



National Women's Council



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# Care, Climate Justice and the Upcoming Referendum

6<sup>th</sup> February 2024



Rialtas  
na hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040



*The project is funded under the Community Climate Action Programme: Climate Education, Capacity Building and Learning by Doing (Strand 2) through the Department of Environment Climate and Communications.*

- 1pm Welcome - Collette McEntee, Feminist Communities for Climate Justice
- 1.05pm Vanessa Conroy, Feminist Communities for Climate Justice
- 1.15pm Dr. Fiona Dukelow, Dr. Catherine Forde and Edith Busteed, University College Cork Department of Applied Social Studies – Authors of Care section
- 1.30pm Fiona Weldon, ILMI Capacity Development Officer
- 1:40pm Rachel Coyle, NWC Head of Mobilisation & Campaigns
- 1.45pm Question and Answers
- 1.55pm Close



introducing  
the project



# feminist communities for climate justice



**Amplify** the voices of women and marginalised communities most impacted by climate crisis

**Advocate** and influence policy with women and marginalised communities

**Mobilise** communities to support and learn from one another, with the establishment of a Communities for Climate Justice National Network

**Train:** those working with or active within women's and marginalised groups and communities – *Community Work in a Changing Ireland Certificate Programme* in partnership with the Department of Applied Social Studies at NUI Maynooth; developing toolkits for communities and community workers



# why a feminist community work approach?

Addresses and tackles the root causes of inequality and climate injustice – system change, not climate change.

Cares – it champions caring work, paid and unpaid, and calls for it to be appropriately valued and recognised as green work.

Transforms consultation into meaningful, non-tokenistic participation in decision-making.

Focuses on the issue of women's representation in decision-making as well as other marginalised groups – those most impacted by the climate crisis need to be at the centre of decision-making spaces.

Champions a collective focus – we must fight for the many, not the few.

Means better public services to benefit people and the planet!



## climate justice

while reducing carbon emissions, we are also reducing social inequalities

**The climate crisis is an everything crisis**

Climate justice recognises that the effects of climate breakdown are not felt equally

‘those that cause the least of the climate crisis are the most affected, with the least resources to respond’



## **Women are more likely to be hardest hit by the impacts of climate emergency, in Ireland and globally:**

They are socioeconomically disadvantaged compared to men

Care work is key to how women experience and are impacted by the climate crisis.

Their voices must be central; their input is essential in ensuring that future climate action does not worsen existing gender inequality



## care

Care work: essential and low-carbon, but undervalued, underpaid or taken for granted – and largely carried out by women.

Caring jobs like teaching, community work and healthcare are **26 times greener than manufacturing jobs** but are seldom part of the green jobs discourse.

Education often touted as crucial for our green transition, yet our teachers are being priced out of their homes and jobs.

**Care work should be recognised as the essential green work that it is.** Better pay, better hours and better working conditions to allow for women to fully participate in economic, political and social life.





