

Bridging the gap between climate change, resource scarcity and social justice

The future role of civil society associations

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new economics foundation



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About the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland

The Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society was established to explore how civil society could be strengthened in the UK and Ireland. The Inquiry Commission was chaired by Geoff Mulgan and was also informed by an International Advisory Group.

The objectives of the Inquiry were to:

- explore the possible threats to and opportunities for civil society, looking out to 2025;
- identify how policy and practice can be enhanced to help strengthen civil society;
- enhance the ability of civil society associations to shape the future.

The Inquiry Commission's work began with an extensive futures exercise to explore possible futures for civil society. Drawing on the findings of the futures work, which are documented in two reports, *The Shape of Civil Society to Come* and *Scenarios for Civil Society*, the Inquiry Commission agreed to explore the current and possible future roles of civil society associations in relation to the following themes:

- **Growing a more civil economy**
- **A rapid and just transition to a low carbon economy**
- **Democratising media ownership and content**
- **Growing participatory and deliberative democracy**

This paper was commissioned to inform the Inquiry's work on a rapid and just transition to a low carbon economy.

The final report of the Inquiry Commission, *Making good society*, was published in March 2010.

For further information about the Inquiry and to download related reports go to www.futuresforcivilsociety.org

Published on behalf of the Commission by the Carnegie UK Trust

www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

March 2010

ISBN 978-0-900259-66-1

Design by Falconbury

Front cover image: www.rodolfoclix.com.br

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Executive summary

Climate change and resource scarcity have always been issues of social justice because some parts of society will feel their effects more markedly than others, and these are likely to be people who are already suffering some form of deprivation. For example, developing countries are more likely to be hit directly by droughts, storms and rising sea levels, and indirectly through damage to health, housing and livelihoods. Wherever they live, the socially-excluded are the least likely to be able to protect themselves against harm as they have less access to insurance and savings, and are less able to move.

This problem is aggravated by the inability of the disadvantaged to influence climate-related policy decisions. Recognising the importance of civil society associations in responding to the challenges of climate change and growing pressure on resources, this report explores their future role in bridging the climate change, resource scarcity and social justice divide.

There is a growing national and international climate justice movement which advocates the nexus between climate change (and sustainability more generally) and social justice. However, until recently, the social dimensions of these challenges have been marginalised by economic and political concerns, and framed within a scientific context. This perspective has made the systemic nature of these challenges difficult to see. Broadly speaking there are three key dimensions to the link between climate change and social justice; a triple inequality:

- unequal distribution of the impacts of climate change (flooding, drought, disease, crop failures etc.);
- unequal responsibilities for climate change;
- unequal costs of mitigation and adaptation between developed and developing nations.

Research suggests that, from August 2008, there may be only 100 months before we enter

a new, more perilous and potentially irreversible phase of climate change. The time frame for making the transition to a low carbon economy is therefore much shorter than previously thought. Moreover, given the likely differential effects of the problems, this transition should be made in a socially-just way. The authors define this transition as: a step change in responses to climate change and resource scarcity that will prevent catastrophic climate change and simultaneously enhance, rather than undermine, social justice.

Failure to meet this challenge could mean the coming decades are characterised by a series of self-reinforcing social, economic and ecological crises. The existence of tipping points in the climate system and unpredictable environmental feedback loops means that change and its effects are likely to be non-linear and, to cope with this, policy responses will need to be flexible and creative. Incremental policy change will not keep pace with environmental change; radical solutions need to be found.

In fact, policy responses to date have failed to slow the growth rate of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, the principal driver of climate change. Finding new ways to live within our environmental means, and the systemic changes this implies, offers an opportunity to transform society and to augment social justice.

The transition to a low carbon economy should be made in a socially-just way. This transition is defined in this report as: a step change in responses to climate change and resource scarcity that will prevent catastrophic climate change and simultaneously enhance, rather than undermine, social justice.

Failure to act: the urgency-agency gap

There is a discrepancy between the urgency of these issues and the action being taken to address them. The extreme seriousness of climate change and increasingly sophisticated scientific understanding of its likely physical, social and economical impacts is not reflected in policy or public responses.

Evidence suggests there has been only a limited response – in terms of behavioural changes, public pressure on government, or a growing, self-organising social movement – to address these issues in all Western nations. The authors believe that the reasons for this urgency-agency gap are as follows:

- technology and habits of consumption that perpetuate a carbon-intensive infrastructure;
- neo-liberal economic principles and practice that have changed the balance of power between market, state and civil society;
- declining trust and support for the institutions of democratic government in advanced democracies;
- the interpretation of climate change in predominantly scientific terms by policy-makers, the media and environmental civil society associations, resulting in primarily technocratic responses;
- over-emphasis on economic growth as the key indicator of 'success', rather than more comprehensive measures to deliver social and environmental goals.

The need for a rapid and just transition and the role of civil society associations in bringing this about

A rapid and just transition from fossil fuel dependence to a low carbon economy is both urgent and necessary and civil society associations have a unique and critical potential role to play in achieving this. They are able to address social justice, resource scarcity and climate change issues, and often address them simultaneously in their activities, even if not always consciously or explicitly. The present research shows that organisations such as Groundwork, Sustain and Sustrans address issues with very direct social justice and climate change/resource scarcity impacts, but do not necessarily promote them as

such, preferring to talk more simply and effectively about getting people to improve their environment, getting healthy food into schools and improving people's mobility and health, respectively. For these organisations, using this kind of language is often more effective for engagement with policy-makers, the public and other civil society associations than speaking about the more abstract concepts of social justice and climate change. In this way, civil society associations are developing a better 'story to tell' about how to create the just transition and how the government can learn much from their approach.

Civil society associations also face a variety of challenges in bridging the social justice and climate change/resource scarcity agendas. In particular, tensions arise from civil society associations which represent particular interest groups, whose immediate or short-term interests may prioritise social justice, but whose longer-term interests (whether recognised or not) are more obviously tied to climate change and resource scarcity issues. Trade unions are the most obvious example here but community groups working in disadvantaged areas face a similar challenge, with poverty and crime always presenting themselves as more immediate challenges. Conversely, environmental groups in civil society have often neglected to focus on people and issues of social justice. Their focus has been predominantly scientific, environmental, and not social. There are tensions between environmental and social justice organisations over many issues such as planning and housing.

Strengths, challenges and focus

To address these challenges, civil society associations have enormous strengths based on the wide range of activities they perform which help them to fulfil their missions. The authors identify seven key activities, many of which are interconnected:

- creating a positive future vision;
- creating deliberative spaces;
- raising awareness;
- developing new forms of associational life;
- innovation and practical action at the grassroots;
- holding to account;
- influencing state and market actors.

