



# Community Catalysts for Transformative Economies

a Participatory Action Research Report  
of four distinct rural areas across peripheral Europe

"Making Sense of Transformative Economies"

July 2021



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

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# 1. Preface and Thanksgiving

This report details the process and results of the first phase of the “Community Catalysts for Transformative Economies” project funded by ERASMUS+ Key Action 2, under project code 2020-1-HU01-KA204-078850. The Participatory Action Research phase was co-designed and simultaneously implemented in four rural regions across peripheral Europe by four of the six project partners: Profilantrop Association (Hungary); Palma Nana (Italy); Projecto Novas Descobertas & Orla Design (Portugal) and Nuria Social (Spain). In addition to the ERASMUS+ funding, this report is made possible thanks to the active participation of all those interviewed in each of the case study regions:

Algarve, PORTUGAL	HUNGARY	Madonie, ITALY	La Garrotxa, SPAIN
Izzi Market; Flores do Barlavento; Lavrar o Mar; Monte da Casteleja; Rota Vicentina; Viv'ó Mercado; Caldeira negra; João Matias Santos; Salema Eco-Camp; Cooperativa da Terra;	Mindenegyüttmegy Egyesület; Kunbábonyi Tízek Közösségi Szövetkezet; Zalatnay László; Gólya Szövetkezet; Szatyorbolt és Szatyor Egyesület; Gólya Szövetkezet; Nyimi Öko Közösség; Szolidáris Gazdaság Központ; Magyar Permakultúra Egyesület; Pécsi Kosár Közösség	Chi semina raccoglie; Gesualdo Faulisi; Vallone Wilderness; Catalizzatori di comunità per le economie trasformative	Associació d'Empreses EURAM Garrotxa; Artiga Coop, SCCL; Agència d'Innovació i Desenvolupament de la Garrotxa; SAT La Vall d'en Bas, Cooperativa Verntallat; cacau pastisseria; Associació de Creadors de la Garrotxa, La lera; FuturOlot; CercleGarrotxa-Ripollès; Resilience Earth SCCL; Ecoxarxa Garrotxa

Our deep thanksgiving is extended most especially to our planet, who sustains and inspires us, and to the ancestors of our four regions, for doing the same.

Köszönjük, grazie, obrigado, and gràcies,

The Community Catalyst team.

## 2. Transformative Economies

### 2.1. “Creating the Soil” for Transformative Economies - an Introduction:

Economy has been linked greatly with extractive mindsets for the late period of human presence on this planet, especially amongst communities that perceive Nature as something “out there”, something separate that can be taken, explored, turned into financial gain. With the advent of cities, this perception has increased greatly, and the awareness of belonging to the cycles of Life has been put into question with huge impact to the Web of Life that we all are part of. This illusion has been taken by most economic discourse to such a degree that many say we are now living in the Anthropocene, an unofficial unit of geologic time, used to describe the most recent period in Earth's history when human activity started to have a significant impact on the planet's climate and ecosystems, leading us towards degenerative cycles of human presence on this planet, that we share with so many other beings.

This mindset has been greatly promoted by a trend of trying to find a single narrative in economic discourse and practice, that can be exported, adopted, and colonise any other mode of management of our Lands and livelihoods. A transformation in this paradigm is strongly needed, one that celebrates diversity and pluralism within modes of management of Land and creation of viable and regenerative Livelihoods centred on community values and love for the Earth.

The origin of the words ‘ecology’ and ‘economy’ come from the same Greek root, ‘oikos’, which means home. Home is always a place of deep and intricate relationships based on mutuality, reciprocity and cooperation. ‘Logos’ means knowledge and ‘nomos’ means management. So ecology is knowledge of the home and economy is management of the home. How are we managing our Home?

Around the world, rural regions offer a hopeful future, given their key role in stewarding the land and providing food for the surrounding populations, linked to/and aware of the ecological limitations and long-lived relations within the Natural world. Also, due to the smaller size of rural communities, they provide fertile ground for testing place-based alternatives that can catalyse accelerated social and ecological change.

This Participatory-Action Research (PAR) process wishes to build upon the findings resulted from a previous project (Community Catalysts for Regenerative Development), where the knowledge of the state of each region's ecological or biosphere Sustainable Goals were mapped, based on the layers of the UN Sustainable Development Goals “wedding cake” (Rockström and Sukhdev, 2016). Now the focus was on how communities are innovating on the management of their Landscapes and Bioregions, through diverse approaches to transforming mainstream economic practices.

For that we've designed this PAR process based on the Community Catalyst's Toolkit for Regenerative Development created within the context of that previous project, that used the "WeLand - Making Sense of Place" Regenerative Design Thinking process, to come up with alternatives on modes of management that sprout from a rooted connection with land and a clear relationship building with each Place where the initiatives develop their transformative action.

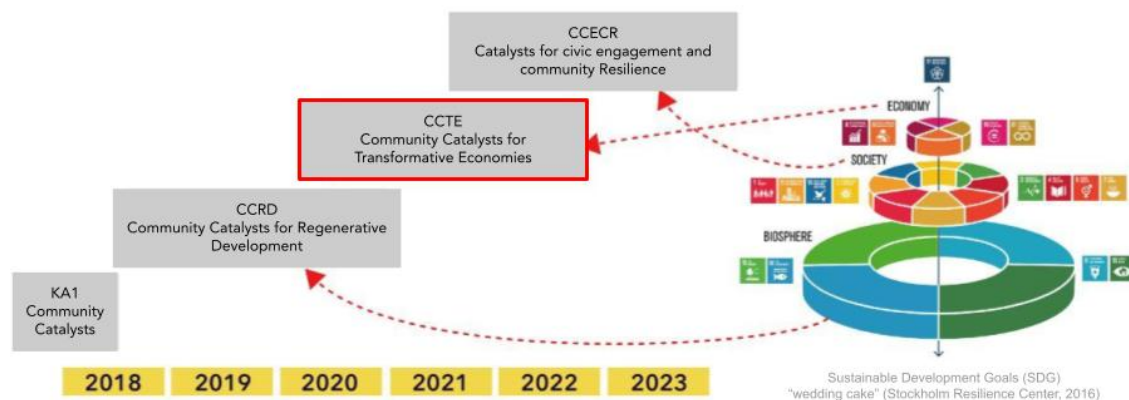


Image 2: Community Catalysts project lifecycle sequence of projects

The research was carried out from October 2020 through to June 2021 and applied a combination of more traditional Participatory Action Research methodologies and the regenerative design thinking process "WeLand - Making Sense of Place", to both collect the data, analyse the results and *spark* regenerative action within each bioregion. This PAR was conducted in four distinct rural regions in peripheral Europe. The four regions were selected using criteria that value both their distinctive as well as their common qualities and challenges. As such, the four rural regions of peripheral Europe were:

1. Atlantic coastal Europe (Algarve, Portugal)
2. Continental flatland Europe (Hungary)
3. Mediterranean insular Europe (Madonie, Sicily)
4. Mediterranean alpine Europe (La Garrotxa, Catalonia)

This report outlines the theoretical framework, the methodological process and the results and initial conclusions of the research process. The results and conclusions will be revisited and used to inform the next phases of the project.

## 2.2. Theoretical “Landscape” on Transformative Economies

### 2.2.1. Transformative Economies Definition

Already well into the 21st century, we are still suffering the consequences of the political and ideological manoeuvres begun in the 1980s by the neoliberal vanguard, which has trapped us for decades within the iron cage of "There Is No Alternative", coined by Thatcher, the embodiment of the wretched combination of moral conservatism and economic neoliberalism that still haunts and affects us to this day.

The global financial crisis which erupted in 2007 - fruit, precisely, of the connivance among established political powers and financial elites in pursuit of capital accumulation - shows the need to rethink the current economic order. A multitude of anonymous voices from around the world, from the indignados to the Arab spring, through to the Occupy movement, have come together in a cry that calls for the ousting of the established regime.

The lack of outside interference in these movements is accompanied by an unspoken undercurrent, built upon the remnants of the “Another world is possible” of the antiglobalization movement, and long-standing historical traditions such as cooperativism and communitarian economies. A whole host of hands and minds, put to establishing new ways of living in the here and now, developing new economies - of working, housing, consuming, and living together - from bases, materials and cultures diametrically opposed to the regime of late capitalism, show that there are other ways to live, despite having to do so outside of the narrow confines of the free market.

These other economies, which have grown markedly in recent years under the radar of the elites (and also, unfortunately, of the masses), are in the process of gaining strength. One of the main challenges that we face on this journey is the absence of a common narrative - of a holistic vision that allows us to identify and combine different positions, and to gather them together within a narrative that is both broader in scope, and shared throughout transformative socioeconomics.

This common narrative is key not only for allowing us to demonstrate our unity, but also to unmask those projects that do little more than reinvent neoliberal thinking under a new banner, and moreover to face down the monstrosities emerging on the far-right.

*Transformative economies*, is then a unifying concept of those proposals for socio-economic transformation that point to the same horizon. This horizon is shaped by plurality and regenerative processes that allow for the management of Place with respect and care for present and future generations. There are four movements of movements that, hybridising with each other and with other proposals, are the heart of the virtuous circle of transforming economies:



- *Feminist Economies*, to move markets and capital as the center of socio-economic organization and place life and all the processes that make it possible in a sustainable way, with special importance of the economy of care and key role of women and feminized values within this process.
- The *Social and Solidarity Economy*, with fair trade and ethical finance, built on the foundations of cooperativism and the construction of social markets, hybridising the traditional social economy with new practices of self-organisation and democratisation of the economy in all links to the business cycle, providing goods and services for the satisfaction of needs rather than profit.
- *Agroecology and the movement for Food Sovereignty*, with its key role in rethinking the agri-food model as a basic piece for sustaining life, which is also rethinking our relationship with the Earth and natural cycles, and that, therefore, connects its struggle with all the struggles for the defence of the land, led by social ecology and movements such as Degrowth.
- The economy based on the *Commons or Pro-commons*, with its three major subfamilies: urban commons, natural commons and digital and producing value, based on community management, breaking the state-market duality as the only visible and legitimate spaces for the production, management and allocation of resources of the economic system.

## 2.2.2. Feminist Economies and Economy of Care

Feminist economics is the critical study of economics and economies, with a focus on gender-aware and inclusive economic inquiry and policy analysis. Much feminist economic research focuses on topics that have been neglected in the field, such as the experiences of care work, intimate partner violence, or on economic theories which could be improved through better incorporation of gendered effects and interactions, such as between paid and unpaid sectors of economies. Feminist economists call attention to the social constructions of traditional economics, questioning the extent to which it is positive and objective, and showing how its models and methods are biased by an exclusive attention to masculine-associated topics and a one-sided favoring of masculine-associated assumptions and methods. While economics traditionally focused on markets and masculine-associated ideas of autonomy, abstraction and logic, feminist economists call for a fuller exploration of economic life, including such "culturally feminine" topics such as family economics, and examining the importance of connections, concreteness, and emotion in explaining economic phenomena as experienced by all members of society not solely the elites.

First, it explores the mutually constitutive relationship between gender and class, where class is defined as the relationship of a person/group to the production, appropriation, and distribution of surplus. Second, most contemporary feminist political economists view capitalism not just as an economic system but as an institutional order that shapes the culture, polity, as well as the economy, through its tendency to prioritize the accumulation of surplus, which is the "front story" of capitalism (Fraser 2014). Feminist political economists have developed a critique of this drive to accumulate, arguing that it

cannot be reconciled with a feminist vision that prioritizes life-making, in the broadest sense of that term (Bhattacharya 2017).

Care is about looking after and providing for the needs of human and nonhuman others; it is about the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance and protection of humans and the more-than-human world (Tronto 1993). Care is also assumed to be linked to the sense of feeling affection or liking or love. In interpersonal relationships, care often means to give or provide for the well-being of those who cannot take care of themselves because of age or disability.

This work is characterised by its time intensity, the continual requirements of the dependents and the inability of the carer to postpone the care needs. Care work can be performed as unpaid work in households and communities or as work for wages in childcare facilities, in hospitals or in nursing homes for the elderly. Empirically, and globally, this work is mostly done by women and it is socially considered to be 'women's work' (Budlender 2010). The symbolic gender order of masculinity and femininity naturalises this understanding of women's work in the care sector. It is hardly valued in capitalist and patriarchal societies which take care work for granted (Waring 1988, Beneria 2003). The experience of care can be understood as not only about acts of love and friendship but also about appropriate reciprocity among the human and non-human natural world through practices that respectfully acknowledge the agency of all beings in the world. Such acts of care require acts of imagination to reappropriate, reconstruct and reinvent our experienced personal and political lifeworlds (Escobar and Harcourt 2005).

