

LEADER

Community-Led Local Development



National Rural Network

Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action

LEADER 2014-2020

(EXTENDED TO 2022)

NRN CASE STUDY

Project name: Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action (*Breffni Integrated CLG - Climate Change Training*)

Date: 17 December 2019 – 30 June 2022

Type of Beneficiary: Local Development Company (LDC)

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 3: Rural Environment / Sub-theme: Renewable Energy

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Breffni Integrated CLG T/A Cavan County Local Development

Address: Unit 6a Corlurgan Business Park, Ballinagh Road, Cavan

Further information:

- [Course Outline](#)
- [Communities 4 Climate Action | Facebook](#)
- [Participants' Video](#)

Summary

The need to support training targeted at raising awareness and knowledge of the impacts of climate change on individuals' daily lives was identified as a priority under the Rural Environment theme of the LEADER Programme in Cavan's Local Development Strategy 2016. Through a series of three programmes, which encouraged individuals to share their own experiences, with support from tutors who have expertise in this field, Cavan County Local Development (CCLD) set out to address this need.

The 'Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action' training programme enabled participants to build capacity and helped to equip them with the skillset to make their communities more climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable. A major result and legacy of the project was the subsequent formation of a county-based climate action network in Cavan, which aims to inform the wider community of the need for a collective approach to developing climate solutions. Moreover, this training has empowered participants to put climate solutions forward for inclusion in the next Local Development Strategy for the 2023-2027 LEADER Programme in the Cavan area.



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Context

The project beneficiary, Cavan County Local Development (CCLD), is a community-led local development company which delivers a range of rural, social and economic programmes, including LEADER, at a local level across the county. CCLD is committed to helping Cavan transition to a low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable county.

In the past, CCLD has found it challenging in promoting opportunities for LEADER funding to assist in developing climate solution projects to the wider community. The bottom-up LEADER approach in Cavan is premised on sharing knowledge and consulting with the local community with a view to harnessing their ideas and expertise to feed into a better future for everybody (whether LEADER funded or via other supports).

Prior to the commencement of this programme, CCLD found that communities in the county had not been fully engaged in identifying solutions to climate change via the LEADER programme. In particular, the need for additional animation supports for communities to engage in discussions on climate change issues was highlighted. CCLD also acknowledged the scope for easier access to information on examples of what meaningful actions communities could instigate in their own areas.

In 2019, CCLD set out with the aim of delivering a series of climate action training programmes, to be funded under the LEADER Programme 2014-2020 (Extended to 2022), open to individuals, communities, clubs and local enterprises in Co. Cavan.



Objectives

- To build capacity among participants and equip them with the knowledge and expertise to make their communities more climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable.
- To promote opportunities to avail of LEADER funding under the Rural Environment theme to assist in developing climate solution projects moving forward.

Activities

From the outset, CCLD prepared detailed terms of reference and sought tenders for the provision of a series of three climate action training programmes. A qualified collective of trainers, consisting of Cultivate, the Cloughjordan Ecovillage and led by ESD Training, were awarded the tender. ESD Training works with LEADER companies to deliver free climate action training courses to local community groups and enterprises with the aim of helping to build climate action capacity in the county. In addition to Cavan, ESD Training delivered Communities 4 Climate Action programmes in Wexford and Kildare.





“A six-week course was drawn up to cover a range of topics including climate action, community resilience, energy and transport, climate change and water, sustainable agriculture and land use and waste and the circular economy.” John Toland, CCLD

The training programmes were promoted via all available community networks available to CCLD, including their own community databases, the Public Participation Network (PPN), youth groups, the Local Authority, social media, local radio and newspapers. As a result of the pandemic, initial engagement with potential participants was undertaken via online video platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet.

Results

Three Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action training programmes were delivered in the county between 2020 and 2022 – one of which was online and two in a face-to-face classroom environment. The [Course Outline](#) summarises the main modules with additional background on each module and the activities undertaken. A total of 52 participants fully completed the training. Throughout the delivery of the three programmes, there was a mean total of 59 participants.

These courses have directly impacted on climate literacy and understanding of climate action in Co. Cavan. Participants have a greater awareness of the importance of climate change and have the knowledge to develop climate solutions. The training has also enabled some participants to become ambassadors for climate action in the county.

“This was an extremely interesting, inspiring and enlightening course which left me with a much more enhanced awareness of climate action within my local community!” Programme participant

“I enjoyed the exploration of the emotional aspects of climate change: climate anxiety, climate apathy. The need for a mind and heart approach.” Programme participant

“I felt the course was a rich, broad and balanced learning experience on climate change, its causes, implications and solutions.” Programme participant



Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action online training session - Source: CCLD



Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action training programme participants – Source: CCLD

The highlight of each training course was a full-day trip to Cloughjordan Ecovillage in Co. Tipperary. Cloughjordan is an internationally recognised





destination for learning about sustainable living and climate action. The ecovillage is located on a 70-acre site with over 100 residents living in more than 50 high performance green homes, 20,000 newly planted trees, a community farm and gardens, an enterprise centre, outdoor music and culture venue, and Ireland's largest renewable energy district heating system.

"Seeing all that the ecovillage has to offer was inspiring. Cloughjordan is driving climate action and pushing boundaries... that's a lesson in resilience to the rest of us. Well done to you all, your work and creativity is just amazing." Programme participant



Trip to Cloughjordan Ecovillage in Co. Tipperary – Source: CCLD

On completion of the training programme, a network of Cavan citizens interested in local climate action was built and fostered. A dedicated Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action Facebook page was created to build cohesion within training groups and to provide a longer-term online platform aimed at sustaining a climate action community beyond the life of the course. 69 participants have now joined. The group facilitates increased networking and sharing of learnings and resources, generating new opportunities for collaboration for climate action and community resilience in Co. Cavan.

In addition, a county-based climate action network was launched in September 2022, comprising of several participants of the programme. Outcomes

from the work of this network will have a meaningful impact on the plans of agencies in the county including CCLD and the Local Authority into the future. The network aims to enhance the wider community's understanding of the need for climate solutions and it will provide support to groups that undertake climate friendly projects in the future.

Lessons

Attracting participants of all ages

A multi-method approach to the promotion of the Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action training programme, utilising both online and offline tools, was adopted from the outset to ensure that all relevant stakeholders could be targeted. Social media, in particular, proved useful in attracting younger cohorts.

Importance of connectivity

To ensure all participants could stay connected and share ideas throughout the duration of the training programme, and indeed thereafter, a dedicated Cavan Communities 4 Climate Action Zoom account was created to facilitate interaction between the three cohorts. WhatsApp groups were also established which were in regular use.

LEADER support for climate action projects

A key consideration for the LEADER programme moving forward, according to CCLD, is the need for further support to animate communities in climate action solutions and a recognition that rates of LEADER grant aid should be commensurate to the need for pilot projects to be developed.





Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€126,046.64
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€126,046.64
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€79,157.29
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€46,889.35
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	N/A
+ (iii) Other funding sources	N/A

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Breffni Integrated CLG T/A Cavan County Local Development
Contact person	John Toland
Email	jtoland@cclld.ie

