



NATIONAL BACKGROUND PAPER: **Just Transition, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education in Ireland**



OCTOBER 2024



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1. Introduction

This submission was developed using research commissioned by AONTAS to inform the development of an Erasmus+ funded project entitled Adult Education for a Just Transition (Just4All). Just4ALL will collate research on policies and practices in France, Ireland, Sweden, and Cyprus to demonstrate the role of adult education, and lifelong learning in securing a just transition for groups at risk of marginalisation.

AONTAS would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Jennifer Van Aswegen to this paper, through the collation and analysis of survey responses, and insightful recommendations for policy and practice in the field of adult education and lifelong learning.

In order to contribute to this project, this paper will present an outline of the social and economic risks presented to women, migrants, and workers without recognised qualifications due to emerging challenges generated by climate change and

societal responses to this critical policy challenge. This will be followed by a review of climate policies and directives at both a European and National Level that drive activity towards a just transition, which includes a reflection on the relevancy of these provisions to the field of adult education and lifelong learning.

Primary research was undertaken through an online survey, administered to AONTAS' membership network, to ascertain existing educational practice in environmental sustainability and just transition. This research includes a reflection on the capacity of educators to respond to challenge of just transition through the delivery of programmes in their communities, and explores the frameworks and tools the practitioners use in the delivery of these programmes as well as collaboration in networks. Finally, a suite of recommendations regarding the role of adult education and lifelong learning in securing a just transition for groups at risk of marginalisation will be presented.

2. Climate change impacts and just transition policies and programmes

This section will outline research that considers the economic and social impact of climate change on migrant women and low skilled workers, before considering the role of the policy context and the adult and community education sector in responding to the needs of these groups at risk of marginalisation in the transition to a green and carbon neutral future.

2.1. Economic and social impacts of climate change, impacts in the education sector, on women, migrants and low skilled workers or adults with low levels of education

O'Neill and colleagues (2022, 19-20) highlighted the potential impacts of climate change on groups at risk of marginalisation in Ireland, due to their way of lives, and relationship to the surrounding environment, exclusion from social and political life, and cultural processes due to discrimination or the impact of poverty on their living circumstances. In their paper focused on environmental injustice in Ireland they noted that patterns of settlement for marginalised groups could reveal inequalities relating to environmental wellbeing, and the just transition. Those living in poorer urban areas might experience energy poverty, poorer levels of air quality with impacts on health, high levels of unemployment and limited access to green spaces, while those living in rural areas may not have access to a transport network, or be at risk from environmental degradation (O'Neill et al., 2022:27, 30, 33, 37,38,39).

In addition to this, those communities who experience socio-economic deprivation, and lower quality of public infrastructure can find themselves marginalised from decision-making due to a lack of access to information, and legislative justice due to lack of resources to seek redress, and low quality consultation processes that limit the expression

of views (O'Neill et al. 2022:28). When this marginalisation from political processes is coupled with a lack of trust in government agencies and climate policy, marginalised groups may have increased vulnerability to the implications of a just anjust transition to a low carbon future (O'Neill et al. 2022:28 &30).

For example, energy poverty is more likely to be experienced by those with low income, low levels of formal education , lone parents with dependent children, members of minority groups such as Travellers, and those reliant on rented accommodation such as migrants. This can be exacerbated by living in low quality rental stock and a high reliance on fossil fuels that generates carbon tax with implications for household resources (O'Neill et al. 2022:32, 37).

O'Neill et al., (2022:42) outline how some groups are more vulnerable to environmental risks and harms, including women and migrants, and minority groups experiencing socio-economic deprivation like the Traveller community. Energy poverty, a reliance on fossil fuel and insufficient sanitation can impact a family's budget and health in Traveller communities who live in segregated substandard housing. The gendered dimension of socio-economic disadvantage can also increase this vulnerability due to the gender gap in pay, pensions, and structure of the labour market which drives women with caring duties, or who are reliant on childcare into low pay precarious work (O'Neill et al. 2022:43). Migrants face significant socio-economic barriers, including exclusion from decision-making due to discrimination, language and information barriers, lack of recognition of qualifications, and reliance on accommodation in degraded urban areas can generate risks to health and wellbeing for migrant groups in a context of climate change (O'Neill et al. 2022: 44-45; Greaney & Harranhill, 2023:69, 73).