### 2.2.3. Social and Solidarity Economy

Social solidarity economy is an ethical and values-based approach to economic development that prioritises the welfare of people and planet, over profits and blind growth. The social and solidarity economy is an umbrella concept designating social and solidarity economy enterprises and organisations (SSEOs), in particular cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations, nonprofits and social enterprises, which have the specific feature of producing goods, services and knowledge while pursuing both economic and social aims and fostering Solidarity.

Through its principles, values and practices related to participation, democracy, solidarity, and its social, and often environmental aims, the social economy has proven to be resilient to economic crises. In this way it is grounded in stimulating economic cultures that have strong values as well as defining ways and organisational structures for such values to be lived while strengthening communities' self-reliance and interconnectivity.

In times of rising inequalities, environmental degradation, and overall economic turbulence, the social economy provides civil society with the means to fulfil its needs. Indeed, the social economy provides goods and services in tune with the reality, culture and needs of the community it serves.

## 2.2.4. Agroecology And Food Sovereignty

Agroecology is about integrating ecological principles into the design and management of agricultural systems. It incorporates the long term protection of natural resources as an element of food production. It obviously is a merging of the words agriculture and ecology. Its basic purpose is to reconnect agriculture with its biophysical, agronomic, economic, and philosophical roots in natural ecosystems. Agroecology is much more than an environmental intervention. It's a social movement; one that helps to build, defend, and strengthen our complex food and agricultural systems in the process.

Agroecology is a promising alternative to industrial agriculture, with the potential to avoid the negative social and ecological consequences of input-intensive production. Transitioning to agroecological production is, however, a complex project that requires diverse contributions from the outside of scientific institutions. Agroecologists therefore collaborate with traditional producers and agroecological movements, through practices and behaviours, that ensure a regenerative use of natural resources and ecosystem services and addresses the need for socially equitable food systems. The adoption of agroecological practices at farm level contributes to increase smallholder farmer's incomes, food security and their resilience to climate change.

Agroecology applies "ecological science to the study, design and management of sustainable agroecosystems" (Altieri 1995) involving various approaches to solve actual challenges of agricultural production. Though agroecology initially dealt primarily with crop production and protection aspects, in recent decades new dimensions such as environmental, social, economic, ethical and development issues are becoming more relevant, and sprouting local action on diverse fronts. Today, the term 'agroecology' means both a scientific discipline, an agricultural set of practices and a socio-political movement.

Food sovereignty is a term that deals with food systems in which the people who produce, distribute, and consume food also control the mechanisms and policies of food production and distribution. This stands in contrast to the present corporate food regime, in which corporations and market institutions control the global food system. Food sovereignty emphasises local food economies, sustainable food availability, and centre culturally appropriate foods, practices and behaviours. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generations. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

### 2.2.5. Commons and Pro-commons Economy

The commons are the cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of a society, including natural materials such as air, water, and a habitable Earth. These resources are held in common even when owned privately or publicly. Commons can also be understood as natural resources that groups of people (communities, user groups) manage for individual and collective benefit. Characteristically, this involves a variety of informal norms and values (social practice) employed for a governance mechanism. Commons can also be defined as a social practice of governing a resource not by state or market but by a community of users that self-governs the resource through institutions that it creates.

Scholars such as David Harvey have adopted the term *commoning* as a verb that serves to emphasise an understanding of the commons as a process and a practice rather than as "a particular kind of thing" or static entity.

"The common is not to be construed, therefore, as a particular kind of thing, asset or even social process, but as an unstable and malleable [system of] social relations between a particular self-defined social group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet-to-be-created social and/or physical environment deemed crucial to its life and livelihood. There is, in effect, a social practice of commoning. This practice produces or establishes a social relation with a common whose uses are either exclusive to a social group or partially or fully open to all and sundry. At the heart of the practice of commoning lies the principle that the relation between the social group and that aspect of the environment being treated as a common shall be both collective and non-commodified-off-limits to the logic of market exchange and market valuations."

We can then highlight the systemic interconnection that exists between the resources shared (the common-pool resources), the community who governs it, and commoning, that is, the process of coming together to manage such resources. Commoning thus adds another dimension to the commons, acknowledging the social practices entailed in the process of establishing and governing a commons. These practices entail, for the community of commoners, the creation of a new way of living and acting together, thus involving a collective psychological shift: it also entails a process of subjectivization, where the commoners produce themselves as common subjects.

### 2.2.6. Back to Transformative economy

From these different perspectives on the economy and on life itself, we can extract a common perspective, a shared goal based on two broad affirmations:

- The determination to make the hidden faces of the economy visible: these movements place the role of the community in sustaining living conditions and natural systems, care tasks, and community ties at the forefront. The spaces which shape a plural economy have been neglected and often intentionally attacked by the market economy through its eagerness to commercialise all areas of life, and to conceal the strengthening of this diversity.

- The need to place them at the centre of economic activity: consequently, it is no longer merely a matter of giving visibility to that which has been invisibilized, but also of

defending and placing the long-term sustainability of natural systems, care tasks, and community networks at the centre of our economic life; of doing so in such way that the forms that the organisation of the economy might take are based on the equal distribution of power and resources; that they are therefore focused on the fulfilment of needs (as opposed to the pursuit of profit), and are undertaken on a democratic and transparent basis.

Accordingly, we can say that two broad axes form the cornerstone of this shared narrative: the sustainability of life (in terms of nature, our bodies and our communities) and the equal distribution of power (the democratic and non-profit-seeking organisation of the different ways in which systems of production are organised), breaking with the structures and the culture of power established under the current economic order.

Transformative economies want our life in common to be the axis on which the economy turns, and to end, once and for all, the hegemony of a failing capitalism that lingers around us.

For such ventures a holistic approach needs to be framed to support the collective impact of such a transformative shift toward modes of management that Sustain Life and Distribute Power synergistically. For that we believe that we need to take in consideration the lived experience of all impacted by such management, the re-enactment of pluralistic cultures of respect both new and old, the framing and sharing of regenerative practices and behaviour that can support this shift honouring local innovation and tradition as well as a globalised sense of solidarity, all this aware of all the systemic conditioning as well as impact that any action has at multiple scales.

For that, honouring the diversity present within the transformative movements mentioned before, we will be looking for a Framework that will try to encompass the Plurality within these movements focussing on their contributions towards embedded and locally appropriate patterns of change.

### 2.2.7. Integral Theory - All Quadrants

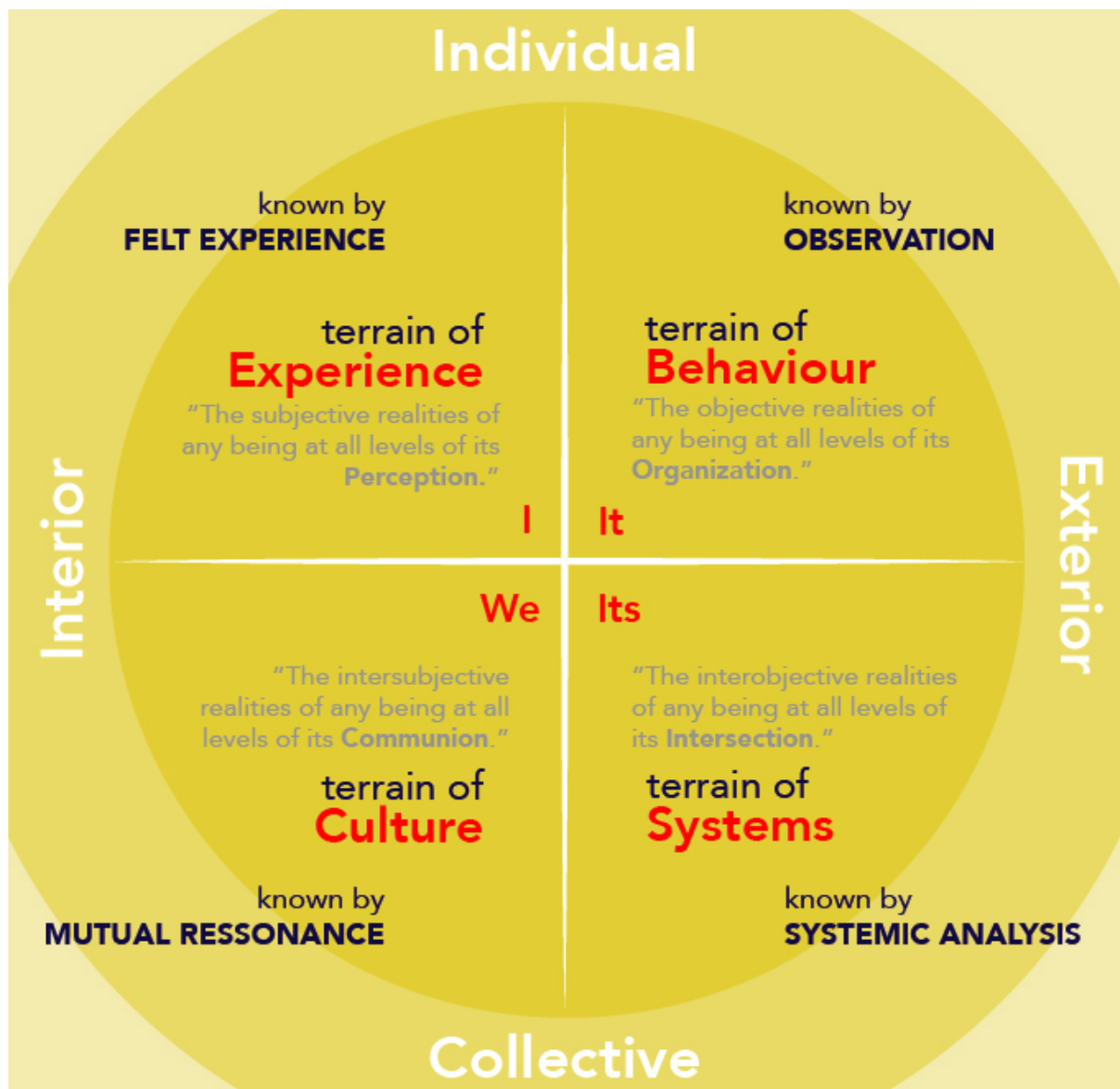
To synthesise the finding that emerge from this diverse and autonomous movement of movements, we've looked into Integral Theory as a synthesising tool that doesn't aim to normalise and bring to a central definition of a theory but is able to hold plurality and the diverse expressions of both lived experience of people impacted, the values and culture that emerges from autonomous organisation, the practices and behaviours present in the movements, as well as the systemic interactions where the movements are embedded and the connections they generate.

Ken Wilber's "Integral Theory" is a synthetic metatheory, a theory whose subject matter is theory itself, aiming to describe existing theory in a systematic way. A synthetic metatheory "classifies whole theories according to some overarching typology." Wilber's metatheory started in the early 1970s, with the publication of *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (1977), synthesising eastern religious traditions with western developmental psychology. Lately it has been widely used as a base to describe other centres of theory, such as ecology, psychology, spirituality and others.

One of the main approaches used by Integral theory to map reality and phenomena by integrating rather than segregating aspects of such phenomena is the content-neutral framework AQAL (All-Quadrants/All-Levels) model proposed by Wilber (2007). Here we will focus only on the “All Quadrants” component and leave the “All-Levels” part aside. We recognize that the “All-levels” part of this metatheory can sometimes be detrimental when ascribing levels of consciousness that in our view need further development to avoid falling into patterns of disconnection and elite creation, and that’s the reason we do not include the “All-levels” part in this analysis. We consider the “All Quadrants” part of such metatheory widely relevant to map the Transformative Economies reality and phenomena at this stage.

