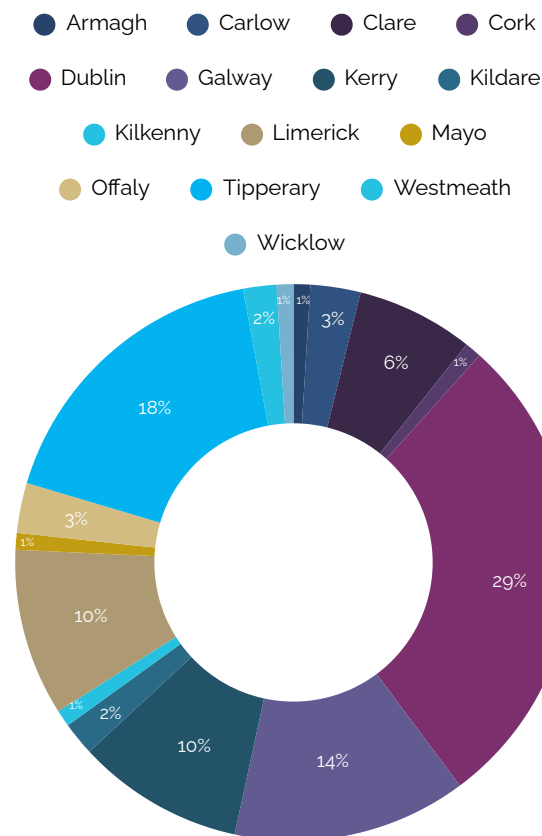
- **Figures 24** shows that over half of survey respondents (55%) had a postgraduate qualification.
- 29% had a higher education degree, 4% had a higher certificate or equivalent, 8% had secondary education, 1% had a primary education while 2% had other qualifications.

Figure 25. Which phrase best describes the area where you live?



- Figure 25 shows that 40% of respondents were living in a city while 34% were living in a rural area located more than 5 km from a town or village. The remainder were living in a large town (16%) or a small town (10%).

Figure 26. In which county in Ireland do you live?



- Figure 26** shows that 29% of respondents were living in the county of Dublin while 18% were living in Tipperary, and 14% in Galway.
 - 10% were living in Kerry and the same percentage were in Limerick, while 6% were living in Clare.
 - 3% of people were living in Offaly and the same in Carlow, while 2% of respondents were living in Westmeath and Kildare.
- The remainder counties represented by 1% were Armagh, Cork, Kilkenny and Wicklow.





7. Participant Interviews, Observations & Focus Group Results

In this section, 10 major themes are summarised from an analysis of 50 participant interviews, 27 participant observations and three focus groups. Figure 27 illustrates the 10 themes, with a more detailed description of each in the following pages.

The vast majority of interviews took place with participants who were regularly attending *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* experiences in the form of participatory and practical workshops. These participants were mainly from *Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate* and *Field Exchange*. A focus group was carried out for each of these projects nearly a year after the participants had been initially interviewed, to capture any further impacts within that timeframe. Insights were gathered from a third focus group with participants from *The Air We Share* directly after a project event. In projects that were targeted at marginalised and underrepresented groups, there was a major emphasis on participant observations carried out by our researchers at relevant project events. Insights were also gathered from participants' support workers, carers and parents.

Creating the conditions to support meaningful behavioural change

Throughout the analysis of all the participant interviews, observations and focus groups, the theme of how *Creative Climate Action Fund II* has contributed to cultural and relational shifts, also known as 'scaling deep', was identified. These changes in 'hearts and minds', including shifts in perspectives, values, relationships and learning, are regarded as vital for a culture shift necessary to ensure an enduring sustainable future. The theme of 'scaling deep' is described in more detail in the following pages.

After 'scaling deep', our analysis uncovered themes relating to conditions necessary for behavioural change (Michie et al., 2011). These were *capacity*, *motivation*, and *opportunity to change*. *Creative Climate Action Fund II* projects were found to support behavioural change by building participants' capacity through knowledge and skill development, inspiring motivation through emotional connection and empowerment, and creating opportunity through social networks and supportive environments. Central to this was the generation of novel creative and social spaces that fostered greater social investment in climate action. These *novel spaces* enabled enhanced dialogue, social connection, knowledge-sharing, learning and collaboration.

Another core theme uncovered by the analysis was how *Creative Climate Action Fund II* projects deeply connected with participants through different types of *engagement* including practical, emotional and sensorial forms. The themes of *creatives as mediators* and *trusted figures* were strongly connected to the theme of *engagement*. *Creatives as mediators* refers to the artists, creatives and project team members who made themes of climate change highly relatable and accessible for participants, thereby increasing engagement and motivation. *Trusted figures* refers to the expert speakers and community leaders whom participants felt they could trust in information relayed about climate change challenges and solutions, also helping to attain deeper engagement and motivation to act.

Another central theme that emerged from the analysis was *scales of impact*, or how the initiative impacted on a wider scale, beyond the participant and into their broader social and professional circles. We found that participants were motivated to share their learnings with family, friends and communities as well as make changes within their own businesses and organisations, where some participants had already started to implement these changes and actions. Finally, important themes of *nutrition*, *health and wellbeing* and *relationships with nature* also emerged from our analysis. Participants drew a connection between nutrition and both physical and mental health and wellbeing. Participants also reported benefits to mental and physical health and wellbeing after partaking in project activities related to nature and biodiversity. All of the above themes are discussed in more detail in the following pages.



Figure 27. 10 major themes from participant interviews, researcher observations and focus groups.

1. 'Scaling deep'

There is clear evidence from our qualitative analysis that *Creative Climate Action Fund II* has contributed to cultural and relational shifts, which are central to the concept of 'scaling deep'. 'Scaling deep' refers to enabling durable systems change across social innovations through personal and cultural transformation, including shifts in social norms and relationships (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Omann et al., 2020; Fraser, 2023).

While the initiative aimed to inspire behavioural change in relation to climate action, our findings suggest that foundational 'ground conditions' must first be established for such change to be sustained. This includes embedding climate action within diverse social and cultural contexts, supported by shifts in values, relationships and collective practices. The 'scaling deep' dimension was incorporated into our analytical framework to capture the 'ground conditions' that underpin wider societal change and climate action.

There's a certain amount of community or 'meitheal' [Irish word for cooperation between neighbours to help each other out with tasks like farming] about it, where people are coming together to do a few jobs and help each other out. I think that's an interesting concept. I mean, I've no doubt that the group here today... I'd feel free to ring them and say 'listen, I'm doing such a thing on such a day' and they'd probably roll in with me.

Field Exchange participant

Our analysis of participant interviews and observations identified 'scaling deep' as the most prominent and frequently referenced dimension within our evaluation. This highlights the crucial role of *Creative Climate Action Fund II* as an initiative that engages with and influences cultural foundations, which are critical for enabling broader and more enduring transformational change. Table 1 shows key sub themes we identified under 'scaling deep' which are discussed in further detail below.

Table 1: Sub-themes uncovered that are central to the 'scaling deep' theme.

'Scaling deep' theme	Description	Projects demonstrated
Towards shifts in hearts and minds	Participants frequently reported changes in their mindsets, emotions and values after partaking in <i>Creative Climate Action Fund II</i> projects and experiences. 'Scaling deep' focuses on transforming people's 'hearts and minds' (Riddell & Moore, 2015) in ways that support lasting systemic change, where even small shifts can create cascading effects (Fraser, 2023).	- Field Exchange - Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate - The Air We Share - The Eco-Makers Workshop - Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do - Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick
Learning and dialogue	<i>Creative Climate Action Fund II</i> demonstrated a highly effective platform for learning, dialogue and knowledge exchange across communities within diverse social and cultural contexts, which is essential for achieving systems change (Riddell & Moore, 2015).	- Field Exchange - Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate - The Air We Share - The Eco-Makers Workshop - Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do - Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick
Relational change	Our analysis found strong evidence of <i>relational change</i> amongst participants. 'Scaling deep' focuses on transforming relationships and patterns of interaction (Riddell & Moore, 2015), recognising that shifts in how individuals relate to one another can support lasting systemic change (Fraser, 2023)	- Field Exchange - Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate - The Air We Share - The Eco-Makers Workshop - Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do - Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick

'Scaling deep' theme	Description	Projects demonstrated
Local and community leadership	Findings from our evaluation demonstrated that the involvement of local 'trusted figures' and expert speakers within communities of practice played a key role in fostering participant engagement and trust in the information shared. 'Scaling deep' emphasises relational and place-based approaches to change, highlighting the importance of locally embedded leadership grounded in trust and community context (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Fraser, 2023).	• Field Exchange • Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate • The Air We Share • The Eco-Makers Workshop • Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do • Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick
Heritage and local identity	<i>Creative Climate Action II</i> projects and experiences were found to connect participants to their sense of heritage and local identity, reflecting the importance of cultural meaning-making and belonging in processes of deep, sustained change. This aligns with the concept of 'scaling deep', which emphasises shifts in values, cultural norms, and collective meaning-making as central to achieving lasting systemic change (Riddell & Moore, 2015)	• Field Exchange • The Air We Share • Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick

Towards shifts in hearts and minds

'Scaling deep' involves transforming 'hearts and minds' to support lasting systemic change (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Fraser, 2023). *Towards shifts in hearts and minds* was the most frequently referenced theme under our 'scaling deep' analysis. Participants reported positive shifts in mindsets, perspectives and values, which may represent early indications of deeper transformation. Many described gaining new ways of understanding climate challenges through creative practices and peer exchange.

I think it's encouraged people, encouraged myself to be braver, I guess in my own boardroom experiences and to look to see where we can lead more than just be a passenger on climate change discussions.

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate participant

A strong theme under the *towards shifts hearts and minds* category was a sense of empowerment, with participants feeling more confident in their ability, individually and collectively, to address climate issues. Narrative and framing played a key role in this process, shaping how participants interpreted issues and their role within them, and supporting changes in beliefs and meaning making.

I think when it comes to climate action, it's great to have like those group kind of events or planning kind of brain brainstorm... because it gives kind of like a collective sense of empowerment! And kind of gives you agency... Yeah, I think that it's great for inspiring action because you're held accountable to the fact that you're in a group and you've all talked about this together and said that you all care, and saying it out to a group of people who are members of your community or close by anyway. It kind of gives you a bit more drive towards achieving those goals.

**Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities
– From Plan to Do participant**

Learning and dialogue

Learning and dialogue emerged as a central mechanism of scaling deep. *Creative Climate Action Fund II* created nurturing platforms for knowledge exchange across diverse communities, where learning occurred not only through artists and facilitators but also through participants sharing lived experiences. Participants reported gaining new knowledge and skills related to climate and sustainability, many of which they had applied or intended to apply in their personal and professional lives.

I've learned about moss and how to cultivate moss. I've learned a lot about forestry, and how forestry has been used in different ways in farms. And I have come to, I suppose, have another appreciation of

how artists can engage with a landscape and create something that is special. That has an impact as well, in terms of exercising that kind of part of the mind around how we look at climate change

Field Exchange participant

A key enabler of the effective learning and dialogue was the creation of *novel spaces*. These were the inclusive, creative environments enabled by *Creative Climate Action Fund II*, that brought together diverse groups and fostered open dialogue. These spaces supported reflection, learning and collaboration, facilitated by artists, community leaders and project teams.

I think everyone will take their own personal value from the sessions. And also when we meet, we remember what we each contributed. There is a shared feeling and a shared bond after each session. And particularly with the participants here because I know them from several projects and we're learning, I feel we're learning together. We're exploring together, so it is enriching friendships as well. I think gaining knowledge through friendship is profound actually.

**Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick
– Dance Limerick participant**

Relational change

Scaling deep focuses on transforming relationships and patterns of interaction (Riddell & Moore, 2015), recognising that shifts in how individuals relate to one another can support lasting systemic change (Fraser, 2023). Throughout our analysis we found strong evidence of *relational change* amongst participants, primarily through new connections made with other participants in social, professional and community contexts.