This paper contends that, if the following two conditions are met, it will greatly facilitate civil society's ability to pursue many of these activities and make their activities more effective:

- the expansion of collaboration both within civil society and across market and state.
- the adoption of a 'strong' sustainable development model with social justice at its core that also aligns with the scientific estimates of what it will take to live within our environmental means.

However, there are a number of obstacles faced by social justice and environmental organisations seeking to ensure just and fair responses to climate change and resource scarcity. Some key challenges include:

- the need to raise awareness that reducing the impact of climate change is about more than individual consumer choice;
- a public perception that environmental and social justice agendas are in conflict;
- lack of a co-ordinated government response which means that social and environmental policy have been addressed separately by different departments;
- a limited tradition of social justice, environmental and grassroots organisations working together.

These are huge challenges, but recently civil society groups across the environmental/social justice divide have begun conversations about the challenge of making progressive social policy sustainable and ensuring that environmental policy is 'poverty-proofed'. Moreover, there are real opportunities to achieve multiple 'wins'. Dealing with climate change can open up new opportunities to better deliver social justice. As a number of examples featured later illustrate, there are a number of responses to climate change that will not only reduce emissions and contribute to the long-term adaptation to climate change, but can also offer the opportunity for positive social change. This can include:

- resilience to volatile food or energy prices;
- local economic regeneration;
- building social capital and social cohesion;
- improving physical and mental well-being and employment opportunities.

Civil society cannot do this alone, nor can any other single sector. A new age of collaboration is now called for with greater balance between each sector and with each playing the roles, separately and collectively, that are appropriate and necessary. As this report shows, this involves a radical re-think from all sides and a deeper consideration of some of the things we have thus far thought of as unquestionable.

This report does four things:

- it maps out the challenges facing civil society associations and their constituencies over the next 30 years;
- it explores the interplay between social justice, resource scarcity and climate change – with a specific focus on the UK and Ireland;
- it identifies how civil society associations are addressing climate justice; how they create change and the difficulties that still need to be resolved;
- finally, it puts forward a number of recommendations for the future role of civil society associations in achieving a rapid and just transition.

Civil society cannot do this alone, nor can any other single sector. A new age of collaboration is now called for with greater balance between each sector and with each playing the roles, separately and collectively, that are appropriate and necessary. This involves a radical re-think from all sides and a deeper consideration of some of the things we have thus far thought of as unquestionable.

1 Part 1: Setting the context

‘In a totalitarian state the problem of the distribution of sacrifice does not exist ... It is only in a free community that the task of government is complicated by the claims of social justice.’

J.M. Keynes (1940) in *How to Pay for the War*



Introduction

The independent Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland, funded by the Carnegie UK Trust, commissioned nef (the new economics foundation) to explore the current and possible future role of civil society associations in bridging the agendas of social justice, climate change and resource scarcity.

This report is the result of that research. Through the issues of climate change and resource scarcity, the research reviewed the understanding of social justice. It then explored the role of civil society associations in linking social justice to climate change and resource scarcity in both practical and theoretical ways. The report concludes with recommendations for state, market and civil society in light of the challenges civilisation faces over the next 50 years.

The report is a synthesis of several elements:

- an extensive literature review, the full version of which is separately available;
- a series of semi-structured interviews;
- an online survey; and
- a high-level roundtable discussion.

Objectives of the research

How can we respond to the complex ecological, economic and social problems we face, now and in the future? What policies need to be developed and who needs to be involved to ensure that a liveable and socially just world can be achieved and sustained?

These are some of the key questions that this report seeks to answer, with specific reference to

the current and potential future roles of civil society associations in the UK and Ireland. In particular, this report addresses the following questions:

- What are the social implications of climate change and resource scarcity on civil society associations and their constituencies?
- What evidence is there to suggest that policy-makers are bridging the gap between social justice, climate change and resource scarcity?
- What steps are already being taken by civil society associations in rich and poor countries alike to bridge the gap between climate change, growing pressure on resources and social justice?
- What are the future roles of civil society associations in mitigating resistance to adaptation and ensuring that resources are distributed fairly?
- How should the balance of power shift between the state, private sector and civil society associations in order to achieve this?

Climate change and resource scarcity: the threat to social justice

Civil society associations are in a unique position to tackle the interwoven issues of climate change, resource scarcity and social justice. They can do so either through their own work, in partnership with other organisations across all sectors, or by raising awareness within their respective constituencies.

An unequal and divided society will be ill equipped to take the kind of concerted action needed to deal with and adapt to the challenges of climate change and resource scarcity. Addressing social injustice will therefore be a key tool to improving our ability to meet these challenges.

Despite the rise of the environmental movement and a growing understanding of climate change, almost half of the 1.1 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) released into the atmosphere since 1750 have occurred in the past thirty years.

What is clear from this report is that initial efforts at technological solutions and market-based initiatives have failed comprehensively to cut emissions. Instead, we are emitting greenhouse gases and consuming natural resources at an ever-increasing rate. The benefits and burdens of this exploitation of resources, however, are not distributed equally. More often than not, those who have benefited least from economic development and who are least responsible for emissions face the worst impacts.¹ Policy responses that fail to take account of this tend to exacerbate or maintain existing inequalities.

The triple crunch

The year 2008 will be remembered as the year of the so-called triple crunch: a coming together of credit-fuelled financial crisis, accelerating climate change and highly-volatile energy prices, underpinned by the approaching peak in global oil production.

Although 2008 was the coolest year of the current decade, it was still the tenth-warmest year since instrumental records began in 1850. A number of academic papers published in 2008 and early 2009 indicated that climate change was far more serious even than reported in the most recent review of the science by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Against this background, and as a recent survey of charities showed, many civil society associations – including those who campaign or work in the field – have already begun to feel the pressure of the economic downturn, just at a time when they are needed the most.²

An increasing global recession may slow consumption, but it might also widen income inequalities within and between nations. In the context of climate change and resource scarcity, this matters because socio-economic deprivation can lead to greater vulnerability to their effects.

Climate change, resource scarcity and social justice

In the developed world, climate change and resource scarcity have often been seen as purely economic or scientific questions, and though there has been some high-level recognition that there is a social justice aspect to these issues (For example, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has stated that: ‘poverty, inequality, discrimination, lopsided power relationships and social injustice make certain groups particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change’³). There remains a triple inequality in the way of an ambitious and inclusive international climate change agreement:⁴

- unequal distribution of the impacts of climate change,
- unequal responsibility for precipitating climate change, and
- unequal sharing of the costs of mitigation and adaptation between developed and developing nations.⁵

These problems are exacerbated by the inability of the disadvantaged to influence climate-related policy decisions, while shifts in power away from civil society to the state and the market have reduced the ability of civil society groups to influence change.