Four irreducible perspectives are framed within this model as quadrants, by separating reality into Interior or Exterior manifestations of individual or collective phenomena. These quadrants serve to synthesise phenomena and organise reality into qualities of expression. They are not to be seen as isolated and segmented bits that separate phenomena but holons of a whole systems (holistic) approach that try to describe phenomena, and from which angles we are perceiving the whole of creation. (Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman, 2009) The four quadrants are as following:

- A subjective experiential/intentional perspective (I) known by felt experience (individual-interior); In the subjective—or upper-left—quadrant, we find the world of our individual, interior experiences: our thoughts, emotions, memories, motivations, states of mind, perceptions, and immediate sensations—in other words, our “I” space.
- An intersubjective cultural perspective (We) known by mutual resonance (collective-interior); In the intersubjective—or lower-left—quadrant, we find the world of our collective, interior experiences: our shared values, meanings, language, relationships, and cultural background—in other words, our “we” space.
- An objective behavioural perspective (It) known by observation (individual-exterior); In the objective—or upper-right—quadrant, we find the world of individual, exterior things: our material body (including brain) and anything that you can see or touch (or observe scientifically) in time and space, practices, behaviours—in other words, our “it” space.
- And finally, An interobjective systemic/social perspective (Its) known by systemic analysis (collective-exterior); In the interobjective—or lower-right—quadrant, we find the world of collective, exterior things: systems, networks, technology, government, and the natural environment—in other words, our “its” space.



### 2.2.8. Theoretical synthesis

Looking deeply at the four movements that comprize our shared definition of Transformative economies (Feminist Economies and Economies of Care; Social and Solidarity Economy; Commons and Pro-commons Economy; and Agroecology and Food Sovereignty) we've identify certain patterns and qualities of inquiry that each one of them expresses, that have wider focus for such movement in comparison with others. With this we are not saying that such movements only dwell on such patterns for its inquiry, but that within their inquiry these patterns are shown as stronger allies for a holistic definition of Transformative economies, contributing to the plurality of expressions present within the movement of movements more clearly. We also found that there is a synergistic relationship between those qualities and the quadrants presented by Integral Theory, that lead us to choose, in the first place, such theory to frame the holistic concept of Transformative Economies. The connections are as following:



- Feminist Economies and Economies of Care, have a strong focus on the experience of all individuals impacted by economic choices, specially marginalized communities and individuals. It centres its action on improving the quality of life and empowering individuals as contributing members of society independently of gender, race and/or economic status emphasising the wellbeing, voice and power, specially, for those more marginalised. This is not to say that this movement does not take in consideration the systems where it is embedded (such as systemic violence) for instance or doesn't engage in behavioural societal change or the creation of cultures of value and decision making processes, on the contrary, they have wide impact on such areas of reality as well. But what is often shown and expressed as a strong motivation for such movement is the shift of the lived experience especially of marginalised individuals and honouring the experience of such individuals within the transformation of economic narratives. This is the reason we've placed this movement centred within the "I" quadrant (terrain of Experiences - known by Felt Experience - Subjective phenomena) looking out from that centre to the rest of phenomena, and having impact as a holon on all other quadrants as well.
- Social and Solidarity Economy; in this case the enfase is on highlighting the values and ethics associated with the way economic ventures are organised through the creation of shared organisational structures and processes that reinforce a collaborative and cooperative culture within initiatives. As in the prior movement, SSE also has strong links and innovations with the other quadrants. We've situated this movement centred in the "WE" quadrant (terrain of Culture - known by Mutual Resonance - Intersubjective phenomena), spreading its impact outwards through the other quadrants too.
- Agroecology and Food Sovereignty, deals especially with practices of securing sustainable/regenerative agroecological production of foods and other needs at a community level, as well as consumption behaviours that maintain and support such local cycles of economic flow. In this case we see this movement as a strong action oriented one and for such reason we've situated it at the "IT" quadrant (terrain of Behaviours - known by Observation - Objective phenomena), once again spreading its action onto other quadrants as well.
- Commons and Pro-commons Economy; Lastly this particular movement clearly has as its object of awareness the systems of communality that permeate the management of the "Oikos" (our collective Home), the air we breath, our oceans, the ecosystems and their functions and services, lands prior to privatisation, wildlife, climate, the collective knowledge base that exists and its shared across humanity's journey, as well as all the knowledge present outside present human awareness. For such systemic approach, this was an easy allocation, within an Integral Theory context, on the "ITS" quadrant (Terrain of Systems - known by Systemic Analysis - Interobjective phenomena), although starting from a systemic focus it also provides cultures of sharing, through actionable behaviours that have impact on the experience of those involved.

Acknowledging the permeable flow that each of these movements have through the different quadrants of the Integral Theory framework we've decided for this Participatory-Action Research (PAR) process to create an All-Quadrants adaptation for



Transformative Economies. We took in consideration each of the movements and their strong grounding aspects and rename the quadrants in terms of their qualities and essence. We were aiming that through this renaming and dissociation of such movements we would be able to have a less biased interpretation and approach of the broad representation of economic ventures that are transforming economic narratives independently of their identification with a particular movement or ideology. So for that we've create the following quadrants:

- PURPOSE & CARE later CARING PURPOSE; to emphasise the experience and motivation through the development of any type of transformative initiative.
- EQUITY & SOLIDARITY later SHARED CULTURE & GOVERNANCE; to highlight both the value system inherent in the initiative as well as the collaborative culture and shared organisational structures.
- ECO-SOCIAL ACTION later ECOSOCIAL ACTION; broadening the focus on actions developed through transforming economic narratives and practices, we've seen the need to widening the arena of agroecology and food sovereignty to encapsulate also other actionable eco-social behaviours and practices such as conscious water management, sustainable and affordable housing, renewable energy production and consumption, just to name a few.
- COMMUNITY & PLACE later SYNERGISTIC PARTNERSHIPS; to shed light into the fact that all initiative are embedded in particular Places and benefit from the shared commons present in a Community and that relationships or partnerships transform the health and quality of such commons specially when there's synergies established between initiatives.



This framework was what guided our Participatory Action Research (PAR) process and the harvests of local practices experienced within the four peripheric rural european regions described in the next chapter.

## 2.3. “Co-Sensing” - Selection of the four case studies of peripheral Europe

This project has defined its area of work with the concept of the “margins”. In hierarchical and centralised systems, margins are generated, in which the system is not able to act upon. The margins remain at the periphery of the social hierarchy and generally are characterised by more precariousness compared to the centre of the system. On the contrary, from a systemic perspective the marginal areas represent areas with high development potential, as the rigidity of structural violence is not so forceful here, leaving room for creativity and emergence of natural patterns.

For this reason, at the beginning of the Community Catalyst project, we selected partners from regions that meet the following criteria:

- They form part of the peripheral countries of the European Union
- They form part of the marginal areas in their own country
- They are part of a clear and singular bio-region
- They belong to a unique and peripheral culture
- They are not from an area majorly affected by exploitation, which would limit the implementation of regenerative development projects due to lack of resources

The four regions that meet the above criteria are:

### 1. Southwest Algarve, PORTUGAL

A rural Atlantic coastal region. This case presents a region with a unique and millennial history, and which is at the western end of Europe. It has developed an economy based on dried fruits, fishing and tourism.

### 2. Ecséd, HUNGARY

A rural continental flatland region. This case presents Roma communities which have their own ancient and unique language and culture, and represent one of the most marginalised cultures in Europe.

### 3. Madonie Sicily, ITALY

A rural insular region. This case presents a region that speaks its own dialect and has an ancient and unique culture. It is a clearly peripheral zone, but at the same time has capacity for response.

### 4. La Garrotxa Girona, SPAIN

A rural Mediterranean alpine region. This case presents a rural mountain region that speaks Catalan, a language not recognized by the European Union. It has a unique history and a sufficiently active, but not long-term, economy.

## 2.4. The “Identity” of this P.A.R. process - Research Goal and Objectives

### 2.4.1. Research Goal

Being a recent systemic movement of movements, many of the patterns innovated by Transformative initiatives are yet being tested and getting grounded in their particular local places. This gives space for an opportunity for shared learning and understanding between the different European periferic rural regions, before proposing any toolkit or set of patterns that in our perception might support the transformation of economic narratives.

We aim then to engage in a Participatory-Action Research process that takes in consideration the present state of such movements in the four regions at the same time that it strengthens the methodologies created by the Community Catalyst collaborative research consortium. Aiming for an iterative relevant proposal that is in tune with the needs and stage of development of each of the study regions, highlighting patterns that can be strapulated or serve as inspiration for other peripheral rural european initiatives.

### 2.4.2. Specific Objectives

1. Implement a participatory diagnosis to extract patterns on how local initiatives are transforming economic narratives and practices.
2. To highlight growing edges, limitations and strengths of each region in the context of Transformative Economies.
3. To prototype the Community Catalysts Toolkit, created in a prior project “Community Catalysts for Regenerative Development”, based on the regenerative design thinking process “WeLand - Making Sense of Place”, adapting it to a Participatory-action Research methodology.
4. To identify patterns useful for the creation of a Toolkit, a Curriculum, some theoretical guidelines and a Platform on Community catalyst for transformative economies.
5. To see the relevance of the SDG's for the context of Transformative Economies.

## 3. Methodology - our "Co-Design" process

### 3.1. Design of the Participatory Action Research process

Participatory action research (PAR) is an approach to action research emphasising participation and action by members of communities affected by that research. It seeks to understand the world by trying to change it, collaboratively and following reflection. PAR emphasises collective inquiry and experimentation grounded in experience and social history. Within a PAR process, "communities of inquiry and action evolve and address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers".

The PAR cycle is a process that invites community members to collaboratively engage in continued observation (Observe), gathering those observations and reflecting on them (Reflect), plan a course of actions appropriate to the context being researched (Plan) leading to act on the issue at hand (Act). Being an iterative process, the actions are followed by further observation, continued reflection, further planning and continued action.

The facilitators of this PAR considered it important to structure the PAR process in such a way that each part would generate a possible pattern to be analysed. Prototyping in this manner the pattern language process aimed for the creation of the Toolkit that follows this stage of the Community Catalysts for Transformative Economies project.

Also acknowledging the iterative process of these systemic inquiries, we've considered the design process that resulted from the Erasmus project that this consortium was involved in before (Community Catalysts for Regenerative Development Toolkit - CCRD).



For this PAR process we merged these two processes: the regenerative design thinking process "WeLand - Making Sense of Place" (CCRD) and the "Participatory-action Research Cycle". Both being able to showcase the iterative nature of the process needed to understand Transformative Economies locally, as well as focussing on participation that leads to action on particular issues.

## 3.2. The Participatory-action Research Script

### 3.2.1. "Creating the Soil" for the Participatory Community Meeting (pre-meeting)

- 1st** - Define the limits of the Bioregion you wish to access.
- 2nd** - Find 8 to 10 diverse initiatives with relevant work on Transformative Economies.
- 3rd** - Send the Transformative Economies Survey for the initiatives to answer, collect the data and analyse it.
- 4th** - Invite the representatives for an interview guided by a Canvas with the following 3 patterns: Territorial Impact of the Organisation; Result of their Transformative Economies Survey as a Radial chart within the 4 Transformative Economies quadrants for reflection; Define collaboratively the Drive of the Initiative.

### 3.2.2. Participatory Community Meeting on Transformative Economies

Invite the initiative co-developers that you've interviewed and the community actors affected by those initiatives, as well as the general public with interest in the subject of Transformative Economies (TE) to participate in a Community Meeting. The form of such meetings can be diverse, although we encourage that it is done as an interactive exhibition, where people pass by different actionable stations to leave their comments and participate in the creation of this PAR process. It can also be done online with the support of Mural (online platform). The proposed stations are as followed (to be adapted to the local context of each region):

#### "Landscape Integrity" - Observe

##### 1st. Bioregion Territory of Impact

- > **Why:** To visualise the collective territory covered by the initiatives and the areas underlooked or overlooked.
- > **How:** Dispose a Map of the territory. Invite participants to delineate/draw the territorial area their initiative impacts on.
- > **What:** A Map, markers, computer (online), mural (software)
- > **Tips:** reinforce the real impact that the initiative has, more than the one that the initiative wishes to have to be able to highlight areas that might be taken less in consideration.

## “Co-Sensing” - Observe

### 2nd. Bioregional TE Radial Chart

- > **Why:** To visualise and picture the growing edges and strengths of the bioregion in terms of TE and stimulate reflexion.
- > **How:** Present the cumulative result of the TE Survey showcasing an over-positioning of the results as a collective radial chart, highlighting growing edges and potential strengths present in the bioregion. Ask for reflection and insights people might have when viewing the radial chart.
- > **What:** A print out of the radial chart of the cumulative results, flipcharts and markers.
- > **Tips:** choose different colours for the different initiatives.