I think I've made friends for life first of all. And I know that I'll always like, even when this ends, I know that Ailbhe will still be calling me probably to participate in future events and do different things with her and collaborate. And I love that...

Field Exchange participant

Findings from this evaluation indicate the formation of new communities and networks, alongside the development of deeper relationships characterised by trust, friendship and collaboration. This aligns with the relational and community-centred nature of scaling deep, which emphasises connection and collective processes (Fraser, 2023).

I think it will make lasting connections between the participants, because I find that doing things like this with other people does make a lasting connection. You're moving together and you're feeling together and you're doing things together in a creative space that have these lasting connections.

**Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick
– Dance Limerick participant**

Local and community leadership

Scaling deep emphasises the importance of leadership that is embedded within communities and grounded in trust, relationships and shared context (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Fraser, 2023). Findings from this evaluation highlight the significant role of local *trusted figures* and community members in fostering participant engagement and trust. We found that project team members from *The Eco-Makers Workshop*, *Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick*, *Field Exchange* and *Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do* in particular had already built rapport with participants from previous partnerships, projects and involvement in NGOs, enabling credibility and deepening participation.

I like being with (project team member)... he's the very best man on the job.

The Eco-Makers Workshop participant

There has kind of been a relationship built with them now that (project team member) is coming in...I think she was only supposed to come in initially for like 4 weeks and then the group were like "are you coming back again?"

**Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick
– Dance Limerick participant**

This form of leadership was also evident within professional and community-of-practice settings, where respected peers and expert contributors influenced how participants understood and engaged with climate-related issues. *Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate* and *Field Exchange* in particular exemplified this, where the impact of leadership extended beyond knowledge transfer, supporting shifts in perspectives, norms and ways of working. This suggests that ‘scaling deep’ is not limited to place-based communities but can also occur within professional networks where trust and relational credibility enable meaningful and sustained change.

You know I learnt a lot. I thought the content and the speakers were well chosen and good experts. And you know, I think it has probably strengthened my own desire, ambition, to make a difference in this space.

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate participant

Heritage and local identity

Projects that connected participants to their sense of heritage and local identity further strengthened engagement, reflecting the importance of cultural meaning-making and belonging in processes of deep, sustained change. This aligns with the concept of ‘scaling deep’, which emphasises shifts in values, cultural norms and collective meaning-making as central to achieving lasting systemic change (Riddell & Moore, 2015). Participants of *Field Exchange* remarked on feeling more connected to the land and their farming heritage, as well as affirming a sense of their cultural and historic roots through creative practices such as dry-stone walling, rope making and other traditional crafts:

I never thought that I'd be able to work with lake reeds, like weaving reeds. And going into the local forests and being able to map out different areas and finding all the different species that are growing in one tiny little plot. You can't help but pick up all that local knowledge. And that is such a tangible part of our farming heritage as well, and our rural heritage of being, you know, country-side dwellers. It's important.

Field Exchange participant

Artistic, cultural, and creative practices were central to facilitating this, providing accessible and participatory ways for individuals to engage with and reinterpret their heritage. These approaches not only reinforced a sense of local identity but also created shared experiences through which cultural knowledge and meaning could be collectively expressed and sustained, supporting deeper forms of engagement and reinforcing participants’ sense of belonging. This participant from *The Air We Share* expressed the importance of shared lived experiences through the community group’s collective textile work:

I do a lot of embroidery, so when we went up to see the big fabric that was there, where like multiple people were doing the embroidery and that, what was said there was really important - that there's a lot of story in the process... there's a lot of story that's in the fabric. And I think it's also really important to get these things through at events like these.

The Air We Share participant

2. Capacity, motivation and opportunity to change

During the evaluation of the first *Creative Climate Action Fund I (2021-2022)*, an analytical framework based on the COM-B model developed by Susan Michie et al. (2011) was adopted. The COM-B model proposes that behaviour arises through the interaction of capacity, opportunity, and motivation, encompassing an individual’s psychological and physical capability, the external conditions that enable behaviour and the cognitive and emotional processes that drive action.

This framework proved effective in identifying how the initiative fostered necessary conditions for behavioural change in relation to climate action and sustainable practices. As a result, it informed the analysis of *Creative Climate Action Fund II*, where all three conditions were strongly represented. *Capacity to change* emerged as the most prominent theme, followed closely by *motivation* and *opportunity to change*. Sub-themes falling under each condition were identified from the analysis and are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Key sub-themes of behaviour change conditions identified

Behaviour change condition	Relevant themes	Projects demonstrated
Capacity to change	- Learning – new knowledge, knowledge sharing, new skills, systems learning/thinking - Empowerment – sense of group and individual ability/efficacy - Agency – through co-creation and co-design	- Field Exchange - Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate - The Air We Share - The Eco-Makers Workshop - Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do - Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick
Motivation to change	- New perspectives - Empowerment – sense of group and individual ability/efficacy - Element of fun or enjoyment - Positive feedback mechanisms and use of stories - More motivated to change after attending event/project - Adaptation – participants already adapted or were motivated to adopt new practices and behavioural changes to adjust to current and future challenges posed by climate change	- Field Exchange - Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate - The Air We Share - The Eco-Makers Workshop - Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do - Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick
Opportunity to change	- New Connections – social, professional, community - Spaces for reflection, dialogue, safe space and not feeling alone - Group agency through co-creation and co-design - Collaboration of diverse stakeholders - Formation of new communities and networks	- Field Exchange - Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate - The Air We Share - The Eco-Makers Workshop - Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do - Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick

Capacity to change

Our analysis found that *capacity to change* was primarily supported through learning and skill development. Participants frequently reported gaining new knowledge on climate change and sustainability issues and solutions, alongside practical skills and systems-level understanding.

[Expert] spoke to us about doughnut economics and that was a whole new area. I hadn't been involved in that before... and then some of the exercises we were using to come up with solutions were new and were interesting. So yeah, I learned loads.

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate participant

Opportunities for knowledge sharing and peer learning were also significant, enabling participants to learn from one another's experiences. In addition, participants described increased feelings of empowerment and agency, particularly through co-creation and co-design processes. These participatory approaches strengthened both individual and collective efficacy, enhancing participants' confidence in their ability to contribute to climate action.

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. And all this, no matter how experienced you are, there's always somebody in the room that might have this little nugget of information that just changes the direction of the project or just opens it even further.

Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do

Motivation to change

Motivation to change was found to be influenced by both cognitive and emotional factors. Participants frequently reported new perspectives and positive mindset shifts on climate challenges and action, often shaped through creative engagement and dialogue. A strong sense of empowerment also contributed to motivation, reinforcing participants' belief in their capacity to act. The following feedback from *Field Exchange* and *From Plan to Do* participants effectively demonstrate their renewed commitment and belief in community climate action after taking part in the projects:

I think that small community-led projects like this just cement the fact that if you are active within your own community, it doesn't matter how small of a difference you're making, you're still making a difference.

Field Exchange participant

I think like the local climate action is much more tangible. It gives you the sense that people are working towards these goals, of reducing our missions or whatever. Because when you hear about it spoken at a high level, or you see some of the other stuff that's happening at a high level that is in conflict with action, plans, goals, then it can kind of make you feel a bit nihilistic, or that things aren't really happening, But when you attend a local event like that, it gives you a much stronger sense that things are happening.

Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do

The presence of enjoyment, creativity and positive experiences within projects also played key roles in motivation and supporting further participant engagement. This parent of an *Eco-Makers Workshop* participant reported their enjoyment of the project group activities in eco crafts, and their willingness to show up every day as a result:

He got a lot out of it. And he seemed to go, be very happy taking part in it and he had something to show for every morning, so it was lovely.

Parent of Eco-makers Workshop participant

Storytelling and positive feedback mechanisms also helped sustain engagement interest and inspiration. Positive feedback mechanisms act by reinforcing, validating and amplifying pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours, through sharing success stories and hearing positive feedback in terms of adopting new sustainable practices

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 space. And what you've learned in your own work as well.

Field Exchange festival participant

Participants felt encouraged, “powered-up”, inspired and re-energised in their motivation to act when meeting others at *Creative Climate Action Fund II* experiences. Notably, many participants indicated that they were more motivated to adopt sustainable practices following their involvement, with some already implementing changes and others intending to do so in response to emerging climate challenges:

I've made personal changes since starting the program, but from a commercial point of view I would be more keen to ensure that as the businesses that I'm involved in that it is a boardroom topic [green agenda], that it sits on the agenda of a boardroom meeting, which it might not otherwise do. So yeah, I feel more inspired. I feel I have more tools to deal with the issue than I might have had before.

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate participant

Opportunity to change

Our analysis found that *opportunity to change* was enabled through the social and structural environments created by *Creative Climate Action Fund II*. Participants developed new social, professional and community connections, leading to the formation of new networks and communities. The creation of safe, inclusive spaces for dialogue and reflection allowed participants to share experiences, build confidence and feel supported in their engagement with climate issues:

Sharing my engagement with others is very powerful. And that's what the facilitators create in the space - a place where we can, kind of really explore how we feel about the topic [climate change] together. And that has a lasting impression.

**Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick
– Dance Limerick participant**

Collaborative processes, particularly those involving diverse stakeholders, further strengthened participants' belief in group efficacy for collective climate action. These support *opportunity to change* and highlight the importance of social context for enabling transformative change:

If you notice there just in the choosing the site for the stonewall seat, like how many different views were offered and angles and people's outlooks. It just shows diversity amongst people. We're all individuals and we can all bring something.

Field Exchange participant

3. 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, and community-driven action across local, community, and national levels to generate solutions to climate change.

By convening people around a shared goal and appreciation of creativity, this approach has generated a distinct and innovative space for fostering new and alternative responses to climate challenges. These 'novel spaces' reflect key elements of 'scaling deep', which emphasises shifts in values, relationships and cultural meaning-making as foundations for lasting systemic change (Riddell & Moore; Fraser, 2023).

Within our analysis of *Creative Climate Action Fund II*: recurring themes highlight the value of facilitating such spaces, where creativity and pro-environmental behaviour are central. Participants described these environments as safe and inclusive, enabling reflection and open dialogue without fear of judgement. This creation of safe spaces is critical for scaling deep, as it allows individuals to explore new perspectives and engage more meaningfully with complex issues.

It's such a relaxed environment. It's going to reduce our stress, but also then meeting people and talking to people and just having the craic without being worried about saying the wrong thing. It's kind of a safe space.

Field Exchange participant

The diversity of stakeholders within these spaces enabled the exchange of ideas and perspectives, contributing to new ways of understanding climate challenges and solutions. Participants frequently reported gaining new perspectives through both creative practices and interaction with others. This aligns with 'scaling deep' processes, where exposure to diverse viewpoints supports shifts in thinking and meaning-making. This *Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate* participant highlighted the importance of diverse viewpoints and consensus for effectively addressing climate challenges:

If ever you want proof of the value of different perspectives, the value of diversity, in innovation. I think we all saw that ... even though we had lots of different views...what really came through was that the more diverse views you have, the better outcome you can get through consensus.

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate participant

A recurring theme across our findings was the importance of fun, enjoyment and creative expression. Engaging with art and creativity not only enhanced participants' experiences but also supported learning, inclusion, and sustained engagement. These positive emotional experiences are also significant within 'scaling deep', as they foster motivation, openness and a deeper emotional connection to climate action. This *Air We Share* participant expressed enjoyment as well the importance of experiencing a shared group activity and connection:



Puffin Rock
Image by Cartoon Saloon

Well, I enjoyed the walk because we were a group. I think that impact is also important. We were a group of people. We're actively doing something. I think it was a bringing-together actually. It does unite. It's uniting.

The Air We Share participant

Positive and enjoyable experiences helped participants feel re-energised and more motivated to take climate action, while also broadening participation through accessible and informal approaches. The *Eco-Makers Workshop* participant in the following quote remarked on their enjoyment of delivering food to local retailers which they helped to grow at Inspired's Biodiversity Learning Hub:

Interviewer: Have you enjoyed it?

