

CASE  
STUDIES

Promoting a Just Transition  
in Europe and Worldwide:


How Civil Society  
and Trade Unions  
are Driving the Change

*Examples by the SOLIDAR Network and its allies*



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# Foreword



The year 2020 was yet another record year when it comes to climate change and environmental degradation: it was one of the three warmest years on record and it registered a further increase of greenhouse gas concentrations compared to 2019 - the year when they had reached new highs -, as well as the occurrence of extreme weather events such as major fires, extensive flooding and severe droughts all around the world.<sup>1</sup> People's lives, livelihoods, homes and jobs across the globe are, already today, critically exposed to danger. Marginalised and poor people everywhere are disproportionately affected by the **climate** and **environmental crises**, despite being the ones that least contribute to it.

To counter the climate and environmental emergency, **structural changes** to our economies and to the ways we live, produce, consume, travel and work are necessary and urgent. However, we must also ensure that such restructuring is managed in a way that does not aggravate social inequalities and economic hardships, push people out of work and in so doing pile the costs of the transition on the poorest and most marginalised. Moreover, a transition to sustainable economies must be strongly supported by communities and workers. But how to combine environmental and social justice? When does a transition to climate-neutral societies become beneficial to all? What would make it a *just*, fair and inclusive transition?

Contrary to widespread belief, acting *now* for the planet is not incompatible with acting **for people**. They are essentially two sides of the same coin. Climate and environmental actions do not by default constitute a death sentence for sectors, regions or communities. On the contrary, they offer an opportunity for local and national **development and innovation**, for improving local environments, economies and jobs. It is a chance to make sure that the most developed countries and the richest companies take responsibility for their disproportionate impact on global climate change. Fighting the climate and

<sup>1</sup> <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/2020-was-one-of-three-warmest-years-record>

environmental crises now can help build a more equal, resilient, prosperous and thriving world for all. Change is coming, whether we like or not, and how dramatic and profound it will be depends on what we do *today*.

The term “just transition” was coined by the international **labour movement** and was first used to define the reconciliation between the need to protect the environment and ensuring that workers have decent jobs. Already in 2006, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) launched a study on the impact of climate change on jobs. In 2015, the international trade union movement succeeded in including the concept of just transition in the negotiations leading to the Paris Agreement, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) published **implementation guidelines**<sup>2</sup>, this way becoming one of the major proponents of the notion of just transition. The ILO's vision of a just transition is a systemic and whole of economy approach to sustainability, which includes both measures to reduce the impact of job losses and industry phaseout on workers and communities, as well as measures to produce new, green and decent jobs, sectors and healthy communities<sup>3</sup>.

For us at SOLIDAR, acting for a **just transition** means intertwining and advancing both the social and the environmental agendas. We define a “socially just transition” as the guarantee that the transformation processes and drastic structural adjustments that are needed to meet the climate emergency are being implemented taking the **rights and needs** of affected communities into consideration. To be just, the green transition must have a **strong social dimension**, and social and environmental goals must be recognised as equal and mutually reinforcing. Measures for a just transition must be seen as integral to the success of climate policy and implemented through a broad range of initiatives by multiple actors, across different sectors and mainstreamed into all policy areas.

Processes of **social and civil dialogue** are of paramount importance to ensure a just transition. Trade unions, civil society organisations and social movements in Europe and worldwide are bringing indispensable contributions to the fight against climate change and environmental degradation by adopting and promoting sustainable practices, developing research on climate-related issues, informing citizens and workers, and engaging in advocacy actions that target legislators and companies. They have developed relevant knowledge and expertise and should therefore have the opportunity to engage with institutional actors and shape discussions and decisions on social and climate policies, be it at international, European, national or other levels. Now, it is time for decision-makers everywhere to create the conditions for the meaningful and institutionalised **involvement of civil society**.

As progressives, this is our time. The political project of achieving social justice and sustainability through a just transition is the grand narrative that we should rally behind. The future of our societies depends on it.

**Mikael Leyi, SOLIDAR Secretary General**

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_432859.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf>

## ABOUT SOLIDAR

SOLIDAR is a European Network of more than 50 Civil Society Organisations gathering several millions of citizens throughout Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the values of its members to the European Union and to international institutions and organisations across three main policy areas: social affairs, international cooperation and lifelong learning. The network is brought together by its shared values of solidarity, equality and participation.

SOLIDAR works mainly in cooperation with progressive civil society, labour movement organisations and progressive parties. SOLIDAR is a member of *Social Platform* (the European platform of social NGOs), *CONCORD* (EU NGO Confederation for Relief and Development) and *Lifelong Learning Platform* (European Civil Society for Education).

## SOLIDAR MEMBERS



# Introduction

The following study stems from SOLIDAR's growing interest in engaging with the topic of ensuring a socially Just Transition to **climate neutrality**. At the end of 2020, the SOLIDAR network developed a new multiannual strategy for the platform, one that aims to place social justice and Just Transition at the centre of European and international policies and recovery strategies. Then, in the framework of its renewed mission, SOLIDAR kicked-off a **mapping exercise** that attempted to identify the key concepts, main policies and existing initiatives linked to a Just Transition. This publication is a result and a consequence of that exercise.

Early on in our analysis, it became evident that the contribution of the **civil society** sector, in particular social NGOs, to climate action and to ensuring a Just Transition to climate neutrality is not sufficiently taken into consideration in the literature on the matter. Social NGOs' views on climate and environmental issues are even less frequently the object of decision-makers' attention. Policies and strategies for a green transition are considered a prerogative of environmental and climate actors, and the latter are often excluded from discussions on social matters. In other words, environmental, climate and social NGOs are placed in a **system of silos** that hinders meaningful exchanges among them and prevents from contributing to decisions on a socially Just green Transition in Europe and worldwide.

This study aims to challenge this system of silos by providing examples of contributions made by trade unions and social movements to the creation of environmentally sustainable, fair and inclusive societies. By adopting positive behaviours, organising life-saving support to communities across the world, sharing their knowledge and practices, researching issues, promoting sustainable development models and much more, civil society organisations all over the world combine and reconcile environmental *and* social objectives, this way proving that fighting for both **climate and social justice** is possible.

This publication is addressed to both decision-makers and members of civil society. The first section consists of a snapshot of the European Union policies connected to a Just Transition and aims to inform members and partners of SOLIDAR who wish to engage in EU- and national-level decision-making processes. The second part showcases initiatives designed and implemented by members and partners of SOLIDAR at a local, national, European and international level. Our hope is that organisations will feel

inspired by the projects and activities presented in this publication and decision-makers will start to regard social NGOs as relevant stakeholders in the debate around a Just Transition and its implementation.

The list of organisations whose work is showcased in this study consists mainly of social NGOs and trade unions. They operate in Serbia, Italy, Spain, Sweden, as well as at European and international level. The study also contains an example of how environmental NGOs are adding a social component to their work and focusing on a socially Just Transition. This list is far from being exhaustive and there are many more social actors working for a Just Transition than the ones we mentioned here. This study is less of a comprehensive coverage and more of a **celebration of the diversity** of activities, projects and initiatives for sustainable development that social organisations undertake.

## The Policy Landscape: the European Union and a Just Transition

The legally binding international treaty on climate change known as Paris Agreement, adopted at the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) in December 2015, requires that national governments outline and communicate post-2020 national climate plans that include **just transition measures**. The treaty speaks of

*“Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”<sup>4</sup>*

According to a scorecard by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), only 8% of the enhanced National Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted by 79 governments before April 2021 include **Just Transition plans**.<sup>5</sup> With its recovery package that includes a Just Transition Fund, ITUC lists the European Union (EU) among the countries (or, in this case, a union of countries) with the most credible Just Transition plans.<sup>6</sup>

Over the past several years, the European Union has taken a leading role in coordinating the greening of the Union’s economy and the efforts of its Member States to combat climate change. The European Green Deal, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the reform of the European Semester into a sustainable development tool, are all expressions of the EU’s intention “to put people, their health and the planet at the centre stage of economic policy” and “(...) build an economy that works for people and the planet.”<sup>7</sup>

The concept of Just Transition is at the very core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. The Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) embody the understanding of the interrelations between social, environmental and economic policies and promote a development model that respects planetary boundaries and leaves no-one behind. The EU and its Member States have been key players in the SDGs negotiations and are committed to its implementation through domestic and external policies.

