

 Friends of the Earth



# Safe, Warm, Green Towards Energy Justice Webinar

Thursday 5th December 1:00pm  
The event will have ISL interpretation

 Cairde

 Fuinneamh  
Oileáin Árann  
Aran Islands Energy



Rialtas  
na hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

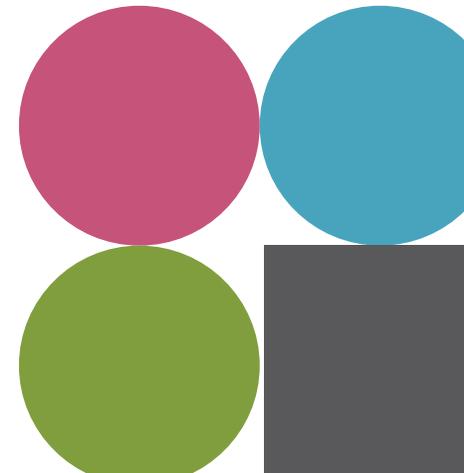
Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040



*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.*

## Agenda

1.00-1.10pm	Introduction / Welcome – Vanessa, FCCJ
1.10-1.20pm	Energy & Housing chapter, Feminist Climate Justice report
1.20-1.30pm	Theresa O'Donohoe
1.30-1.40pm	Sara Hurley & Elena Manciu, Friends of the Earth & Cairde
1.40-1.50pm	Avril Ní Shearcaigh, Aran Islands Energy Cooperative
1.50-2.00pm	Questions and Answers, Call/s to Action and Close

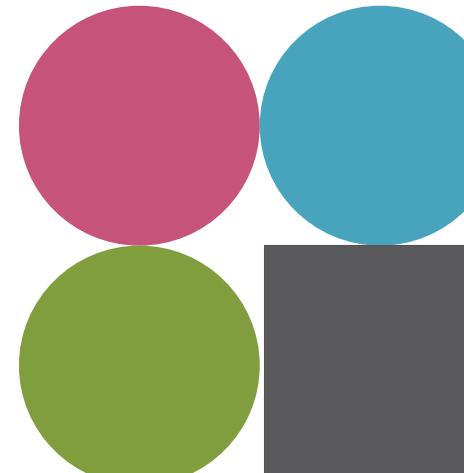


**Amplify** the voices of women and marginalised communities most impacted by climate crisis

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

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

**Strengthen capacity & raise consciousness** of those working with or active within women's and marginalised communities through *Community Work in a Changing Ireland Certificate Programme* in partnership with the Department of Applied Social Studies at NUI Maynooth; and the development of toolkits for communities and community workers



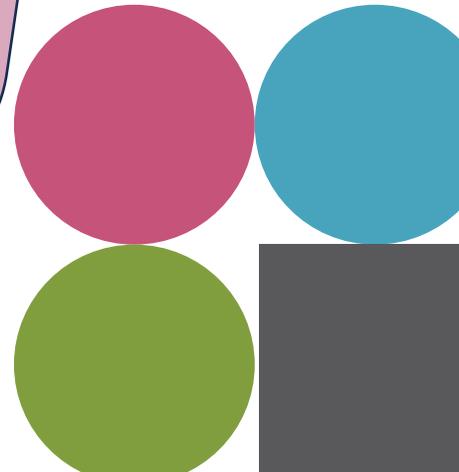
# Feminist Climate Justice

Feminist climate justice is about **paying attention to the gendered and intersectional characteristics** of all dimensions of climate justice

*Voices of Feminist Communities  
for Climate Justice*

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

*Leaving no one behind and  
reaching the furthest behind  
first. Listening, responding  
to communities who will  
have to adapt.*



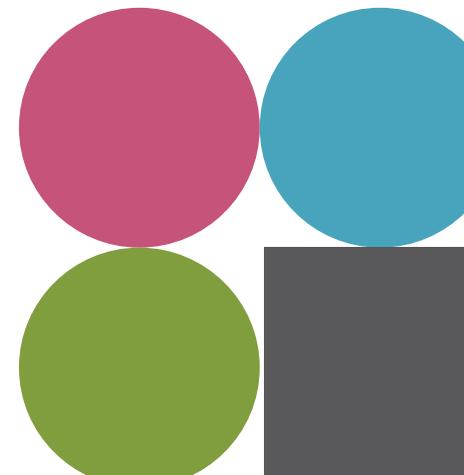
## why this project?

**Responding to community workers** – climate impacts coming, but a need for more information, guidance and tools

**Responding to data and policy gaps** – existing climate policy does not adequately pay attention to the domestic gendered impacts of the climate crisis

**For a feminist analysis** of climate justice

**Response to National Women's Council members** who wanted climate justice integrated in the Council's work



## why women?

**Impacts of the climate emergency worsen existing social and economic inequalities – including gender inequalities**

Gender Pay Gap: **9.6%**

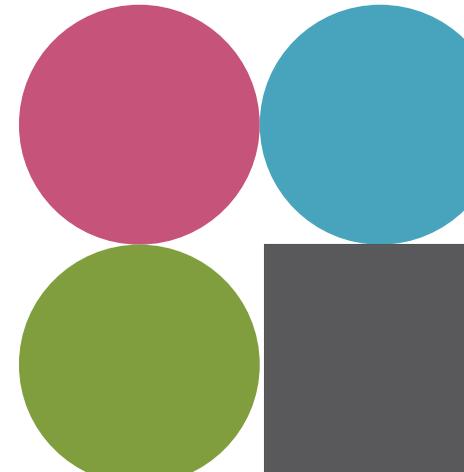
Gender Pension Gap: **35%**

Women do **twice** as much unpaid care work

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

Caring roles are linked to food, energy, transport choices & security

Most Irish women consider car ownership a necessity to carry out caring duties and to alleviate safety concerns with public transport