Greaney and Harrahill (2023:10,13) produced a report for a Public Participation Network in a rural area of Ireland through the engagement of marginalised groups including people experiencing socio-economic marginalization, including low income farmers, carers and lone parents, refugees, and people with disabilities. This report outlined how groups that experience inequality are more likely to be disadvantaged in the transition to zero carbon in addition to the risk generated by lack of infrastructure and climate hazards. Key responses to these structural challenges suggested by this report include a reimagining of the employment in the just transition that expands beyond agriculture, energy, transport which risks perpetuating gender inequality by neglecting other essential areas of work in the realm of care, including the recognition of unpaid care work which is largely carried out by women. Another suggestion was to ensure a localised approach to employment planning particularly in rural areas to address area based disadvantage. This could include a focus on green tourism that reduces displacement, and ensures decent working conditions, and supporting change in community infrastructure and practices such as agricultural activities that can reduce emissions (Greaney & Harrahill, 2023:46-50 56, 58). This targeted approach can help ensure that transition activities are geared towards local needs, protecting against unequal outcomes in the transition to a carbon neutral future.

It is important to consider the role of adult education and lifelong learning supports in a just transition for marginalised communities in Ireland in community education contexts. As social exclusion can have a negative effect on both the individual and society due to the disempowerment and disengagement of citizens from public life, weakened economic growth, and failure to translate technological change into growth across all economic sectors, the adult learning sector has a role to play in securing a just transition (OECD, 2017). This has implications for the realisation of a just transition, which include a reorientation of work, and community practice that includes the groups vulnerable to marginalisation (Greaney & Harrahill, 2023).

Community based education, and lifelong learning opportunities can ensure the achievement of socio-economic justice in a context of climate change, by engaging hard to reach learners through targeted responsive learner centered supports including practical, social and personal supports to support this transition in work and community practices (Cobain et al., 2020; ETBI, 2021). This is crucial as research has shown that despite the impacts of socio-economic disadvantage for adults with lower level of formal education, there is less engagement of this cohort in lifelong learning opportunities. Moreover, certain groups at particular risk of marginalisation including women affected by addiction, lone parents, people impacted by imprisonment, and migrant women may face significant barriers to participating in this form of education. These barriers can include a dearth of support services, financial barriers, the delivery of programmes that are responsive to their needs, and the development of self-confidence as an antidote to stigma and discrimination (Meyler et al., 2023, 4-5). In recognising these barriers, and responding to need, adult education in community contexts can lead to continued engagement with further education, links to other social resources (ETBI, 2021; Paul Partnership, 2019) and the provision of tangible skills that can enhance labour market participation (CEFA, 2014). These are essential stepping stones that can lead to the experience of a just transition.

2.2. Global climate pledges, green transition policies, regulations, and plans

At an international level EU treaty contain a number of directives and regulations that set out environmental objectives for air and water quality, pollution levels, and the environment in general (O’Neill, et al., 2022:22). The EPA is the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of directives and the environments quality in Europe, and following the discharge of its duties it provides policy advice to Government and information to the public to make sure

these directives can be realised. Ireland also has obligations to uphold access to information, participate in decision-making, and ensure justice under the Aarhus Convention to which it is a signatory.

2.3. National Recovery and Transition Plans

In Ireland, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act was signed into law in 2021 committing Ireland to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 and achieving a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030. The Act has the ‘purpose of pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, and climate-neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050 and to thereby promote climate justice, and just transition’ (Government of Ireland, 2021: 5). It further states that under the Climate Action Plan and National Long-Term Climate Action Strategy, the government should have regard for a Just Transition in so far as is practicable and defines a Just Transition as (i) maximising employment opportunities, and (ii) supporting persons and communities that may be negatively affected by the transition (Government of Ireland, 2021a in Greaney & Harrahill, 2023:25).

To assist with integration of Just Transition principles the Irish Government established the Just Transition Policy Framework as part of the Climate Action Plan which requires ministers to consider key principles when they formulate and implement climate action policies across their departments. These key principles are: responding to the needs of a Just Transition as they emerge; equipping people with the skills to participate in from the future net zero economy; ensure that the costs of climate action are shared so that the impact is equal between everyone and pre-existing inequalities are not worsened; And finally empower impacted citizens and communities through social dialogue.