### 3rd. Shifting Hats

- > **Why:** To create empathy and widen the voices and points of view, adding diversity and inclusiveness to the inquiry.
- > **How:** Place the name of diverse actors present in the bioregion (human and other-than-human) on individual pieces of paper. Choose one and roleplay by speaking to a relevant question from the viewpoint of such an actor. (eg. What is my contribution and impact on the local economy?)
- > **What:** paper, list of actors...
- > **Tips:** give time for reflection; a circle conversation can help; use deep listening...

## “Identity Naming” - Reflect

### 4th. Bioregional TE Leverage Points

- > **Why:** To highlight areas of future potential impact and collective action
- > **How:** After reflection, invite people to either name potential leverage points on a flipchart; or by placing the different areas of transformative economy from the TE quadrants ask them to place dots in the three areas that would have more impact in the region. The collective highlighting would show the priority for action.
- > **What:** Flipchart, markers, a printed chart with the 4 quadrants and their respective 3 areas of potential action.
- > **Tips:** emphasise the need to choose the ones that would have more impact on the present context.

## “Co-Design” - Plan

### 5th. Bioregional Golden Bowl 2025 (Backcasting)

- > **Why:** To delineate pathways to activate the leverage points identified to be achieved by 2025
- > **How:** on a wall place a table with 4 columns, each one for each year from 2022 to 2025. Ask people to place the leverage point (as goals) they wish to see achieved by 2025 on the

respective column. Invite them to visualise and write on post-its the actions needed per year to achieve such goals, starting with 2024, followed by 2023 and finally the more closest actions for 2022. Step back and reflect on the actions present.

> **What:** Cenic paper or flipcharts, markers, post-its, mural (online)...

> **Tips:** invite people to be specific.

#### **6th. Assets Present / Assets Needed**

> **Why:** To celebrate and inform assets present, and inform and highlight assets needed

> **How:** Place two flipcharts on the wall. One for people to write the assets already present and another for assets that are not present but needed in the bioregion that can support the implementation of the proposed actions. Invite people to name those assets in the respective flipcharts.

> **What:** Flipcharts, markers, mural (online)

> **Tips:** review the assets needed and see if they are available but unknown to the person that wrote such assets. Sometimes you have surprises.

## **“Regenerative Livelihoods” - Act**

#### **7th. Draw your comments & contacts**

> **Why:** To harvest other topics and comments relevant to the context.

> **How:** place a white board or flipchart for people to leave their comments and their contacts to have direct feedback as well as allowing an agile network and connectivity emerge between people with linking interests or challenges.

> **What:** whiteboard, flipcharts, cenic paper, markers

> **Tips:** Encourage artistic expression

#### **8th. Jump of Commitment**

> **Why:** To celebrate and commit to each individual's next steps, to activate leverage point in the bioregion

> **How:** from a stand (high, low you choose) jump forward and shout your commitment. “I will commit to...”

> **What:** a stand, your will to do it.

> **Tips:** not all people feel comfortable to expose themselves in an extroverted way, so for those more shy, allow for silent reflection on this point.



## 4. Our “Regenerative” Findings and Discussion



### 4.1. “Creating the Soil”

#### 4.1.1. Transformative Economies Survey

##### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

After identifying Key initiatives that had relevant work or interest within Transforming economic pattern in the Southwest Algarve bioregion, the survey was sent and 12 initiatives answered. The initiatives were a diversity of alternative currencies; integral cooperatives; NGOs in the field of outdoor tourism and arts; eco-tourism; alternative farmer’s markets; organic & regenerative farms and others. The results were diverse in scope and a radial chart was developed with such results.

Being a survey that focuses on the perception an individual or a collective has of its own initiative (qualitative survey), the results tended to show a more subjective understanding of each initiative. As a Participatory-Action research tool, it aimed to instigate conversation and reflection within the initiatives to prepare the ground for further, more specific inquiry with the Interviews (canvas).

The feedback to the survey was that it created a momentum of reflection to the topic of Transformative economies, and a push for initiatives to look inwardly and identify transformative patterns in the way they interact with each other and the commons. An improvement suggestion that came frequently was the scale of answers that by being always the same and more general, not always applied easily to some of the questions.

As cumulative results we got a quite filled radial chart, although we could identify a slight more capacity within the upper quadrants (purpose and Care; Eco-Social Action), the ones that relate most with the individual layer of the initiative, and a slight growing edge on the collective layer (Equity and Solidarity; Community and Place). One reason we reflected for such results was that most initiatives are still in the first years, some even months, of existence, and that that makes it visible that the focus is still more internal. We believe that



once initiatives get more established the impact on the collective region as well as the creation of a transformative economy's culture will be more established.

## Hungary

In Hungary the survey was filled out by members of 9 organisations. All of them are established social solidarity economy organisations, cooperatives, associations or nonprofit companies. Their profile contains: community supported agriculture, network of farmers and practitioners of sustainable lifestyle, permaculture, ecovillages, Social-solidarity Economies (SSE) network facilitators. Almost all of them are active members of the Hungarian SSE network. In the majority of the cases one person filled out from each organisation, but in 2-3 cases it was brought to a meeting where more members could give inputs.

Everybody found it a very important questionnaire, and expressed the importance of knowing why we are doing this work. In this way it raised the visibility of our work and the curiosity about the result in our target group.

The people found the survey itself really useful and informative. A member of a local cooperative, who works with different communities, asked for permission to use the questionnaire in her work, as she really liked it.

A recurring feedback about the survey was that some questions were about a specific topic (like the one about renewable energies, and plan to reach it) which is not a relevant question e.g. in the case of a shopping community thus the radial chart was low in that part, but in reality the shopping communities are reducing energy consumption. The indicator did not cover the whole topic of energy consumption and this led to a low rate in that part. Another example for this is waste management or local money. The shopping communities are too small to create local money, but they have an effect on the local economy in many ways. There also were subjective questions in the questionnaire, like the feminist ecology which is hard to measure.

Another feedback was, that it would have been better if more people would have filled it out from the same organisation, because in many cases the person who filled out was too strict on the initiative. The opportunity was there for every organisation to choose this option but we did not make it mandatory.

Also if an initiative has a 1, and a 5 year plan, next to the vision, and mission, and if they are checking, reflecting on it, or not. The leader of an initiative has to make it possible to reflect on all this from time to time. What is the working ecosystem?

## Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

Two findings are worth sharing: the results of the survey and the territorial reaction to it. The first territorial answer are the difficulties encountered in engaging with the tool. Many external circumstances made it difficult for people to be engaged; as an organisation, Palma Nana attempted to harvest learnings: 1. The tool proposed did not embed a language that was accessible to the catalyst involved 2. Palma Nana should have the role of

translating the tools from the consortium into tools that are appropriate to the local context.

An introductory online meeting was organised before launching the surveys, involving 9 local initiatives in the field of transformative economies. Only three initiatives filled in the survey.

## Garrotxa (Catalunya)

The surveys were sent to the chosen initiatives and to the cooperative ecosystem of XES Garrotxa (50 entities). 9 initiatives answered, the information has been transferred first to a google form and then to the survey on the Community.catalyst website.

Aspects identified in the survey design:

The survey was focused on initiatives of nested system 1, that is, first-degree structures, in which the social purpose is work. Initiatives that are networks or community economies, such as Euram or lera, and that do not have labour work within the initiatives, did not answer questions such as: "Are economic, social, gender and gender conditions taken into account when hiring a new member or when corroborating their permanence in the initiative?"

There were answers to the survey that were difficult to position within the scale of progressive response, such as: "How do you collaborate, promote, or are part of any initiative to promote renewable energy?". In these cases, it would have been useful to use a progressive answer with information more in line with the question, or to have the open answer.

The format of the survey was based on unmeasurable and qualitative indicators, and answers were given according to the respondent's perception, implying that results may be subjective. For instance, while the Administration (DinàmiG) complies with the State's regulations, most responses given were "Implemented, collecting learnings and improvements", and other initiatives' responses varied depending on whether they applied proactive improvements beyond the law, even though they were applying it in a less regulated format.

## General synthesis

The response to the survey was diverse. In several cases, it served the purpose of introducing the concept of Transformative economies as a unifying theme between the diverse initiatives, as well as establishing the engagement with some of the initiatives. Within this field of action the tool of a survey with questions that came from a more structured (academic) framework did not always stimulate the same will for engagement. Although we were able to harvest some information that was useful for further reflection in the next stages of the PAR we need to create more interactive modes of inquiry, if we wish to engage initiatives that already struggle with the use of their time.

## 4.1.2. TE Interviews (Canvas)

### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

We've interviewed, with the help of the TE Canvas, the different initiatives during the Community meeting on a separate station solely dedicated for such purpose. The different initiative's representatives reflected on the impact they have on the Territory, as well as on the results of the survey through analysing the radial chart with the help of a facilitator. After reflection, the Drive for the initiative to tackle Transformative economies was delineated collaboratively and each initiative benefited from the reflection and took the result as a synthesis document.

### Hungary

During the interviews we went through the canvas in a Mural (an online cooperative whiteboard service), gathered information about the organisation, its territorial impact and then we were diving into the results of the interview. The feedback about the interviews presented before were harvested in this part.

The radial chart was analysed together with the participants, gathering feedback about how relevant they find it. In the majority of the cases they felt that it fits their perception but there were also points where they did not find it correct. In some cases the main field of activity of the organisation got the weakest results. (For example, an organisation providing training and active support for permaculture practitioners was really low in eco-social action.) We were discussing if this is due to the measurement tool or the fact that these organisations have the deepest knowledge in their field thus they are aware of the perspectives and the heights that are possible to reach.

It was a good self-reflection for most of the participants to realise their own strengths, the fact that they are good in many aspects. The overall opinion was that regular occasions of such self-reflection should be part of the life and development of the organisations.

In the last part came the formulation of the driver. The difficulty of this task varied on a wide scale, some participants almost instantly formulated the sentences of the driver as if they would already have a driver (although they didn't, they just could get attuned to the thinking really easily), in other cases it was a long and hard thinking, co-creating process. We tried from time to time to give a proposal for a specific part of the driver and that helped to formulate the complex and in many cases difficult situations into some sentences.

The people found it really useful in their further work, many of them brought the driver to a meeting in the organisation to present it for their colleagues to build on it in the development of the organisation or managing a specific conflict or blockage they are facing. This is a direct positive impact and shows the real spirit of a Participatory Action Research: the very fact of participating in the process instantly had a positive impact on the participants, the act of self reflection increased the clarity on their situation and the new viewpoint offered through the PAR fostered new solutions in moving forward.

## Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

In the above described context, Palma Nana decided to try and meet the catalyzers, to go through the survey together and do the interviews at the same time. In the context of covid restrictions and severe weather conditions, we did not push the activity. Very few people were reacting to our stimulus, only three filled in the survey and so we held only one interview.

Unfortunately we realised that the communication between us and the catalyzers was interrupted and we sensed it was not appropriate to insist.

## Garrotxa (Catalunya)

12 interviews were conducted following the following diversity criteria:

- Its position on the paradigm of regenerative development
- Organisational nested system (first degree structure, second degree, or county level)
- Catalyser role within the county

12 initiatives were chosen, which display enough regional representation so as to get to know different fronts.

In the interviews that followed the Canvas format, respondents were first asked about the territorial impact and then delved into a more ecosystemic dimension of the situation of the initiative and needs to further develop its purpose.

## General synthesis

Where the canvas was used, it gave a progressive structure to an interview that slowly built into coming up with a driver for each initiative for the way they wish to incorporate Transformative economies within their culture. From looking at the real impact on the territory of their initiative, following the reflection on the results of the TE survey through the radial chart, the interviewers were embedded in a space of reflection that made it easier to frame a driver for the initiative's present moment concerning the transformation of economic narratives and practices.



## 4.2. Landscape Integrity

@ Community Meeting

### 4.2.1. CM\_Bioregion Territory of Impact

#### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

The Southwest Algarve Bioregion comprises 3 municipalities (Lagos, Vila do Bispo and Aljezur). When identifying where the participants of the Community meeting and their initiatives impacted in the territory we've got a mixed result with some participants impacting small valley regions within a particular village, to impact within a municipality but not the neighbouring ones, trans-municipality regions such as the coast or the inland hills as well as initiatives/people that their work impacted the entire bioregion. We also identified an epicentre within the participants around Lagos. This can be, because the community meeting was done in Lagos making it more accessible for participants of that part of the bioregion, also Lagos is the only city in the bioregion having also a bigger population, making it an epicentre of action in a plurality of sectors, and that got represented in the results of the territory of impact of the participants.