# why women?

women are excluded from the economy and work in unpaid caring or domestic roles which impact transport use and vulnerability to transport poverty and injustice

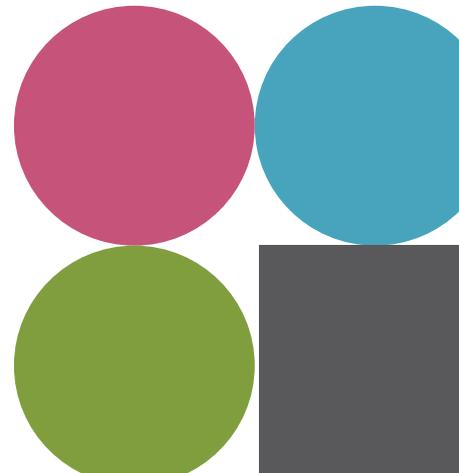
Women face huge barriers in access to employment, key resources and public services including housing and health

disproportionately represented in deaths related to air pollution

Care and support work - vital and inherently low-emissions work, must be a key part of the just transition

Marginalised women are particularly affected

Women's voices must be central – those most impacted by the climate crisis need to be at the centre of decision-making spaces.



## why a feminist community work approach?

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

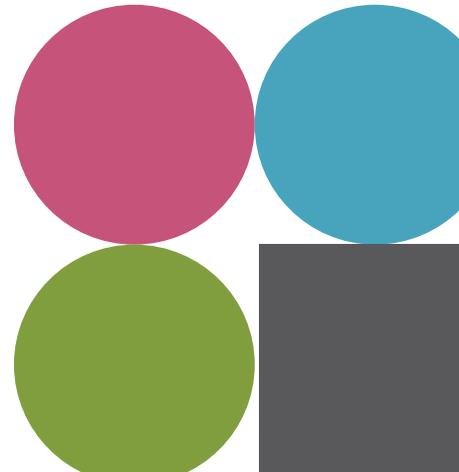
Cares – it champions caring work, paid and unpaid, and calls for it to be appropriately valued and recognised as green work

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

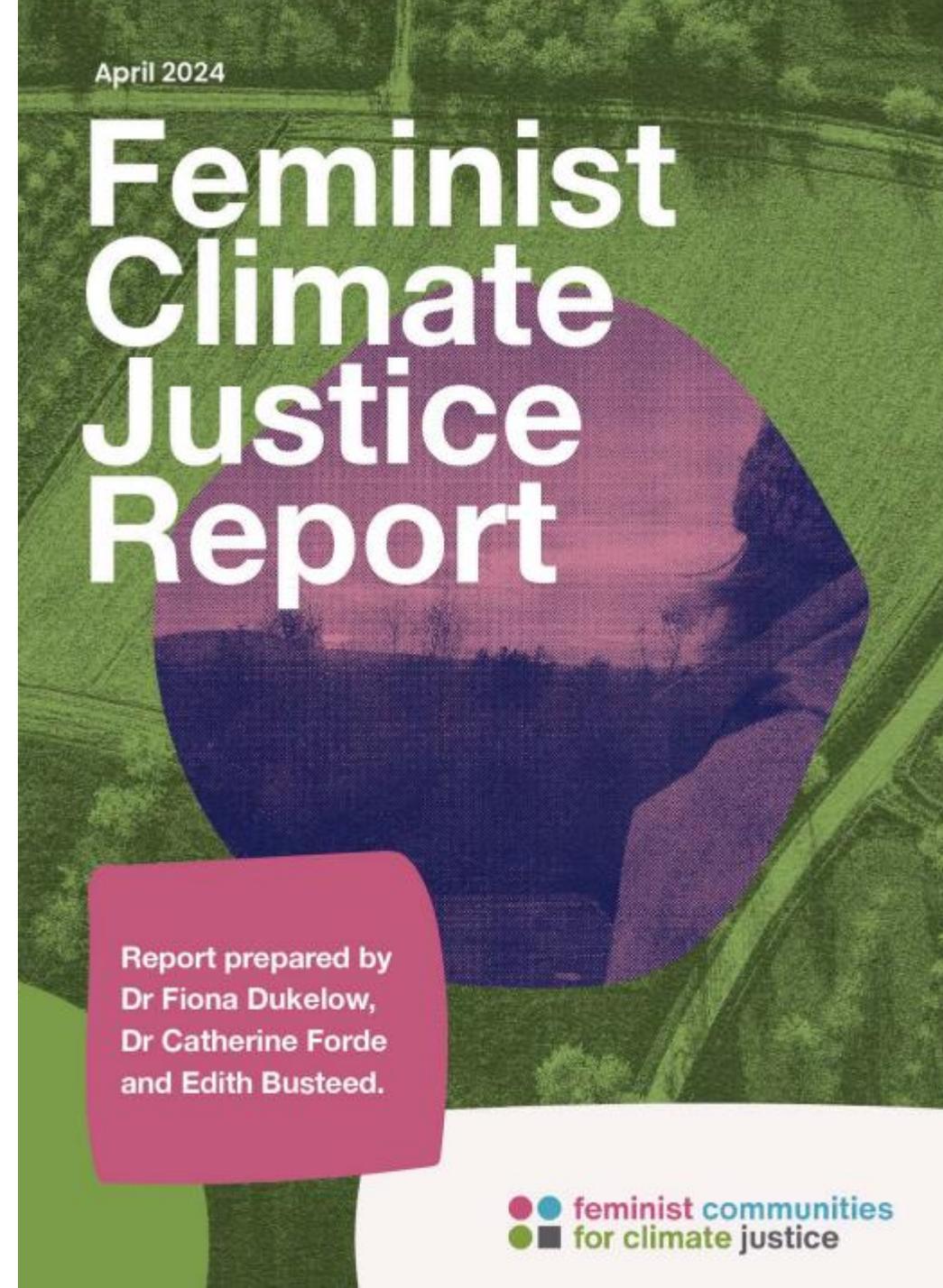
Champions a collective focus – we must fight for the many, not the few