<sup>4</sup> [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ituc-csi.org/scorecards-ndcs>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ituc-csi.org/governments-fail-paris-agreement?msdyntrid=35YVFYkNr2bY-ZKNXwAnqng6MLs8sBIGi\\_IL9bD19wc](https://www.ituc-csi.org/governments-fail-paris-agreement?msdyntrid=35YVFYkNr2bY-ZKNXwAnqng6MLs8sBIGi_IL9bD19wc)

<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/semester\\_sdgs.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/semester_sdgs.pdf)

## THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

Presented by the European Commission (EC) in December 2019, the European Green Deal (EGD) is a strategy that sets out how the EU aims to become a **climate-neutral continent** by 2050, safeguard biodiversity, establish a circular economy and eliminate pollution in the Union. It also commits the EU to becoming a global leader in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation, by pursuing a “green deal diplomacy” - including through trade and development funding - focused on convincing and supporting international partners to take on their share of promoting more sustainable development.

While outlining a response to the climate emergency, the EC mentions that

*“(...) this transition must be just and inclusive. It must put people first, and pay attention to the regions, industries and workers who will face the greatest challenges.”<sup>8</sup>*

The concept of just transition appears mainly in the section on “Mainstreaming sustainability in all EU policies” of the EC Communication on the European Green Deal. While it is mentioned that *“All EU actions and policies should pull together to help the EU achieve a successful and just transition towards a sustainable future”*, references to a just transition appear there mainly in terms of financial support to overcome the economic and social costs of the green transition in the most vulnerable coal and carbon-intensive regions of the EU.

In January 2020, as part of the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan (SEIP), which is the investment pillar of the Green Deal, the European Commission presented a Just Transition Mechanism (JTM). The Recovery Package proposed by the EC in May 2020 further strengthened it. While the SEIP caters for funding for all regions, the JTM helps mobilise a total investment of **at least 150 billion €** over the period 2021-2027 to support the economic diversification and reconversion of the regions most affected by

<sup>8</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640&from=ET>

the transition. This includes investing in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, creation of new firms, research and innovation, environmental rehabilitation, clean energy, up- and reskilling of workers, job-search assistance and active inclusion of job seekers programmes.<sup>9</sup> Funding under the JTM comes from the EU budget (the **Just Transition Fund**), co-financing from Member States as well as contributions from InvestEU and the European Investment Bank (EIB). In June 2020, the EC launched the Just Transition Platform<sup>10</sup> (JTP) to help Member States produce their **Territorial Just Transition Plans** (TJTTPs) and access funding from the JTM.

While the provision of financial support to the regions most affected by climate action is considered as the main way to ensure a socially just green transition in the EU, the EGD also mentions “pro-active re-skilling and upskilling” as the main tool “necessary to reap the benefits of the ecological transition”. Aside from this, the EC Communication does not include references to inequalities and only acknowledges some social rights and measures, such as fostering an active citizens’ and social dialogue, reducing energy poverty, renovation of social housing and improving public transport, in a disconnected way and without making clear links between them and a just transition.


Negotiations among EU institutions on several of the initiatives proposed under the European Green Deal are still ongoing. A few days before the finalisation of this publication, on 19 May 2021, the European Parliament (EP) adopted the Just Transition Fund (JTF), endorsing the agreement reached with the Council in December 2020 for 17.5 billion €.

## THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

Proclaimed at the Gothenburg Summit in 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) sets out 20 rights and guiding principles towards a **strong social Europe** that is fair, inclusive and full of opportunities. The document constitutes a reference framework to drive reforms at national level and serves as a guide for a renewed process of progress towards better working and living conditions in the EU. While the EPSR does not explicitly acknowledge the two-way relationship between social inequalities and environmental challenges, the introductory part of the EC Communication on the EGD states that the EPSR *“will guide action in ensuring that no one is left behind”<sup>11</sup>*.

In January 2020, the EC published the Communication “A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions”<sup>12</sup>, which described the challenges of climate action, digitalisation and demographic change, and aimed to prepare the way for an Action Plan to implement the 20 principles of the EPSR. In the preface to the

<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/just-transition-mechanism/just-transition-funding-sources\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/just-transition-mechanism/just-transition-funding-sources_en)  
<sup>10</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/just-transition-mechanism/just-transition-platform\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/just-transition-mechanism/just-transition-platform_en)  
<sup>11</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640&from=ET>  
<sup>12</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs\\_20\\_49](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_20_49)



document, EC President Ursula von der Leyen commented that “*People care about the future of our children and our society, and about fairness and equality in every sense of the word*”. The EC released the EPSR Action Plan in March 2021. Despite a promising title, “A Strong Social Europe for just transitions and recovery”, and the fact that policy agendas like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the EGD are mentioned throughout the text, the Action Plan makes only few clear interlinkages between social rights and environmental challenges.

The green transition appears mainly under the heading “skills and equality” of the Action Plan. Although a strong focus is put on education with the aim of improving skills for the green transition, the plan does not specify which skills are needed for people to face the transition and the issue of green skills is not accompanied by targets or concrete initiatives, leaving these words rather non-committal.<sup>13</sup> Some of the upcoming actions by the EC in the framework of the Action Plan have a “just transition” element, such as updating the new Industrial Strategy for Europe, a Council Recommendation on Minimum Income and a Council Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability.

## THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

Established in 2010, the European Semester is the annual tool through which EU Member States coordinate their domestic socioeconomic policies. Every November, to mark the beginning of a new European Semester cycle, the EC releases an Annual Growth Survey (AGS) as part of the Autumn Package, which outlines the general economic and social policy priorities for the EU for the following year. These priorities form the basis for the policy recommendations addressed to each Member State at the end of the Semester cycle. The European Semester Autumn Package published in December 2019, ahead of the 2020 European Semester cycle, showed a stronger focus on sustainability and a growth model that works for people and the planet.

In the Autumn package for the 2020 cycle, the title of the AGS was changed to Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy (ASGS). With the SDGs said to be at the heart of the EU’s policy making, the ASGS for 2020 focused on four main priorities: environmental sustainability, productivity gains, fairness and macro-economic stability. Moreover, each country report now includes an Annex analysing the country’s performance in meeting the SDGs. The ASGS for 2021 was launched in September 2020 and contains what the EC

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.solidar.org/en/publications/briefing-paper-98-action-plan-on-the-european-pillar-of-social-rights>

calls a “broader narrative”. Although the four priorities remain the same, the importance of fairness and social wellbeing overall has become smaller compared to economic priorities and the green and digital transitions. The ASGS introduces seven European “flagship areas” on which Member States are supposed to base their Recovery and Resilience Plans. These mainly encourage Member States to invest in the green and digital transition, but neglect the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic.<sup>14</sup>

## THE EU SOCIAL TAXONOMY

To deliver on the aims of the EGD and on its climate targets for 2030 and 2050, the EU must ensure that investment, be it public or private, goes into projects and activities that are truly sustainable. For this reason, it created an EU taxonomy, a common classification system to determine if an economic activity is environmentally sustainable based on **harmonised EU criteria**. To qualify as green, an investment would need to contribute to at least one of six environmental objectives: climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, water, circular economy, pollution control, and biodiversity. The taxonomy for all six objectives will be completed by end 2021 and the EC will also explore how it can be used in other contexts, such as in the framework of the EGD by the public sector.

A permanent Platform on sustainable finance composed of experts from across the economy and civil society is tasked with advising the EC on further developing the EU taxonomy and improving its usability. As part of its Platform, the EC has formed working groups, including one that aims to explore building a Social Taxonomy. Subgroup 4 on Social Taxonomy advises the EC on extending the taxonomy to social objectives and compliance with minimum social safeguards. This shows that social objectives are increasingly acknowledged as a key element of sustainable investing.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.solidar.org/en/publications/briefing-paper-96-sdgs-and-the-european-semester>

# Just Transition in action

## Local and national case studies in Europe



### ASSOCIAZIONE RICREATIVA E CULTURALE ITALIANA (ARCI) – PROMOTING HIGHER ENVIRONMENTAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS AMONG ITS MEMBERS



Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana (ARCI) is one of the largest associations for cultural and social progress in Italy. Established in 1957 as a network for the defence and development of “houses of the people” and recreational clubs, many of which were closed or expropriated during the fascist era, today ARCI has over a million members organised in more than 4400 branches at the local level across Italy. These include clubs or “circoli”, cultural associations, youth organisations and mutual aid societies. ARCI stands for and actively promotes democratic values, peace, equality, solidarity, free access to culture, social justice and freedom of association. The network implements inclusive social and cultural actions and activities for all, with particular attention to those in disadvantaged economic, social and cultural conditions.