#### Hungary

The community event was organised in online format using zoom and the Mural canvas which was started during the interviews, extended with new content and frames for cooperation.

We managed to cover the whole bioregion, which in our case was the whole country, as there are not so many initiatives locally, and the country is small. Based on the feedback from the interviewed participants, we could identify further important organisations, communities who could be part of the PAR, for example an important initiative, the Krishna Valley (an Indian Cultural Centre and Eco Farm in Hungary is one of the largest and oldest ecovillages in Europe).

## Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

The Madonie Mountain Park -which is in the European Network of Geoparks- holds more than 60% of the Mediterranean Biodiversity. The Park extends from the northern coast to the inland of Sicily, where it reaches 1900m above the sea level. The socio-economic context is of a peripheral, marginal, rural territory. Poor infrastructures are contributing to the phenomena of migration of people, especially young people, abandoning villages and lands. In this context, those that live in the territory are passing on ancient knowledge, and enhancing the territory, protecting the landscape, producing and processing food into niche products.

## Garrotxa (Catalunya)

The territorial impact is very diverse, as initiatives of different sizes and projections were interviewed, from the multinational Zoetis, to community economies such as the Ecoxarxa. Most identify the impact generally in all Garrotxa.

## General synthesis

Some regions are more bounded by administrative boundaries that match the identity of the people interviewed. Other regions extend to more than one municipality and so there is a diverse sense of identity with the impact in the region. Other areas are natural parks that have their own boundaries. And on a broad scale some regions comprise the entire country as it is the example of Hungary. To visualise the areas impacted by the initiatives was useful in some cases, highlighting territorial areas that receive more attention than others.



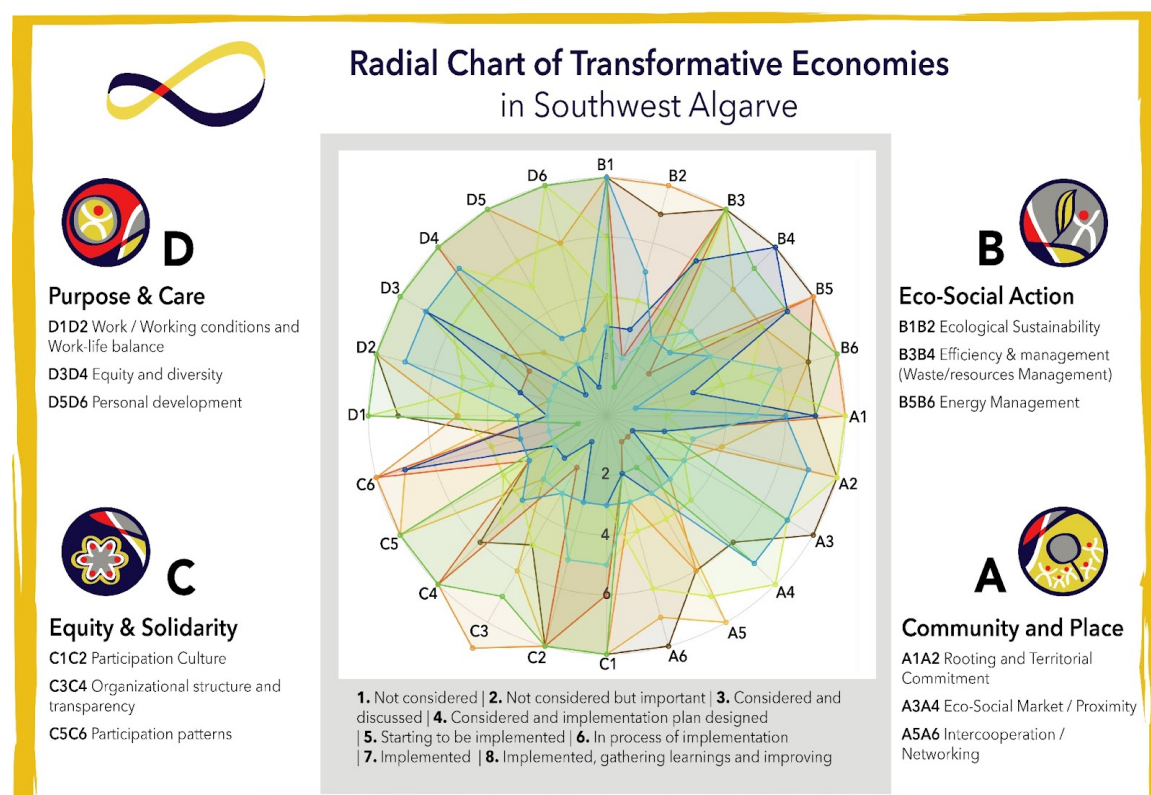
## 4.3. Co-Sensing

@ Community Meeting

### 4.3.1. CM\_Bioregional TE Radial Chart

#### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

The interactions with the collective radial chart (cumulative results from the TE Survey), brought a sense of shared awareness that within the region there is a wide spectrum of capacity and that the diverse initiatives could easily share amongst themselves their strengths and difficulties, and that trans-initiative collaborations would be appreciated. At the same time there was a sense that many initiatives are still very recent, and that for each type of initiative there are not many other initiatives that are similar. So although the diversity was broad, the quantity and quality of the collective learning is still low.



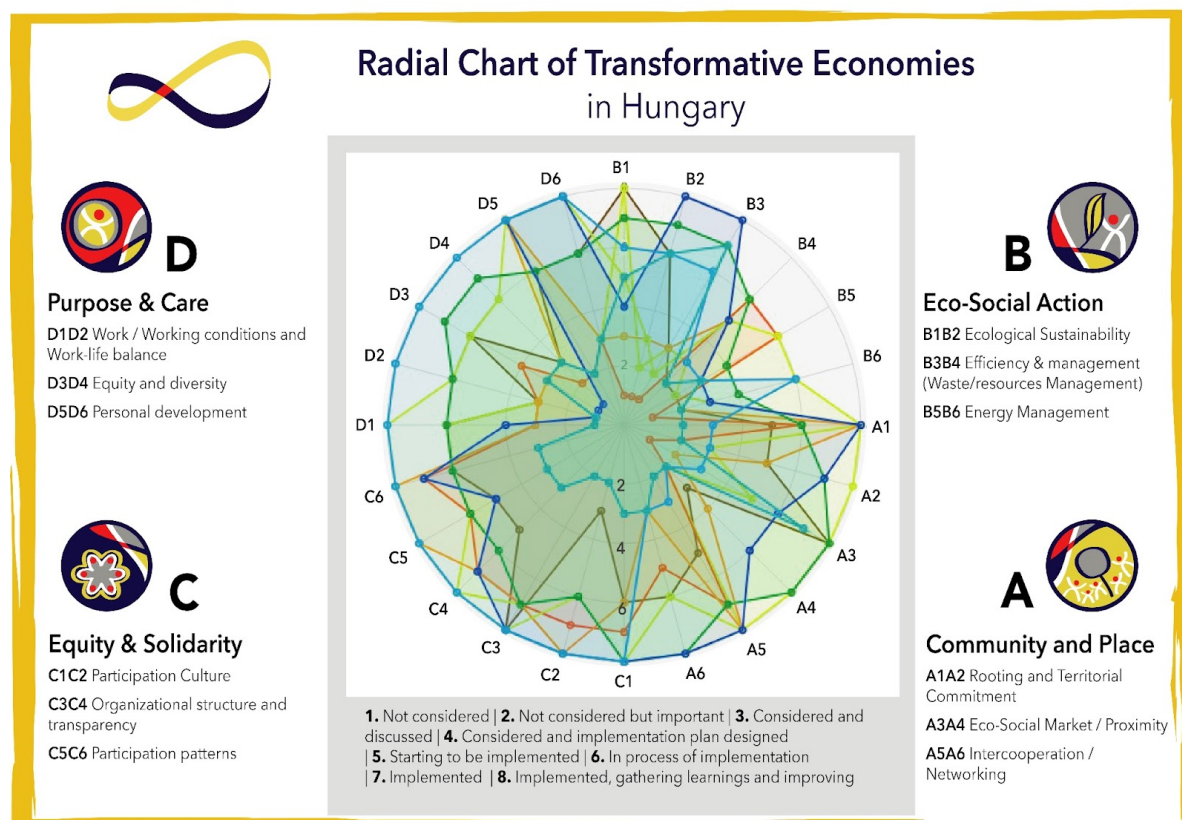


## Hungary

After each organisation got familiar with their own radial chart in the community event they were really interested to see the bioregional radial chart. Common strengths and weaknesses we have found in the radial chart: The 9 initiatives almost cover the whole "flower". The weaknesses are mainly in the energy independency, or a plan for it, and the waste management; in general the B section is the weakest one, but based on the feedback, the questions were too general/strict, so they were giving low numbers even to the questions which are their main focus. (Like a shopping community that got low in waste management, meanwhile they are not using plastic at all, the main idea is to buy locally, and to lower the waste.)

Another important outcome was that the cooperation between the organisations could be strengthened, there is a lot of unused potential in this. There are many common issues with which the participants are dealing separately, they find the solutions themselves. From a wider perspective the one of the TE movement as a whole this counts as duplicate work.

On the other hand this network of organisations is decentralised which makes it more resilient. This feature is a strength that can be built on. Such opinions and understandings about the whole scene of SSE, TE are the result of community events as the PAR closing event, they are not emerging when separate organisations are developing their strategies. This was another important contribution of the PAR process in developing the Hungarian scene of SSE: on top of the benefits of the interviews with the separate organisations, the community event provided a self-reflection for the whole Hungarian community of the experts, practitioners, and activists of Transformative Economy.





## Garrotxa (Catalunya)

In the in-depth conversation, five questions were asked:

### A. What is the purpose of the initiative?

The purpose of each of the initiatives is diverse and unique depending on its social object and desire for transformation, however, all of them name differently three patterns with which they understand their economic activity:

- **Network:** the need to network with the environment, to cooperate among members, to create a community.
- **Responsibility:** Whether from self-sufficiency or from local or professional development, with different perspectives, all initiatives appeal to co-responsibility.
- **Positive social and environmental development:** some initiatives refer to the SDGs, others to socio-economic development, and for others the goal is social and environmental transformation taking into account the "limits of perversion".

### B. What is the context in which you work to fulfil the purpose? Or how are you fulfilling that purpose?

Most of the interviewees identify different challenges, which are part of the global context. For example, the multinational initiative argues that it doesn't face any challenges to develop its purpose. Instead, other initiatives identify challenges such as the devaluation of their products or services, the relocation of the decision-making poles, the accessibility to resources necessary to develop their activity, among others. DinàmiG argues that there is a joint strategy with a public-private partnership, although the different initiatives state that this strategy, or the actions that derive from it, do not meet their needs. Different initiatives emphasise the need for a common and transversal direction.