Means better public services which benefit both people and planet!



# Feminist Climate Justice: Gaps explored, what does the research tell us?

1. Just Transition
2. Care
3. **Energy Poverty and Housing** ←
4. Transport
5. Health
6. Food, Land-use, Agriculture & Biodiversity



## what is energy poverty?

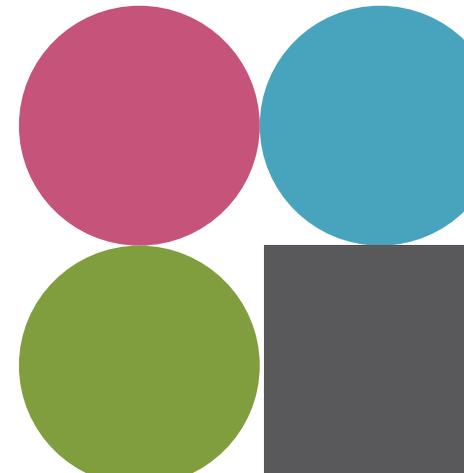
*“Energy poverty is defined as an inability to heat or power a home adequately,”* – Energy Poverty Action Plan 2022

*“Household spending more than 10% of its income on energy, including electricity but excluding motor fuel,”* – Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)

*“Energy poverty occurs when a household must reduce its energy consumption to a degree that negatively impacts the inhabitants' health and wellbeing,”* – European Union

*“The lack of access to sustainable modern energy services and products,”* – World Economic Forum

... Definitions vary!

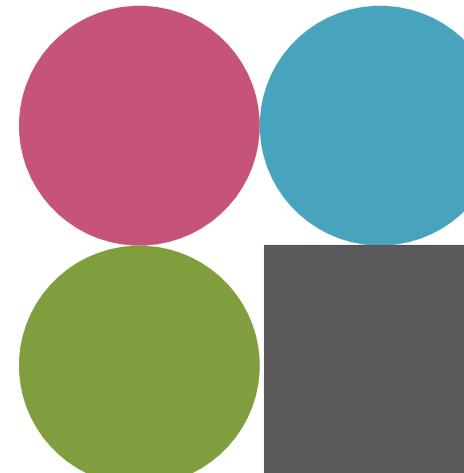
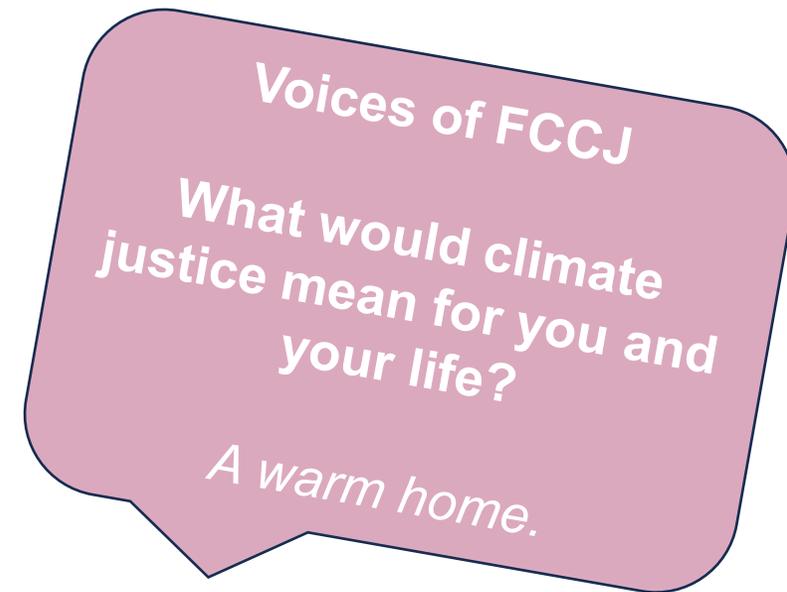


## three dimensions of energy poverty

- Level of household income
- Cost of energy
- Energy efficiency of the home – how well it retains heat

As these factors are constantly changing, levels of people in energy poverty are also very changeable. Levels of household income and the cost of energy are particularly changeable.

As a certain level of energy use is essential for day-to-day activities and to maintain households, increases in prices hit lower-income households harder.