*Participant: Yes, it's a very good experience for me.
I like the deliveries.*

The Eco-Makers Workshop participant

These novel spaces also played a key role in enabling participants to build social, professional, and community connections, fostering a sense of shared purpose and reducing feelings of isolation. Participants reported feeling supported by others with similar values, contributing to a stronger sense of belonging across contexts. As discussed earlier, these relational dynamics are central to 'scaling deep', where changes in how people connect and relate to one another underpin wider cultural and systemic transformation. Connections were further strengthened through engagement with heritage and local identity, with creative practices enabling participants to explore and reinterpret shared cultural meanings.

The threads in the [group textile] piece thread us together and the community, and the threads also in the text or in the textile reference pollution. And those threads are through us all as well, and so it's the embodied understanding.

The Air We Share participant

Finally, the initiative's *novel spaces* supported the formation of new communities and networks, as participants built relationships across social, professional, and community contexts. These connections contributed to ongoing collaboration and collective engagement with climate action, reflecting the role of 'scaling deep' in

fostering enduring relational and cultural change:

Now in order to get to certain outcomes we were asked to pick which one [topic] we wanted to explore further... And one of them was about forming a network so that maybe if we run into sticky problems ourselves at board level, that we'd be able to go to those directors and say: 'how are you getting past this?' 'What did you do?' 'How did you find the solution or how did you influence people? So yeah, I will connect with [others]. So yeah, definitely connections made and ways forward.

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate participant

4. Inclusivity

Inclusivity emerged as a central theme across the analysis, supported by both participant feedback and observational data. This aligns with the *Environmental Protection Agency* emphasis on equity, social inclusion, and just transition as key components of effective climate action (EPA, 2022). Findings indicate that all projects contributed to these objectives by engaging diverse groups and reducing barriers to participation.

Projects such as *The Eco-Makers Workshop* demonstrated strong inclusive practices by engaging people with intellectual disabilities in creative and sustainability-focused activities. These initiatives supported learning about environmental issues as well as providing meaningful opportunities for participation and skill development. Similarly, *Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick* and *Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities- From Plan to Do* engaged communities experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, while *Field Exchange* focused on farming and rural communities, which are often underrepresented in climate discourse. This *Eco-Makers Workshop* participant described their role in the deliveries of their locally produced food to retailers, demonstrating accessible pathways for participation and skill development:

I'm in charge of the sign for the veg and for signing papers. So the boys are in charge of bringing the veg and I ask the customers to sign the paper.

The Eco-makers Workshop participant

From a COM-B perspective, inclusive approaches expand opportunity by making participation accessible to a wider range of individuals and communities. They also enhance motivation by ensuring that activities are relevant, meaningful and responsive to participants' lived experiences. In terms of "scaling deep", inclusivity is critical for embedding change within diverse social and cultural contexts, ensuring that shifts in values, norms and practices are widespread and equitable rather than confined to specific groups (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Fraser, 2023).

Overall, inclusivity was shown to be essential for engaging new stakeholders as well as sustaining and deepening engagement over time. By creating accessible, participatory and context-sensitive approaches, the initiative supports broader cultural change and contributes to more just and inclusive pathways towards climate action.

It's great that it's people of different abilities and different capabilities and coming together and working, learning some new skills, growing some local food. But I think it's just a prime example of local people doing something good for local people.

Local retailer/purchaser of The Eco-makers Workshop locally produced food

5. Engagement

Individual engagement with climate change requires cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions often conceptualised as the integration of "head, heart, and hands" (Wolf & Moser, 2011; Mac Mahon et al., 2025).

Findings from this evaluation indicate that *Creative Climate Action Fund II* projects were highly effective in engaging participants across these dimensions, aligning with the COM-B model (Michie et al., 2011), where behaviour is shaped through the interaction of capacity, motivation and opportunity. Creative approaches enhanced participants' understanding (capacity), fostered emotional connection (motivation), and provided participatory environments for action (opportunity).

Emotional engagement emerged as a key driver of motivation. Participants frequently reported feelings of empowerment, curiosity, pride, inspiration, and excitement.

The presence of fun and enjoyment played a central role in sustaining engagement and making climate action feel accessible and positive. This supports existing evidence that positive emotional experiences can enhance engagement and behavioural intent (Schneider et al., 2021). These emotional shifts also reflect elements of 'scaling deep', where changes in values, perspectives, and meaning making contribute to longer-term cultural and behavioural transformation (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Fraser, 2023).

Yeah, absolutely. These sorts of events always make me feel really connected to space, and I think build that sense of place I feel! I mean they can improve how connected you feel to the Irish landscape and to the work going on here and make you feel more inspired to stay and do more with what you have here.

Field Exchange participant

Fun and enjoyable activities helped to draw more participants to events by word of mouth and 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 Fund II experiences were also reported to enhance a sense of wellbeing through connection to nature, social connection and physical movement, which bolstered engagement further. The following quote is from a *Limerick Sports Partnership* mentor who worked alongside the Dance Limerick project team with a Limerick community:

I think it's absolutely brilliant on a couple of different levels. What we're kind of seeing is the excellent social engagement, the enjoyment levels from dance that it's bringing but it's also bringing that physical activity level as well. And even for their own kind of mental well-being, their emotional side afterwards. When the dancers actually leave and we have the second hour with them the place is completely different. The energy in the room is extremely positive

Limerick Sports Partnership tutor

Practical engagement further supported participants' capacity and sense of agency through hands-on activities such as workshops, co-design processes and the creation of artworks. These experiences enabled participants to translate knowledge into action, while also fostering social connection and wellbeing. The creation of inclusive, participatory spaces contributed to a sense of belonging and collective engagement, reinforcing the social conditions necessary for sustained behaviour change. On practical workshops held outside at Brookfield Farm (*Field Exchange* location), this participant remarked on their comfort level at the setting and style of engagement:

You're kind of moving and on the go and I suppose it's a kind of a way that would probably appeal to farmers. Because if you're walking along a country lane or if you're walking through the woods or walking through the field... it's like that old kind of adage about the men's sheds. Men kind of talk shoulder to shoulder rather than face to face... You're walking along through fields or along the lane or whatever. Sometimes people might be more comfortable to talk in that way rather than sitting down opposite each other at the table, so it can open up different conversations.

Field Exchange participant

Another distinctive form of engagement found in the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* projects was their emphasis on *sensorial and experiential engagement*, which deepened both motivation and meaning-making. Participants described how engaging multiple senses enhanced their awareness and connection to the experience. As one participant noted:

This particular project is wonderful because it's dealing with all five senses and you can tell better stories in an impactful, interesting, special, dynamic way.

**Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick
– Dance Limerick participant**

Another reflected on how the experience encouraged presence and attentiveness:

I was totally listening to the sound... it was interesting to just be present and hear sounds which I would have ignored.

The Air We Share participant

These immersive approaches not only strengthened engagement but also align with 'scaling deep' by fostering deeper emotional and cognitive connections that can influence how individuals perceive and relate to climate issues.



Dinnseanchas.
Image by Hometree

6. Creatives as mediators

Creatives as mediators refers to the role of artists, facilitators, and project teams in delivering effective and accessible climate communication and engagement. Analysis indicates that these actors employed highly effective methods to communicate climate-related messages, engaging participants cognitively, emotionally, and practically. These findings are further supported by observations from researchers attending *Creative Climate Action Fund II* events. This *Air We Share* participant described how they could understand and relate to air pollution by the unique manner communicated through the artist's sound design piece:

We have seen a lot of like maps or plots or things showing data about air pollution, but actually walking around in your own neighbourhood, seeing those differences happen in real time was really amazing. I mean, just from that perspective as well. And then it also immersed me into this good meditative zone because the sounds were so nice. And so even if it was air pollution that we were experiencing, it was still pleasant. He [artist] also explained quite nicely how things are working, like the inhale is sudden rise in the particulate matter and then exhaling is like a drop.

The Air We Share participant

Project teams demonstrated strong alignment with the stated objectives of the National Campaign of Communication and Engagement on Climate, outlined in the Government's *Climate Action Plan* (DCEE, 2024), particularly in delivering clear, tailored messaging and engaging audiences through creative and accessible approaches. This was particularly salient across *Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick* and *The Eco-Makers Workshop*, where diverse learning methods including visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and storytelling approaches were used to meet participants at different levels of understanding.

I suppose a chat about climate change and you know, the dancing, like it seems to be a more interesting way of learning about it and that's what I seem to see from the group inside and they love it.

**Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick
– Dance Limerick participant**

A key strength of these approaches was the localisation of climate messaging. Projects addressed issues of direct relevance to participants, such as air quality in Westside Galway (*The Air We Share*), housing conditions in Dublin 7 (*From Plan to Do*), and local food production systems (*Field Exchange*). By presenting information in accessible, non-technical ways and using strong visual and experiential elements, creative mediators made complex issues more tangible and meaningful. They also facilitated social interaction within *novel spaces*, enabling participants to exchange perspectives, knowledge and experiences.

I can say what I liked about the event, which is the way that it was facilitated. And I really enjoyed the quite strong visual learning aspect to the workshop, which I thought was good as well... Yeah, it's engaging and it's also inviting.

Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do

Engagement across the “head, heart, hands” dimensions (Wolf & Moser, 2011) was evident across all projects. Creative mediators supported understanding through tailored messaging, fostered emotional connection through enjoyable and engaging activities, and enabled practical participation through co-design workshops and creative processes. These participatory approaches enhanced participants' sense of agency, reinforcing their belief that their contributions were valuable and impactful.

Creativity as a tool emerged as a key mechanism for engagement and transformation. Participants engaged with design-thinking, service design, and eco-design approaches, gaining new insights into how creative skills can be applied to real-world challenges. This focus on solutions contributed to increased motivation and confidence to take action. Importantly, these processes align with ‘scaling deep’, as they influence how participants think about problems, their role in addressing them and their capacity to contribute to change.

Finally, the role of trusted messengers was critical. Creative mediators were often perceived as credible and relatable figures, enabling stronger engagement and openness among participants. This relational trust is central to both effective communication and ‘scaling deep’, as it supports shifts in perspectives, values and ways of working within communities and networks.

7. Trusted figures

The theme of *trusted figures* followed closely after *creatives as mediators* in terms of frequency of references within our analysis. This theme 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 affect change. *Community stewardship* and *expert speakers* are key sub themes referenced under the *trusted figures* category. *Community stewardship* refers to people in a community who take responsibility for the wellbeing of the environment e.g., Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) volunteers or farmers who adopt sustainable farming practices.

I suppose you trust the people who are organising that event, because they're from the area as well, like as far as the SECs 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.

Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do

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 was particularly evident in *The Eco-Makers Workshop*, *Creating a Climate for Change - Dance Limerick*, *Field Exchange* and *Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities- 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 included persons with intellectual disabilities, communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, and renters.

The importance of expert speakers or guidance was clear in our analysis of all projects but was 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 fulfil a key role in community stewardship within their respective organisations/communities.

I've felt I've learned and that's good. I enjoyed the experience. That's good. And I think the professionals behind it were good subject matter experts in their different domains.

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate participant

8. Scales of impact

Individual behaviour has been identified as a catalyst for wider transformative change, extending beyond the individual through social and professional networks, often described as a “ring of confidence” (Backen & Vollen, 2024; Newman & Weber, 2023). This concept highlights how behavioural change spreads outward through relationships with family, peers, colleagues, and wider societal actors. This aligns with the COM-B model (Michie et al., 2011), where behaviour is influenced not only by individual capacity and motivation but also by social opportunity, including networks and peer influence. It also reflects ‘scaling deep’, where shifts in individual values, beliefs and behaviours influence broader cultural norms and relationships (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Fraser, 2023).