What power civil society has to influence change is increasingly restricted by the kind of erosion of civil liberties highlighted by policing at the G20 protests in London on 1 April 2009 and the use of counter-terrorism laws to monitor political activists and control demonstrations was seen by many as upsetting a delicate balance between freedom and order.

The UK director of Greenpeace, John Sauven, observed:

‘I have witnessed Greenpeace staff walking into our office in north London having to run a gauntlet of police photographers and videographers filming all who enter and leave.’⁶

Loosely-drafted and hastily-enacted legislation following the September 11 and July 7 terrorist atrocities in New York and London potentially encroach upon fundamental freedoms of speech, association and assembly. Civil liberties underpin a strong and vibrant civil society, and are pivotal if society is to produce what the UK government's climate change Minister has called for, a 'mass mobilisation' against inaction on climate change.

Scientific evidence makes it clear that the matter is urgent. A rapid and just transition will call for policies that prioritise social justice and democratic decision-making. For this to happen, a broader and more diverse set of stakeholders will need to be involved, and existing power structures will have to be reconfigured. Civil society associations are already playing a key role in trying to accelerate such a transition, but they are hampered by obstacles in the policy environment and within civil society itself.

The challenges facing civil society over the next 30 years

Climate change

The Earth's climate system is currently changing dramatically, in patterns that are beyond the characteristics of natural variations. Our economic demand on natural resources is exceeding supply, while greenhouse gas emissions are fast increasing. Climate change is undoubtedly caused by human activity particularly the excessive use of fossil fuels.

Box 1: 100 months and the need for a rapid transition

New, cautious, calculations suggest that there may be as few as 100 months, starting from August 2008, to stabilise concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere before the risk of uncontrollable global warming increases significantly.⁷ This is supported by research from a leading institute for the study of climate change, the Tyndall Centre for Climate Research.⁸ At best, therefore, there is less than a decade before potentially irreversible changes to the climate begin to happen.

Energy security

Long-distance transport, industrialised food systems, growing conurbations and many commodities – from cars, plastics and chemicals, to pesticides, air conditioning and refrigeration – are dependent on abundant, cheap energy. The decline of the availability of oil, gas and coal means that the prices of fossil fuels are likely to become increasingly volatile in the near future, with catastrophic implications for the world economy.

A report by the US Department of Energy in February 2005 warned that 'the peaking of world oil production presents the US and the world with an unprecedented risk management problem'. The report goes on to state: 'As peaking is approached, liquid fuel prices and price volatility will increase dramatically ... without timely mitigation, the economic, social, and political costs will be unprecedented.'⁹

Energy prices reached record levels in mid-2008, with oil at \$147 a barrel in July. While prices later fell to \$40, it seems that this volatility will be compounded by growing reliance on reserves in a small number of regions (it is estimated that 62% of all known oil reserves are in the Persian Gulf).¹⁰ Despite huge untapped renewable energy sources in the UK and Ireland, both have become increasingly reliant on imports and are increasingly vulnerable to wild fluctuations in oil and gas prices. The social justice implications of this are manifold. To take one, the government has estimated that for every 1% increase in the price of energy, a further 40,000 households will find themselves in fuel poverty.¹¹

Food security

Climate change will affect food yields and therefore world food security¹² (defined by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as 'Consumers having access at all times to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for an active and healthy life at affordable prices'¹³)

In northern Europe, forecasts suggest increased crop yields due to warmer temperatures.¹⁴ However, growing dependence on a global food system means that the UK and Ireland are both vulnerable to the impact of crop failures outside this region. This vulnerability will be amplified because of the heavy dependence of agriculture

on fossil fuels, which are used for the production of fertilisers and pesticides and the processing, packaging and transportation of food.

Defra reported in mid-2008 that there is a growing body of evidence linking high oil prices to rising global food prices,¹⁵ a conclusion substantially endorsed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, with consequent repercussions on the numbers of the hungry, a further 75 million people being added to these in 2008, bringing the total to an estimated one billion. Around the same time, the UN World Food Programme had to reassess its agreed budget for the year after identifying a \$750 million shortfall due to rising food prices. Higher oil and gas prices contributed to this, as did the increasing use of land for the production of bio-fuels.

Again, it is the poor who will bear the brunt of rising costs which, in turn, could lead to an increase in health inequalities and vulnerability to the impact of climate change.

Credit crisis – a time for change?

The impact of the financial crisis, which began in August 2007, plunged the UK towards economic recession in late 2008. However, it has provided a window of opportunity to create a more sustainable, stable and socially-just model. Any attempt to go back to business as usual will inevitably fail and the growing international interest in 'Green New Deal' policy packages are testament to this.

At the heart of a UK Green New Deal would be an environmental stimulus package designed to begin the rapid environmental transformation of UK businesses, while simultaneously softening the worst impact of the recession. The idea would be to create jobs in the environmental and renewable energy sector – often referred to as green-collar jobs – and lay the foundations for a truly green recovery.

Recent research by nef and Greenpeace, however, suggests that many Western governments, including the UK, are taking this idea less than seriously.¹⁶ While Lord Stern and the UK Green New Deal group have called for government spending of £11 billion and £50 billion a year respectively, the green economic stimulus package outlined in the 2009 Pre-Budget Report was just 0.0083 % of GDP while, in the wake of the banking crisis nearly 20% of UK GDP has been provided to support the financial sector.

Growing inequalities

The benefits of economic growth have not been equally distributed, in fact they have heightened existing inequalities. The far-reaching effects of global inequality have been powerfully summarised by Angel Gurría, the Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

*'Growing inequality is divisive. It polarises societies, it divides regions within countries, and it carves up the world between rich and poor. Greater income inequality stifles upward mobility between generations, making it harder for talented and hard-working people to get the rewards they deserve. Ignoring increasing inequality is not an option.'*¹⁷

Inequalities within and between countries are widening. Between 1990 and 2001 just \$0.60 in every \$100-worth of growth in the world's income reached the poorest segment of the world's population.¹⁸

In the UK and Ireland, growing inequalities in income and assets have shadowed sustained economic growth. This is evidenced in a Joseph Rowntree Foundation report published in July 2007.¹⁹ It found that already-wealthy areas have tended to become wealthier. There is evidence of increasing polarisation, with rich and poor living further apart. In areas of some cities, over half of all households are now below the official poverty line. Britain is moving back towards levels of inequality in wealth and poverty last seen more than 40 years ago.²⁰

Likewise, recent research among the OECD nations²¹ found that the gap between rich and poor had widened in most nations in the decade following the mid-1990s. Over the two decades between 1985 and 2005, the UK still had one of the highest levels of income inequality in the developed world. The Republic of Ireland was just one place ahead of the UK in the rankings.