### C. What impact is this purpose having?

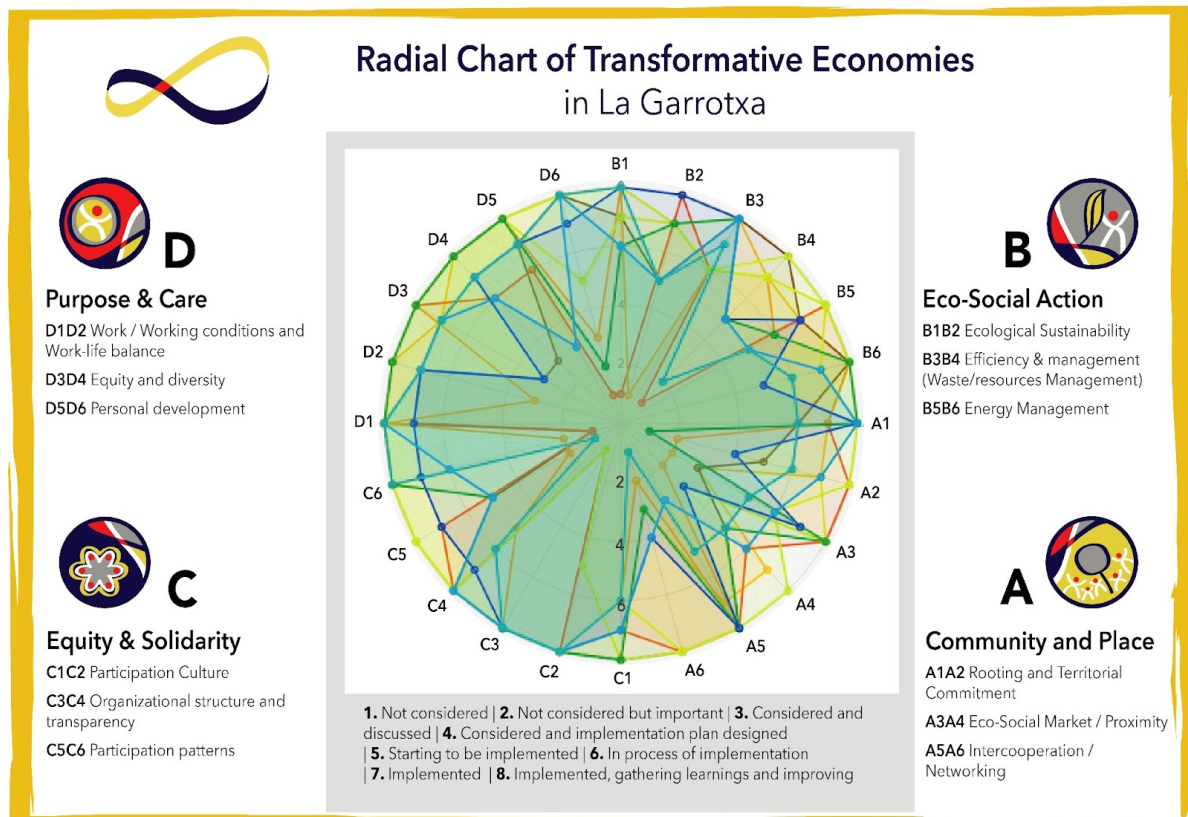
The impact of these institutions is diverse, although most of the initiatives notice some recognition in the environment, and growth either in society, with an increase in collective participation, or in community deepening. In this sense, a common pattern is seen in **generation of networks**. However, most of the initiatives place themselves in the complaint, arguing that their impacts happen due to external factors. We could place most of the initiatives in a moment of **Reorganisation within the Resilience Cycle**, as a sense of uncontrollability and a chaotic margin in the initiatives can be perceived.

### D. What do you need from the ecosystem to develop the purpose with more agility and transformation?

Most of the initiatives mention the need of access to resources or of better distribution, whether economic, access to land, or even in the accessibility of mobility infrastructures within the county, compared to other counties. However, most initiatives call for more awareness, education, information, and empathy from the public. Individual responsibility is called for in different situations. We could say that the **paradigm of progress or green washing** in the regenerative framework is a common denominator.

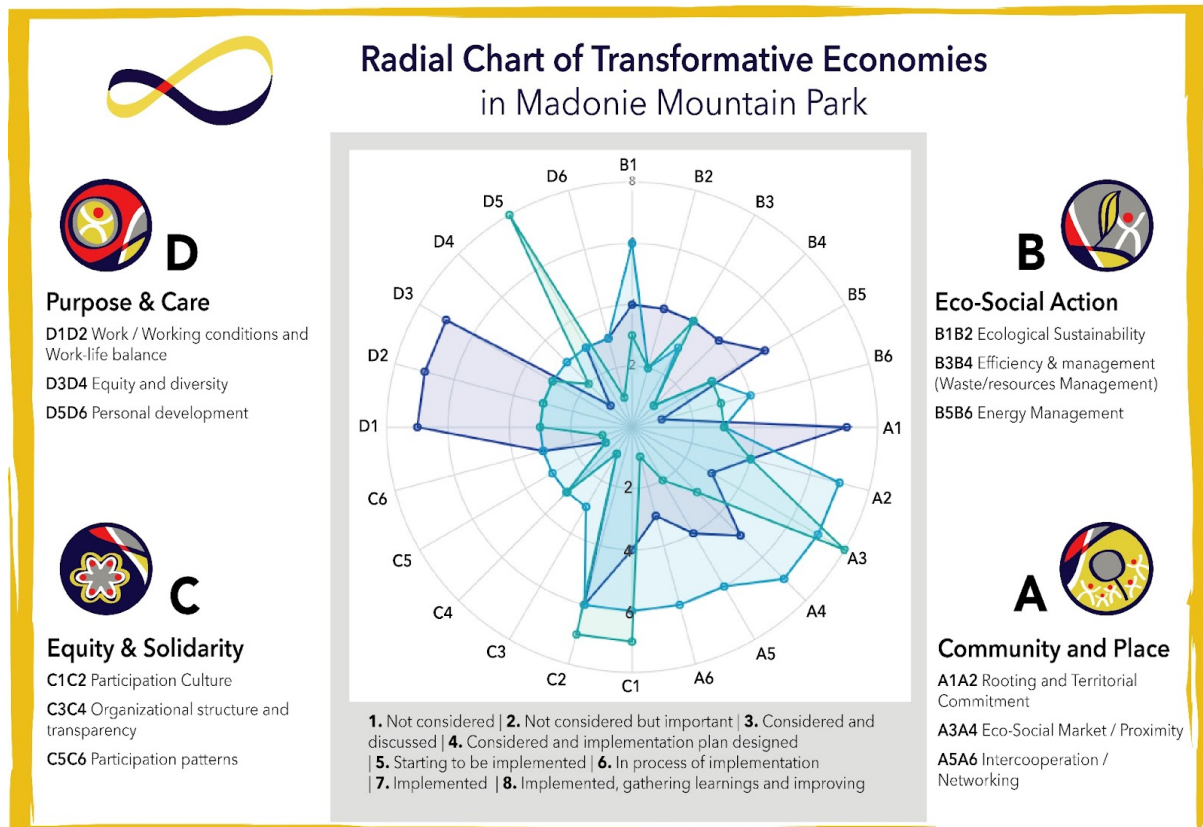
## E. What would happen if your needs were met?

The initiatives argue that the population's awareness would increase. It's an element that has been raised frequently in the interviews. Another common element is that the work would be framed with a shared vision, which takes into account community, and a change in the productive and economic models, which would generate a strong rooting in the county. It has also been said that there would be more communication, more ease in the processes, and that it would have a positive impact with more equity, both socially and environmentally.



## Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

With the awareness of the difficulties encountered in the first phase of the PAR, Palma Nana decided not to force the local context: the community meeting has been cancelled. The facilitators of the cooperative went through the stations agreed for the meeting, in order to harvest learnings from the process.



## General synthesis

Where the cumulative radial chart with the results for the bioregion on the four quadrants of Transformative Economies were used as base for reflection, we've seen that the focus of attention grew out from each individual initiative's capacity and skill sets, to a sense of collective possible action and knowledge present in the region. Insights into leverage points of collective growth were signalled. And, conversation and exchange was possible between initiatives. In other areas the sharing happened around trying to find a common purpose for action, and sparked discussion and reflection on priorities shared by participants. This exercise of reflection was also aimed as warming up the field for a focussed naming of leverage points, in a next meeting station, that would generate achievable actions in the future towards transforming economic narratives and practices.

### 4.3.2. CM\_Shifting Hats

#### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

A circle of chairs with the generative question “What is my contribution and impact on the local economy?” was put in place. In the middle a pack with cards with several actors present in the bioregion (sports person; Cork oak; artist; municipality; researcher; farmer; tourist; investor; Association; Octopus; entrepreneur; citizen’s movement; school or pedagogical project; youth; surfer; Wild boar; fisherman; craftsperson; family; hunter; health care person) as well as some empty cards for participants to add any relevant actor not present in the pack of cards (child and new-age healer were added to the actor cards). The participants were asked to sit in the circle, choose one card and answer the question from the point-of-view of the actor and truly embed as much as possible such actor in the conversation. This sparked very rich conversations and allowed participants to dissociate from their individual wishes for the bioregion and create empathy with other actors within the region. A reason for such exercise was also to broaden the reflection and depersonalise the answer when looking at the prioritisation of the leverage points for the Bioregion as a whole.

#### Hungary

This activity did not work properly in our online event. The participants did not understand the purpose and were confused about what has to be done. This prevented many of them from even contributing to the task and those who gave inputs did not do it in the first person – as the instruction said, to “wear” that hat – but in third person.

Maybe the cause was the online format, probably in a live setting the activity could have been designed to be more attractive and inducing real participation. Another reason could be that the participants were too academic, too analytical, overly in the head and this activity needed another mode of operation, using different parts of their personality which they are not used to.

#### Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

Roles – and learnings harvested

1. Activators and facilitators – the language, the spaces and the rhythm of the process has to be designed from territorial needs
2. SME and TE initiatives – in the socio-economic context of peripheral, rural and marginal communities it’s hard to find spaces for meta reflection, if it is not possible to see the local relevance, the tangible outputs and the applicability of the proposal at the territorial level
3. Civil society – need for spaces of debate and collective growth
4. Youth – need to foresee the how the tangible results of the project can help building local sustainability
5. Municipality and local decision makers – how can the tools proposed serve to create job

opportunities and bring change at the local level?

## Garrotxa (Catalunya)

In the context of the XES Garrotxa, different roles of the ecosystem of La Garrotxa were identified: general public, allies, administration, MSMS and associations, SMEs and local trade, antagonists (industry, meat, euras), XES G entities, Núria Social,

People were asked to "act out" each role, and to answer the following question, "What do you think of SSE?"

The actors personify XES Garrotxa and answer the question for each role, so as to understand how we should approach them in this role. Trying to make it a "conversation".

We collect feedback from all roles on the board:

- What does each role say?
- What is the answer to approach it?

## General synthesis

Broadening the inquiry with the voices and perspectives of other actors that have their livelihoods present in the regions, helped to see beyond each sector's silos, and increased empathy with others present in the territory. Different worldviews live in Place, and for us to be able to make sense of place as it is lived, we need to understand each territory in an inclusive and diverse manner. Not always it is easy to change hats with others, specially with those that think differently from oneself. In some cases the embodiment of each worldview was playfully tried out, in other cases was more difficult or less appropriate to do so.



## 4.4. Identity Naming

@ Community Meeting

### 4.4.1. CM\_Bioregional Leverage points

#### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

To identify and prioritise the most relevant Leverage Points from a transformative economies perspective, we've asked participants to vote (using dotocracy) what were the 3 main areas of action to stimulate transformative economies in the bioregion, the results were as following:

1. (12dots) Intercooperation / Networking (A5a6)
2. (9dots) Ecological Sustainability (B1b2)
3. (7dots) Rooting and Territorial Commitment (A1a2)
4. (6dots) Eco-Social Market / Proximity (A3a4) & Efficiency & management (Waste/resources Management) (B3b4)
5. (5dots) Equity and diversity (D3d4) & Organisational structure and transparency (C3c4)
6. (3dots) Participation Culture (C1c2)
7. (2dots) Energy Management (B5b6) & Personal development (D5d6) & Participation patterns (C5c6)
8. (1dot) Work / Working conditions and Work-life balance (D1d2)

Interestingly, these results reinforces the reflection done with the cumulative radial chart (survey) results where the growing edges of the bioregion were situated more on the Community and Place quadrant, with intercooperation/Networking coming as the one most voted and Rooting and Territorial Commitment in 3rd. There is also a good number of dots (votes) on Ecological Sustainability, that we identify more with the pressing issues we are living today globally with ecological crises and a need for global and local eco-social action.