In February 2020, ARCI Firenze, the member organisation of ARCI in Florence, Italy, launched a call for project proposals titled “Climate Impact - Towards 2021”. The call urged the 250 clubs that are part of ARCI Firenze to present proposals for projects aiming to **reduce their impact** on the

environment. To be eligible for the grant, projects had to fall into one of the following categories:

1. Replacement of disposable catering products with ceramic, glass, steel or otherwise washable, reusable or biodegradable ones.
2. Plant trees in green areas owned or managed by the association.
3. Install a photovoltaic or thermal system or perform insulation works on the headquarters building of the association.
4. Purchase bins or waste collection systems.
5. Purchase of glass bottles or installation of fountains for dispensing water.

ARCI Firenze also focused on improving the ethical profile of its members’ **purchasing choices**. It offered its clubs and individual members a free-of-charge service providing personalised advice on their existing contract with an electricity and/or gas supplier, with the aim of highlighting any hidden costs and undue charges, and the chance to join an energy purchasing group, this way giving customers the guarantee to always benefit from the best conditions on the market. Around 50 out of the







250 clubs of ARCI Firenze currently belong to the buying group.

ARCI Firenze's initiatives have the objective of ensuring greater coherence and alignment between the values of the network and the practices and daily choices of its clubs and other members. They demonstrated that, even in an organizational context based on voluntary work, it is possible to strive for **higher environmental and ethical standards**, as well as to pursue affordability. By bringing the clubs together, the network facilitated a valuable exchange on the identification of renewable energy suppliers and provided the opportunity to learn from each other.

The non-elitist characterization of ARCI clubs creates a favourable context for the diffusion of values and practices to be assumed also on an **individual level**. By learning how to better manage the choices of the club, many volunteers became aware of the importance of lowering their own impact on the environment. Moreover, they realised that it is possible to adapt one's standards without falling into technicalities and being discouraged by the complexity of the bills and the lack of clarity of the commercial offers of the energy companies. The ecological transition does not necessarily have to diverge from the working classes and can be - with forms of accompaniment - made "your own" and acquired by all.



**Further information:**

[\*ARCI Firenze's call for projects\*](#) (in Italian)

[\*ARCI Firenze's energy purchasing group\*](#) (in Italian)

**LIGA ESPAÑOLA DE LA EDUCACIÓN Y LA CULTURA POPULAR – PROMOTING AGROECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AMONG TEACHERS AND SOCIAL EDUCATORS**



Liga Española de la Educación y la Cultura Popular is an independent and secular NGO funded in Spain in 1986. It is formed by a network of volunteers and professionals who provide social, educational, care and assistance services to promote civic education for young people and adults based on democratic values, Human Rights and social solidarity.

[www.ligaeducacion.org](http://www.ligaeducacion.org)

[@Ligaeducacion](https://www.facebook.com/Ligaeducacion)

[@LigaEducacion](https://twitter.com/LigaEducacion)

Now in its third edition, "Aulas con sabor a tierra. Aprende disfrutando del huerto" (Classrooms with a taste of earth. Learn while gardening) is an **educational project** run by La Liga Española de la Educación y la Cultura Popular and other partners since 2018. It consists of a training course for students at the University of Valladolid, in northwest Spain, with career aspirations in the fields of Early Childhood Education, Primary School Education and Social Education. This is because, as future teachers and social educators, they will act as multipliers in and outside of the classroom.

The aim of the training course is to promote **agroecological knowledge** and food sovereignty, which is defined as people's right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. The course seeks to spark reflections on a personal, social and professional level and looks at the educational role of **teachers and social educators** to generate transformations towards more sustainable societies. It provides participants with relevant knowledge and key competences for global citizenship, such as the capacity and disposition to take constructive action toward sustainable development and collective well-being.

This is done through both theoretical learning and practical work in **vegetable gardens**. Students have to learn and experience the cycle of the garden and its development and implementation. They learn about issues such as ethical purchasing, fair trade, responsible consumption,





the Sustainable Development Goals, inequalities, distribution of wealth, and more. The training course was developed following international guidelines such as the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, national guidelines such as the Environmental Education Action Plan for Sustainability in Spain 2020-2025 (PAEAS) and the Rural DEAR Agenda, which includes a model for Global Citizenship Education in rural areas in Europe.

Classrooms with a taste of earth 3.0 includes opening the project up to the broader public, with the aim to make the process visible and show the students' work via a food sovereignty blog. Online materials have also been developed to spread information about the value of food sovereignty and agroecology and to promote the development of an ecological consciousness.



**Further information:**

[Aulas con sabor a tierra. Aprende disfrutando del huerto training course](#) (in Spanish)



**INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (IDC) – SUPPORTING SMALL FARMERS AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES**



Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC) is a Serbian non-profit organisation dedicated to the social and economic inclusion of less privileged categories of the population and the protection of their human rights. It supports the most vulnerable social groups, often living below the poverty line, by enabling respect and protection of human rights, innovative socio-economic solutions, and building a just and responsible society that respects diversity and allows equal opportunities. IDC's programs include social assistance programs, retraining, additional training, active job search, development of social services in the community, programs for starting a business and seminars.



In Serbia, 75% of registered farms are small, family-owned agricultural households that cultivate less than five hectares of land. They face a number of challenges on the market: their estates are further divided into several small lots, they do not have storage and processing capacity, they often lack knowledge and skills and are forced to grow different agricultural products every year due to the instability of the prices.

To support small and medium-sized agricultural producers from rural areas of Serbia, in 2016 Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC) initiated and founded the **social enterprise** Agro Iris and its brand Zadruga. Agro Iris offers a business cooperation to small agricultural households and the stable purchase of their products. It focuses primarily on the production and sale of dried fruit such as dry plums, dry pear and apple chips under the brand Zadruga ("Cooperative" in Serbian). Agricultural households provide the high-quality raw materials, labour and energy, while the social enterprise arranges mobile dryers for drying their fruit, defines the process of production, final product processing, product packaging, marketing, placement and other actions necessary to the production and sale processes. The products have a home-made character and they differ qualitatively from similar industrial products, with no use of additional sweeteners, flavourings and additives.




Agro Iris redistributes up to 70% of the profit from the sale of the products to its subcontractors – agricultural households. Most of the farmers who are part of the cooperative earn as much as three times more money than they would have earned by just selling raw products on the market. With 22 subcontractors, Agro Iris ensures higher and more **sustainable income** for more than 100 people in rural areas, who can benefit from better living conditions. In addition, the final processing and packaging of the products is carried out by the company “Novitas Consult”, which is dedicated to the professional rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities.

Agro Iris and its brand Zadruga were created within the project “Rural development after floods” implemented by ASB Austria and IDC and supported by the Austrian Development Agency and the city of Sabac. Agro Iris is currently looking for investments and non-financial support for the development of new products, such as beetroot chips, homemade dried apricot and dried tomatoes in olive oil, scaling up to other markets outside of Serbia and engaging a few more family households and young farmers in the cooperative.



**Further information:**  
[Agro Iris website](#)

## OLOF PALME INTERNATIONAL CENTER (OPC) – WHY EVERYONE WHO LOVES JUSTICE NEEDS TO BECOME A CLIMATE ACTIVIST

 The Olof Palme International Center (OPC) is the Swedish labour movement’s umbrella organisation for international solidarity and advocacy. It has 27 member organisations working with social change, trade unionism and political organisation. OPC works globally for democracy, human rights, peace and social justice, in the spirit of Olof Palme. The Center currently supports 170 local and international progressive civil-society organisations, unions and parties in 30 countries.