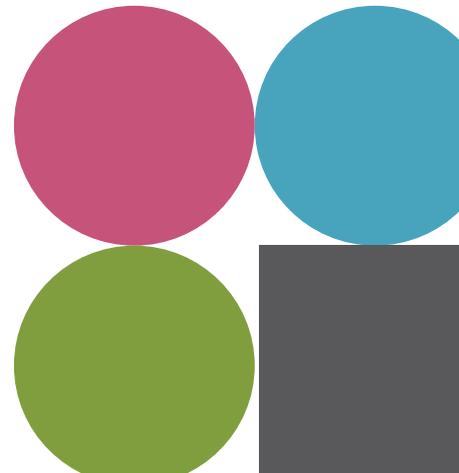


# weaknesses of current measurement of energy poverty

'Household' is the current unit of measurement, meaning anyone outside of a traditional household is not properly accounted for. This means people living in emergency accommodation and or direct provision; people living in caravans, trailers or mobile homes; Travellers who are not connected to a standard meter, are not accounted for

Income as a measurement does not properly account for those who reduce energy use to dangerous levels in order to save on the costs and to avoid arrears/debt

A lack of disaggregated/detailed data, including gender disaggregated data, **means the intersectionality of energy poverty is not fully understood** – this hinders improving current measurements



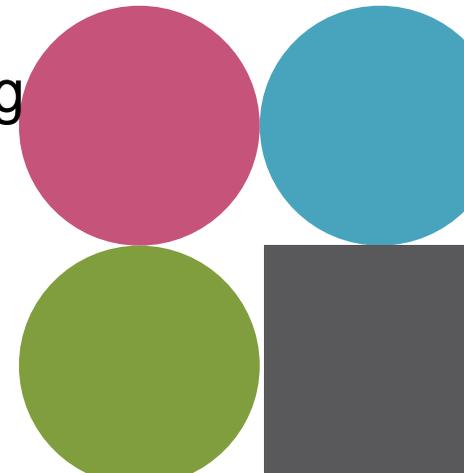
## gender & energy poverty

Care work – still largely carried out by women – genders patterns of energy use. Focusing on household income and paid employment re: measurement overlooks the impact of unpaid care work on energy consumption

Women, particularly if they are both working in paid employment and caring, can experience a 'time-squeeze' leading to more intense resource use to fulfil household and care work. This includes greater use of energy intensive household appliances

Women are more vulnerable to energy poverty due to preexisting socioeconomic disadvantages – other groups more vulnerable include Travellers, disabled people, people seeking international protection and living in direct provision, people in emergency accommodation, and lone parents (majority women)

Linking findings of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions and Housing Agency reports reveals those most impacted by energy poverty are **female lone parents renting private accommodation in Ireland**. They are also disproportionately affected by poor housing quality, including problems with dampness, leaks, and rot.



## barriers to retrofitting

Those who rent are more likely to not be able to heat their home compared to those who own their own property in Ireland – **tenants in private rental housing also do not have any agency in whether their property is retrofitted or not**

**The Traveller community are disproportionately impacted by energy poverty, spending five to six times the national average on energy**

The National Traveller Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) 2019 report found that, from a survey conducted among Travellers living in mobile homes or trailers, **72.3% went without heating and 60% could not keep the household warm**

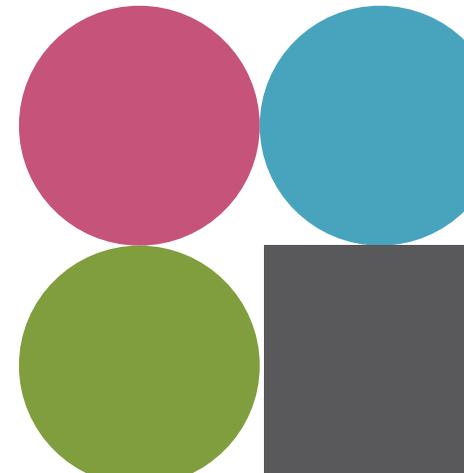
**Current retrofitting schemes remain entirely inaccessible for Travellers who live in trailers, caravans and mobile homes**

### Voices from FCCJ

**Opportunities & challenges in achieving climate justice.**

*Traveller Community- left behind- didn't benefit from the energy grant.*

*Traveller inequalities are compounded by pollution- highly industrialised areas are halting sites.*



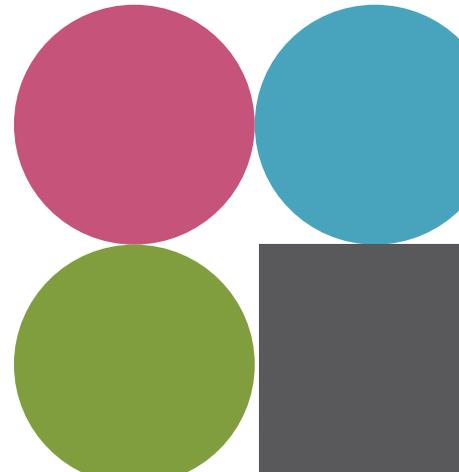
# towards energy justice

Three principles of energy justice:

- **Distributional:** fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of energy systems
- **Procedural:** meaningfully include women, marginalised communities and those most impacted by energy poverty in decision-making processes related to energy
- **Recognition:** acknowledging the past and present experiences of those disadvantaged or harmed by the current energy system; repairing these harms and eliminating disadvantage

**Transitioning to a low-carbon energy system alone is not enough to ensure energy justice** – huge importance in citizen-led and community-led engagement when making decisions around transitions to renewable energy sources.