#### Hungary

The group was split into two small groups in breakout rooms, working on separate sections on the Mural. The groups gathered the leverage points and then we united again

in one big group and synthesised the results and created a list of the most relevant leverage points:

- Focus on your own area of impact
- Ecosystem-thinking is needed: are the actors able to think out of their box?
- Becoming that actor of the ecosystem who can form others behaviour, whose acts are followed or questioned; who can have an effect on the public opinion
- Build on the widespread distrust towards the system, the establishment and turn (or develop) it into an increased trust towards community
- Show good examples
- Raising awareness
- To grow our visibility, and the trust toward us
- To focus on our own scope
- Take advantage from the transformative capacity of different crises: giving a response to the economic crises by presenting and popularising alternative economies
- Local currency with negative interest (the bills contain the date when it was released and lose some percentage of the value every week – this encourages people to spend the money and not keep in reserve, which gives a boost in the local economy)
- Not only being motivated to do things differently but to do this together with others
- Instead of just going with the flow and reacting, the organisations should be more focused and strategic
- Finding where is the motivation in the community and build on it

After the group's reunion we have integrated the leverage points and identified the three most important to work with in the next steps. These were:

1. Turn crisis into transformation
2. Increase the visibility of alternatives, increase the trust towards them
3. Community actions, experiencing them deeply

## Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

Drive: to raise awareness on the transformative potential of territorial actors

Leverage points:

1. Love for the bioregion
2. Passion and territorial integrity
3. All actors are rooted in the territory
4. To be recognized and legitimised by the macro-community for the quality of the processes of food production and transformation
5. People are open to collective growth and feel a shared need to higher the impact of individual and collective actions



## Garrotxa (Catalunya)

To generate a dialogue with the community and receive feedback on the results of the surveys and interviews, it was necessary to have two meetings among two different ecosystems:

1. XES Garrotxa. The network of solidarity economies of La Garrotxa encompasses 53 entities with more than 650 people involved. It aims to become a reference and cross-sectoral network in La Garrotxa with a respectful economy and aimed towards the eco-social transition, promoting inter-cooperative relations.
2. Ateneu Cooperatiu Terres Gironines. A public-cooperative body with 21 entities that work for the dynamization, training and support in the consolidation and creation of the social and cooperative economy in Girona.

### XES Garrotxa

XES Garrotxa suggested the strategic objective of generating a discourse of advocacy and a common story with the different entities. After generating a dynamic of deepening and strategic analysis, leverage points of impact were identified that could be useful in the co-creation of our advocacy discourse. These points are as follows:

1. Before, in rural areas, there was already an exchange of resources and a solidarity economy, we must look for ancient references in local wisdom.
2. Pay more attention to the traceability, behind the purchase, of what we sell. The production process and the values we use are very valuable here
3. Do not blame individual consumption because it generates rejection, as it is difficult to get things moving. Promote collective or more structural changes to make structural violence obsolete
4. Make ourselves visible collectively, not only in individual projects, but as a network
5. We need to keep in touch with local trade and SMEs. Even though we think that they should recycle themselves, because if they don't, many will disappear as they only act as distributors, we need to keep the relationship alive. They can sell us. We also need to find bridges of common struggles, such as high rental prices.
6. Another important point in our discourse is that the work we do from our own initiatives is a reflection and a strategy to respond to eco-social challenges. We don't have to confront the mmss ("I have a lot of you in me", "we have the same purpose")
7. An emerging strategy is to embrace initiatives of solidarity and community economy. To welcome the diversity of economies, and to break away from the paradigm idea of public and private, so that a more communitarian, cooperative, associative paradigm emerges, where there are more communitarian and solidarity dynamics.
8. To make reference that we are this, that we are in solidarity, that we support initiatives that subvert from precariousness.
9. For the discourse, we must refer in terms of CO2, data on the externalities generated by the initiatives. And here, we can raise the value of our discourse. We need data.
10. We need to have a purposeful voice, a voice of advocacy for them to see us.



### Ateneu Cooperatiu Terres Gironines

With the Ateneu Cooperatiu Terres Gironines, through the Diagnosis and Intercooperation Commission, the following work plan has been proposed:

1. To support the cooperative ecosystems that are emerging in the counties of Girona
  - Identify local and regional strategic points
  - Go deeper in the relations and the coordination between counties
  - Support in the structuring of local networks
2. Codesign a communitary Observatory
  - Data collection and indicators
  - Assessment, analysis and generation of knowledge
3. Amplification of resources
  - Financing strategies
  - Support ESS communities
  - Public-cooperative strategies to influence the economic model

### General synthesis

The priorities might be different for each region, but nevertheless we have identified a few patterns worth noticing:

- Rooting and Territorial Commitment, has been mentioned often with a sense of groundedness, love and passion for the bioregion, work on the sense of territorial integrity with its ancient local wisdom and rooting in the territory.
- To work on the Intercooperation & Networking; through community actions; supporting cooperative ecosystems; promoting collective structural changes that make systemic violence obsolete; exchange resources through solidarity; creating bioregional Observatories.
- Turning crisis into transformation; Amplifying viable alternative livelihoods that lead us towards Eco-social regeneration.



## 4.5. Co-Design

@ Community Meeting

### 4.5.1. CM\_Bioregional Golden Bowl 2025 (Backcasting)

#### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

Result per Themes:

##### A. Participatory citizenship

- a. 2022 - activate sectoral meeting points to stimulate municipality dynamics; citizen pressure for inclusion in decision making.
- b. 2023- run “WeLand - Making Sense of Space” workshops and events with different initiatives and start-ups; create citizen forums that promote popular participation; farmers and local decision makers have mechanisms for horizontal sharing and co-creation; collectives stimulate regenerative interventions to link citizens and policy makers.
- c. 2024- public institutions understand and value the work of local initiatives and bridges are established; popular participation techniques are consolidated; bioregional community forums are created.
- d. 2025- citizens and public organisations are active in participatory governance through clear collective decision making processes on shared open platforms.

##### B. Ecology & food sovereignty

- a. 2022 - map existing native forests and ecosystems; local products are present and appreciated; promote organic bioregional food production; organise bridges between local farmers.
- b. 2023- create legislation to protect native forests and build public awareness of their importance as valuable ecosystems; support and training for organic

farmers; fundraising for organic farming; local production makes a difference on regenerating the local economy; increase the value of local production on public canteens; municipalities recognize the value of organic local production; implement and expand on local community or domestic systems of composting.

- c. 2024- linking public canteens with local production through a participatory local food system; municipalities support organic and local producers with incentives, markets, linkages between producer/consumer;
- d. 2025- food sovereignty based on organic local production; create a OrganicBioregion; protect native forests; lower ecological footprint of the region.

#### C. Shared economies

- a. 2022 - support initiatives that are doing good work on the ground already; create a platform for local cultural initiatives; stimulate the local entrepreneurs ecosystem through circular economy; create community communication systems; inquiry about needs and assets present in the bioregion; create a tool's collective to share tools amongst the community; prototype initiatives with alternative methodologies (WeLand - Making Sense of Place; Community Catalyst's for Transformative Economies); synergies are created between different local initiatives to apply WeLand to the region.
- b. 2023- capturing investment for collective food processing units; recognize existing community resources or skills; connect with regenerative and circular economy initiatives; create microeconomic circular initiatives based on solidarity and ecological values; meeting spaces for sharing of skills and resources; reenforce transparency and horizontality within networks and organisations; workshops and practical events.
- c. 2024- create visible and accessible spaces for this; share tasks; create regulations and training; promote networking and solidarity.
- d. 2025- regional autonomy through sharing and circular economy.

#### D. Housing & Access to Land

- a. 2022 - create regenerative Land-trusts governance systems to ensure redistribution of land and wealth; join funds to buy as much land as possible to regenerate.
- b. 2023- create a legal framework for eco-building. Get more members and funders for Land-trusts; access land to regenerate.
- c. 2024- ease regulations on natural eco-constructions. Create regenerative villages and farms on the land; regenerate the soil through Land-trusts.
- d. 2025- Community Land-trusts are present and affordable housing

#### E. Education

- a. 2022 - collaborate to create alternative models of education locally & globally which promotes ethics; design together in partnership with local public schools pilot projects of inclusion of alternatives within public systems.
- b. 2023- collaborate with schools to raise awareness and identify needs.
- c. 2024- continue extensive research on alternative educational models, analyse the results and adapt; integrate these practices within scholarships, internships, professional courses and school programs.
- d. 2025- there is an active link between public educational institutions and local

private initiatives aiming for transition, cooperation, civic engagement and participation. Especially at the high school level.

## Hungary

We had the opportunity to develop two of the leverage points:

### A. Turn crisis into transformation

- a. 2022 - Mass training, preparing people for transformation; Connecting people who are already active and encouraging them for further actions; Knowledge base about organisational development; New communication channels.
- b. 2023 - Equal distribution conditions; Developing a knowledge base about building a local movement.
- c. 2024 - Increase in number and visibility of communities functioning differently in economy; A political system is established which considers different actors as equal; Significant attention is paid on transforming crises into transformation, a mass movement is developed on it.
- d. 2025 - An economic initiative not related to the mainstream has started in every Hungarian municipality; The crisis has been turned into transformation; The initiatives work in networks.

### B. Increasing visibility of the alternatives

- a. 2022 - Helping to find the connection points for everybody – even if it's not us; Turning our attention to our scope of influence, which decreases the anxiety and widens the scope itself; How to turn tension into action.
- b. 2023 - Providing food from CSA source to 6000 people around Nyíregyháza; Creating 300 shopping communities; The shopping communities work in a network.
- c. 2024 - Community bank based on the principles and design of the Catalan CIC; Country-wide training system of organic, biodynamic and permaculture knowledge; Community house-building system; Community accounting system.
- d. 2025 - A big success – like a bank or a house building project – based on community economical approaches is successfully implemented; Increase visibility but not becoming too big – staying under the radar of the establishment; People know about the existence of a real alternative to the mainstream economic approach.

## Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

- A. To be part of a community of catalysers which is structured and autonomous from Palma Nana's inputs
- B. To put Palma Nana's knowledge at the service of the territory and of the needs of the catalysers. To propose adequate tools and proposals
  - To open the doors for collaboration
  - To develop a Community Catalyst strategy at the local level
- C. To spread the bioregional concept at all scales: organisational, community and municipal level
  - create pathways of learning directed at the different scales and targets: producers, local administrators, youth and youth workers, knowledge and culture holders

## Garrotxa (Catalunya)

Various actions were then taken to amplify the story and generate discourse, and different leaderships were proposed to move it forward.

- A. Carry out a diagnosis-register or survey of the member entities of the XES Garrotxa to find out the status of the different entities. This will be linked to the XES group on tour.
  - *Who? Joan Naspleda. Link with XES on tour: Alba*
- B. Promote campaigns/posters to make the story visible to the general public.
  - *Who? Georgina and Alex.*
- C. Study strategies that make the story penetrate into different places and strategic audiences
  - *Who? Laura.*
- D. Write articles and send them to local newspapers and magazines?
  - *Who? Laura, with the support of Joan*

*Alba supports the different actions, especially by linking the working group of XES on tour and Incidence-Story.*

*When? Spring 2022*

## General synthesis

By applying an action oriented process, delineating achievable targets for a close future such as 2025, the people involved were able to own their actionable-steps as well as collaborate with others for collective intention. The in between steps of 2022 to 2024 were aimed as turning a bigger goal, as that of 2025, into digestible smaller (or doable) actions that people could engage in co-creating autonomously. In some cases even individuals were assigned to particular tasks. In other cases, the contributions were grouped by themes that aim to stimulate synergistic partnerships in the following moments of interaction within the bioregion. By naming these collective streams of intention, a flow and movement towards shifting economic narratives has been put in motion, or in some cases, clarify and identify the motion already present in the territory.