 [www.palmecenter.se](http://www.palmecenter.se)  [@Palmecenter](https://twitter.com/Palmecenter)  
 [@olofpalmeinternationalcenter](https://www.facebook.com/olofpalmeinternationalcenter)

The Olof Palme International Center (OPC) has a great interest on the issue of Just Transition and is currently working on it from several fronts. Firstly, the Center follows closely and cooperates with the Climate Agenda initiative, an independent project that is developing a union-backed action plan for a Just Transition in Sweden. This process is taking place in three steps:

- Analyse what each sector of the economy needs to do to lower their carbon emissions, in order for the country to be in line with the Paris agreement, arriving at an action plan based on solid data.
- Secure support for this action plan through

outreach to political parties, the business sector and civil society.

- Communication and dialogue with workers and the public. This may take the form of trainings, possibly through a network of green union representatives, and will be done in collaboration with unions and actors involved in workers’ education.

Secondly, OPC is looking to provide increasing **support to partner organisations** around the world in their work for a Just Transition. In line with this objective, OPC has developed a **capacity-building workshop and materials** that have advocacy, policy development and alliance-building for Just Transition as central topics. In September 2020, OPC held a training course on a Just Transition and the climate and environmental crisis titled “Why everyone who loves justice needs to become a climate activist”. Participants came from member organisations of OPC and were already active in development cooperation projects.

The training aimed to strengthen the understanding of the crises and look at solutions. It covered four main areas:

- What is happening to the climate and to life on Earth – an honest look at the reality of the situation we find ourselves in.
- What it means for the things our movement is working so hard to achieve today; how the planetary crises affect the work for social and economic justice.
- How can we protect the Earth and build a more equal society at the same time? Just Transition and a Green New Deal.
- What role can participants in progressive social movements play in creating the change

that is needed? How can we get started and contribute to this historic shift?

The training course is viewed as a positive model and has been adopted by SOLIDAR to engage in discussions with its member organisations on Just Transition.



**Further information:**

[OPC’s brochure Climate policy for Just Transition](#)  
 Video [“What is a Just Transition?”](#)  
 Video [“Why engage for a Just Transition?”](#)  
 Video [“What’s the role of women in a Just Transition?”](#)



# Just Transition in action

## Europe-wide case studies



### EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC) – GETTING WORKERS READY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) was founded in 1973 to represent and promote workers' interests at European level. The ETUC is the voice of workers and represents 45 million members from 90 trade union organisations in 38 European countries, plus 10 European Trade Union Federations. It works for a Europe with a strong social dimension, a Social Europe, which focuses on workers' interests and well-being. The ETUC defends fundamental social values such as solidarity, equality and cohesion.



The publication “**Adaptation to Climate Change and the world of work: A Guide for Trade Unions**” was developed by the ETUC in 2020 in response to the need for research on the impact of climate change and its consequences on the **world of work**. Climate change **adaptation** means “anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimize the damage they can cause or taking advantage of opportunities that may arise”<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation_en)

ETUC's guide has three main objectives:

1. To inform European trade unions about the foreseeable consequences of climate change on the world of work;
2. To prepare trade unions to play an active role in the design and implementation of national **strategies for adaptation**;
3. To bring adaptation to climate change on the agenda of industrial relations by developing a toolkit for trade unions.

The guide includes an analysis of the impact and consequences of climate change on different European regions, sectors and workers, a set of **recommendations** aiming to strengthen the contribution of social partners to the development of adaptation strategies at various levels, and examples of successful trade union involvement in debates on adaptation. Its content is based on input by national trade union confederations from 18 countries and sectoral organisations such as the European Public Service Union (EPSU) and IndustriAll, as well as on the views of experts collected during workshops in different countries. In addition to the guide, the ETUC developed a **toolkit** that contains infographics, videos and banners to be used by trade unions for national-level awareness-raising actions.

ETUC's research shows that, when it comes to adaptation to climate change, there is **no one size fits all solution**. The changes brought by climate change vary greatly from one region to another and the needs for adaptation depend very much on the sectoral and geographical reality. This requires a **bottom-up approach** and the **engagement of all stakeholders** to find adequate answers. Workers are the best placed to identify the challenges and

risks that climate change poses to their work and working conditions. As a result, Social Partners are a key element of the new EU Adaptation Strategy, which should promote and monitor the involvement of trade unions at all stages of the process of design and implementation of adaptation policies in the different sectors and in all countries. The ETUC hopes that this publication will serve as the main guiding tool for trade unions and other stakeholders such as NGOs, employers and regional governments, to act in the field of adaptation.

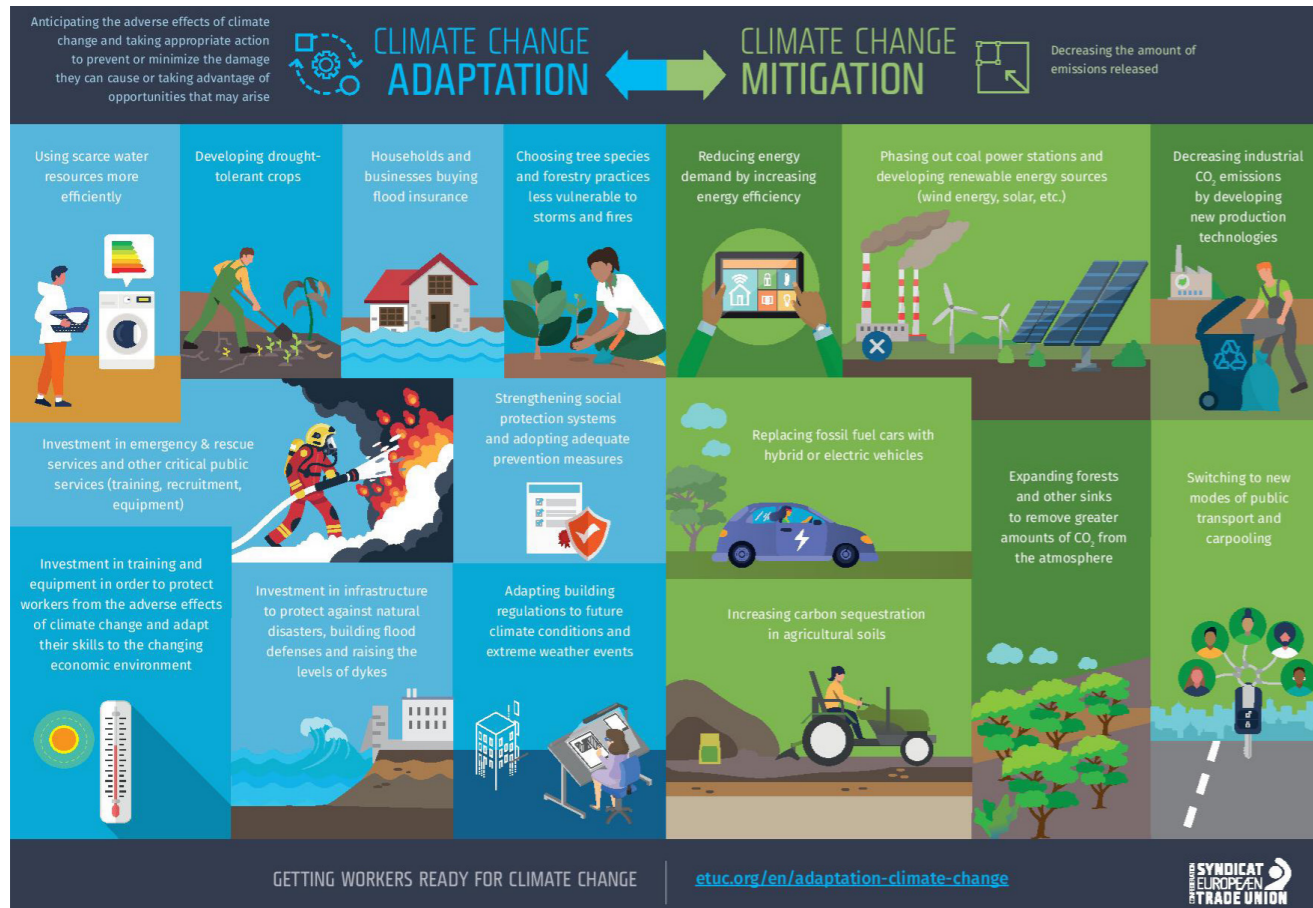


**Further information:**

*[Adaptation to Climate Change and the world of work: A Guide for Trade Unions](#) (Available in 10 languages)*

*[Dedicated toolkits for trade unions](#) (Available in 10 languages)*

*[A video clip explaining the impact of Climate Change on the world of work](#) (Available with subtitles in 10 different languages)*



**FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE STUDIES (FEPS) – PLACING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AT THE HEART OF JUST TRANSITION**


 The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) is the think tank of the progressive political family at EU level. Its mission is to develop innovative research, policy advice, training and debates to inspire and inform progressive politics and policies across Europe. It operates as hub for thinking to facilitate the emergence of progressive answers to the challenges that Europe faces today. FEPS benefits from a network of 68 member organisations active in the promotion of progressive values and a network of partners that includes renowned universities, scholars, policymakers and activists.