Findings from this evaluation demonstrate this ripple effect across both professional and community contexts. Within professional settings, participants reported increased motivation and capacity to influence practices within their own organisations and sectors. This included initiating organisational change processes and engaging with colleagues and peers, illustrating how individual behaviour can shape organisational norms and practices. This *Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate* participant commented on the impact of his experience with the project:

We've set up committees around climate change to see how much more we can do as an organisation...I guess the overall experience helped having the opportunity to speak to other directors and just to have the time out to think. I think it probably made us braver in some of the decisions that we've made internally.

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate participant



Similarly, participants described increased confidence and motivation to share knowledge within their professional networks, reinforcing peer-to-peer learning and influence:

I suppose more motivated to learn and equip myself with the knowledge to be able to discuss with other farmers and best practices, what they could be doing or what they can do.

Field Exchange participant

Beyond professional contexts, participants also demonstrated increased engagement within their communities, including among peers, families and local networks. Participants reported a greater willingness to initiate conversations about climate change, reflecting increased motivation and confidence:

To engage more. And to talk about things with other people... I might have been quite slow to bring up the topic... but I'm less so now and I've realised that people are actually very interested in discussing environmental matters.

**Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick
– Dance Limerick participant**

Participants also described this process using a “ripple effect” metaphor, illustrating how individual actions can influence others within their sphere of influence. This reflects both the social opportunity dimension of COM-B and the relational dynamics of ‘scaling deep’, where change spreads through networks and contributes to wider cultural shifts:

I mean because if you drop a pebble in a lake, in the water, the ripples spread out. So, I do think if each of us as participants do something that impacts other people, it certainly can help us...

Field Exchange participant

This outward influence was further reinforced through intentional efforts to share learning and success stories, including speaking at events and forming networks. These activities extend the reach of individual engagement and contribute to collective learning and action, strengthening both motivation and opportunity for change across wider systems:

One of our suggestions... was to form this group. Where we would share success stories and also deep dive [into] problems and so on

Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate

Overall, these findings demonstrate how individual engagement can extend into wider social, professional and community contexts, reinforcing the interconnected nature of behaviour change. Through the lens of COM-B, this highlights the importance of social opportunity and peer influence, while from a ‘scaling deep’ perspective, it illustrates how individual-level shifts can contribute to broader transformations in relationships, norms and collective practices.

9. Nutrition, health and wellbeing

Themes of *nutrition, health and wellbeing* emerged consistently across the analysis and were supported by both participant interviews and observational data. Sub-themes relating to *food, traditional practices*, and *mental wellbeing* were evident across multiple projects, particularly *The Eco-Makers Workshop*, *Field Exchange*, and *Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do*.

Participants highlighted the connection between food production, nutrition, and both physical and mental health, with several reporting enjoyment in growing, preparing, and consuming organic produce. Parents and guardians also observed improvements in participants’ wellbeing, suggesting wider impacts beyond the individual.

These findings can be understood through the COM-B model (Michie et al., 2011), where improved knowledge and skills relating to food production enhanced participants’ capacity, while positive experiences of growing and sharing food strengthened motivation. In addition, the social and participatory nature of these activities created opportunities for engagement.

From a ‘scaling deep’ perspective, these experiences contributed to shifts in values and everyday practices around food, wellbeing, and sustainability, reinforcing more holistic and health-oriented approaches to climate action (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Fraser, 2023).

Having that sense of climate change and eating the right foods is really important. So, I see a kind of correlation with that... When I heard of the climate activation and these kinds of projects being run, I think it fits into the kind of physical activity side of things and health in general as well. I think it's hugely important.

Limerick Sport Partnership Tutor, Dance Limerick

These findings suggest that wellbeing can support engagement and may act as a foundational condition for sustained behavioural change, aligning with both COM-B (motivation) and 'scaling deep' through shifts in how individuals prioritise health, care and sustainability in their daily lives.

10. Relationships with nature

A strong theme across the analysis was participants' *relationship with nature*, with many demonstrating high levels of care for the environment and biodiversity. While these biospheric values were often already present, participation in *Creative Climate Action Fund II* projects helped to re-energise and deepen this connection, strengthening motivation for pro-environmental behaviour. This was particularly evident in *Field Exchange*, where participants reflected a strong sense of environmental stewardship after engaging in workshops on agroforestry, biodiversity enhancement and sustainable land management:

I mean on the one hand, it's that sense of appreciation of the here and now, and I suppose the whole importance of climate action and of our responsibility to the land and to the place that we are from, and it also, I suppose, just evokes that sense of how lucky are we to have a world that's as lovely as it is. And so it beholds us to pass it on and to pass it on in a better condition than we've received it.

Field Exchange participant

From a COM-B perspective, these experiences reinforced motivation through emotional and value-based engagement, while also enhancing capacity through learning practical approaches to sustainable land use. The emphasis on stewardship and responsibility aligns strongly with 'scaling deep', as it reflects shifts in values, identity and long-term relationships with the natural world (Riddell & Moore, 2015; Fraser, 2023). Participants expressed a responsibility to care for the land and pass it on to future generations, indicating deeper cultural and intergenerational dimensions

of change. Engagement with nature and biodiversity also proved effective in attracting and sustaining participation across projects. Activities centred on biodiversity broadened appeal, particularly within community energy contexts such as *Dublin City Sustainable Energy Communities - From Plan to Do*, where addressing diverse interests was important for maintaining engagement. Participants and project team members widely reported that nature supported wellbeing, describing it as restorative, inspiring, and essential to their quality of life. This aligns with research highlighting the cognitive, emotional and behavioural benefits of engaging with nature (Salonen et al., 2023).

From analysis of *The Eco-Makers Workshop* it was evident that participants had increased emotional wellbeing from being immersed in the natural surrounds of Inspired's Biodiversity Learning Hub. Participants were reported feeling less anxiety as well as increased confidence and 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. They were also found to have enhanced understanding of the connection between their plastic beach combing for making recycled plastic jewellery, and its positive impact on the local ecosystem.

Similarly, participants in *Creating a Climate for Change - Dance Limerick* described enhanced physical and mental wellbeing, alongside a deeper connection to nature through embodied and creative practices. These experiences illustrate how engagement with nature can simultaneously support wellbeing, strengthen pro-environmental behaviours, and contribute to 'scaling deep' by reshaping how individuals perceive and relate to the environment. This *Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick - Dance Limerick* participant described their experience of relating to biodiversity loss after partaking in a 'Web of Life' group activity:

Well, today when we did that web exercise I actually felt almost like a grief when one of the threads was lost. So it was like a loss, it was like 'ah!' And actually I felt it as a loss and that's really, really affecting. If you can feel something in the moment... You know anything detail wise you remember that we always remember feelings. So that's why I love these sessions... for giving options for getting down through the layers and hitting the important ones.

**Creating a Climate for Change in Limerick
– Dance Limerick participant.**



Bean Festival, Brilliant Ballybunion.
Image by Rena Blake



8. Project Team Survey Results

In this section, we summarise our findings from self-reported data acquired from 42 project teams. 59 surveys from 42 project teams were collected at the onset of projects while 37 surveys from 31 project teams were collected on completion of projects.

All quotations from project team member surveys were anonymised to protect confidentiality. While participant responses could not be traced back to identifiable individuals, responses from project representatives are potentially identifiable due to their roles and the specific nature of the projects. The majority of survey respondents were project managers or project directors, who had multiple roles that included the development of the project idea, developing the creative content of the project, supporting the implementation of projects or managing events and logistics.

General Patterns of Engagement and Impact of Arts and Creative Experiences

The survey findings show that *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* projects primarily engaged local communities, while also reaching more targeted audiences. These target audiences included people with shared interests, families, workplace groups, and, to a lesser extent, policymakers, scientists, industry actors, and minority or age-specific groups. Projects were mainly rooted in local contexts, while also extending their reach to a wider range of sectors and audiences.

Engagement took place mainly through in-person events, supported by social and traditional media (radio, television and print) and, to a lesser extent, online events. The overall reach exceeded initial expectations, with media playing an important role in amplifying visibility. The findings indicate that projects were particularly effective in shaping how people think and feel about climate change, increasing confidence, empowerment, responsibility, and understanding. Behavioural change was less immediate and appears more gradual, suggesting that shifts in attitudes and awareness may be an important preceding step towards longer-term action.

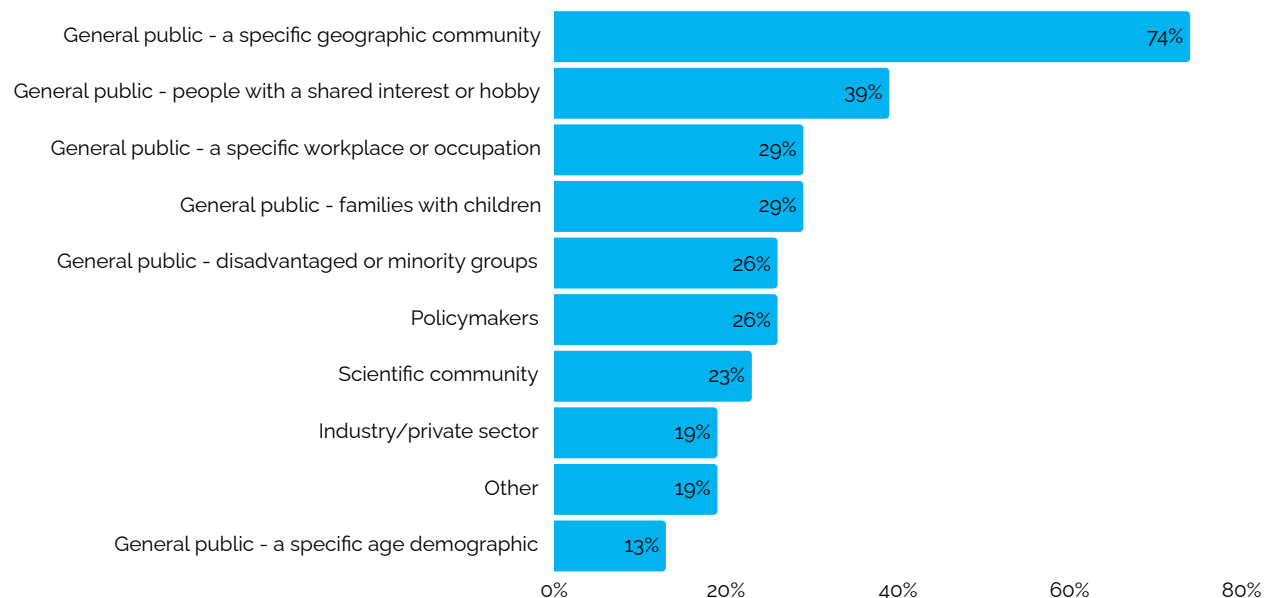
The majority of projects report strong fulfilment of their community engagement objectives, with a focus on education, capacity-building, and the provision of inspiring examples. Emotional communication was widely used to support engagement, while incentive-based approaches such as rewards or prizes were rarely employed, indicating that participation was primarily driven through learning, empowerment, and skills development, rather than extrinsic motivation.

Projects used a wide range of artistic and creative practices, often in combination. Their value lay less in the specific art form and more in how participatory and socially engaged approaches supported dialogue, collaboration, and inclusive forms of engagement across diverse audiences.

Across the programme, projects generated interconnected impacts, including stronger relationships and networks, organisational learning, and the creation of lasting resources, tools and outputs. These impacts extend beyond delivery as broader influence, through dissemination and potential for scaling and replication. Being part of a shared cohort further strengthened these outcomes by fostering a sense of community and shared purpose, while enabling peer learning, collaboration, visibility and access to resources. Although levels of engagement varied between projects, the cohort structure was generally seen as reinforcing the quality of individual projects and the overall collective impact of the programme.