### 4.5.2. CM\_Assets (resources) Present/Assets needed

#### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

##### Assets Present:

- Environmental and Nature protection NGOs
- Environmental legislation (although not always applied)
- Data about existing ecosystems
- Land
- Will to change
- Investment that can be captivated
- Knowledge and capacity to facilitate participatory processes
- Ancient and modern knowledge about agriculture and processing of endogenous resources
- Land for sale (land-trusts)
- People to join and create land-trusts
- Good regenerative models and experiences (local & global)
- Land; hands; arms; brains; hearts; political intelligence; strategic capacity
- Regenerative dynamics and collectives; VivoMercado; CooperativaDaTerra; facilitation skills; diverse citizens & critical mass; relationship between collectives and initiatives
- Diverse funding opportunities to stimulate and support more regenerative/ecological practices.
- Fundação Terra Agora
- DL 92/2019, 10 Jul; ENCNB 2030; Resolução Conselho de Ministros n.55/2018 (conservação da Natureza e Biodiversidade)
- Info-networks/skill-Exchange: telegram groups to organise workshops
- Workshops on regenerative practices
- Neighbours
- Mastermind; Orla; creative territory; local enterprises; start-ups

#### Assets Needed:

- Awareness raising on the importance of the Environment, biodiversity, soils and forests, for the local economy.
- Implementing the appropriate legislation
- Create protection zones
- Create jobs in areas connected with silviculture and regenerative agriculture.
- Time; Water; Rain; Sustenance
- Funding; dedicated people; land and permits (Land-trusts)
- More info, process facilitation, counselling to access funds and resources that support an conscious management of the landscape and natural resources; resource networks for small and medium producers and landowners
- Regenerative and resilience language more accessible and understandable (adapted to key actors)
- Local resources and resident's empowerment and value chains
- Bridges between key-actors present in the territory; "Tertulias" and co-creation moments
- Funding on wealth sharing strategies (e.g. UBI Universal Basic Income EU; shared housing/property programs - especially for elderly); PT law n.83/2019, 3 SET (bilingue/pdf)
- Communication and decision making tools
- Central space (or many) with easy access
- Skilled people open to sharing;
- Funding; european funding opportunities
- Promotion of periodic events for co-creation, energise the movement of transition catalysts

### Hungary

#### Assets Present:

- Networks, movements, groups
- Knowledge
- The crisis itself
- Willingness to understand the other
- Graspable, communicable results

#### Assets Needed:

- Reconciliation and harmonisation of visions, concepts, language
- Putting symbolic cases, people, examples in the spotlight
- Everybody should communicate common, coherent, harmonised messages on their own channels
- Trust and empowerment to make the own causes common
- Expansion of the circle
- Increased focus on the networks
- Visibility of the results



## Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

Assets present:

- producers of the territory are holding excellence activities and are preserving a precious and often ancient knowledge
- the small municipalities that are part of the bioregion are accessible and open to dialogue
- the territory has a big potential: natural resources are abundant, many tourists visit the territory

Assets needed:

- infrastructures: there's not a supportive infrastructure system (roads, public transport) (eg. there's no internal transport connection between villages)
- territorial cohesion: moments of cohesion are rare. Generally the villages of the park hold a strong identity of the village itself, more than the bioregion or the collaboration with other villages
- learning paths for young people, to give the chance to imagine and build a future on territorial resources. Access to education is a topic: schools are closing due to the lack of students; adult education takes place only in cities.

## Garrotxa (Catalunya)

- Write articles
- Find the way so that a person from XES Garrotxa is freed-up
- Be stronger, more solvent and generate more cooperation

## General synthesis

Within this exercise, visibility was given to the resources that different participants saw were present in the bioregion as well as those that were still needed, to be able to achieve the goals and actions they identified in the previous backcasting station. In some cases there were matching links between assets that were perceived as needed and those that were present. By collectively inquiring about possibilities different people might hold information that was not accessible or known to others. Catalysing in such a way info sharing amongst participants.



## 4.6. Regenerative Livelihoods

@ Community Meeting

### 4.6.1. CM\_Draw your comments and contacts

(only relevant locally)

### 4.6.2. CM\_Jump of Commitment

#### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

The Community meeting participatory exhibition finished with a place for participants to jump their commitment. The aim was to bring some final celebration, and tracing next steps at the individual level and a commitment towards transformative action within the bioregion. We had mixed participation, some really took the moment to internalise their commitment by jumping and shouting their affirmations, others felt shy or that it was not so relevant and passed by the station acknowledging it but always with the choice of not engaging, that some participants appreciated.

#### Hungary

In the online version it wasn't a jump, but people made some commitments:

- Involving new volunteers through charity shops
- Amplifying positive stories about different initiatives
- Starting an initiative on the topic of scope of influence and autonomy
- Cooperation in the community bank initiative
- Help in communication, increasing visibility
- Distilling the knowledge from the difficulties, blockages, drawbacks
- Providing these methods, concepts as inputs on the next meeting of the network of SSE organisations

### Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

This exercise was not applicable to the format used locally for this PAR.

### Garrotxa (Catalunya)

This exercise was not applicable to the format used locally for this PAR.

### General synthesis

Where a commitment was voiced and celebrated, participants left with a sense of celebration and also responsibility to forward self-driven action once leaving the Community meeting. We hope this leads towards more decentralised autonomous action and the emergence of local shifts within the field of transformative economies.



## 4.7. #GENERAL SYNTHESIS#

### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

Within this Bioregion, the initiatives are willing to build on collective impact by practical moments and tools that already create some change and collaboration at the local level. Many initiatives know of each other, but not always have the opportunity to converge to create something together. This PAR process contributed to stimulate one of such conversion moments. By building on the previous toolkit for Community Catalysts for Regenerative Development with the “WeLand-Making Sense of Place” regenerative design thinking process, that some of the initiatives (at least those also active in the ecological front) had been introduced in the previous Community uCatalysts project, they were able to reiterate, use and be trained in such toolkit, this time adapted to a PAR Framework within a Transformative Economies context.

For the initiatives that were interviewed, the self-reflection that the inquiry stimulated, both with the survey and the Canvas interview, yielded insights and instigated conversations within the initiatives as well as with other initiatives on potential areas of growth or opportunities for capacity sharing.

For the local movement as a whole within this bioregion, the event converged voices and moments of sharing between participants. Held by a Participatory community meeting process where actionable self-organised collective action was stimulated, participants made their voices and suggestions part of a wider discussion. One that aimed for decentralised action-steps that each of the participants were invited to own and take to their daily action within their livelihoods and action in the Bioregion. More moments like this were requested, training and further local possibilities for skill sharing and synergies are now being followed through and will continue to be stimulated during the rest of the project.

### Hungary

The participants as active members of the Social and Solidarity economy are involved in many activities: working on their organisation’s mission, developing plans,

creating, synthesising and adapting theoretical foundations and the implementation of all this. There is a lack of human resources at every level, it is still a small minority who believes in the alternative economical activities, business that much to base their own livelihood on them. In rural areas the situation is even worse with significant migration towards the urban areas especially among young people.

The visibility of this area is not sufficient, for the average citizen there seems to be no real alternative to the profit oriented market economy, the consumerist approach. The cooperatives and other community-based alternative economic formations unfortunately still have a negative connotation which originates in the socialist era where these concepts were misused with the fake message of them being realised. Although the essence of the cooperatives was not present – with forcing people to enter them, making the private ownership of the land impossible and leaving no autonomy for them by the centralised state-party – the name “cooperative” was used which leads to the misconception that this approach was already tried out in the history of the country and have proven to be wrong.

The community or the participants felt the questions raised by the PAR really important. They felt that this community of practitioners should strengthen the ecosystem thinking to increase efficiency, find more synergies and become an important factor.

### Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

It has been very stimulating to reflect on the topics, both as facilitators and with the people involved. It has been a shame that the format we have proposed was not found to be accurate to the context. A deeper reflection -both at the level of the consortium and at the local level - on the tools used, and on the way they have been delivered would have helped the process

### Garrotxa (Catalunya)

In La garrotxa, we already have a formal organisation that includes over sixty organisations working from the Social and Solidarity economy framework. Resilience Earth is the dinamazer of this organisation and holds the residency at the moment. This organisation is called Xarxa per l'Economia Social i Solidària de la Garrotxa (XES-Garrotxa), its translation to english is The Garrotxa Social and Solidarity Economy Network. The PAR was a great moment to get together and wonder about the differences that this network holds in relation to the rest of the economic organisations of the region. To be able to realise which value we bring and which capabilities do we need to improve.

The participants really value the community catalysts initiative, to be able to keep learning and relate from a transrural perspective, generate a dialogue with different regions that share challenges and are willing to generate reciprocity.

### General synthesis

Although the PAR process worked differently in the four regions, for the Consortium and this project, this PAR process highlighted the need for both an autonomous, open-source and interactive Toolkit that can be as a living organism adapting to the needs

and contexts of different Bioregions and the diversity of those that uses it; as well as a Community of Practice that can share learnings through a living Online Platform with possible local and global forums and possible curriculums to learn how to use the Toolkit.

## 4.8. Process feedback

(what was the impact of this PAR in your community)

### Southwest Algarve (Portugal)

For the different initiatives that participated in this PAR there was a shared feeling that more of these moments were needed within the Bioregion to be able to achieve critical mass and impact in transforming the local economy with its multiple challenges. The participant appreciated that the results from the previous project were used this time to guide and design this PAR so that the ones that were involved previously were able to practise such processes, as well as, seeing them in action within a different context.

The aim for further training, participatory processes and collaborative partnerships was expressed during the PAR and several links have been made and put in motion so as to make them happen in the near future.

For the Community Catalysts consortium, this PAR gave us insights on the need for agile sharing of practical tools as well as a platform for easy decentralised communication and training.

### Hungary

The PAR had an important role in Hungary by providing occasion for the SSE practitioners to have a self reflection moment, to learn and to have discussions oriented towards the common effectiveness and success of the shared vision.

Although the general feedback about the survey was about its difficulty and the needed knowledge and efforts to fill it out, some participants found it really useful in their work. One participant asked permission to use it in training that she is holding to widen the horizon of the learners.

The drivers touched on really important issues either in the life of the organisations or in the development of the solidarity economy field in Hungary. Almost all the participants informed us that they will work further with it, bringing it into the organisation to take advantage of it. In this way the PAR had a direct positive effect on the organisational development of the participants' organisations.

### Madonie Mountain Park (Sicily)

The tool (questionnaire) proved to be far from everyday activities and the reality of lived experience; on a too abstract scale, participants have a deep awareness but are also

very committed to their daily subsistence dynamics in a historically complex and delicate socio-economic context. This might have contributed to the difficulties encountered, and to grasp the transformative and social dimension of the ongoing process, at an individual and territorial, community level.

Space and Time: Community Catalyst proposes a European scale to trigger change processes. The processes of change at the local level are perceived on a scale limited to one's own project. Local projects exhaust their energies in making everyday life and subsistence work. There are no more energies for a meta reflection.

Local organisations (Palma Nana) should translate the Community Catalyst concepts and frameworks into the concreteness of territorial realities. We failed to do this convincingly, passing the relevance of the abstract proposal over to the practical activities of the participants.

### Garrotxa (Catalunya)

For the XES Garrotxa, the PAR represented an eye opening exercise, where they could take some perspective from the daily work and realise that what we are doing goes beyond surviving, and is a need shared among many other rural organisations in Europe and around the globe.

They also could realise that there is a lot of research and proposals around this type of economy and how to keep evolving new forms of economy that are both transformational and regenerative.

For the XES Garrotxa, the platform that we are proposing and developing with the feedback from this PAR, would be really welcomed and was valued as useful to improve effectiveness and make the process of evolving the economy less challenging and more caring for the people involved.

Our outcome is that this initiative brings great value, and that we need to make it as agile and as accessible as possible for people working on local very busy projects to be able to participate and gain its value.

### General synthesis

All regions expressed the wish for continuation and further iterations of similar and even more adapted participatory processes that can provide the regenerative skills, convergence moments and decentralised communication platforms. In this direction, a living platform where local initiatives can interchange knowledge and opportunities was highlighted as a way to stimulate autonomous synergistic partnerships and relevant actions.



## 5. Recommendations and Implications

After running this PAR in the four European periferic rural bioregions, we are now more informed of certain patterns that can leverage further economic transformations within such regions. Patterns such as:

- Decentralised platforms for sharing tools and processes that can be alive with contributions coming from the ground up, could easily empower local autonomy and experimentation, as well as collective learning opportunities. What worked, what did not work, etc...
- Providing learning processes where the inquiry around diverse modes of Transformative Economies can be explored and adapted to different stages of development of an initiative or a bioregion.
- Reinforcing the Place-based integrity of each landscape and community by not promoting ready-made models to implement blindly, but instead, diverse actionable patterns that can easily be chosen according to the characteristics and momentary expression of each Genius Loci (Place).
- Flexibility, open source culture, collective learning, interconnectivity...

Also, within each Bioregion, the Transformative Economies movements had an opportunity and pretext to come together and co-create possible action-plans for the coming 4 years. Together with a convergence that aimed to feed the momentum for such initiatives to enter in synergistic partnerships locally. Aware that a single convergence does not make the pulsing flow to generate consistent regenerative action, this PAR aimed to, at least provoke a boost into each local movement to sprout life and build on the local resilience by investing in relationship building between local initiatives and actors.

Many learnings came also on how to do things differently, and on how to adapt the tools to the local contexts. Keeping things less academic, and more user friendly can stimulate engagement easier, specially within the initial moments of interaction between initiatives and actors that are highly active and lacking extra time for over abstraction.

Through transrural grassroots engaged solidarity, the different bioregions will be linked with each other and will have the opportunity to share findings, difficulties, resources, knowledge, skills, tools and processes in a transrural interactive platform that we aim can be alive and relevant for these bioregions and others.

As an overall, we see that this PAR process gave us the appropriate insights to take to the next stages of this Community Catalysts for Transformative Economies project, where we'll develop further on the patterns identified here.