[www.feps-europe.eu](http://www.feps-europe.eu)
 [@FEPSEurope](https://www.facebook.com/FEPSEurope)
 [@FEPS\\_Europe](https://twitter.com/FEPS_Europe)

One of the greatest challenges facing decision makers over the coming decade will be to implement transformative climate action in such a way that it benefits from lasting **public support** and realises its long-term objectives without disruption or delay. FEPS' publication "**The People's Transition: Community-led Development for Climate Justice**" aims to showcase an approach to climate action that avoids issues of social resistance to climate measures by putting fairness at the heart of policy-making.

**Rural communities** are key players in the green transition and garnering wider support from the farming community is paramount to the success of climate action. Based on extensive research and engagements with farmers and rural communities in Ireland on the future of their livelihoods and climate change, FEPS' report presents "The People's Transition", an approach to climate action that puts communities and local development at the heart of Just Transition. According to this model, social approval can only be achieved through climate action that seeks to address **local development** needs and priorities as a primary objective.

Successfully designed climate action must be co-created with local communities. "The People's Transition" model consists in the formation of **bottom-up strategies** for climate action that seek to share benefits widely, enhance livelihood options and improve standards of living. It is a participative decision-making model that engages communities on their terms and addresses local needs and priorities with solutions that will both enhance community well-being and drive down emissions or build adaptive capacity. If fully implemented, it would give real power and resources to communities to determine their own future, while being supported by the necessary expertise to ensure that the actions undertaken to reach that future are of benefit to a stable climate.

- In the report, significant emphasis is placed on:
- the promotion of trust between communities and decision makers;
  - the importance of community capacity building;
  - the valuing, and incorporation, of local knowledge and expertise into climate solutions.

The objective is that communities are assured of having their **voices heard** and learn to have faith in a bottom-up approach to policy making, confident that climate action will respond to their needs, rather than make their lives more difficult. This research model aims to inform the development of the **Climate Pact**, the bottom-up component of the European Green Deal, which seeks to give everyone a voice and a space in which to design new climate actions, share information, launch grassroots activities and showcase solutions that others can follow.



**Further information:**

- [The People's Transition: Community-led development for Climate Justice](#)
- [Policy Brief - The People's Transition: Community-led Development for Climate Justice](#)
- [Videos and interviews on Local Wealth Building](#)



# The People's Transition:

## Community-led Development for Climate Justice



## POUR LA SOLIDARITÉ (PLS) – REDUCING FOOD WASTE AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Founded in 2002, Pour la Solidarité (PLS) is an independent European think & do tank committed

to promoting solidarity and sustainability in Europe. PLS takes action to defend and strengthen the European Social Model, which consists of a subtle balance between economic development and social justice, and operates in five main fields: Social affairs; Corporate Social Responsibility & Diversity; Sustainable Development; Citizen Participation and Social economy. PLS has experience in research, consulting, coordination of European projects and event organisation. It uses its expertise to support companies, public authorities and civil society, guided by the motto: 'Understand to Act'.

 [www.pourlasolidarite.eu](http://www.pourlasolidarite.eu)

 [@PLSOLIDARITE](https://www.facebook.com/PLSOLIDARITE)

 [@PLS\\_NEWS](https://twitter.com/PLS_NEWS)

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), one-third of the world's food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted each year, amounting to 1.3 billion tons of food. At the same time, a Eurostat report from 2019 shows that 6,7% of the population in the European Union

cannot afford a quality meal every other day. There is an urgent need to rethink the way we produce and consume, so that every human being can afford to eat and have access to **quality food**.

From an environmental and climate point of view, the consequences of **food waste** are considerable: soil degradation, declining soil fertility, excessive water use, seabed degradation and overfishing have severely reduced our natural resources and their ability to produce food. According to the FAO, food wastage ranks as the third top emitter of greenhouse gas after the USA and China. Produced but uneaten food occupies almost 1.4 billion hectares of land, which represents close to 30% of the world's agricultural land area.

Pour la Solidarité, together with four other organisations from Belgium (Asbl Travie) and France (Handicap Travail Solidarité - HTS, Angers University, Sesame Autisme 44), launched the "**SolidFoodWaste**" project, a European partnership that aims to develop a national food waste reduction chain by upgrading bread, fruits



and vegetables, while creating jobs for people with major disabilities. SoliFoodWaste has the following objectives:

- protect the environment and fight against food waste by reusing unsold bread, fruits and vegetables;
- create and maintain jobs for people with disabilities;
- create an economically viable and socially responsible unsold goods processing structure;
- strengthen the economic viability of structures for integration through work with a new collaborative channel;
- raise awareness of anti-waste and disability among the general public and professionals.

SoliFoodWaste is the first large-scale project combining circular economy with the professional integration of people with disabilities. A pilot project took place in the region of Nantes, in France, where they managed to centralise the collection, processing and resale of 600 tonnes of bread and 500 tonnes of unsold fruit and vegetables per year. This experience will be extended to

more than 65 national and European sites by 2030. It is estimated that the project will allow annual savings of 80 000T of bread, fruits and vegetables, 42,290T of CO2, 40,960 million litres of water and 6,932 hectares of crops. Moreover, 24 jobs will be created, including 8 for people with disabilities, and 40 in the provision of services from adapted companies and Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs). 5% of production will be reallocated to food aid NGOs and 1% of profits will be redistributed to NGOs in the field of disability or environment.



**Further information:**  
[SoliFoodWaste \(life-solifoodwaste.eu\)](http://life-solifoodwaste.eu)  
[Network implemented by the project](#)  
[Linkedin](#)



## WWF EUROPEAN POLICY OFFICE – ASSESSING LOCAL-LEVEL STRATEGIES FOR A JUST TRANSITION



WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. The WWF European Policy Office contributes to this mission by advocating for strong EU environmental policies on sustainable development, nature conservation, climate and energy, marine protection, sustainable finance and external action.

Office contributes to this mission by advocating for strong EU environmental policies on sustainable development, nature conservation, climate and energy, marine protection, sustainable finance and external action.



To access funding from the EU's Just Transition Fund and the other two pillars of the Just Transition Mechanism, EU Member States are required to produce a single country-wide **Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP)** or several region-specific TJTPs. These are local-level strategies that must be developed in public consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and local community representatives, and submitted to the European Commission. The WWF European Policy Office recently developed a framework for **assessing and comparing TJTPs** across Europe in order to ensure that they contribute to delivering a truly just transition and are in line with the EU's climate objectives.



TJTPs differ greatly from one another: they are closely linked to the reality of the territory and are developed on a different timescale. Countries also differ in the transparency of the process and availability of the plans. Nevertheless, the WWF European Policy Office identified a set of **unifying principles** for what a plan for a truly just transition looks like. To develop such principles, the organisation referred to the template annexed to the draft Just Transition Fund (JTF) Regulation, existing norms and legal requirements, climate and energy commitments of the EU as well as existing literature on just transition. They also consulted partner organisations and WWF national offices. The result of this work was a set of **10 principles** and 33 indicators, against which plans can be assessed.