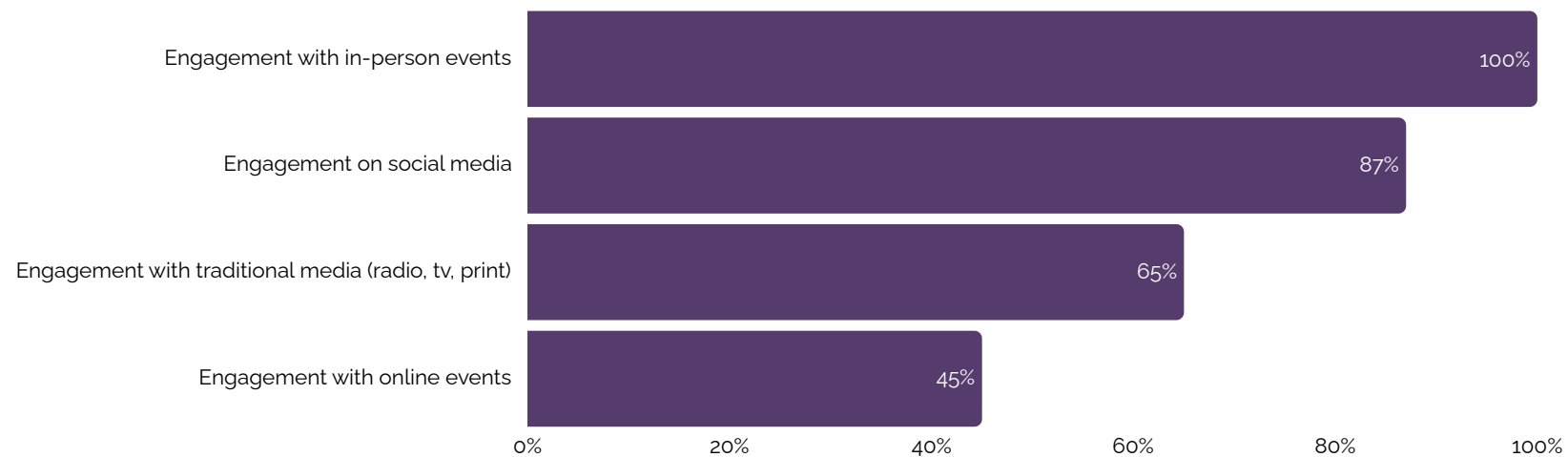
Finally, most projects intend to continue collaborations beyond the programme, with most projects aiming to continue partnerships, build on existing activities and seek further funding, with ambitions to deepen local impact and extend reach more widely.

Figure 28 **Who were the audiences or demographics reached by your project? Please describe the audience in more detail in the space provided. You may select more than one option.**



- **Figure 28** shows that 74% of project respondents reported reaching the general public connected to a specific geographic community. 39% reported reaching the general public that consisted of people with a similar interest or hobby. 29% of projects reached families with children, and the same percentage (29%) reached those with a specific workplace or occupation. 26% reported reaching disadvantaged or minority groups while 13% reached the general public who were of a specific age demographic.
- 26% of the projects project respondents reaching policymakers, while 23% reported reaching the scientific community and 19% of responding projects reported reaching the industry/private sector.

Figure 29. **How have people engaged with your project? You may select multiple forms of engagement.**



- **Figure 29** shows that 100% of project respondents reported that people were engaged with their project through in-person events. Additionally, 87% of projects engaged people through social media, 65% through traditional media (radio, tv and print) and 45% through online events.

Figure 30. Which behaviours, attitudes or beliefs in relation to climate change has your project addressed among the target demographic?

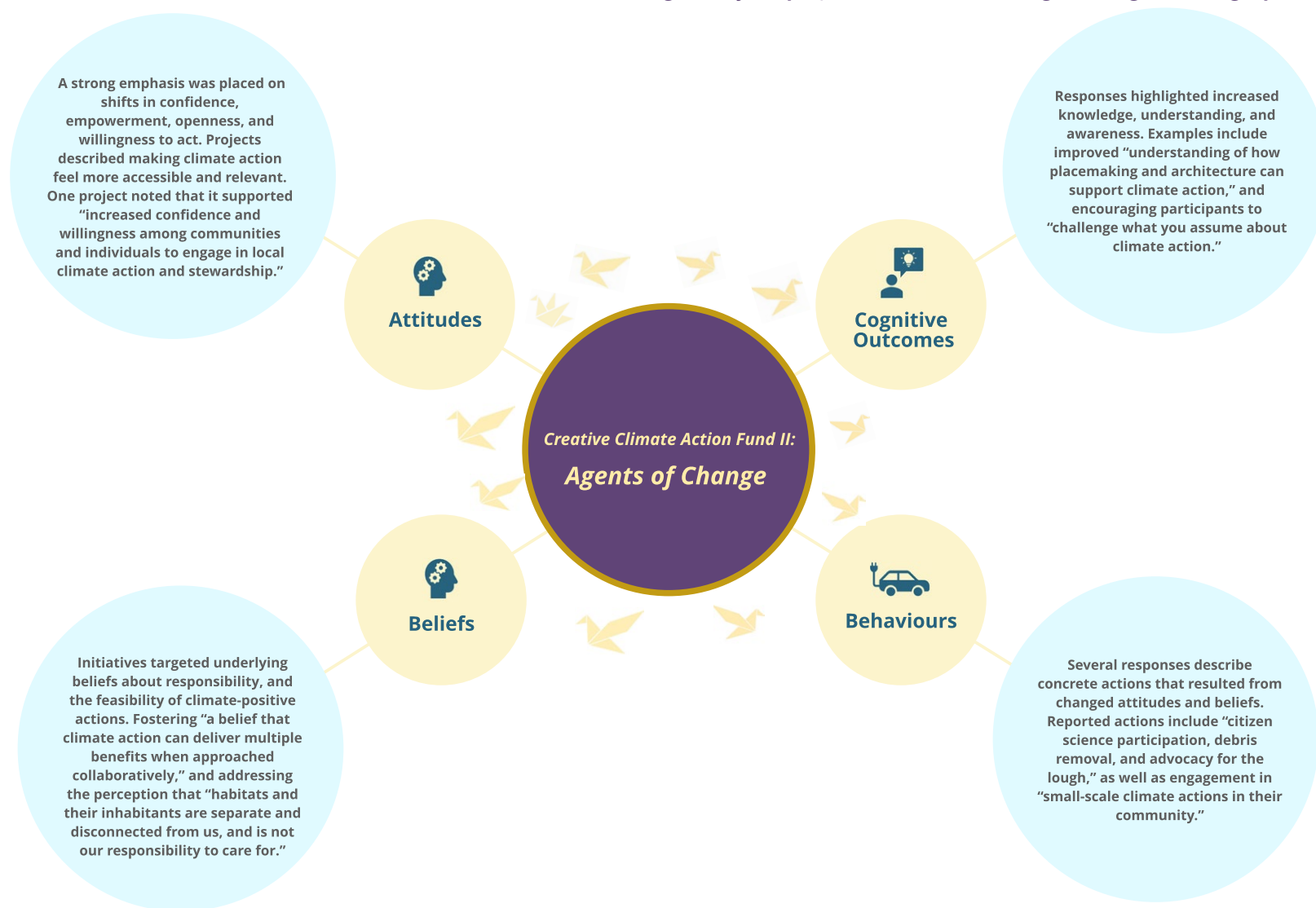


Figure 30. Four main dimensions addressed by the projects. Attitudes and beliefs emerged as the most prominently articulated outcomes, followed by cognitive changes and, to a lesser extent, behavioural change.

1. Attitudes

A strong emphasis was placed on shifts in confidence, empowerment, openness and willingness to act. Projects described making climate action feel more accessible and relevant. For example, one project noted that it supported *“increased confidence and willingness among communities and individuals to engage in local climate action and stewardship.”*

2. Beliefs

Many initiatives targeted underlying beliefs about responsibility and the feasibility of climate-positive actions. One of the examples mentioned fostering *“a belief that climate action can deliver multiple environmental, social, and economic benefits when approached collaboratively,”* and addressing the perception that *“habitats and their inhabitants are separate and disconnected from us, something that occurs ‘elsewhere’ and is not our responsibility to care for.”*

3. Cognitive outcomes

Several responses highlighted increased knowledge, understanding and awareness, particularly regarding biodiversity and the intersections of climate and local environments. Examples included improved *“understanding of how placemaking and architecture can support climate action,”* and encouraging participants to *“challenge what you assume about climate action.”*

4. Behaviours

Some responses described concrete actions that resulted from changed attitudes and beliefs. Reported actions included *“citizen science participation, debris removal, and advocacy for the lough,”* as well as engagement in *“small-scale climate actions in their community.”*



Brilliant Ballybunion.
Image by Rena Blake

Figure 31. To what extent have the following community engagement objectives been fulfilled by your project?



- **Figure 31** shows that 100% of project respondents reported fulfilling their educational community engagement objectives, by “increasing knowledge and understanding” somewhat or to a great extent. 100% of project respondents also reported fulfilling their objective of persuading “participants using communication to induce either positive/negative feelings or to stimulate action” somewhat or to a great extent.
- 94% of project respondents reported achieving their objective of enabling and building “capacity by increasing means, capabilities and/or opportunities for communities to act” somewhat or to a great extent, and 96% reported fulfilling their objective of providing “new examples and models that people can aspire to” somewhat or to a great extent.
- 93% reported achieving their objective of encouraging “changes in the physical or social context which support positive environmental actions”, while 93% also reported achieving their objective of training “participants by imparting skills”.
- A small proportion of projects reported using rewards or prizes to incentivise participants.

Detail any forms of art, creative expression or creative practices that have worked well in your project and explain how they were valuable in achieving the project goals.

The responses to this question revealed a diverse range of artistic and creative practices used across projects, spanning participatory, visual, design-based, performative, digital and craft-based approaches. As shown in Table 3, while many different forms of expression were identified, the findings suggest that their value lies not only in the specific medium but in how they were mobilised to foster engagement, dialogue and collaboration.

In particular, participatory and socially engaged practices stood out as central, often underpinning other creative methods and enabling more inclusive, experiential and impactful ways of addressing project goals. Across responses, multidisciplinary emerged also as a common element, with projects combining diverse methods such as *“performance, visual arts, film, sound, storytelling... and participatory arts”* to create layered and interconnected forms of engagement.

Table 3. All forms of art, creative expression and creative practices mentioned by the respondents.

Category of creative expression	Forms of art and creative practices identified
Participatory & socially engaged	Co-creation, co-design, co-building, workshops, community art workshops, artist-led walks and visits, participatory research, ethnographic interviews, participatory science activities, community exhibitions, public engagement events, creative consultations, learning exchanges, active street engagement, community conversations, picnic-based engagement and collaborative making.
Visual	Community murals, public art installations, photography, exhibitions, illustration/graphic design, ink/graphic art, mosaic, posters, art books, publications, documentary film, animation, eco-printing, drawing, map-making, sand art, textile art, moss installations and sculpture.
Design-based	Design-thinking workshops, co-design processes, service design, rapid prototyping, Double Diamond methodology, systems thinking, placemaking architecture, public realm design, sustainable design, creative briefs, design sprints, Government Design Principles, spatial design and collaborative design in exhibitions.
Sound-based	Field recording, soundwalks, music composition, songwriting, music/sound installations, podcasts, audio for apps/trails, orchestral collaboration, contemporary classical music and sound-based storytelling.
Performing arts	Live performance, theatre, improvisation/comedy, dance, performance workshops, promenade/immersive performance and artist talks.
Immersive and digital	Apps, immersive exhibitions, multimedia installations, audio-visual environments, digital storytelling platforms, cinema modules, interactive exhibition elements, sensory installations, virtual/experiential environments combining sound, visuals and narrative.
Storytelling and narrative	Storytelling, narrative research, documentary filmmaking, podcasts, scripts, poetry, story-based exhibitions, archival storytelling, character creation and campaign narrative.
Craft-based	Woodcraft, upcycling/reuse practices, papermaking, seed bomb making, making with natural materials, model-making, construction techniques, garden-based creative practices and functional crafts.