Energy decision-making and energy access can have substantial impacts on everyday life and social practices. Communities must be involved in the transition.



theresa o'donohoe:  
lived experience



sara hurley & elena  
manciu:  
friends of the earth &  
cairde





# Roma Communities and Climate Justice

Tackling Energy and Heat Poverty in Ireland

**50** Friends of  
the Earth  
Celebrating 50 years

**Cairde**  
*Challenging ethnic minority health inequalities*

**Irish Aid**  
An tAid Éireann / Irish Aid  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**CONCERN**  
worldwide



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Ireland**

**Cairde**

*Challenging ethnic minority health inequalities*



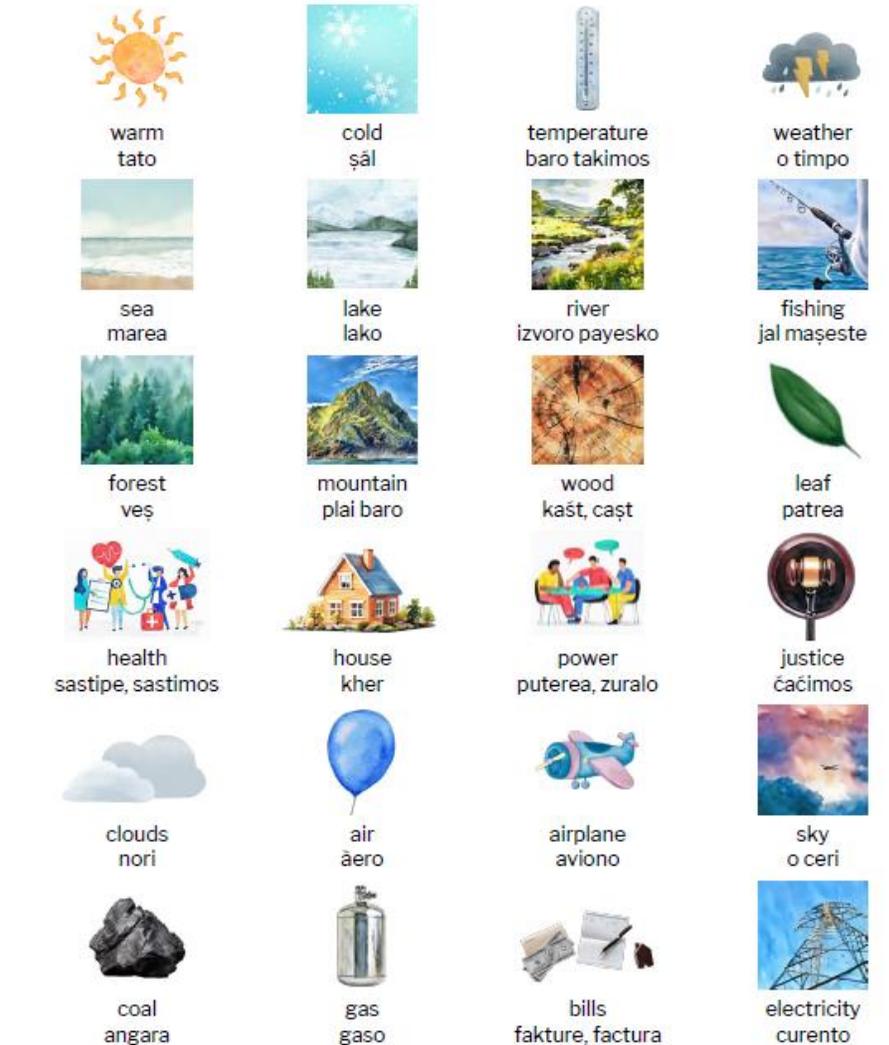
# CELEBRATING ROMANI LANGUAGE

This poster was created by Cairde's Roma Education Programme and Friends of the Earth to raise awareness of Romani language and the impact of climate change on Roma communities. The Roma Education Programme brings together Roma in Ireland to participate in online classes in English, computers, and other subjects. There are different dialects of Romani language and the words below reflect the words used by the participants in the Roma Education Programme.



# ROMA CLIMATE JUSTICE

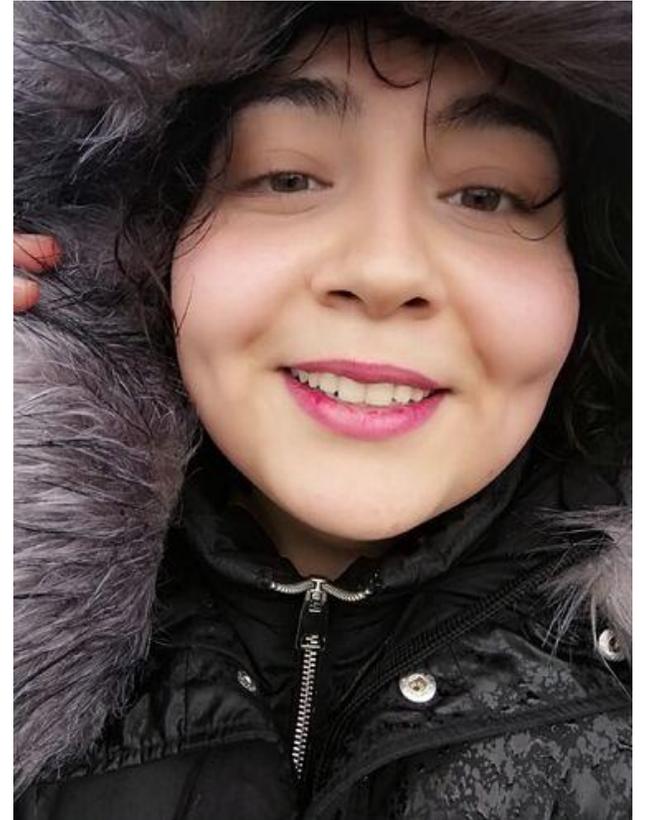
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# ***Roma Climate Justice Peer Education Worker***

Good morning everyone. Thank you all for being here and for wanting to hear the voice of the Roma community.