The report also emphasised the correlation between income inequality and social mobility, with nations having greater income inequalities tending to have less mobility. Furthermore, it highlighted the fact that income inequalities have an impact on the distribution of power: 'Societies with a large gap between rich and poor face the threat of political power being confined to the hands of a few wealthy individuals.'

In their recent book, *The Spirit Level*, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett highlight the impact of inequality on public health. Higher rates of mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, imprisonment, obesity and teenage pregnancy are all associated with high levels of income inequality.²² There is also lower educational attainment, literacy and life expectancy across whole populations that have a high level of income inequality.

Moreover, increased consumption, for those who enjoy it, does not lead to a greater sense of well-being. National trends in subjective life satisfaction (an important predictor of other hard, quantitative indicators such as health) stay stubbornly flat once a fairly low level of GDP per capita is reached.²³ And, importantly, only around 10% of the variation in subjective happiness observed in northern populations is attributable to differences in actual material circumstances, such as income and possessions.²⁴

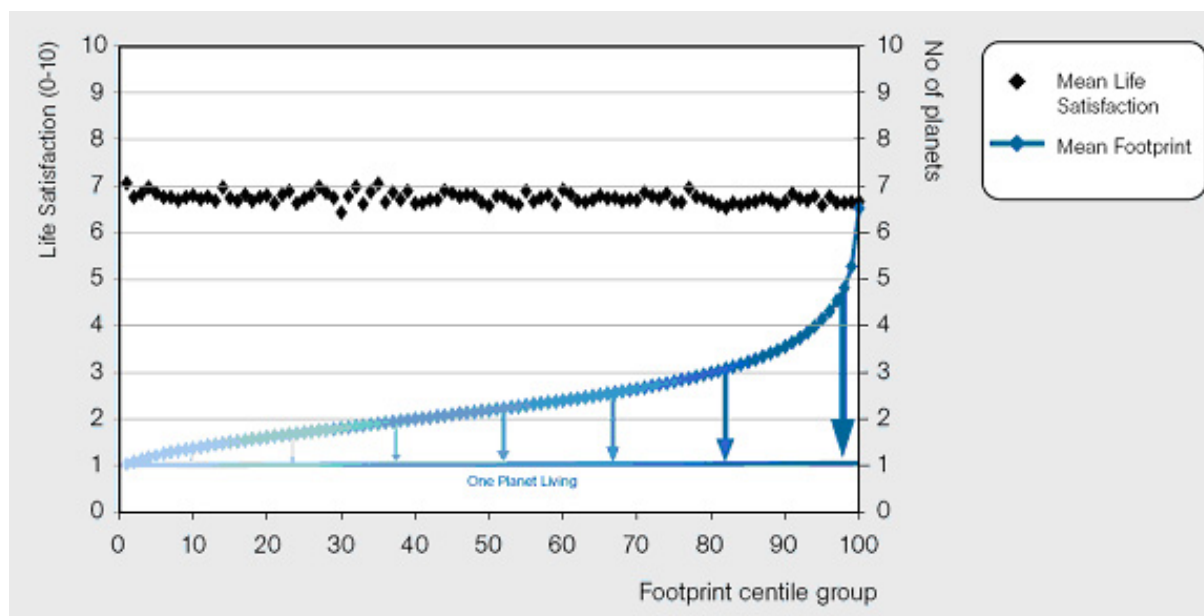
Figure 1 shows the results of an online survey of life satisfaction and consumption in Europe, conducted by nef.²⁵ The survey contained questions

about lifestyle – consumption patterns, diet, health, and family history – as well as subjective life satisfaction. Using these data, estimates of footprint and life expectancy could be calculated. Some 34,000 people in Europe completed the survey.

The blue line represents the distribution of ecological footprints, expressed in terms of the number of planets’-worth of resources that would be required if everyone on the planet were to live the same way. The black line shows the degree of life satisfaction of respondents. This does not vary significantly across the spectrum of consumption. The arrows depict the nature of the transition that is required to both level, and lower disparities in consumption towards equitable and sustainable use of the earth’s resources.

In other words, while Europeans consume too many of the world’s resources, this over-consumption does not produce happiness or well-being. If this is grasped and taken seriously, the EU footprint might be reduced significantly within 10 years, to address climate change, without leading to loss in well-being.

Figure 1: Life satisfaction compared to levels of material consumption in Europe



Challenges to civil liberties impacts on protest

Civil liberties centrally involve the right of association, assembly and expression and are, therefore, the quintessence of a functioning civil society. However, over the past decade there has been a growing concern that counter-terrorism legislation is undermining these fundamental freedoms.

Even before this, a recent study found that there has been a discernible decline in commitment to civil liberties over the past 20-25 years that cannot be fully explained by differences of age, party affiliation or education.²⁷ Even where support for the ideal of civil liberties persists, the mere mention of counter-terrorism increases people's willingness to contemplate giving up freedoms. However, the right to hold public meetings and protest remains important for many.

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), a human rights and international law watchdog, published a report in early 2009 which argues that, since 9/11, states have allowed themselves to be rushed into counter-terrorism responses that 'lack basic safeguards' and 'encroach on fundamental freedoms'.

Counter-terrorism measures have often been predicated on a definition of terrorism that is so vague that it can be used against any person engaged in political activity while the rights of those who come under suspicion of terrorism have been simultaneously eroded. In the UK, for example, individuals can be detained under counter-terrorism legislation for long periods without trial, while intelligence agencies have been given new powers of surveillance.

In parallel with this, the UK government has sometimes taken up contradictory and confusing positions on protest. The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Miliband, called for a mass mobilisation of civil society on climate change. As a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights made clear in response to the G20 protests in April 2009: 'while protests may be disruptive or inconvenient, the presumption should always be in favour of protests taking place without state interference,' but a more forthright approach to policing has made protest the preserve of the more experienced or committed activist.

'If a democratic and civil libertarian agenda is in place and working, the outcomes – fairness, justice, equality of opportunity for all – will come over time.'

Conor Gearty, Professor of Law, London School of Economics (2003)²⁶



Protest and civil disobedience (the principled defiance of a law judged unjust)²⁸ are both important civil society strategies. By raising awareness and gaining wider public support nationally and internationally, activists have sown the seeds of social change, as the experience of abolitionists, suffragettes, US civil rights movement and anti-apartheid activists strikingly demonstrate.

