

ECEN Assembly 2023

Thematic Group: Sustainable communities in transition

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Aim

Why this name? Because we feel in a process of transition away from carbon dependency to become healthier and more sustainable communities.

This process is based on the transformative capacity of local communities mitigating against the damage prompted by climate breakdown. As a resilient network we can adopt the tools that technology makes available while encouraging research and decision makers to accelerate towards sustainability. Transition therefore concerns lifestyle and advocacy in both church and society.

This thematic Working Group complements the experiences of eco congregations and eco churches in ECEN, whether informal or church-structured institutions, some linked with certification schemes.

Sometimes our commitment to reduce our footprint reflects (and stimulates) similar secular initiatives that started, for example from search of zero food miles and organic food, or from reducing our involvement with oil investment or other climate change actions.

The initial '*Transition Towns*' movement (now *Transition Together*) began as part of civil society moving towards a low carbon world. It remains a positive example of empowering local people to break their dependency on fossil fuels at various stages. The movement operates in many countries across Europe and beyond.

The WG will be a place to share our own experiences, approaches, methodologies, tools, contacts, actions and events about *Transition Together* where you live.

Methodology

This WG will recall its background which integrated some of the other ECEN work on water, mobility and energy, inspired by some of the sustainable communities development that has taken place in the UK.

In order to be welcoming and inclusive we will:

- share our experiences on how transition is progressing in our own localities and in ECEN activities.
- discuss possible developments of the WG
- use social networks to be more interdependent. The experience of the last few years has shown the difficulty of establishing horizontal relationships between countries, many of which have websites.

Outcome

The last ECEN assembly in person was in 2018. Two weeks later Greta Thunberg appeared at COP 24 and from her the FFF movement started with her. In 2020 a global virus appeared that also profoundly altered the life of the churches, and the two events, added to the war on Ukrainian territory, impressed an even greater demand for the urgency of change.

Community transition varies considerably in and within our different countries, and the playing field is not level. We hope this workshop will enable us to be more cooperative and interdependent across our churches and communities.

In the group we will:

- explore this urgency and will hope to inspire a greater willingness to engage together as churches.
- initiate links between the various national networks by finding at least one contact person for each
- identify a common European initiative per year