Ireland’s most recent Climate Action Plan (2023) also acknowledges that achieving a Just Transition hinges on recognising the transformational scale of change required to meet Ireland’s climate targets, and states that climate policymaking in Ireland should ‘seek to protect the most vulnerable’ (Government of Ireland, 2023: 68 in Greaney & Harrington, 2023:14). The integration of the Sustainable Development Goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in policy represents a move towards the realisation of this goal. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in this agenda can ensure that policy responses align with the multi-systemic goals of a just transition addressing economic, social and environmental dimensions, particularly for vulnerable groups in areas like energy poverty, housing, and employment¹. This is intended to achieve the overarching principle of leave no one behind in the transition to a climate neutral, greener future². Key SDG’s relevant to the field of adult education and lifelong learning include; SDG 1 No Poverty, SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 17 Partnership for the goals.

There is also a Green Skills for FET 2012-2030 policy which is informed by The European Green Deal (2019) and the Osnabrück Declaration on Vocational Education and Training (2020) which outline the role of the Further Education and Training (FET) system in response to environmental challenges and a just transition. Nationally, green skills are included in Skills for Zero Carbon 2021 Housing for All 20215, Action Plan for Apprenticeships 2021-2025, Programme for Government 2020, Climate Action Plan 2021, and Future Jobs Ireland 2019.

Ireland’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Government of Ireland, 2021b) aims to support a sustainable, equitable, green, and digital recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

1 [gov - National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024 \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/publications-and-statements/publication/national-implementation-plan-for-the-sustainable-development-goals-2022-2024)

2 www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/238357/74386d7f-167d-402e-82b9-4eb71b3077db.pdf#page=null

The plan emphasises a green digital transition that will promote socio-economic development and job creation through the development of physical and human capital. This includes targeted support to boost employment in disadvantaged communities through the implementation of equality measures across government strategies. Target groups include women and girls, those with disabilities, Traveller and Roma communities, the LGBTI+ community and migrants (Government of Ireland , 2021b:14). This includes the development and implementation of a competitive fund to drive digital transformation in enterprise activities that will incorporate social proofing to ensure gender equality, equal rights and opportunities for all in financing decisions. Further initiatives such as the Work Placement Experience Programme (WPEP) and the SOLAS' Green Skills Action programme will provide groups identified as being at risk of socio-economic disadvantage with the opportunity to gain experience, reskill or upskill to new areas that are experiencing growth and skill shortages (Government of Ireland, 2021b:15).

This plan also emphasises progression through the higher education system through the provision of responsive, adaptable and flexible course provision in the areas of distance learning, part-time, online or blended learning, lifelong learning and higher education access for vulnerable or marginalised groups. This can include the development and mainstreaming of relevant courses, content or approaches to addressing the digital divide and emerging regional skills needs. These directives should ensure learner access by meeting the needs of vulnerable persons including those in under-represented or socially or economically disadvantaged groups or areas in a context of change and transition (Government of Ireland , 2021b:27).

2.4. National and multilateral funding for just transition, including in the education sector and to support women, migrants/refugees, and adults with low levels of education

The funding landscape for adult education and lifelong learning has an influence in the sectors ability to respond to the requirements of a Just transition as funding is a key tool for strategy implementation and frames practice. Currently the Further Education and Training (FET) system which provides options for adult and lifelong learning is funded through SOLAS and is the national FET agency charged with overseeing the planning, funding and co-ordination of publicly funded provisions across Ireland. Funding for FET is made available by Department of Further and Higher Education Research, Innovation and Science to SOLAS. Almost €800 million of funding is invested by SOLAS annually in FET. This enables the FET system to implement the Future FET: Transforming Learning 2020-2024 through the activities of 16 regional Education and Training Boards through the delivery of programmes that are responsive to local needs in order to build skills, foster inclusion and facilitate pathways to further education. It is based around the three core pillars: building skills, fostering inclusion, and facilitating pathways. These FET provisions incorporate apprenticeships, traineeships, Post Leaving Cert (PLC) courses, adult and community education (ACE), including core literacy and numeracy services. This is delivered through a wider network 293 community-based adult education providers that provide programmes, primarily at Levels 1 to 4, which respond to particular community needs.