Clockwise from top left: Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, Field Exchange, The Air We Share, Images by Michelle Burke.
Clockwise from bottom right: The Air We Share, image by Ciarán MacChoncarraige; The Eco – Makers, image by AK Inspired Tralee; Creative Boardroom: Collaborate4Climate, image by Michelle Burke.



1. Participatory and socially engaged practices

Responses to this question highlight that the effectiveness of creative practices lies less in specific art forms and more in how they are used within participatory and process-driven approaches. Participatory and socially engaged practices emerged as the most central mentioned practices. Co-creation, workshops, interviews, and community-led activities were consistently described as enabling dialogue, trust and ownership. As one response notes, *“co-design and co-building were core creative practices, turning local knowledge and making into the project’s main method of climate engagement.”* Similarly, participatory formats such as walks and workshops *“created a space in which people could express their ideas freely about biodiversity”* and *“bring people together and allow... individuals to meet each other, learn and share ideas.”* These approaches position participants as active contributors to both process and outcomes.

2. Visual and design-based practices

Visual arts were widely used, primarily as communicative tools and to extend project reach outputs such as murals, exhibitions, installations and publications, making climate issues visible and accessible. These outputs were seen to amplify impact, as *“public facing outputs [had] a wider impact with the general public and brought the project to a level that was seen in national press.”* Design-based approaches appeared mainly as co-design frameworks embedded within participatory processes. Methods such as design thinking, prototyping, and systems approaches support structured collaboration and helped translate ideas into tangible outcomes. Performing, sound-based, and storytelling practices contributed to emotional and embodied engagement with other participants and with nature. Formats such as theatre, music, movement, and narrative-based work are described as making climate issues more relatable, fostering empathy and enabling participants to connect personal experiences with broader environmental challenges.

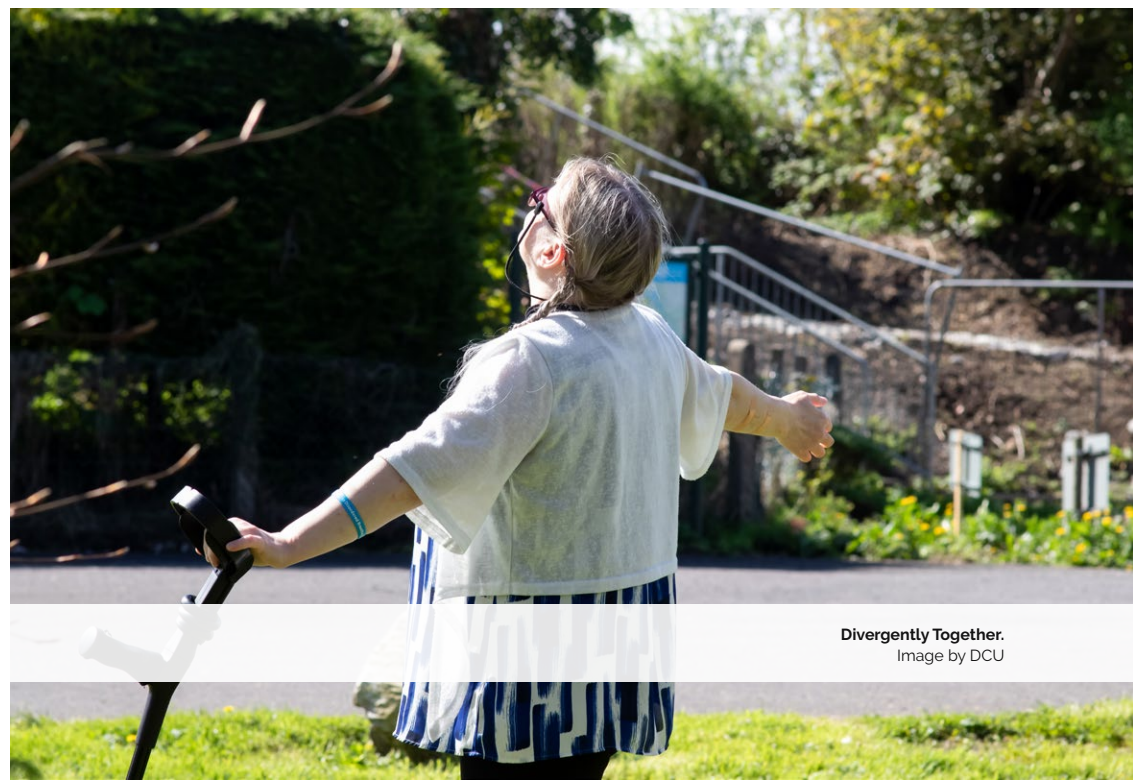
3. Performing, sound-based, digital and storytelling practices

Performing, sound-based and narrative practices supported emotional and embodied engagement with climate issues. Approaches such as performance,

storytelling, digital and sound-based methods helped make complex topics more relatable and fostered deeper connections. For instance, immersive methods *“made the largely unseen underwater environment... visible and emotionally engaging,”* while improvisation-based formats *“ensure that each show is tailored... to the audience... and what they want to see discussed.”* These practices also created alternative spaces for dialogue, with formats that provided *“a different environment to have climate conversations.”*

4. Craft-based and hands-on practices

Craft-based and hands-on practices provided accessible entry points for participation and supported learning through making. Activities such as sculpture, upcycling and creative workshops enabled participants to engage directly with materials and ideas. One response highlighted how *“crafting... from discarded materials made climate action tangible and personal,”* while workshop-based approaches *“allowed for ease of engagement that didn’t require a steep learning curve... [opening] up a space for participants to engage in transformative art practice.”*



Divergently Together.
Image by DCU

Figure 32. Please outline some successes and potential sustained impacts of your project.

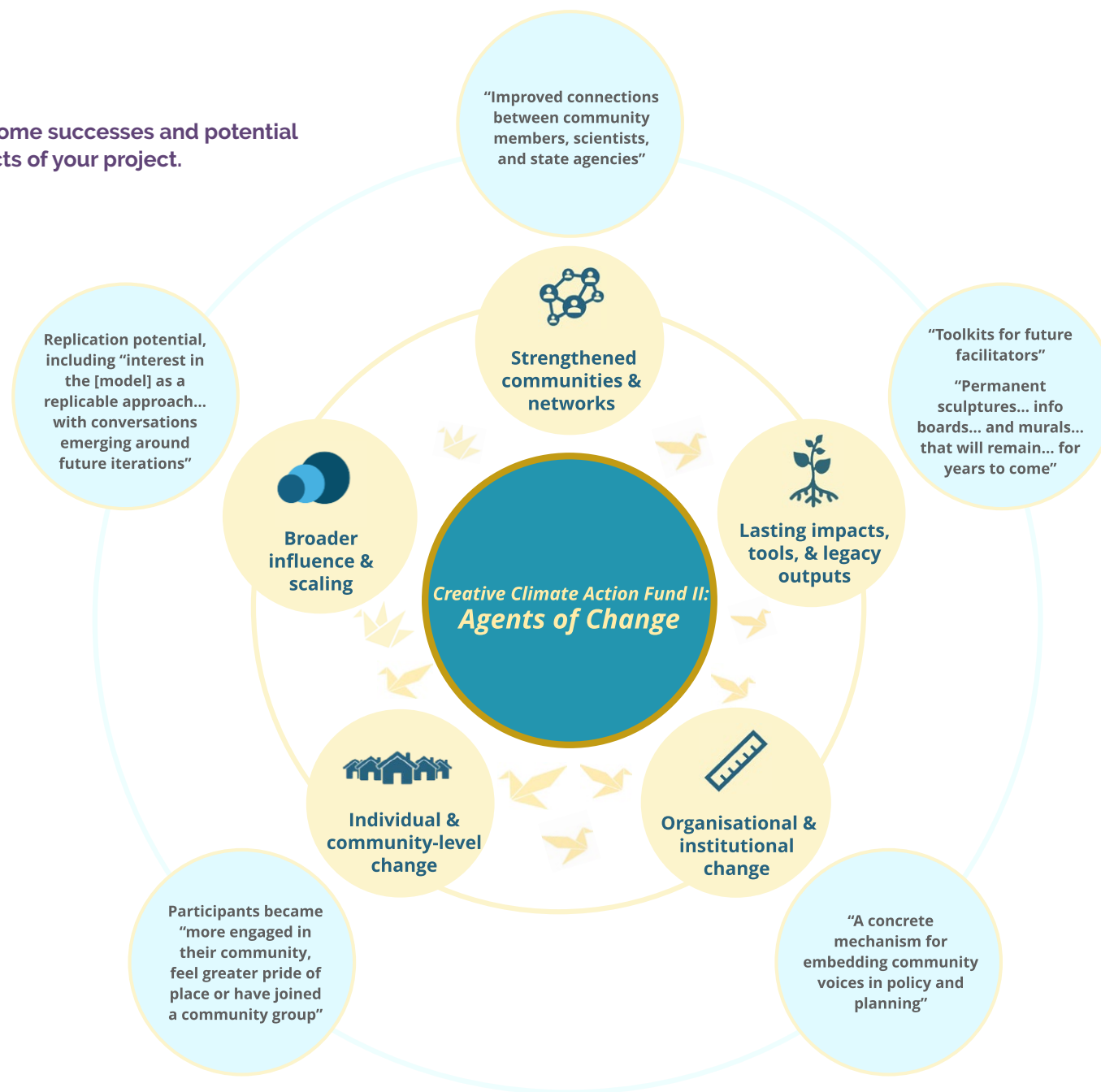


Figure 32. Five main successes and impacts reported by the projects

Reported successes and potential sustained impacts can be grouped into five main categories: Strengthened communities and networks; lasting impacts, tools, and legacy outputs, organisational and institutional change; individual and community-level change, and broader influence and scaling.

1. Strengthened communities and networks

A consistent outcome was the strengthening of relationships between communities, organisations and sectors, often leading to ongoing collaboration and knowledge-sharing networks. For example, projects reported *“improved connections between community members, scientists, and state agencies,”* while others highlighted how the work *“brought together community groups, artists, architects, ecologists, local authorities, policymakers, and land stewards.”*

2. Lasting impacts, tools, and legacy outputs

Many projects reported sustained outputs and structures, including hubs, installations, publications and toolkits, which supported continued engagement beyond the project lifecycle. Examples include *“toolkits for future facilitators,”* *“a handbook... to deliver this material,”* platforms that *“will remain available to more than 900 [groups]... to assist them in community building and decarbonisation action,”* as well as more material legacies such as *“permanent sculptures... info boards... and murals... that will remain... for years to come.”*

3. Organisational and institutional change

Several responses highlighted changes within organisations, including shifts in practices, increased collaboration and contributions to longer-term planning or policy-related processes. For example, one project described how it *“embedded artists within an organisation... [challenging] a system that saw artistic practice as something separate,”* contributing to gradual *“attitude shifts, one conversation at a time.”* Others reported *“greater cooperation between groupings... and enhanced leadership within communities.”* In some cases, projects also influenced policy-related processes such as creating *“a concrete mechanism for embedding community voices in policy and marine planning.”*

4. Individual and community-level change

Projects reported increased confidence, sense of belonging and engagement among participants, sometimes leading to continued involvement or new initiatives. Projects reported that participants became *“more engaged in their community, feel greater pride of place or have joined a community group,”* while others described deeper emotional impacts, such as participants who *“were in tears about how welcomed they felt... [having] not felt that safe in groups before.”*