My name is Elena. I was born in Bucharest and at the age of six, I moved to Spain. Four years ago, I moved to Ireland, where my whole family is and where I have the most connection with my culture.



# ***Roma Climate Justice Peer Education Worker***

At the start of 2023, I started to work as the Roma Climate Justice Peer Education Worker with Cairde and Friends of the Earth.

A key part of this role has been the research we are discussing today.

Most of us are aware of extreme energy poverty that the world suffers, but before this research I would not have imagined the extreme situation in which my community finds itself.

I completed questionnaires with 32 Roma men and women, to learn about their experiences of energy poverty and to see what they know about climate change.

# ***Roma Climate Justice Peer Education Worker***

The conclusion is clear, the Roma community suffers many obstacles to inclusion in Ireland and energy costs are one of the main causes that plunge us into a vicious cycle of poverty. Today very few people can keep their homes warm, and it is a huge effort to be able to pay the bills.

In Ireland, most houses have very poor insulation, so a lot of energy is wasted. Some people have to go to the extreme of putting blankets and tape on their doors and windows, thinking that this would have been a thing of the past in the extreme poverty we suffered in Romania.

Despite everything, many Roma are grateful for being able to have a roof over their heads.

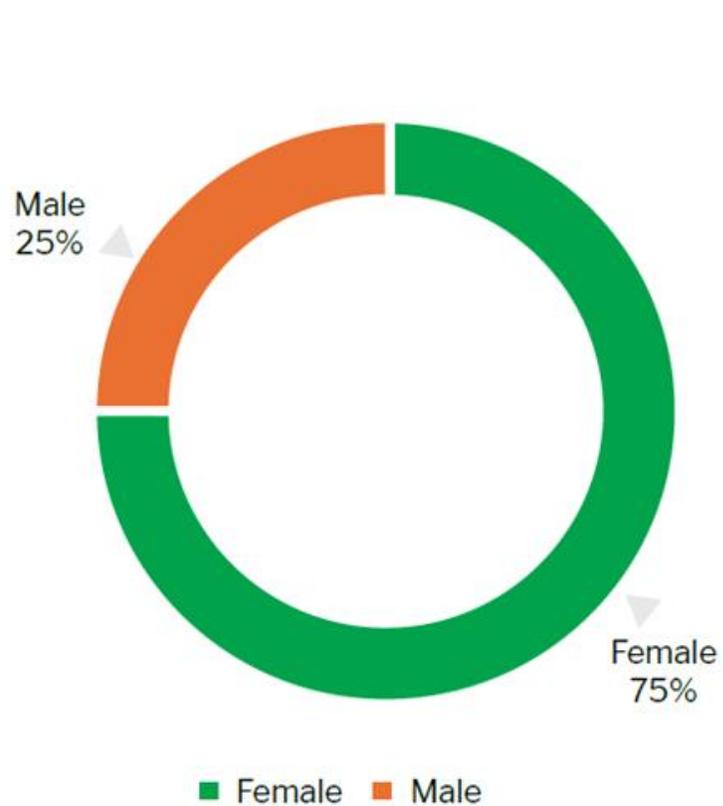
# ***Roma Climate Justice Peer Education Worker***

Thank you Cairde and Friends of the Earth for making this research possible and thank you very much to my community for having participated and shared their experiences and obstacles with me.

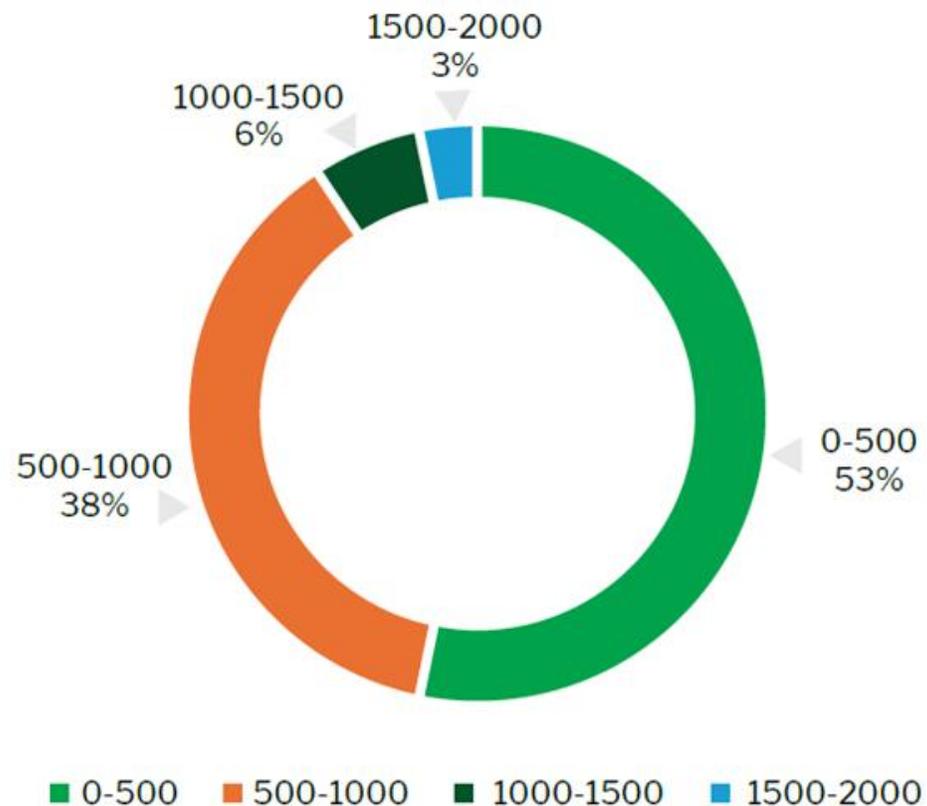


# Demographics of Roma Respondents

## Gender



## How much do you pay per month in rent?



Average size of people living together (families and households) across all accommodation types (including children):