The operation of learning activities related to a just transition in the field of adult and lifelong learning is framed by the Green Skills for FET 2021-2030 which connects FET to the transition to a green economy as aligned to various EU and national directives. The strategy is a collaborative effort between SOLAS and the ETBs with three main objectives:

Green Skills for Life	Green Skills for Construction	Green Skills for Careers
<p>Objective: To create awareness of climate justice, sustainability and bioeconomic issues across FET learners, FET staff and school students.</p> <p>a) Green Skills Modules for All Make green skills and sustainability awareness modules available for all FET learners across the sector.</p> <p>b) Professional Learning & Development of FET Staff Enhance the capability and confidence of FET practitioners to anticipate, respond to and meet the evolving needs of learners in the context of green and digital transitions.</p> <p>c) Promote Green FET Promote the FET sector as a leader in providing skills for the green economy.</p>	<p>Objective: To train and upskill those in construction occupations in the latest green technologies.</p> <p>a) Construction Apprenticeships Incorporate green skills and business training in curricula so the workforce remains equipped for technological advancement in the green economy.</p> <p>b) Developing Construction Skills Ensure that FET construction programmes (i.e. CSCS) include a focus on green, sustainable practices and technologies to remain industry relevant.</p> <p>c) NZEB Centres of Excellence Provide starter programmes, conversion courses, upskilling and post-apprenticeship courses in Near Zero Energy Building technologies in 6 Centres of Excellence nationwide.</p>	<p>Objective: To create career opportunities in the green economy for the employed, unemployed and those within vulnerable sectors.</p> <p>a) Non-Construction Apprenticeships Expand non-construction apprenticeships curricula to include green, sustainable practices and technologies.</p> <p>b) Skills to Compete/Skills to Advance Provide flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities in the green economy for employees, employers and the unemployed.</p> <p>c) Just Transition Support employees, employers and enterprise which may be vulnerable in the shift to a green economy through the principle of Just Transition.</p>

There are other funding options available to adult and lifelong learning opportunity providers in community contexts that are relevant to the achievement of a Just Transition. For example, the Community Climate Action Fund established in 2020 has supported a number of thematic projects that facilitated action on climate issues through education, capacity building and learning by doing aimed at generating greater awareness of climate issues.³

³ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/031fc-minister-ryan-announces-grant-recipients-of-new-5-million-fund-under-strand-2-of-the-community-climate-action-programme/>

3. Formal and non-formal education on climate, environment, and Just Transition

To capture existing just transition provision and practice within the field of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation representing organisations, practitioners and learners in the field invited members to participate in a survey in order to explore the range of activities relating to the realisation of a Just Transition. 15 AONTAS members participated in an online survey over a period of 2 weeks.

Participation Slides	Number of participants	Participation rate
<input type="radio"/> Please provide your name and position within your organisation.	15 / 15	100%
<input type="radio"/> Please provide name of your organisation.	14 / 15	93%
<input type="radio"/> Please provide name of contact person and their email address.	13 / 15	8w7%

Profile of Participants

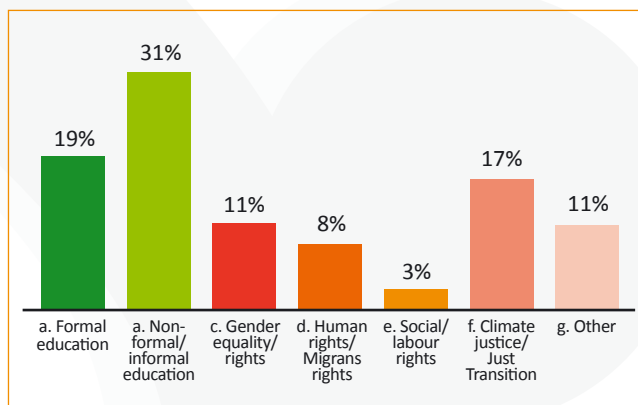
Participating members included representatives from regional ETBs, Public Participation Networks (PPN), and community development organisations engaged in service delivery, community projects and information sharing networks.

3.1. Scope of Formal and non-formal education on climate change and the Just Transition

The participants were asked to respond to questions relating to the work areas of their organisations, the forms of education they provided. Non-formal/informal learning (11) was the most prevalent response followed by formal education (7) and climate justice/just transition (6) however, respondents also worked in the area of gender equality, human and migrants’ rights. The scope of provision is presented in the following chart.