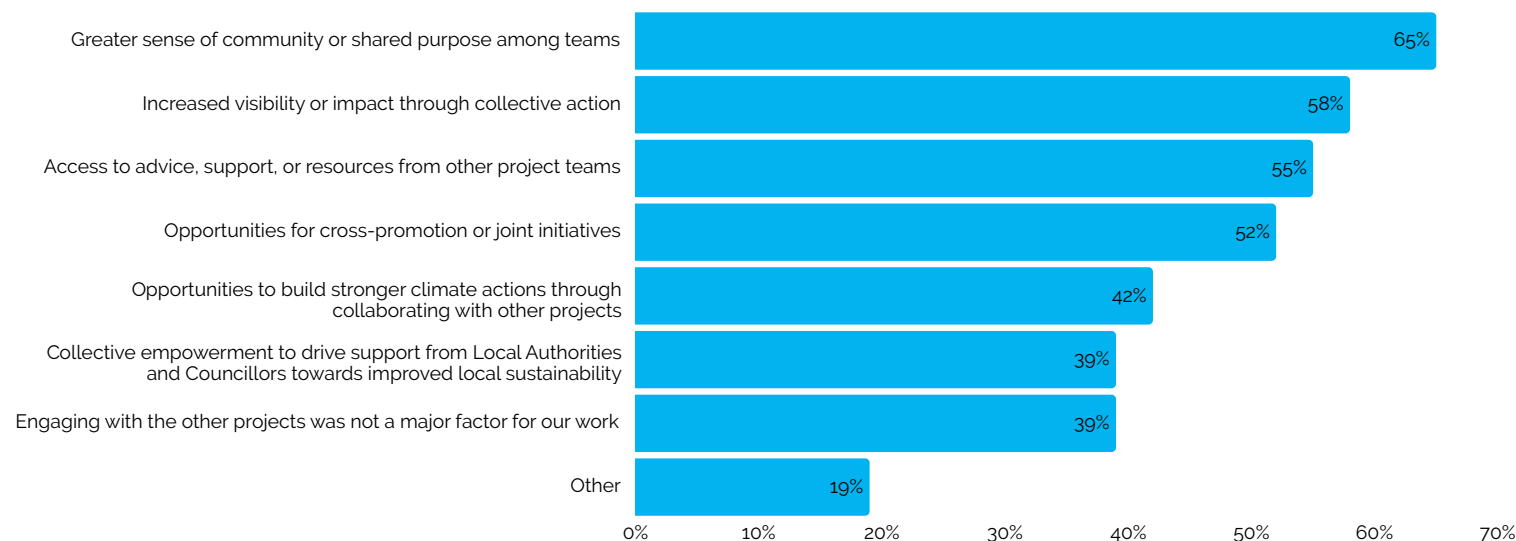
5. Broader influence and scaling

Impacts extended beyond immediate participants through dissemination, partnerships, media visibility and the replication potential. Some reported, for example, being *“featured in the Irish Times, The Journal and the Irish Examiner,”* or attracting *“almost 6000 visitors”* to online resources. Others influenced wider sectors, for example through *“workshops in Deloitte, Accenture... [reaching] businesses that work with global companies.”* Several also noted replication potential, including *“interest in the [model] as a replicable approach... with conversations emerging around future iterations,”* or *“similar impacts in similar towns across Ireland.”*



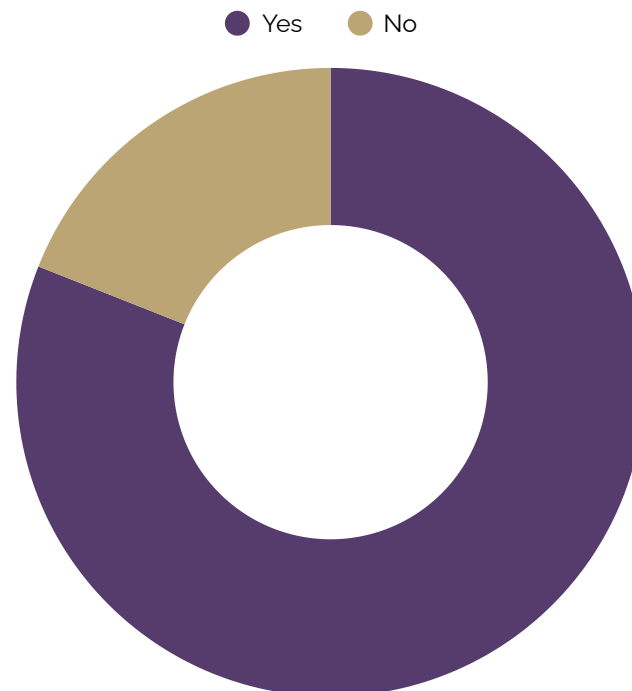
The Air We Share.
Image by Ciarán MacChoncarraige

Figure 33. In what ways has being part of a cohort of 42 projects under the same *Creative Climate Action Fund II* provided value or advantages for your project? Please select all that apply.



- **Figure 33** shows that 65% of projects reported that being a part of a cohort of 42 projects under the same *Creative Climate Action Fund II* brought value to their project as it provided a “greater sense of community or shared purpose among teams”. 58% of projects reported that it “increased visibility or impact through collective action”, and 55% reported that it also provided “access to advice, support, or resources from other project teams”.
- Just over half of the projects (52%) reported that it provided value or advantages to their projects through “opportunities for cross-promotion or joint initiatives”, while 42% reported that it provided “opportunities to build stronger climate actions through collaboration with other projects”.
- 39% of projects reported that engaging with other projects was not a major factor for their work, while the same percentage of projects (39%) reported that it provided a sense of “collective empowerment to drive support from local authorities and councillors towards improved local sustainability”.
- Other additional comments indicated that participation in the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* cohort provided value primarily through informal networking, peer learning, inspiration, and opportunities for exchange. Respondents highlight that “*the opportunities afforded assisted us and gave opportunities to explore and consult with others*”. At the same time, a few expressed a desire for more connections. For example, one response noted that they “*would have loved some of these, even a monthly zoom check in to chat about progress that is opt in might have allowed space for asking advice of other projects or promoting ours to them*”.
- The responses to this survey indicate that there was a significant benefit to projects being part of a cohort of 42 projects under the same *Creative Climate Action Fund II*.

Figure 34. **Are you and your group continuing the collaboration started under the *Creative Climate Action Fund II*?**
If yes, please share a brief description of how your collaboration is planned to be progressed in the coming years.



Among the 81% of respondents who indicated that they would continue the collaboration, projects planned to continue existing partnerships (*“will continue to programme events in collaboration with partners”*), community engagement (*“working with local community groups to map out”*), creative outputs (*“the exhibition tour continues until Dec 2025...”*), and research initiatives, with a strong focus on sustaining impact, securing funding, (*“in the coming years, this collaboration hopes to progress (funding dependent) through continued research, creative experimentation, industry engagement and public campaigns...”*) and expanding reach locally, nationally, and sometimes internationally (*“the platform brings together creatives, researchers and partners in Ireland and internationally”*).



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



9. Project Team Thematic Results

To complement the survey findings, all the open-ended responses from the preliminary and follow-up surveys administered to the project teams were analysed qualitatively to capture the depth, nuance and context of project teams' experiences, reflections and perceived impacts. The analysis focused on identifying patterns of meaning and recurring themes within the responses, rather than measuring frequency or statistical significance. Through this process, a set of seven themes emerged. These themes provide a framework for understanding how project teams perceive the impacts and outcomes of their work and are illustrated with quotations in the sections that follow.

As this section presents findings from the perspective of project teams, including those responsible for the design and implementation of the initiatives, it offers insights into how impacts were understood, facilitated and experienced from within the projects themselves. There is a degree of overlap between the themes identified in this chapter and those emerging from participant data presented earlier, particularly in areas such as community building, learning, and empowerment. This convergence reinforces the consistency of key findings across the evaluation. However, important differences also emerge. While participants primarily describe lived experiences, personal transformations and engagement processes, project teams emphasise the design, facilitation and structural dimensions that enabled these outcomes. As such, this chapter offers a complementary perspective, highlighting how similar processes are understood, interpreted and operationalised from the perspective of the project teams.

Across the responses, several interconnected patterns emerged. Project teams consistently highlighted community building as a central outcome, emphasising the creation of trust, networks and relationships that often extend beyond the project lifecycle.

Many projects also reported contributing to institutional and structural change through collaborations with local authorities, the development of tools and frameworks, and the integration of sustainability practices into organisational contexts.

Behavioural change was described as gradual and often rooted in earlier shifts in awareness, motivation and confidence, with projects supporting both everyday sustainable practices and community-level adaptation and resilience.

In addition, project teams identified a range of lasting impacts, including contributions to biodiversity, regeneration of place, and the creation of tangible outputs such as toolkits, publications and community infrastructure.

Finally, projects were understood to strengthen participants' sense of agency and empowerment, while also increasing knowledge, environmental awareness and climate literacy. These processes were closely linked to broader cultural shifts, including changes in attitudes, values and perceptions of collective responsibility for climate action.



Figure 35. Main themes and sub-themes identified through the qualitative analysis of preliminary and follow-up surveys with Creative Climate Action Fund II project teams.

1. Community building

This theme emerged as central across project responses. Projects reported that creating community was one of their most notable successes, as they functioned not only as artistic, cultural, or climate interventions but also as catalysts for building relational infrastructure that, in many cases, extends beyond the project lifecycle. This theme is illustrated through three interrelated sub-themes including *Strengthening local community networks*, *Creating trust* and *Bridging across sectors and scales*. These findings also reflect processes of ‘scaling deep’, where strengthening relationships, trust, and shared meaning within communities and networks creates the cultural foundations necessary for sustained and systemic change.

Strengthening local community networks

Many projects reported strengthening existing relationships and creating new networks that continued beyond the project lifecycle. Connections were frequently mentioned as key successes. For example, one project reflected on these connections as both a central achievement and a potential long-term impact:

The project has not only deepened our connections with the community but also expanded our vision of what creative collaboration can achieve. The experiences, insights, and new relationships forged through this project will continue to inform and inspire our work in the years ahead.

Creating trust

Trust-building emerged as a key prerequisite for collaboration and community engagement. Project teams emphasised that building trust requires time, face-to-face interaction and the involvement of artists and facilitators experienced in working with communities.

It takes time to build trust with the community and using the arts is not ‘an easy sell’ at the start. Having a flexible and adaptive artist who has experience with communities is key to building that trust among the communities and encouraging them to step into their

creative capacity. Working with two communities helped them to share and exchange experiences in a different location and see beyond their own impacts.

Respondents also highlighted the importance of trusted local intermediaries and engaging directly:

Community Champions – having people in the community to guide early encounters and act as trusted connections for groups and individuals; introducing ourselves and the project to existing community groups in person, rather than relying on flyers or online information.

Bridging across sectors and scales

Beyond strengthening local networks, several projects reported building relationships across geographical areas, sectors, institutions and governance levels. These collaborations extended the reach of project activities and helped embed climate action within broader systems of decision-making and practice.

Some collaborations extended into academic and professional spheres and continued after the project concluded:

The cross-disciplinary engagement with students at college level will continue because of our project, it was well received by students. Local authorities have reached out to us about the project and we have presented our findings to the EPA.

Projects also described extending their reach to completely new audiences:

This ongoing dissemination allows the stories and learning from the project to be shared with new communities and reach a much broader audience than might be expected. For example, I presented at the ICTMD.ie conference in DCU to ethnomusicologists, where my paper was the only one related to climate change and climate science research.

Projects acted as bridges, connecting diverse groups of community actors. This vertical and cross-sectoral collaboration can extend the reach and durability of project impacts beyond the immediate project context.

2. Institutional and structural change

This theme captures how projects extended their impact beyond community-level engagement to influence institutional structures, governance processes and professional practices. Two sub-themes illustrate this theme, namely *Institutional integration* and *Frameworks for future work*.

Institutional integration

Many responses highlighted strengthening relationships with local authorities, public institutions and professional stakeholders. These collaborations ranged from informal partnerships and knowledge exchange to more formal integration of sustainability initiatives into governance and planning processes.