# Care Research: Dr. Catherine Forde

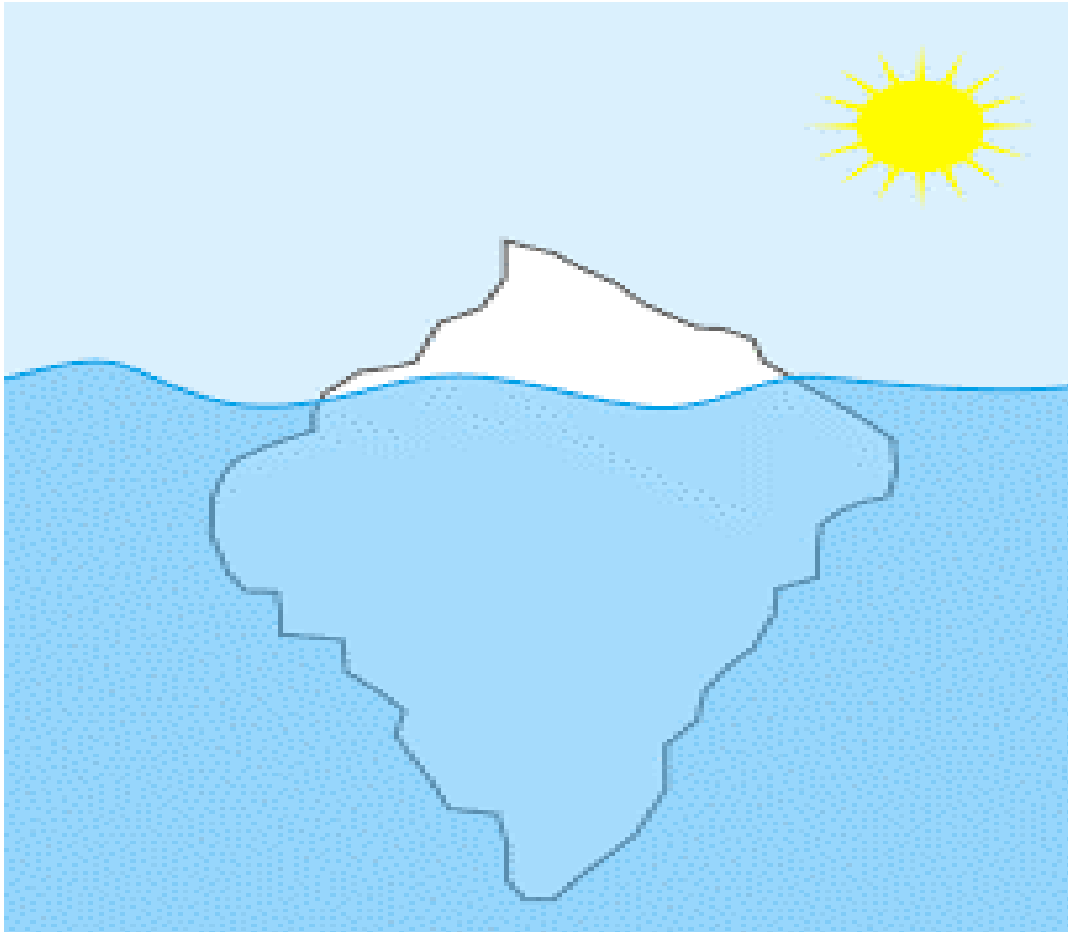


## Care in Ireland

- In 2022, **61% of unpaid carers were women** compared to 39% who were men (CSO, 2022).
- Time spent caring is also gendered, with **31.3% of female carers spending 43 or more hours a week doing care work** compared to 25.6% of male carers (CSO, 2023).
- Proportion of Ireland's population providing regular unpaid care grew from **4% in the 2016 Census to 6% in the 2022 Census**, indicating a growing care deficit in Ireland (CSO, 2023).



# the iceberg economy



The visible economy:  
paid work, counted in  
GDP.

The invisible economy:  
informal care,  
housework, reproductive  
work, nature.....all of the  
things on which we inter-  
depend



## Care and the environment

Eco-feminism and feminist ecological economics point to **the fundamental importance of and links between care for people and care for planet.**

Care and environmental resources are treated as infinite and freely available and **share characteristics of being invisible, undervalued and exploited**, despite their importance to the continuation of life (Dengler and Strunk, 2018).

**Breaches of planetary boundaries are driven by inequalities such as care and gender inequalities** that altogether undermine the just and safe flourishing of all life (Raworth, 2017).



## care employment

**Care services employment would fulfil the triple roles of improving employment and gender equality and meet climate change targets** (De Henau and Himmelweit (Women's Budget Group), 2020) because of the low carbon nature of the work and investing in care would be less polluting per job created than jobs created in the construction industry (ibid).

**Understanding of what green jobs are tends to neglect care work** and focus instead on sectors that concentrate on employment in renewable energy, retrofitting and recycling.



## policy on care

Care and climate exist in **siloed spaces** in Irish policy making.

Ireland's **dated National Carers' Strategy** (2012) does not make any connections between care and issues of concern to intersectional feminist climate justice.

Ireland's Climate Action Plan (CAP) (2023) **gives no consideration to the centrality of care to our survival**, to the threats that the climate crisis poses, nor to the idea of care work as green work in relevant sectors, particularly industry and just transition.



## care and climate policy

Feminist groups have called for the acknowledgement of **care work as green work** that requires:

- major investment in our social infrastructure, including **provision of decent jobs in care** in all its forms and adequately valuing unpaid care.
- **time policies** with objectives such as reducing working time and reducing and redistributing the care work that women do.
- **diverse income support policies** ranging from universal basic income to various forms of participation or care incomes.

**What would climate justice mean for you and your life?**

*Childcare - affordable and reliable*  
*Care work - green work (paid and unpaid)*



## care and climate policy

Connections between care and climate are not part of the **mainstream political and public imagination** and the strategies that ought to be adopted to develop these connections and ultimately promote a care economy.

A narrative shift around care and climate is required and this narrative should reflect **values of equity, intersectionality and inclusivity** (Novello, 2021; Wang et al., 2023).

Positive framing would emphasise that **'care work is climate work'** (Novello, 2021: 8)





## Barcelona: care work as climate work

The city of Barcelona practises intersectional climate justice through a range of measures:

- local care centres around the city that serve as hubs to support carers and offer meeting spaces
- opportunities for shared parenting and municipal childcare, in tandem with
- cycling and walking networks in ways informed by the everyday journeys undertaken for caring activities.
- Carers' card.



Disability.  
Perspective:  
Fiona Weldon



# Referendum: Rachel Coyle



any questions?



# Thank you!

## Follow up actions

- Share/discuss the Care research with others
- Vote and campaign for Yes Yes in upcoming referenda, check the register
- Join the Feminist Communities for Climate Justice National Network
- Invite the Project Team to speak with my local community / group / organisation
- Join our mailing list - scan the QR code