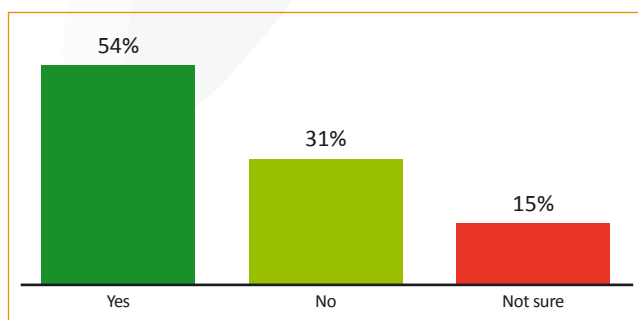
Respondents were then asked about the provision of non-Formal Education for Environmental Sustainability in particular.

FIGURE 1: Respondent work focus



Over half of those responding to this question (n=13) reported that their organisation provides nonformal, environmental sustainability education. Under one-third of participants (4) reported that they do not; and 15% (2) reported that they are not sure.

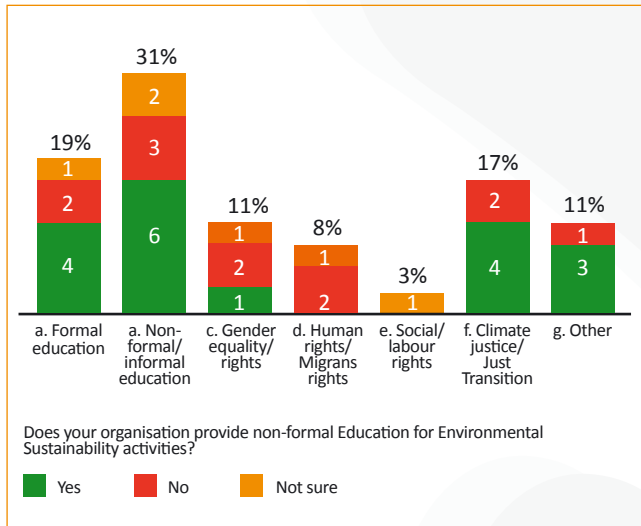
FIGURE 2: Non-formal Provisions for Environmental Sustainability



Further analysis of this data against the scope of activities question provides deeper insights for the findings of this study regarding the provision of formal and non-formal opportunities relative to the mandate of the organisation.

The key findings of this analysis are that 4 participating organisations providing formal education also provide non-

FIGURE 3: Type of Provision in each area of work



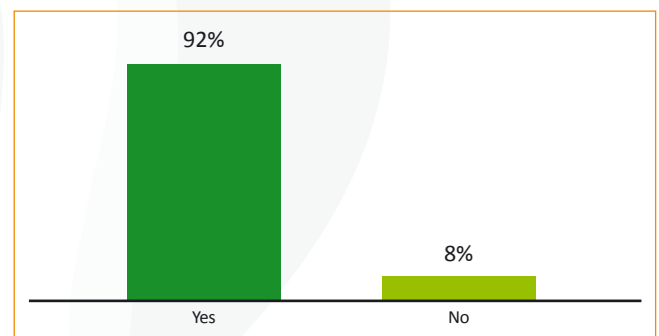
formal environmental sustainability education, 2 do not, and 1 is unsure. Six of those providing non-formal or informal education provide non-formal environmental sustainability learning; 3 do not; and 2 are unsure. Four participants engaged in climate justice activities provide non-formal educational opportunities; and 2 are unsure. Of those engaged in gender equality activities, 1 provides non-formal environmental sustainability education, 2 do not; and 1 is not sure. In the area of human rights, none of the participating organisation reported non-formal environmental education; 2 stated they do not; and 1 is unsure.

The seven participating organisations also provided more information regarding non-formal sustainability education submitted when asked for further information.

These responses reveal that activities relating to the circular economy, upcycling, gardening, wildlife, energy and environment sustainability were undertaken as part of this form of non-formal provision of sustainability education.

In terms of Community Sustainability and Just Transition 92% of participants (n=11) report that their organisational activities engage service users in actions that promote community sustainability or just transition activities while 8% reported that they do not.

FIGURE 4: Engagement of communities in activities to promote sustainability



We deliver practical workshops on repair, reuse, and the circular economy.

Learners and the local community are encouraged to use our composter. We built a pond to support wildlife and sustainability. Partnership with the Dundrum Town Centre Bee Garden.

Within the context of weaving, we explore the use of natural resources, Irish wool. It gives an understanding of the scope of fast fashion at local and global perspectives. Weaving is slow fashion.

We provide community education training in Upcycling Textiles at Beginners and Intermediate level as well as workshops.