**5.5** people

Average number of families per household:

**1.25**

Single adult families  
(all women):

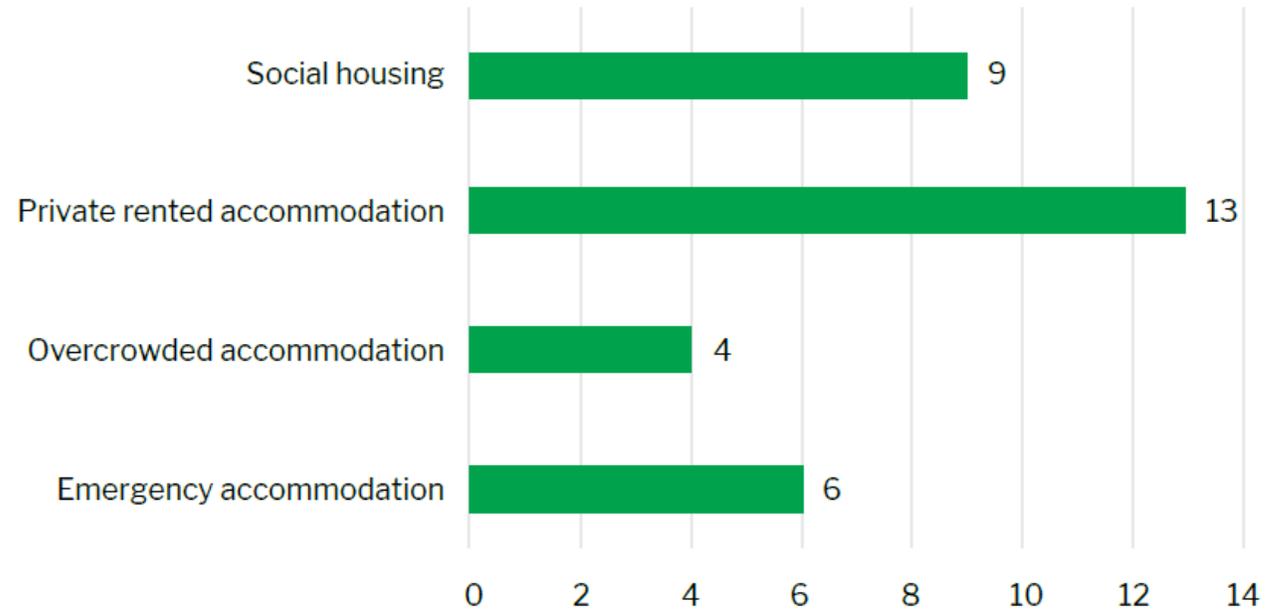
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The majority of participants were living in

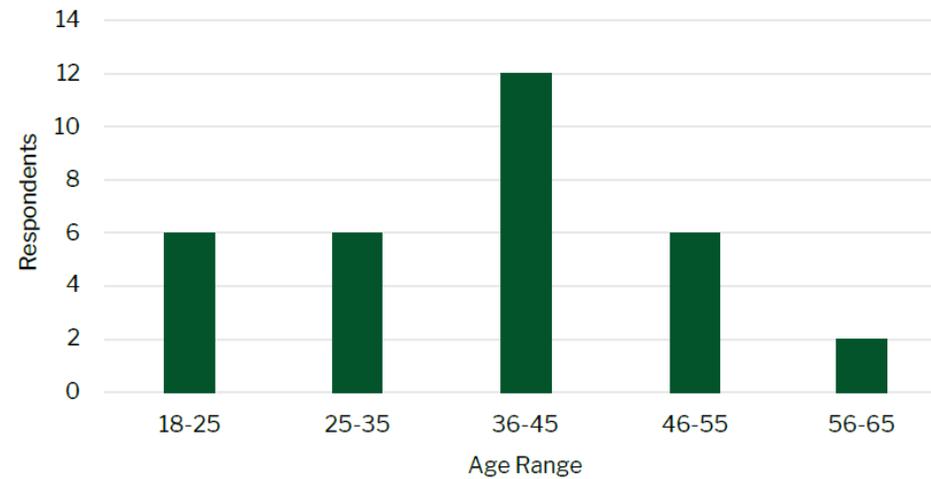
**Leinster**

(Dublin 75%), and in Munster and Ulster.

## Accommodation Type



## Age of Respondents



# Housing

“I’m happy because I don’t have to live in the hotel but my house is really in bad condition.”

-Roma woman, aged 26 -35, Dublin

“I have a small son who had heart surgery [...] in winter it is very difficult for me to keep my house warm and comfortable.”

- Roma man, aged 18 - 25, Dublin

One family households had avg 2.1 rooms, two family households had 3.2 rooms. Majority of people rented the entire property.