Cutting consumption: a clash of freedoms

Civil liberties are not the only aspect of personal freedom likely to be thrown into conflict by climate change and resource scarcity. For people in industrialised countries, the threat of global warming still seems too distant to justify significant disturbance to their lives and consumption habits. Likewise, decision-makers are acutely aware of negative public and media reaction to any perceived curbs on 'freedom' to consume whatever one's income allows.

In a similar way, during the second world war, the economist J.M. Keynes lobbied the Treasury through a series of articles in *The Times* newspaper and a pamphlet called 'How to pay for the war', in an effort to show that even a moderate development of the war effort 'necessitated a very large cut in general consumption'.²⁹ Keynes' view was perceived to be too strong. Opinion was not ready.

In fact and eventually, to manage reductions in consumption, the war-time government deliberately chose rationing over taxation for reasons that were logical and progressive. Taxation alone, it concluded, apart from disproportionately and unfairly placing a burden on the poor, would be too slow to change behaviour.³⁰

Historian Mark Roodhouse derives specific lessons for today's policymaking. If introducing rationing now, he argues, the government would need to 'convince the public that rationing levels are fair; that

the system is administered transparently and fairly; and that evaders are few in number, likely to be detected and liable to stiff penalties if found guilty.³¹

Dynamics that are driving these trends

Since the middle of the 19th century, the world has experienced a period of rapid economic growth. The key to this has been the availability of abundant cheap energy, the spread of transport and communication technologies, knowledge, science and population increase, in addition to rising consumption.

This 'great acceleration' has been underpinned by the exploitation of natural resources. Even at low economic growth rates of around 3% per year (typical of a developed economy), the economy's 'doubling period' takes just over 23 years. At a 10% rate, typical of rapidly developing economies (at least prior to the current recession), the economy doubles in just under seven years. With each successive doubling period, the economy consumes as much resources as in all the previous doubling periods combined (just as 8 exceeds the sum of 1, 2 and 4), so putting an ever-increasing strain on the biosphere.

‘Every society clings to a myth by which it lives. Ours is the myth of economic growth.’

Professor Tim Jackson, Sustainable Development Commission³²



The latest climate science challenges the political assumption that infinite orthodox economic growth is viable. Recent evidence suggests that, while the growth rate of CO₂ emissions includes carbon-cycle feedbacks (a decrease in the effectiveness of the land and ocean to remove human-produced CO₂), over half of emissions growth is due to an increase in economic activity.³³

Mapping social justice in the context of climate change and resource scarcity

This section explores current understandings of social justice and looks at whether the concept needs to be rethought in the light of climate change and resource scarcity. It maps the various ways that social justice can be undermined by climate change and resource scarcity. Finally, it identifies why those involved in developing policy responses to both climate change and resource scarcity need to have social justice as an explicit aim.

Defining social justice

There is no straightforward or widely accepted definition of social justice. An in-depth review of the theories of social justice was commissioned as part of the Commission's broader Inquiry into the Future of Society. The author, Professor Gary Craig, offers a framework of values that recognises the importance of difference and diversity in civil society.³⁴ This framework includes:

- achieving fairness, equality of outcomes and treatment;
- recognising the dignity and equal worth of all, and encouraging self-esteem;
- the meeting of basic needs, defined through cross-cultural consensus;
- reducing substantial inequalities in wealth, income and life chances;
- the participation of all, including the most disadvantaged.

Civil society's view of social justice

This research found that the values of social justice within civil society associations are closely aligned with Craig's framework, as Figure 2 shows.

Figure 2 : Civil society associations and the values of social justice

Value of social justice	Responses
Fairness	<p><i>'Everyone in the world should have access to a nutritionally balanced diet, fresh water and a reasonable standard of education, pay and accommodation. They should also be able to live without the fear of violence. This should be achieved without deliberately harming the environment or animals.'</i></p> <p><i>'The notion of fairness is in our DNA – we want to bring this into the public debate'</i></p>
Equal worth	<p><i>'A socially-just society is one where the overriding value is co-operation, and where wisdom and compassion are valued. This would be a society where difference would not lead to oppression, lack of opportunity, or inequality. It would also be a society where the "isms": – racism, sexism, homophobia, speciesism – would have no hold.'</i></p> <p><i>'A socially-just society is one which affords individuals and groups fair treatment and an impartial share of the benefits of society. A socially-just society maximises the expectations of the least well-off groups.'</i></p>
Basic needs	<p><i>'A society where the basic needs of everyone are met, and where good access to education, housing and health services is available regardless of where people live.'</i></p> <p><i>'Equal access to all significant resources – food, energy, shelter.'</i></p>
Reducing inequalities	<p><i>'Our union wants an economy that promotes equality and reduces the gap between top and bottom'</i></p> <p><i>'Social justice is a mixture of the Rawlsian veil of ignorance, more equal outcomes but equality of opportunities, and greater equality on the basis of greater liberty. [The] centre-left will lose a lot of ground if we push the idea that everyone should be the same line. Solidarity, liberty and equality all come in. This is therefore a collectivist, egalitarian view of social justice.'</i></p>
Participation	<p><i>'Social justice to us means people who are disadvantaged being given a chance to participate in our education programmes, helping the marginalised gain access to education, information and practical support'</i></p> <p><i>'Participative democratic structures at a local level'</i></p> <p><i>'When people are engaged as active citizens, this leads to a more equal society'</i></p> <p><i>'Equal opportunity to make decisions'</i></p>

Social justice in the context of climate change and resource depletion

Climate change and resource scarcity have long been recognised as issues of justice. Indeed, the reconciliation of social justice with environmental protection has surfaced at every major international meeting since the first environment and development conference at Stockholm in 1971. Additionally, a commitment to equity forms the basis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). However, such commitments are often honoured more in name than practice. Meanwhile, injustice is increasingly evident in almost all aspects of global warming: from the distribution of climate change impacts to the cost of mitigation and the accountability for emissions, which are so closely related to the national and per capita distribution of wealth and consumption.

‘No human being has the right to diminish the life and well-being of another and no generation has the right to inflict harm on generations to come.’

David Orr, Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics at Oberlin College³⁵



Those unable to participate fully in society are also less able to cope with the kinds of external shock likely to be associated with climate change, which means the global distribution of climate change impacts is highly uneven – both between rich and poor countries, and between the rich and poor within countries. Climate change and resource scarcity, therefore, could easily intensify existing inequalities within and between nations.