The following step was the development of the **Territorial Just Transition Plan Scorecard**, a user-friendly online tool that allows to conduct a standardised assessment of a TJTP's quality and potential to deliver a just transition, compare the plan with ones from other regions and inform recommendations for its improvement. It is aimed at policy makers, municipalities, civil society and other partners involved in developing such plans and enables them to evaluate the quality of a plan from the early stages of the designing process by providing information about what makes a good plan. The initiative is EU-wide and intended to assess and influence TJTPs from any EU region where they are being developed. The scorecard web tool was only launched in February 2021, but it has already been used by civil society engaging in the development of plans.



Photo: Klearchos Kapoutsis / Flickr

The WWF European Policy Office believes that securing truly just transitions is pivotal to the success of the energy (and broader sustainability) transition. If the transitions exacerbate or even just fail to unlock opportunities to address existing inequalities, or if they create new ones, the public will not accept them and resistance will delay or even block the transitions needed altogether. Moreover, their initiative underlines (through the principles) that social and environmental goals are not fundamentally opposed, but rather are intertwined and interdependent, and that we need to deliver on ambitious climate and environment objectives in a socially just way to secure the transition.



**Further information:**

[\*Territorial Just Transition Plans: Build your scorecard\*](#)  
[\*Resources and early scorecard assessments\*](#)



# Just Transition in action

## Case studies from the Global South

### MOVIMIENTO POR LA PAZ (MPDL) – PROMOTING WOMEN’S RIGHTS THROUGH AGROECOLOGY



Movimiento por la Paz (MPDL) is an NGO active in the fields of social action and humanitarian aid and development. Independent, secular and progressive, MPDL was created in 1983 and works to achieve a fairer world for all, with full compliance with human rights, democratic governance, equality and solidarity. MPDL is active in Spain and in 11 other countries on different continents.



[www.mpd.org](http://www.mpd.org)



[@MovimientoPorLaPaz.MPDL](https://www.facebook.com/MovimientoPorLaPaz.MPDL)



[@movimientoxlpaz](https://twitter.com/movimientoxlpaz)

Movimiento por la Paz (MPDL) cooperates with the Fundación Entre Mujeres (FEM) and other community-based organisations to promote **rural women’s rights** through agroecology in Nicaragua. Since 1995, FEM has founded 8 cooperatives with one central coordinator in the Estelí department, whereby women’s economic and social development is advanced through agroecology, education, technical assistance and awareness raising on women’s rights.

Currently, MPDL and FEM are working on an initiative that aims to identify and measure the social function of the agroecological transition

from the perspective of rural women, meaning the variables and indicators that ensure that women’s rights to a dignified life, decent work and freedom from all kinds of violence are guaranteed in the context of the transition.

Their project is guided by the idea that “*Agroecology without women’s rights is just more of the same*”, and stems from the observation that the **agroecology movement** has too often ignored the women’s rights perspective in its work, despite the FAO considering “Human and Social values”, which includes addressing gender inequalities and women’s empowerment, as one of the 10 main elements of agroecology.

In November 2019, a first meeting took place with national and international organisations active in Nicaragua (FAO, Solidar Suisse, Horizon 3000, and others), during which the social aspects of the agroecological transition were debated. This event, financed by SOLIDAR, marked the start of the thought process that led to this initiative.

In April 2021, and with funds from the Generalitat Valenciana, MPDL and FEM started working jointly on the development of **indicators** related to women’s rights in agroecology that may in the future be incorporated in the FAO’s Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE) methodology at the national and regional levels.

The main activities in 2021 consist of the selection of 100 peasant women who have opted for an agroecological transition among the more than 420 who are part of the social fabric of FEM in 8 cooperatives and a Central of Cooperatives. After the presentation of the FAO TAPE methodology during a series of workshops, indicators that measure the dignified life of peasant women



in their transition process will be analysed and proposed. Comprehensive empowerment, leadership, balance in care tasks and farms, equal access to productive resources, decision-making, prevention of violence and healing of victims, among other topics, will be addressed. According to MPDL Nicaragua, *“Making the specific needs of peasant women visible within the agroecological movement is a first step in order to complete the transition in a just, non-exclusive way.”*



## UNION AID ABROAD – APHEDA – PROMOTING DECENT WORK FOR ENERGY SECTOR WORKERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA is the global justice organisation of the Australian union movement. APHEDA works to support movement-building through unions and social justice movements, primarily in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as in parts of Southern Africa and the Middle East. Its key areas of work are: trade union development and workers' rights, climate justice and energy democracy, migrant labour rights and feminist movement-building.



[www.apheda.org.au](http://www.apheda.org.au)



[@apheda](https://twitter.com/apheda)



[@UnionAidAbroadAPHEDA](https://www.facebook.com/UnionAidAbroadAPHEDA)

Since 2017, climate Justice, energy democracy and Just Transition have been a strategic focus of the work of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA, which has pioneered an **Energy Democracy program** by partnering with and strengthening the capacity of trade union movements in Southeast Asian countries, such as the Center for Labour and Social Studies (CLASS) in Nepal and the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), as well as by supporting the ITUC Asia-Pacific and Global Union Federations in the incorporation of climate justice-related issues across their sub-regional and regional work-plans.

In particular, the aim of APHEDA's Energy Democracy program is to support organised workers in fighting for **decent working conditions** in the electricity generation and construction material sector. More specifically, the program intends to ensure that:

- unions are equipped with basic knowledge on the science of the climate crisis and its negative impacts, as well as on the inter-relationship of neoliberal wealth accumulation and failure to reduce rising global temperatures;
- unions and the labour movement are aware of and assert their strategic role in the struggle for climate justice;
- trade union leaders possess basic knowledge of climate change, and of how awareness-raising among workers and advocacy for climate justice can be optimised, especially in the context of the new challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic;
- workers and unions are actively participating in the discourse on a Just Transition, as this affects their employment, livelihood and trade union organisation;
- unions develop an action plan on climate justice.

Moreover, and more generally, the program also aims to engage **policy makers** to ensure swift energy sector decarbonisation, introduce the concept of a just and equitable transition in the context of developing economies, including considering broader implications for women's rights and migrant workers, strengthen policy and increase other stakeholders' understanding of the electricity sector as a quality public service, including advocating for public and social ownership.

The main activities carried out in the context of the Energy Democracy program have included:

- Research studies on the working condition of workers in the energy sector
- Capacity building of union leaders in just the transition sector
- Training workers on labour law, workers' rights, and benefits
- Training on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and methods to improve OHS standards and organise workers.



## SOLIDAR SUISSE – MOVING TOWARDS JUST TRANSITION, ASIA PROGRAMME



Solidar Suisse is a Swiss development organisation with projects in Africa, Asia, Latin

America and South-eastern Europe. Together with its local partners, Solidar Suisse fights for decent work, social justice, participation in democratic processes and against extreme inequality worldwide. With foresight and ambition, it eliminates social wrongs and creates possibilities and prospects for disadvantaged people. Solidar Suisse currently puts solidarity into action in over 60 projects on four continents.



Solidar Suisse works in several Asian countries to promote decent work, occupational safety & health, and to fight child labour and exploitation. It has several projects, all on-going, involving:

- local NGOs, activists, and unions in the palm oil plantations in Malaysia;
- companies, unions, industry associations, and authorities in the leather industry in Bangladesh;
- local NGOs, international networks, and trade unions working on safe migration, brick kilns and the textile sector in Cambodia and Thailand;



Solidar Suisse - Usman Ghani

- as well as other networks, such as the Asian Monitor Resource Center (AMRC) and the Mekong Migration Network (MMN) working across the South-East Asia region.

Solidar Suisse's **Asia programme** takes a regional approach with a clear thematic focus on **decent work**. For Solidar Suisse, increased awareness and capacity allow more workers, especially women, to self-organise into democratic organisations and bargain for decent work. More workers in target Asian countries can, as a consequence, escape the worst forms of labour including child labour, forced labour and modern slavery, unpaid or underpaid work or particularly dangerous or health-damaging work.