NA

Training for schools and colleges, University staff, and college education to community leaders and in community settings. Empowering local Networks, Energy Transition, SME training on green transition.

We are currently offering a gardening programme which is part of Sláinte Care Healthy Communities funded programme.

Through our education team, we deliver a number of European-funded projects focused on CC. Through SICAP, we deliver Legacy4Meath and through LEADER, we deliver Circular Economy training.

Further details were provided by participants with regard to these activities when prompted.

We have programmes that target those who are experiencing poverty and/or who are international protection applicants. We use group discussions and activities to help build empathy for others.	Learners encouraged to bring in their food waste for our Composter. The soil is used by our horticulture students. The horticulture students planted flowers for the bee hives in Dundrum shopping centre.	We run weaving workshops within our community with schools and our library. Within the workshop we explore the benefits of “handmade” and a comprehension of slow fashion.	All our training, include modules on Awareness of Textile Waste and the impact of Fast Fashion.
We do information sessions on home energy, SEAI grants, warmers house, green economy and climate actions.	Creatively in an arts collective we provide outreach in a non-formal setting on climate actions.	So for example in the Gardening workshop, participants will gain a strong understanding of all things green and how to produce their own food whether their garden is big or small.	The training we provide is experiential and utilises materials developed in our education team.
We place a large emphasis on our community and the importance of playing an active role in it.		We deliver a course on active citizenship and voter education which is rooted in social justice and participation.	

The main focus of activities that support community sustainability and a just transition reported by participants include creative arts, composting, textiles, green economy and upcycling, social inclusion and active citizenship.

3.2. Educators and trainers' capacities on climate justice and Just transition issues

Participants were also asked about their capacity to deliver programmes on Climate Justice and the Just Transition. They were asked about their plans to expand their work and develop their capacity and the capacities of educators and trainers on Just Transition issues. 82% of participants indicated they had plans for expansion and further development with regard to just transition. Further

NAP	We hope to train more weavers to teach the workshops as the demand is greater than our capacity. We also have a school's programme starting in September.	We collaborate with the Rediscovery Centre which is the centre for the Circular Economy. We are looking at extending our training reach into other areas such as Swap Shops, Repair.	Yes, we established a sustainable energy committee and prepared an energy master plan. At the moment, we are working to implement the recommendations of the energy master plan including campaigns.
As part of Heritage Keeping working in Midland Turf cutting areas on social innovation to move towards eco-tourism and non-fossil fuel use as a SEC.	Divestment insights as a former banker working on advocacy and financial and climate literacy to move money and pensions to eco solution providers.	We would see this to be part of our development plans going forward, to continue to help communities develop and thrive. The organisation focused on social change and SDG aligned especially 1,3,4,5.	Between 2024 and 2028 we will be localising the Local Development Plan for Meath which focuses heavily on Just Transitions and Climate Action. Similar to our range of E+ projects.

We are delivering the course nationwide to train other tutors in the course.

details of expansion plans are provided by participants

The plans for expansion of programmes and capacities reported included taking part in educational collaboration, developing climate literacy, engaging in policy advocacy, energy master planning, and social innovation for eco-tourism. 60% of participants indicated

We are engaged for over a decade and education and sharing learnings ready to learn and share more also.

Yes, we as a group would love to have a greater understanding of issues but also practical steps to engage as a group, sustainably.

Open conversation and more accessible resources would be beneficial to further our engagement in this area.

I would need to know more about Just transition model and how it can be applied to our work so training would be great!

interest in further engagement on climate action and just transition learning. Details provided by participants overlap with the next question on educational collaboration.

3.3. Education frameworks and collaboration between education stakeholders on climate justice and Just Transition issues.

I'm not sure I understand what that is so I would CPD to understand the concept first.	Every aspect of understanding issues should be matched with skills for change, sewing a button, hemming trousers. We need manageable, practical ways to play our part. Remove finger pointing.	Not sure, would need more information.	Knowledge sharing, site visits
In the local levels, we collaborate with CTETB and supporting individuals to follow climate related courses. In addition, getting their inputs for our implementation.	Education the Local authorities and their contractors to the long-term Natural Capital benefits. Work with climate activists in the space and remunerate their work. Creative pilots' multiannual funds	Engaging with organisations is very important, listening to their voices, to understand the challenges of each rural/urban divide, social economic etc. AONTAS and the CEN would be a good starting point.	It is of utmost importance that working groups are established and connecting to work on Just transitions. We need to be feeding the local realities into national strategies.
Open conversations and more accessible resources would be beneficial to further our engagement in this area.		I would need to know more about Just Transitions model and how it can be applied to our work so training would be great !	