This has clear implications for policy. If the two are thus causally linked, they can also often both be addressed through the same means. A report published by ESRC on environmental justice argues: ‘By seeing social justice issues through the environmental lens, and vice versa by analysing environmental issues more clearly in terms of social justice, new and more effective ways for dealing with each can be developed than if, as is usually the case at present, each is dealt with separately.’³⁶

A commonly-cited example of this is energy conservation and efficiency programmes (for example, cavity wall insulation) in fuel-poor homes. Not only do these programmes potentially reduce fuel bills and improve the health and well-being of those concerned, they also reduce energy consumption and therefore carbon emissions from energy generation. Furthermore, such programmes can also provide employment opportunities, often in areas where they are needed the most. A report by the Association for the Conservation of Energy in 2000 concluded:

‘Work in manufacturing and installing energy efficiency measures is accessible to people who suffer the highest rates of unemployment in the UK, given that it is manual labour, and the work is dispersed across the country. Indeed, where programmes aim to assist the fuel poor the work is concentrated in areas where unemployment tends to be highest.’³⁷

The evolution of climate justice from environmental justice

Environmental justice is perhaps the first concept to explicitly link issues of social justice to sustainability, centred on the human right to a clean and healthy environment. Locally, nationally and globally the most vulnerable people with the least power and resources often see this right denied. Whether it is to do with exposure to air pollution or flooding, the location of hazardous installations, inadequate access to clean water or simply not having access to green space and particular environmental resources, the poorest in society are often disproportionately affected.

The UK ratified the Århus Convention (the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters) in 2005. While Ireland is now the only nation in the EU that has not done so, ratification by the EU means that Ireland is now, in any case, bound by its terms. The Convention establishes a legal duty on the government (and other signatories) to protect the public right to environmental participation and decision-making. This goes beyond the notion of environmental equity, typically focused on sharing burdens equally among all communities.

Box 2: The principles of environmental justice

While there are a number of definitions of environmental justice, it is generally deemed to have the following key characteristics:³⁸

- the human right to a healthy and safe environment and the responsibility to maintain it;
- a fair share of natural resources;
- the civil right to be able to access environmental information and participate in decision-making;
- the most vulnerable in society should not suffer the disproportionate, negative effects of environmental omissions, actions, policy or law.

Environmental justice involves tackling environmental (whether natural or built) questions from a social justice perspective, both for present and for future generations. Climate change will make it more challenging to meet the principles of environmental justice. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

A climate justice framework

Craig's social justice framework can be applied to climate change and resource scarcity (see Figure 3). The framework draws heavily on the principles of environmental justice and introduces the concepts of adaptation, adaptive capacity, resilience and inter-generational equity.

Figure 3: A climate justice framework

Craig's framework of social justice	Climate justice	Examples of injustice
Recognising the dignity and equal worth of all	Within and between nations, and between generations.	The growing language of 'climate security' in developed nations toward environmental refugees; failure of the global north to honour adaptation aid; biodiversity loss
The meeting of basic needs, defined through cross-cultural consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The human right to a healthy and safe environment. • Helping individuals, communities and nations to enhance their adaptive capacity and increase their resilience. 	Poor, marginalised and excluded groups have insufficient access to environmental resources, information and services. For example, fuel poverty/affordable warmth and planning decisions.
Achieving fairness, equality of outcomes and treatment	A fair share of natural resources and the right not to suffer disproportionately from climate change impacts, policies, regulations or laws	Ecological debt: some groups/nations consume a far greater share of environmental resources, and contribute far more to their degradation than others.
Reducing substantial inequalities in wealth, income and life chances	Recognising that climate change and resource scarcity are likely to exacerbate inequalities, and redressing these inequalities, is a key adaptive strategy.	Some groups have poor access to local services, insurance and savings which make them more vulnerable to direct or indirect impacts; health inequalities.
The participation of all, including the most disadvantaged.	The ability to access information, and participate in decision-making, on issues related to mitigating and adaptive responses to climate change and resource scarcity.	Poor and socially-excluded groups may be less able to participate in sustainable consumption (for example, to buy shares in a local wind farm, or locally produced organic food); the impact of counter-terrorism legislation on civil liberties.

While the present research has shown that many civil society associations hold a view that is closely aligned to this definition, translating a normative framework into empirical realities poses a challenge. The framework should therefore be taken as a set of guiding principles for policy and practice to move further and further away from climate and environmental injustices.

The climate justice framework is explored in more detail below.

1. Recognising the dignity and equal worth of all, within and between nations and between generations.

The long atmospheric lifetime of carbon dioxide (CO₂) together with the slow response of the climate system, means that the impacts of climate change will be felt by communities that are distant in both space and time from the source of emissions. We therefore consider the international, intra-national and inter-generational aspects of this element of the framework.

‘No theory of justice can henceforth be regarded as complete if it does not take into account the possibility of extending the community of justice beyond the realm of present generation human beings.’

Andrew Dobson, Professor of Politics, Keele University³⁹



The international dimension

Research and reviews such as the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report and the UK Treasury’s Stern Review have shown that the poorest communities and individuals in the world are, and will continue to be, the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.⁴⁰ A combination of physical exposure to climate events, social vulnerability and reliance on natural ecosystems makes the poorest people in poor countries particularly ill equipped to cope with the current effects of climate change, much less to develop the capacity to adapt to the future. For example, marginalised communities in already drought-prone areas are likely to be further impoverished because water scarcity will be exacerbated by climate change.⁴¹

Box 3: Global climate injustice

A recent analysis of 4000 extreme weather events between 1980 and 2002 found that the poor and those who lived in rural areas in poor countries suffered death, homelessness and displacement from climate-related disasters to orders of magnitude ranging from 10 to 100 times that of people in wealthier countries.⁴²

In addition to their increased vulnerability to the impact of climate change, for which they are least responsible, communities and governments in developing nations are often at the sharp end of policy responses, while being excluded from participating in key decision-making processes. This has been defined by Roberts and Parks as the ‘triple inequality of responsibility, vulnerability and mitigation’.

These inequalities have fuelled non-co-operation in international climate change agreements. Because of this, a fair level of participation and recognition of all the actors involved in the decision-making processes (procedural justice) is critical to facilitate co-operation in managing the global resources and to avoid the protection of vested interests.

Increasingly, international civil society associations are becoming instrumental in providing support to developing nations at international climate negotiations. They have, for instance, been central to capacity-building – the development of the technical skills and institutional capabilities required to enable developing nation participation in all aspects of adaptation to, mitigation of and research into climate change. Increasingly, alliances of northern and southern civil society associations have formed a climate justice movement (see Box 4, p. 18) to raise awareness of the injustices described above.