Solidar Suisse is now starting to include Just Transition as an explicit strategic concept into its programmatic work. As a dual-mandate organisation working on the nexus of development collaboration and humanitarian aid, it already integrates a more **holistic approach** of social and environmental justice. One of the pillars of the Asia programme is to address the issue of intra-Asian migration, which is understood to be linked to the **destruction of livelihoods** through human overexploitation and climate change, and to fight for fair working conditions for migrant workers. Moreover, the programme also has the objective to raise awareness about the occupational health and safety (OHS) issues faced by workers due to **hazardous working conditions** related to the use of unsafe chemicals, asbestos, pesticides, as well as the outlook of future additional pressure linked to climate change and increased resource allocation conflicts.

The main activities of the programme include:

- Capacity building of trade unions in their respective sectors.
- Training workers on labour law, workers' rights and benefits, as well as on OHS and application to improve OHS standards.
- Sensitizing the Swiss and European public on the relation of individual customers' purchase decision and the living and working conditions in the countries of mass production as in Asia, thus identifying the systemic problems of an economic system based on the exploitation of people and nature: mass production and consumption, rock-bottom prices and the primacy of profit maximisation.
- Sensitising consumers, businesses, governments, international organisations, and the general public about the worst forms of labour, specifically by publishing reports and launching calls to action.
- Engaging directly with companies based in Switzerland with sourcing links to Asia on human rights issues and environmental impacts in their value chains, as well as engaging on these topics with International organisations (e.g. ILO) and Swiss authorities on ministerial level.
- Sensitising local authorities about their role in the elimination of the worst forms of labour.

Solidar Suisse has reported that the strategy to highlight the interlinkages between environmental threats - for instance, those related to the use of damaging chemicals in production chains or to the destruction of sources of livelihoods due to climate change - and intra-Asia migration and decent working conditions has proven effective in building regional alliances and connections



between networks to find a common solution to both environmental and decent work/social justice issues.

Moreover, Solidar Suisse's projects have resulted in the exposure and denunciation of the worst forms of labour in Asia, for instance in the brick kiln and the palm oil sectors, and have led to an increase in the number of organised workers and in the sensitization levels of workers regarding their labour and democratic rights.

Solidar Suisse highlights that the impact of local projects alone will not lead to the fulfilment of their vision, which is a just world free from exploitation

of people and nature. To achieve this, real change is needed in how and what the economy produces, in our consumption patterns, and in how our governments and the international community regulates economy and society.



**Further information:**

[\*Palm Oil – Green Hell for Workers\*](#)  
[\*Supporting Workers in the Leather Industry in Bangladesh\*](#)

## ASAMBLEA DE COOPERACION POR LA PAZ (ACPP) – MEDTOWN: CO-PRODUCING SOCIAL POLICIES IN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES



Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz

Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz (ACPP) is a non-profit, secular and independent NGO that defends democratic values and fights for social and economic justice. The work of ACPP points in a double yet really one direction: in impoverished countries, it promotes an autonomous and democratic development, in which respect for the environment is non-negotiable and of which women and men must be equally protagonists and beneficiaries; in Europe, ACPP fosters critical capacity with the intention of generating a critical mass among citizens who commit themselves to build a society that has global solidarity as a reference for the construction of a more just world.

[www.acpp.com](http://www.acpp.com)

[@ACPPasamblea](https://www.facebook.com/ACPPasamblea)

[@ACPPasamblea](https://twitter.com/ACPPasamblea)

Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz (ACPP) is working on the project **MedTOWN: Co-producing social policies with Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) actors** to fight poverty, inequality and social exclusion. This is a project implemented by 9 partners from 6 EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries (**Spain, Greece, Portugal, Palestine, Tunisia and Jordan**) and 9 strategic associate partners. The project is financed by the EU, with

86,5% of funding coming from the European Neighbourhood Instrument within the Cross Border Cooperation Programme “Mediterranean Basin” 2014-2020, and 13,5% from the project partners. The implementation of the project started in September 2019 and will be finalised by September 2023.

MedTOWN is a **social innovation project** based on the research and experimentation of a Social Solidarity Economy-based co-production model. It foresees the use of electronic public currencies for the provision of social services and financial aid to the most vulnerable groups in order to increase the socio-economic impacts and effectiveness of public policies and expenditures at the local level.

The overall aim of the project is to promote a **sustainable inclusive growth model** that will transform public services from unilateral providers to facilitators of more democratic participatory communities. The project is targeting a number of indicators, from the UN SDGs to the OECD Better Life Index and the Well Being Economy.

The project design involves **3 pillars of activities:**

- **Training and capacity building** on co-production initiatives, SSE principles and legal framework, regulatory framework of public contracts, sustainable development and circular economy models, types of complementary currencies (CCs), technology software and regulatory framework of electronic money. A dedicated training material will be developed for **community building & facilitation skills** (MedTOWN Facilitation Guide), in order to secure the engagement and participation of the local stakeholders (public services, SSE actors, citizens, economic

operators) in the development **and design of co-production initiatives that will be the Demonstrative Actions (DAs)** of the project in each project partner country.

- **Social experimentation through Action Research.** A group of researchers will be recruited in order to i) develop a Qualitative and Quantitative **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework of the socio-economic impacts** of the DAs, which will be further tested through the sub-granting of “pilot projects” and ii) to study, compare and provide policy recommendations for the improvement of the Legal Framework on public procurement with SSE actors, on the regulations of SSE and the use of CCs.
- **Open Policy Dialogue, Networking and development of Joint Partnerships** among all the participating actors (local authorities, policy makers, researchers, SSE actors,

vulnerable groups, NGO practitioners, etc) through the **MedTOWN Platform of Community of Practice**, which will host group discussion tables among researchers, policy makers and legal experts, online training sessions for facilitators, SSE actors and NGO practitioners, strategic conferences, study visits and exchanges, synergies and networking with other relative initiatives and projects.

Among the six Demonstrative Actions to be implemented, two will be focused on **climate action and environmental protection**. The first will take place in Palestine, in the Municipality Beni Zeid, with the instalment of a Local Waste Management System based on a circular economy model using a complementary currency. The second will take place in Lisbon, in Junta de Campolide in the Agroforest of Bela Flor, which will be used as an urban public space to regenerate active citizen participation as a



means to promote social inclusion and sustainable development through **permaculture** and the community of commons.

So far, ACPP reports that the greatest challenge in the implementation of the MEDtown project has been the limited knowledge of stakeholders on the concepts and practices of 'co-production' and 'complementary currencies, as well as the little trust of local public authorities to experiment with such practices. Nonetheless, the project has so far been successful in achieving a series of preliminary milestones, including:

- the creation of good quality training material on co-production, with the support of SSE actors, that is replicated in each participating country in their own language and needs.
- the development of a platform with a Community of Practice for knowledge sharing and for keeping people connected, that functions as a think-tank on co-production with the use of complementary currencies.
- the creation of a Training Module on Co-production - 'The phoenix journey' - led by the

experts' team from the Transition Network, which has been replicated in Spain, Portugal and Jordan and of a Facilitation Guide to help local trainers organize their training in their territories.

- the realisation of a legal feasibility study for the use of local currencies by local municipalities in Spain.
- the creation of a Social Business Incubator in Jordan and of a Community Agroforestry in Lisbon.



**Further information:**

- [Webpage of the MedTOWN project](#)
- [Webpage of MedTOWN's Community of Practice](#)
- [MedTOWN Facebook page](#)

**Support to local trainers on the organization of the National Workshops**



**ARCS CULTURE SOLIDALI**  
– 'ENTER': PROMOTING ACCESS  
CLEAN WATER IN RURAL AREAS  
IN CAMEROON



ARCS culture solidali is an NGO founded in Rome in 1985 by Arci, the largest secular association for social and cultural promotion in the Italian Third Sector. ARCS runs international cooperation activities through the involvement of communities and citizens in the widespread creation of relations and cooperation between territories and communities, the enhancement of civil aggregations, the building of networks of interest and the strengthening of democratic ownership. For the assertion of peace and human rights and the elimination of all forms of poverty, injustice and social inequality, ARCS practices: Education to world citizenship and peace; Cooperation, solidarity and international volunteering; Humanitarian aid and reception.