This survey also sought to explore the kinds of collaboration that education stakeholders engaged in at National and Local level in order to identify key collaborative relationships between policy actors in the just transition ecosystem and the adult and lifelong learning sector.

Some respondents had no awareness of the concept of collaborative relationships with key policy makers, and cited a need for further professional development to help them engage in this advocacy focused aspect of practice. Others reported engagement with local authorities, regional ETBs and a national Community Education Network. This could support the sector to access funds to deliver programmes, generate understanding of the needs of learners at risk of marginalisation in the context of a just transition. The need for open communication and respectful dialogue was highlighted as a key component of this kind of collaboration by some respondents.

Respondents also reflected on the kinds of frameworks, structures and environmental factors that could promote meaningful and engaging learning environments to support a Just Transition. The adult and community education sector was considered an ideal environment to support learning for a Just Transition, due the focus on a flexible, responsive and supportive environment. The respondents identified local council development plans and strategies as a key opportunity for engaging learners in issues around the Just Transition, and this is also linked to the idea of training underpinned by local needs-based planning. Other key factors that can support learning for a Just Transition include engaging with think tanks focused on sustainable economics, such as FEASTA, and engaging in collaborative community networks that aim to protect habitats such as the community wetland forum. One respondent also identified the need to link in with occupation specific initiatives to support the move towards green agriculture.

Not sure	Practical skills learning. Education on local natural resources such as wool. Linking environmental issues with labour issues. Less blaming more encouragement	Community Education led training based on a local need analysis.	Of course, working with County Councils, LCDC, and existing SECS
Community Wetland Forum workFEASTA, workSports areas SEAI SEC for turf cutting families and jobs in green tech, retrofitting skills and Paludiculture training for farmers.	Community Education in the community and community education providers ensure that opportunities are brought to the learner and also listed in the learner voice.	From our perspective and focus of work, the local Development Plans for every county should contribute to meaningful change.	Create shorter courses and materials that could be integrated into existing courses being run in community and adult ed.

4. Civil society consultation, collaboration, and coalition building

4.1. Advocacy and Educational Materials

Respondents were also asked to reflect on the production of advocacy and educational materials that could promote awareness of climate change and sustainability. Tools used included advertising campaigns to promote engagement from communities and local business, ambassador programmes to empower local change makers, and the leveraging of local networks to engage diverse groups in sustainability initiatives. Respondents also reported the production of tutor handbooks for dissemination and sharing, using particular tailored approaches when engaging communities such as creative workshops, and the delivery of programmes that capitalise on group interests.

<p>We advertise our collaborations on environmental sustainability at the Dundrum Town Centre with regard to our bee garden. We actively work with local businesses to encourage them to use our computer.</p>	<p>NONE</p>	<p>The Impact of Fast Fashion Leaflet. Upcycling training videos, button repairs video, hem making video.</p>	<p>Energy Master Plan - posters for the mini forest project.</p>
<p><u>Earth Hour Ambassador</u></p>	<p>We run the Circular Economy Club in Kildare and share circular resources and local group mobilisation from kids' clubs to cycling groups and Women's Sheds in the area.</p> <p><u>Circular Economy Club</u></p>	<p>I run the Kildare Environmental Network. See our actions and shared events and resources ongoing.</p> <p><u>Kildare Environmental Network Facebook Page</u></p>	<p>Shamrock Spring Enables Education and Empowers local change actions with classes and linking networks.</p> <p><u>Shamrock Spring Facebook Videos</u></p>
<p>Creative actions in art collectives, e.g., IMMA Earth Rising Climate Action Festival sharing awareness with artists on facts and the use of words and storytelling.</p> <p><u>SymbioceneArt Facebook Page</u></p>	<p>We are a long-standing provider of community education. We listened to the voice of the learner and provide learning opportunities based on the needs of the community.</p> <p><u>www.lwl.ie</u></p>	<p>We have a range of materials through multiple E+ projects. Currently, we are leading a youth project, BEST, which focuses on transformative education for Climate Action.</p>	<p>In addition, we are working on two other E+ projects that are creating materials for young people on climate action – Green Meme and MeUsNow. All materials are available for sharing.</p>

5. Cross Border Solidarity

No data available

6. Conclusions and recommendations

This section provides an analysis of the findings from the secondary data and survey to provide a snapshot of current policy and practice on just transitions in adult and community education (ACE). As socially vulnerable members of society including women, migrants, and adults with a low level of formal qualifications are more exposed to climate impact, this report considers recommendations for these learner cohorts in particular.