- More than 50% were unhappy in their current accommodation due to issues including cost, living conditions, and location
- More than 25% of respondents were living in accommodation that was damp and structurally unsound\*

# Energy and Heat Poverty

- 99% who live in private rented or social housing accommodation expressed being “very worried” or “extremely worried” about their energy bills.
- 68% said they were not able to keep their home warm enough.
- More than 80% reported that they had to reduce their energy use to keep their bills low.

“Another big problem that I suffer in my house is expenses, in winter I never allow myself to keep my house warm out of fear.”

- Roma woman, aged 46 - 55, Dublin

Most people were either very worried or extremely worried about their energy bills, with many restricting their energy use. None had approached services to support with their bills.

## Case Study: Energy Restriction

A male Roma respondent in his early thirties reported being happy overall with his accommodation and feels he is sometimes able to keep his home warm enough.

There are two families living in a house with four rooms, and the respondent is renting the entire accommodation without the support of HAP.

This respondent paid the highest amount of rent of all research participants, however he had to make a fireplace in the property to heat it and has been collecting his own wood. While the families have access to the necessary appliances in this accommodation, the respondent was resorting to measures to not only feel warm enough, but also to reduce electricity usage by not using some appliances.

## Discrimination

“I dream of a future where there is change for children, where there is no racism and discrimination anymore.”

- Roma man, aged 36 - 45, Kildare

## Climate Action

Over a quarter of Roma respondents expressed worry about climate change, however 84% of respondents reported that they do not feel confident in taking action to tackle climate change.

“I feel that the structure of my house is not very strong, a lot of cold comes in through the windows. I dream of having solar panels or some help to pay for the garbage. Everything is extremely expensive, garbage, gas, children’s expenses... it is difficult for us to make ends meet.”

- Roma man, aged 36 - 45, Dublin

# Recommendations

- The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage should ensure all accommodation, including emergency accommodation and rented accommodation, is properly insulated, heat and energy efficient, such as the introduction of minimum BERs in the private rental sector from 2025, alongside strong rental protections against evictions and rent hikes. There should also be appropriate and affordable methods of rubbish disposal
- Education and peer support programmes for Roma should continue to be resourced and adequately funded, to support Roma access to English language and literacy classes and overall inclusion in Irish society. Education for Sustainable Development should be inclusive and ensure that Roma are reached and supported in any civil outreach programmes and interventions
- The Department of Transport should ensure that investments are made to make public transport safe by providing training that tackles racism, discrimination and antigypsyism, and ensuring the availability of low cost, reliable travel to all demographics and regions.

# Recommendations

- Funding should be made available for organisations to continue to work with Roma communities in Ireland on climate change and climate justice issues.
- Inclusion of actions that specifically address climate change and climate justice and their impacts on Roma communities in the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II (2024 - 2028).
- Retrofitting schemes that target rental accommodation, while also ensuring security of tenancy for the tenants.
- Translated application forms for relevant schemes and supports including the Social Housing Support Application form, the National Housing Retrofit Scheme, and Electricity Account Credits should be available in languages other than English and Irish, including the languages commonly spoken by Roma in Ireland: Romanian, Czech, and Slovak, among others.

Link to Friends of the Earth's Warm Homes Campaign



avril ní shearcaigh:  
comharchumann  
fuinnimh oileáin  
árann teoranta



q&a

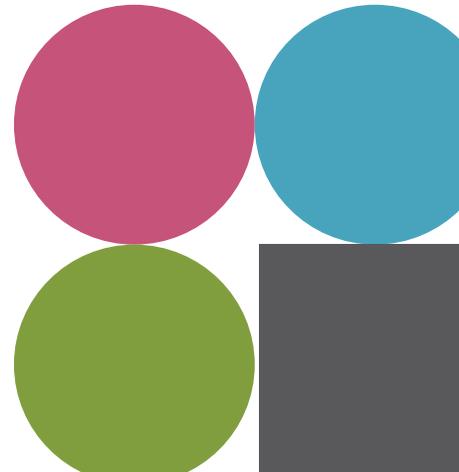


# our key project asks: energy poverty & housing

Redefine energy poverty, developing a comprehensive measurement for energy poverty that goes beyond expenditure. This should include factors like reducing or eliminating energy use due to cost, as well as other barriers to accessing adequate energy

Target and increase investment and eligibility in retrofitting schemes and measures, prioritising marginalised communities and those most affected by energy poverty including women; disabled people; people seeking refuge and international protection; Travellers and Roma; people renting; and lone parents

Ensure that Ireland endorses the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and sets a target date for complete divestment from fossil fuels, paving the way for a fast, fair transition to a fossil fuel-free future





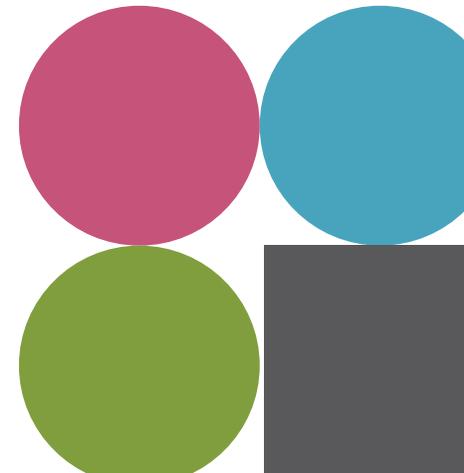
Thank you!

Follow up actions:

- Share and discuss Feminist Climate Justice research report with others – scan the QR code
- Join the Feminist Communities for Climate Justice National Network
- Join our mailing list
- Other ideas? Contact us!



Access the report with this QR Code





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Scan the QR Code to sign up to the project mailing list