Several initiatives contributed directly to institutional frameworks or decision-making by helping integrate projects into local authority planning:

New network established with growers involved in the project and Louth Local Development Inclusion of community gardens in future policies of the local authority. Funding provided for 3 new community gardens in the local authority.

Many projects highlighted strengthened connections with local governance structures: *“There is improved connection with City Council and environmental networks through the establishment of an Alliance Group”*, as well as with other institutional actors, such as libraries, emergency services and local government departments.

We engaged with the libraries and strengthened their awareness of the circular economy and how workshops can be conducted with children.

Improved communication between community, local authority and emergency services.

Frameworks for future work

Several projects developed formal plans, tools and replicable models intended to guide future practice. These examples demonstrate structural capacity-building rather than one-off interventions. For instance:

The characters created for the project continue to deliver workshops that highlight the importance of biodiversity in urban settings. And highlighting biodiversity in mountainous and beach settings will be delivered later in 2025 in partnership with LA.

We’ve built tools and resources that will remain available to more than 900 SECs across the country to assist them in community building and decarbonisation action. These examples include specific examples for renters - a previously underserved cohort. We’ve also brought the design approach to the attention of the SEAI, who run the scheme... and the website www.fromplantodo.ie will now feature in their handbook for SECs.

3. Behavioural change and practical action

This theme captures how projects translated awareness and motivation into concrete climate actions, both individually and collectively, around two sub-themes, namely *Adaptation and resilience* and *Sustainable practices*.

Adaptation and resilience

Projects helped communities take practical steps to prepare for specific climate risks, such as flooding, moving beyond awareness to proactive planning. Participants reported increased community ownership and structured resilience planning, with artistic activities raising awareness and fostering collective responses. Project teams reported, for example:

An increased sense of resilience within the communities as their sense of ownership of their community has been strengthened.

The community since developed a Community Resilience Plan and is being supported by DCSDC. They are now more proactively working together to support the community and be prepared for future flooding, which indicates a shift from reactive response to proactive preparedness.

Sustainable practices

Projects promoted shifts in everyday habits, consumption patterns, mobility behaviours and circular economy practices. One project described introducing children to circular economy practices:

We were addressing the circular economy. We were using toys to engage children in making new toys out of old toys. Many of the parents whose children attended our workshops said that their attitude to using and reusing toys had been changed by the workshop.

Mobility practices were also addressed. Another project described:

By directly engaging with communities, we are raising awareness and positively influencing behaviours by actively promoting rural roads use. This has served to trigger a revival of rural cycle culture by showcasing and using existing rural backroads, inspiring change in travel habits.

4. Lasting impacts

This theme captures how projects contributed to enduring environmental and cultural impacts, leaving a legacy beyond the project lifecycle. Respondents reflected on how their work continues to have lasting influence in different ways. These findings also reflect elements of 'scaling deep', where lasting impacts are sustained through

shifts in values, relationships and cultural meaning-making, rather than short-term outputs alone. By embedding new ways of thinking, relating, and acting within communities, projects contributed to longer-term cultural and systemic change that extends beyond their immediate activities.

Biodiversity and habitat protection

Projects addressed biodiversity conservation, habitat stewardship and individual engagement in environmental protection. Some examples are: *"Understanding and protecting biodiversity in an urban setting"*; *"guardianship of the river and citizen science/active citizenship on biodiversity and water health"*, or *"looking at alternative food sources and climate action as part of active citizenship"*. These illustrate the different ways in which initiatives fostered both environmental awareness and actionable behaviours.

Regeneration of place and heritage

Many projects restored and enhanced local spaces and heritage. One project reported: *"13 landowners have signed to move forward to restore the bog there."* Another project highlighted the need to shift perceptions of human-nature relationships:

Regarding biodiversity - the attitude/belief that habitats and their inhabitants are separate and disconnected from us, something that occurs 'elsewhere' and is not our responsibility to care for.

Tangible outputs and infrastructure

Projects produced lasting physical and cultural legacies, including publications, toolkits, sculptures and infrastructure. One project created toolkits for facilitators and publications available through the library service:

The publication that we created is available through the library service which we hope we have a future impact.

Infrastructure outputs included practical and symbolic community resources:

There is now an 18m upcycled permanent sculpture in celebration of the little tern colony and the conservation work that has been taking place there for the last 30 years, developed with help from the local community workshop participants.

5. Agency and empowerment

This theme captures how projects strengthened participants' belief in their ability to contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation. Project teams highlighted the importance of emotional support, confidence-building and the development of practical and cognitive skills. Two interrelated sub-themes emerged, namely *Personal efficacy* and *Motivation and overcoming despair*, as mutually reinforcing dimensions.

Personal efficacy

Projects reported strengthening participants' beliefs in their ability to make a difference. For example, reporting that:

The project has fostered positive attitudes towards climate action by promoting creative reuse of waste, building belief in individual impact, and encouraging responsibility for environmental stewardship among people with intellectual disabilities through hands-on, inclusive learning experiences.

Another project explained that they employed improvisation and co-creation to enhance confidence and ownership, noting participants became more confident in discussing climate change and taking action in their own lives:

We chose this methodology because it supports our goals of enhancing agency and self-efficacy around climate change in rural communities (...) an increased confidence in talking to friends and family about climate change, increased confidence in taking action to mitigate climate change.

Motivation and overcoming despair

Several project teams noted that feelings of overwhelm or hopelessness could hinder climate engagement, emphasising gradual, supportive approaches, enabling participants to counter it and build confidence incrementally. One project stressed the importance of patience:

[It is important to] persist and take your time.

6. Knowledge, awareness, understanding, learning

This theme captures how projects focused on increasing awareness and literacy around climate, biodiversity, and sustainability, deepening place-based awareness, and facilitating knowledge exchange across communities and networks. Projects described how their initiatives addressed misinformation, challenged the perceived distance between humans and ecosystems, and strengthened participants' understanding of climate change and the environment.

Environmental and climate literacy

Many projects focused on improving knowledge and literacy around biodiversity, climate change and ecological interdependence, combining scientific expertise and creative practice, for instance:

Knowledge transfer was a success in the project which was shared in the report submitted. All groups improved their knowledge (assessed through surveys before and after intervention).

Respondents reported increases in vocabulary, systems awareness, and the reframing of values, highlighting improvements in participants' ecological knowledge:

The workshops demonstrated an increase in positive associations with nature, and increases in vocabulary, which was a very concrete outcome.

Appreciation and pride of place

Projects fostered deeper emotional and relational connections to local environments, strengthening pride of place and challenging perceptions of ecological detachment. The learning extended beyond factual knowledge to reshaping how participants perceive their relationship with local landscapes and biodiversity, as for example in one of the initiatives, the purpose was:

To trigger a revival of rural cycle culture by showcasing and using existing rural backroads, inspiring change in travel habits.

Knowledge-sharing and learning networks

Projects facilitated ongoing knowledge exchange and collaborative learning that extends beyond the lifespan of the funded activities. The following examples highlight how projects functioned as platforms for sustained knowledge-sharing:

The project has not only deepened our connections with the community but also expanded our vision of what creative collaboration can achieve. The experiences, insights, and new relationships forged through this project will continue to inform and inspire our work in the years ahead.

7. Attitudes. From engagement to cultural change

Projects contributed to shifts in social norms, shared values, and collective understandings of climate responsibility. Project teams described efforts to reshape how communities relate to and respond to climate challenges.

Emotional connection and care

Project teams emphasised the importance of trust, empathy, and sensitivity to lived experience, for example in communities affected by climate-related psychological problems. As noted in one of the projects:

Communities impacted by flooding are living with trauma and support is likely needed for the artist to navigate this, we were able to access some support via the Playhouse (...) Having a flexible and adaptive artist who has experience with communities is key to building that trust among the communities and encouraging them to step into their creative capacity.

Inclusion and collective responsibility

Several projects broadened participation and strengthened social bonds, encouraging also environmental stewardship among people with intellectual disabilities, fostering collective responsibility and recognition of diverse climate actors:

The project has fostered positive attitudes towards climate action by promoting creative reuse of waste, building belief in individual impact, and encouraging responsibility for environmental stewardship among people with intellectual disabilities through hands-on, inclusive learning experiences.

These efforts contribute to a cultural shift in who is recognised as a climate actor and reinforce collective responsibility across communities.



Till Now, Callan.
Image by Freddie G

Shifts in attitudes and values

Projects reported an evolution in attitudes and values, for example in expanded understandings of shared risk and collective resilience. For instance, one described how flooding came to be seen as an issue for the entire community, not only those directly affected, reflecting a shift toward shared responsibility:

Climate risk communication and subsequent mitigation actions being an issue for a whole community not just those who directly experienced flooding (...) An increased sense of resilience within the communities as their sense of ownership of their community has been strengthened. A new understanding developed through the sharing of experiences and with this being expressed in the visible documentation of a creative piece of the relevance of working together around the very difficult themes of flooding and what this implies for future preparedness for community action to keep the whole community safe.



Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Minister Patrick O'Donovan at Shared Island Conference, 2025.
Image by Maxwells



Galway Bay is Calling.
Image by Marc O'Sullivan



10. Conclusion

This evaluation demonstrates that the *Creative Climate Action Fund II: Agents of Change* has made a significant contribution to advancing climate action through arts, culture and creativity. Across the 42 funded projects, the research showed that participatory creative approaches can foster meaningful engagement with climate change by making complex issues more accessible, relevant and personally meaningful. Through artistic practice, storytelling, dialogue and co-creation, the projects enabled individuals, communities, organisations and businesses to develop the knowledge, confidence, motivation and relationships needed to participate in climate action. In doing so, the initiative has demonstrated that arts and creativity are powerful mechanisms for building the social and cultural conditions necessary to support lasting environmental change.

A particularly important finding of this evaluation is the programme's contribution to the principles of a Just Transition. The *Creative Climate Action Fund II* successfully engaged people from diverse backgrounds, including communities that are often underrepresented in climate dialogue and decision-making. By creating accessible, inclusive and locally relevant opportunities for participation, the projects fostered trust, strengthened social connections and ensured that a wide range of voices could contribute to shaping climate responses. These findings reinforce the importance of participatory arts and creative practice in ensuring that Ireland's transition to a climate-neutral society is fair, inclusive and community-led, with no one left behind.

The evaluation also highlights the wider and longer-term value generated by the programme. Beyond increasing awareness and encouraging individual behaviour change, the projects strengthened community capacity, developed new partnerships, supported collaboration across sectors, and created enduring resources that will continue to benefit communities beyond the funding period. The evidence suggests that creative approaches can contribute not only to behavioural

change at the individual level, but also to the relational and cultural change needed to enable broader systems transformation. By strengthening social cohesion, fostering collective efficacy and creating trusted spaces for dialogue and learning, the programme has laid important foundations for sustained climate action.

Taken together, the findings provide strong evidence that arts, culture and creativity should be recognised as integral components of Ireland's climate action response. The *Creative Climate Action Fund II* offers a proven model for engaging people, strengthening communities and supporting the whole-of-society approach set out in Ireland's *Climate Action Plan*. Building on this success will require continued investment in artists, creative practitioners and community-based creative initiatives, alongside longer-term funding models that allow meaningful partnerships and lasting impacts to develop. Embedding creative approaches more systematically within national and local climate policy would not only strengthen public engagement but also help drive the cultural, behavioural and relational changes that underpin a resilient, equitable and climate-neutral future.

In our evaluation of the *Creative Climate Action Fund I (2021–2022)*, we concluded 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.” The findings presented in this report reinforce that conclusion and provide even stronger evidence of the transformative role that arts, culture and creativity can play in supporting climate action. As Ireland continues to address one of the defining challenges of our time, the *Creative Climate Action Fund II* further demonstrated that creative practice is not an adjunct to climate policy but is essential in achieving the cultural transformation, social inclusion and collective action required for a successful and just transition to a net-zero future.

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Louth Urban Food Sanctuary.
Image by Creative Ireland Louth



Bog Bothy
Image by Irish Architecture Foundation