Recommendation 1: FET Policy

Current FET policy is structured around three core pillars: building skills, fostering inclusion, and facilitating pathways which supports the engagement of adult learners from groups at risk of marginalisation. This policy is complemented by the Green Skills for FET 2021-2030 strategy which has a strong focus on labour market activation framed as a move into “exciting, interesting vocations and careers within the green economy, in addition to creating pathways to pursue further green skills training within higher education”. The focus of this policy document is on attracting and upskilling for labour market jobs in largely male-dominated professional fields of practice, ensuring that the “appropriate knowledge and skills to drive it forward and several industries served by FET (construction, agriculture, etc.) have central roles to ensure that employees and employers have the sufficient skills to thrive in the green economy” (SOLAS, 2022:2). This strategy has the potential to secure the socio-economic inclusion of women and migrants in the transition to a greener economy in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, equality of opportunity to participate in education for marginalised groups such as women, migrants, and low skilled individuals can be hampered by barriers as revealed by the research conducted Meyler and colleagues (2023). The models of provision explored in this research demonstrate the

responsive and flexible approach to sustainability education for a Just Transition which is highly relevant to the learning regarding the engagement of learners who face the greatest barriers to education (Meyler et al., 2023).

As the current FET strategy cycle Transforming Learning 2020-2024 ends, a new policy window opens up in which to prioritise a social justice approach to climate change that prioritises groups at risk of marginalisation under the fostering inclusion pillar with a specific consideration given to the role of community education.

Recommendation 2: Strategic Alliances for a Just Transition

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) has responsibility for planning and implementing to support rural and sustainable community development throughout Ireland. DRCD is the parent funding department for PPNs across the country. The PPN structure has the potential to deliver just transition formal and informal learning to a network of membership, which in turn is embedded in local communities across their respective counties. PPNs were among the participating organisations in this study. The findings from the survey highlight the need for collaborative educational projects between the PPN national representative body, DRCD and ACE policy advocacy.

It is recommended that AONTAS engage at a strategic level with the DRCD, ETBI and the PPN national representative body towards a framework for delivering just transition in and through adult and community education.

Recommendation 3: Active Citizenship, Public Participation and Climate Justice

Engagement with Public Participation Networks as strategy to develop awareness of climate action and promote community engagement. PPN membership pillars focus social inclusion, community development and climate change. There is scope for intersectional collaboration between organisations across the three pillars of the PPN with potential for developing both accredited and non-accredited adult and community education initiatives. This could engage groups at risk of experiencing inequality throughout the transition to a greener economy, or who face issues relating to health, wellbeing and social inclusion due to their living circumstances.

Greater engagement and collaboration with PPNs can also serve to support the amplification of experiences and needs of these groups at risk of marginalisation in policy making processes, through supported engagement in consultations, and decision-making fora, and the provision of information regarding policy developments.

Recommendation 4: Building Capacity through Communities of Practice

Participants in the study included PPN, ETB and ACE providers across Ireland. Findings indicate a need and appetite for shared learning, training and professional development in order to support further expansion and capacity within the adult education ecosystem. Collaboration at a national and local level can generate learning regarding current good practice in the field of adult education and lifelong learning for climate change and a Just Transition. This can support enhanced capacity through the professional development of educational practitioners and community leaders.

While outside the scope of this study, AONTAS have compiled a number of case studies highlighting current provision and good practice. It is recommended that the learning from these studies are captured, disseminated and promoted to inform and support further development of just transitions through adult learning.

The support that the PPNs provide for networking can also support the development of practice in the area of community education as practitioners can use the space to showcase the variety of responses, and strategies that they have used to implement adult learning for climate change and a just transition. As an umbrella membership and advocacy organisation, AONTAS are ideally placed to collaborate strategically and locally with PPN structures to support the delivery of a just transition through adult and community education. This study recommends to AONTAS a strategic approach to building capacity across the ecosystem through the development of communities of practice.

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