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ARCS Culture Solidali works on the project 'ENTER' - **Renewable energies** and adequate technologies to access **clean water in rural areas in Cameroon**. The project takes place in 3 municipalities in the West region of Cameroon: Dschang, Batcham and Fumbot. The initiative has

started in 2017 and it is ongoing, co-financed by AICS-Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. For its implementation, the project foresees a number of partners both in Italy and on site, such as the African Centre for Renewable Energy & Sustainable Technology (A.C.R.E.S.T.), the Association of African Engineers (AIA) and the Municipal Water and Energy Agency of Dschang Municipality (AMEE). ENTER is part of a wide-ranging program carried out by ARCS in Cameroon, in the priority area WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), started in 2012 and characterized by several actions.

ARCS presence in the Western region of Cameroon began with the story of a young boy from Bankondji, Serge Noubondieu, who completed his studies in Italy to become an engineer specialized in photovoltaic systems and got a job in the sector. The feeling for his friends and brothers living in Bankondji in extremely simple conditions and without drinking water, prompted Serge to seek funds to rehabilitate Bankondji's water system. With the help of ARCS, a first project was submitted to the European Union – Delegation in Yapundè, and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for co-financing.

Since 2012, the village of Bankondji has thus been transformed into a huge construction site and a fascinating social laboratory. As reported by the local inhabitants, until 2013, water was mainly recovered from more or less seasonal watercourses or from wells and springs, being therefore not suitable for safe domestic use in general and for food use in particular. A large part of the population suffered from waterborne diseases (parasitosis, amoebiasis, typhoid, etc.) that seriously affected especially children and the

most vulnerable ones. According to Cameroon government statistics, the rate of access to drinking water in rural areas is around 33%, and in the Western region (where Bankondji is located), the level of access to drinking water in rural areas is as low as 24%.

Even though ARCS found that many small aqueducts had been built by different organizations over time, sometimes these were of poor technical quality and often have not received adequate maintenance. The lack of such maintenance was mainly due to the lack of involvement of the local population in the design and management of the supply structures, together with the absence of adequate training for lasting self-management by locals. The management of water according to the regulations in force is in fact the responsibility of the municipal administrations, which however often manage very large and diverse territories. The contribution of the villagers therefore was identified by ARCS as indispensable to respond promptly to the various needs.

This is why, since the first intervention in the territory, ARCS has involved the local population as much as possible and in many different ways. This methodology of active and participatory training has fostered the process of ownership by the village, which was the key to the success and **sustainability** of the first project.

With the aim of **contributing to the improvement of the quality of life and public health** in the West Cameroon region by promoting access to clean water and renewable energy, the current ENTER project brings together the experiences acquired by ARCS in the country and wants to strengthen natural resource management skills

and increase the use of appropriate technologies in 20 pilot villages selected from the municipalities of Batcham, Dschang and Foumbot, creating a virtuous territorial dynamic involving sectorial enterprises, universities, municipal administrations and decentralized technical services, civil society organizations, traditional authorities, diasporas and local communities in Cameroon and Italy.

ENTER is designed to improve access to water through a strategy (**FoReGo - Formation, Rehabilitation and Governance**) based on three main components:

1. training of qualified technicians at municipal and village levels;
2. Implementation and rehabilitation of water systems using participatory methods;
3. Intervention at a governance level: support/creation of communal and drinking water committees and agencies.

The three components are implemented through the autonomous community organizations in the target villages: water management committees, teachers and students. The FoReGo strategy, moreover, aims to create an **endogenous strategic development model** with a high potential for replication.

The activities covered by the project include:

- research and development of the potabilization system through the production and dosing of sodium hypochlorite (OSEC).
- installation of 20 water supply systems equipped with drinking water purification systems drinking water purification systems.
- construction of a polytechnic building and training courses for young people.
- setting up an awareness-raising campaign in

the beneficiary villages,

- creation of 20 water management committees, supervised by AMEE and the Batcham municipality.

Some critical issues reported by ARCS in relation to the implementation of these activities include some bureaucratic complications and delays in the construction of the polytechnic building, which houses classrooms and accommodation for training students. Also, the worsening of the Anglophone crisis led to an increase in the number of internally displaced persons in the Western region of Cameroon and this particular condition led to high inflation on foodstuffs and increased living costs for students within the polytechnic structure.

Since the end of the first intervention, ARCS has drawn important conclusions, capitalizing on the experience gained and highlighting the many good practices encountered, such as the one bringing together knowledge by creating networks involving associations, institutions, universities and businesses, but also providing renewable energy and appropriate technologies by using local and available materials, or again achieving the active involvement of the local population in the construction of the water system in their village while training people in maintenance management. Thanks to the work done with the previous project, ARCS has gone much further than the results planned at the beginning of the action and it's working hard to do the same with the ongoing ENTER project. To date, dozens of young citizens and technicians have taken part in trainings, thousands of people have been reached by the raising awareness public events, hundreds of citizens have participated in awareness-raising

workshops, hundreds of children in school have joined hygiene-clubs after the meetings organized by ARCS, both the training centre and the guest house for students and trainers have been built and adjusted, and dozens of women have been involved in the training to become "Development Agents for Water".

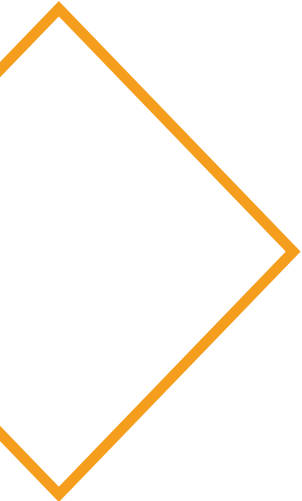


**Further information:**

[\*Webpage ENTER project \(in Italian\)\*](#)



# Conclusions



Despite rarely being in the spotlight, trade unions and civil society organisations are at the forefront of the fight for a fair, inclusive and sustainable world and they play a key role in ensuring a Just Transition. This collection of initiatives has shown some of the ways in which they contribute to advancing both social and environmental and climate justice and just how much their actions vary in nature, focus, size, scope and level of implementation. They are a testimony to the importance of their work and proof of how achieving climate-neutral economies and societies in Europe and worldwide is only going to be possible if social justice and climate justice advance hand in hand.

Nevertheless, we must also acknowledge that civil society's reach, resources and power to change the status quo are limited. Single actions by social movements are not going to be enough to bring about the structural transformations that we need to reach a climate neutral world, if they do not set in motion political processes of change that inspire or force decision makers in the public and private sphere to back them up. Initiatives such as small and large-scale projects, training courses, policy development, best practices and adopting sustainable ways of living are fundamental, but they cannot bear the weight of ensuring a successful and just green transition.

And it is certain that, despite some positive signs, policies at all levels do not yet reflect the urgency nor size of the change we need to ensure a Just Transition. There is still too much talk and too little action to make sure that no one is left behind. Politicians much too often avoid proposing, not to mention taking, the kind of radical decisions that are necessary to save the planet and all life on it. SOLIDAR calls on decision makers at all levels to not shy away from the difficult decisions that we must take. European and national **policies and programs** must pave the way for positive change and institutions must involve trade unions and civil society through processes of social and civil dialogue to ensure that their measures are “fit for people”. Moreover, a Just Transition is only going to be possible through proper investment. To have any meaningful impact, the budget allocated to the post-Covid recovery process should heavily contribute to ensuring a Just Transition in Europe.

Lastly, decision-makers in the private and public sphere are not going to listen, change or act if we continue to act individually. We need to come together from all corners of society and speak with one voice. SOLIDAR therefore calls on all stakeholders, social movements, civil society at large, climate and environmental movements, trade unions, and political parties, to come together and create **broad alliances** advocating for a Just Transition. This must happen at all levels – be it European, national, local or elsewhere. Only this way we will be able to achieve something greater than the sum of our individual efforts and win the sustainable future we strive for, truly leaving no one behind.



# Contributing Organisations:

**ARCI / La Liga Española de la Educación y la Cultura Popular / IDC / OPC / ETUC / FEPS / PLS / WWF European Policy Office / MPDL / APHEDA / Solidar Suisse / ACPP / ARCS**



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Cover images: Group of demonstrators - author DisobeyArt, Shutterstock.com,  
Woman - author 5671698, Pixabay.com



This activity is being realized with the financial assistance of the European Union as part of the Specific Agreement No. CSO-LA/2018/402-422. The contents of this activity are the sole responsibility of SOLIDAR and can under no circumstances be taken as reflecting the position of the European Union.