Climate change and migration

A recent report by EU Foreign Policy Chief, Javier Solana and the Executive European Commission warned that climate change could amplify or trigger mass migration within and between countries,⁴³ which, in turn could spark increased conflicts in transit and destination areas. It adds: ‘some countries that are extremely vulnerable to climate change are already calling for international recognition of such environmentally-induced migration.’

The job of managing refugees already falls largely to developing countries, a situation which climate change is set to aggravate. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2006, developing regions hosted 7.1 million refugees, 72% of the global refugee population, while the 50 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) provided asylum to 22%.⁴⁴

Box 4: Climate justice in practice

In November 2000, CorpWatch organised the First Climate Justice Summit in The Hague at the 6th Conference of the Parties (COP), the annual meeting of signatories to the UNFCCC. The Summit brought together representatives from communities adversely affected by climate change in both developed and developing countries.

Similar mobilisations have been organised at subsequent COPs. For example, during the 8th COP in Delhi in 2002, hundreds of activists gathered for a Climate Justice Summit. Delegates included farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous people, women, youth and the urban poor.

The outcome of the summit was a declaration – the Delhi Climate Justice Declaration – which stated: ‘We affirm that climate change is a rights issue – it affects our livelihoods, our health, our children and our natural resources. We will build alliances across borders to oppose climate change inducing patterns and advocate for and practise sustainable development. We reject the market-based principles that guide the current negotiations to solve the climate crisis: Our World Is Not For Sale!’

The climate justice movement tends to take a holistic view of the world, its agendas often reflecting a broader set of concerns such as economic and political marginalisation.

This is illustrated by CorpWatch’s definition of climate justice: ‘holding fossil fuel corporations accountable for the central role they play in contributing to global warming...challenging these companies at every level – from the production and marketing of fossil fuels themselves to their underhanded political influence, to their PR prowess, to the unjust solutions they propose, to the fossil fuel-based globalisation they are driving.’

Forced from their homes and lands by flood, storm, drought and other environmental and weather-related disasters, environmental refugees are now one of the fastest-growing classes of refugee. There are thought to be already several million more of these than orthodox political refugees. By 2050, between 150 and 250 million people may be displaced by developments such as sea-level rise and drought – some four times the total current population of the UK.⁴⁵

Intergenerational justice

Peak oil and climate change mean future generations will be less likely to benefit directly from fossil fuels and more likely to suffer the impacts of their use. As an example, the World Health Organisation (WHO) calculates that 99% of the disease burden of climate change has been occurring in developing countries, and that 88% of this involves children under five.

Climate justice within a nation’s borders: the UK and Ireland

Those likely to experience disproportionate social, economic and biophysical impacts from climate change include the poor, the elderly, the young, ethnic minorities, the infirm and those with low levels of education, low awareness of climate change, poor social networks and limited access to services. This is in addition to differential burdens and benefits from climate change policy. In other words, different groups will experience different social impacts from the same climate change-related events.

Low-income households are disproportionately exposed to price fluctuations in the global market for food and energy. The prices for these commodities are likely to be influenced by a complex interaction of public policy, market forces, corporate intervention, resource depletion and climate change – none of which the poorest or the socially-excluded can exert much influence over. Furthermore, household emissions are strongly correlated to income. Because of this, the relationship between social justice, climate change and resource scarcity mirror those at the international level – the triple inequality of vulnerability, responsibility and mitigation.

The triple inequality is illustrated below through some examples of direct climate change impacts (such as health) and indirect impacts (such as energy, food and transport).

Direct impacts of climate change

Health

The impact of climate change on human health is of particular significance to socially-excluded groups. The most recent report by the Department of Health and the Health Protection Agency on health and climate change in the UK identifies a number of things that are likely to intensify with climate change. These include:⁴⁶

- *Food poisoning*: cases of food poisoning are likely to increase significantly, by perhaps 10,000 cases per year.
- *Insect-borne disease*: malaria could return to the UK. A range of other potential insect-related problems include a likely increase in flies which spread diarrhoeal diseases – the so-called ‘buffet factor’ – and an increase in fleas, which thrive in warm conditions.
- *Respiratory disease*: the damaging effects of surface ozone during the summer are likely to increase. The chemical reactions producing ozone from air pollution are temperature-dependent, as are natural sources of ozone (from plants).⁴⁷ Altogether this could result in a rise in deaths and hospital admissions from respiratory diseases related to air pollution of between 15 and 53% each year.
- *Increases in heat-related deaths*: Heat-related deaths could increase by around 2,800 cases per year. However, milder winters could lead to a fall in cold-related winter deaths of up to 20,000.
- *Cancer and cataracts*: cases of skin cancer in the UK are likely to increase by perhaps 5,000 per year, and cataracts by 2,000 cases per year, by 2050.
- *Accident and trauma*: as well as injuries and infectious diseases, extreme weather events, such as serious flooding, can result in raised anxiety and depression, especially in the elderly, which in turn is associated with increased risk of hypertension, heart disease and diabetes.⁴⁸ Those whose homes were flooded in Lewes, East Sussex, in 2000 experienced a fourfold increase in psychological distress over those whose homes were not affected.⁴⁹
- *Water and sanitation*: Flood-waters may also create a health hazard from chemical or sewage pollution if industrial, waste-storage and treatment plants are inundated. Increased

water temperatures will also affect water quality, contributing to an increase in algal blooms in reservoirs and a decrease in the efficiency of chemical coagulation – a major means of removing microbes from drinking water.

- *Mould*: milder, more humid winters will lead to more mould growth in housing – already a major cause of respiratory allergies.

In all of the above cases, the poor and otherwise socially-excluded are most likely to fall victim and less likely to be able to mitigate the effects.

In terms of vulnerability to such health impacts, ‘relative poverty’ may also be an important factor. It is believed to be a risk factor for chronic disease. As health academics observe, ‘social gradient in mortality is a reflection of the progressive lack of control and increasing stress levels as we progress down the social ladder’.⁵⁰

Indirect impacts: rising prices of goods and services

Energy

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) estimates that for each 1% rise in energy prices, fuel poverty (see Box 5) will affect a further 40,000 households in the UK.⁵¹ More recently a study explored the burden of crude oil prices on French households in 2006.⁵² The author found that the average burden of crude oil was equivalent to 4.4% of the total budget of a typical French household. However, this figure varied significantly depending on income, age and other socio-economic factors. The elderly, low-income groups and those living in rural areas experience the largest burden from oil price increases. While there is no similar analysis for the UK or Ireland yet, the results can be taken to be broadly consistent with other developed nations. Energy price fluctuations can therefore be considered as an acute social issue.

Box 5: Defining fuel poverty

In general, a person who is fuel poor is one ‘that cannot afford to keep adequately warm at reasonable cost’.⁵³ The National Energy Action (NEA) defines affordable warmth as being, ‘where a household can achieve temperatures needed to maintain health and comfort for expenditure of less than 10% of income’.⁵⁴ A widely-accepted definition of fuel poverty in the UK, therefore, is expenditure of more than 10% of income on heating.

Food

Food poverty is defined by the National Heart Forum (NHF) as being ‘unable to choose, buy, prepare and eat an adequate quantity of good-quality foods in keeping with social norms’.

While food policy aimed at consumers tends to be based on ‘informed choice,’ this can be constrained by factors such as time, cost and accessibility, as well as location and general circumstances of life. According to the NHF, those most likely to suffer from food poverty include:⁵⁵

- low-income households or those who are unemployed;
- households with dependent children;
- the elderly;
- people with disabilities;
- members of black and minority ethnic communities.

Food prices have been volatile recently, because of a combination of factors such as rising energy prices, the impacts of climate change and market speculation. The links between health and diet mean that this can exacerbate vulnerability to the direct impacts of climate change. Furthermore, growing demand for more sustainable food also has potential social justice implications. For example, while low-income consumers may want to buy locally and/or organically produced food, it may be prohibitively expensive or simply unavailable.⁵⁶

Transport and access to services

In a society where car ownership is the norm, people who do not have access to a car experience both economic and social disadvantages, often, but not solely, related to access to services.⁵⁷

In 2002, 59% of the poorest 20% of UK households did not have access to a car. This was around seven times the proportion of carless households in the wealthiest 20% of the population.⁵⁸ In all income groups, however, travel by car (whether as a driver or passenger) accounted for most of the miles travelled. A review carried out by the Social Exclusion Unit demonstrated that transport and land-use policies in the UK have combined to create and reinforce social exclusion.⁵⁹ The review found that inadequate public transport provision can:⁶⁰

- impede access to high-quality education;
- increase public disorder, particularly among young people;

- prevent the social integration of older people;
- impede access to adequate health care facilities; and
- militate against the take-up of employment.

Over the past 100 years, industrialised countries have become increasingly car-dependent. Without significant restructuring of our current transport system, we are committing ourselves to a system which breeds social exclusion and a dependence on an energy-intensive mode of transport.

Despite the climate change goals outlined in the UK Climate Change Programme, there are some significant contradictions in current government policy.⁶¹ For example, while local authorities are encouraged to include social equity in their transport planning, out-of-town shopping facilities are still growing, accompanied by a rapid decline in local shops.⁶² This means that those who are without adequate transport and who are already disadvantaged or socially excluded have less choice in terms of the price and quality of food.

Unless there is substantial investment in public transport systems, transport policies that address climate change could potentially be regressive for people living in poverty and could heighten the problems of social exclusion that a car-dependent society creates. This will worsen with the onset of peak oil.

2. The human right to a healthy and safe environment; and helping individuals, communities and nations to enhance their adaptive capacity and increase resilience

According to Kyung-Wha Kang, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights:

‘Global warming and extreme weather conditions may have calamitous consequences for the human rights of millions of people... ultimately, climate change may affect the very right to life of various individuals...[countries] have an obligation to prevent and address some of the direst consequences that climate change may reap on human rights.’⁶³

The obligation to protect human rights, enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, has major implications for climate policy, both domestically and internationally, because climate change and resource scarcity represent physical and economic shocks that are set to make the realisation of many of those rights much harder.⁶⁴

The language of rights helps to explain climate injustice and, in legal terms is becoming an increasingly important and effective tool for raising awareness of the responsibilities for climate change and resource scarcity that imply the loss of others' rights.

One example where human rights violations have formed the centre of an environmental justice lawsuit occurred in Nigeria in November 2005. The plaintiffs (communities across the Niger Delta) argued that gas flares linked to oil production were a health hazard and a major source of greenhouse gases. The Federal High Court of Nigeria ordered the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to stop the practice.

Working in partnership with the legal civil society association EarthJustice and the Centre for International Environmental Law, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) – which represents over 150,000 people in northern Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia⁶⁵ – submitted a petition in December 2005 to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The groups argued that climate change threatens their lives, health, traditional land rights, personal property and livelihoods, all rights recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights.

The petition called for: 'relief from human rights violations resulting from the impacts of global warming and climate change caused by acts and omissions of the United States' (the US is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases and refused to join the first phase of the Kyoto Protocol). While the petition was rejected by the IACHR, the petitioners felt that their case had raised public awareness about states' obligations to prevent human violations resulting from their contribution to global warming.

In the context of adaptation and resilience, rights-based approaches also have the potential to inform the management of aid and development policy.

3. A fair share of natural resources and the right not to suffer disproportionately from climate change impacts, policies, regulations or laws

In the UK, carbon emissions from household energy use by income decile are shown in Figure 4, below. The graph shows that the largest group of low-income households have the lowest electricity consumption, while the opposite is true for highest income and highest consumption.

However, the matter is not so straightforward, as the graph also shows that some low-income households have very high-energy consumption and related carbon emissions.⁶⁶ which would complicate the implementation of a simple carbon tax. Furthermore, similar relationships are observed for emissions from transport.

Figure 4: UK carbon emissions by income decile⁶⁷



In addition to income, economic activity, age, household structure and car availability significantly influence emissions levels.⁶⁸ Patterns of carbon emissions also reflect settlement size and the availability of local facilities, services and employment as these are key determinants of travel and energy consumption.⁶⁹ This means that individuals will have different ‘carbon capabilities’ – the ability to reduce emissions – as these are often enshrined in patterns of consumption, employment, transport and energy. This could have significant social justice implications for both taxation and personal carbon rationing.

Green taxes

‘Green taxes’ are designed to protect the environment by cutting the use of energy from polluting sources (gas, coal, oil). But unless well designed, they run the risk of being regressive. Compensation in the form of safety nets for households in fuel poverty is a necessary counterbalance.⁷⁰

Typically the cost of energy, transport fuel, water and waste disposal services in poorer households is disproportionately high in relation to their income and climate change policy frequently aggravate this, as a recent review of the costs and benefits of UK climate change policy for low-income households found.⁷¹ Some policies, according to the study, such as Warm Front (grant funding for home energy efficiency improvement) and information programmes that are funded by the taxpayer are progressive. Conversely, some, such as the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), the Renewables Obligation and the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) have a disproportionate impact on low-income households because the costs of such policies are passed on to all consumers by gas and electricity companies. The poor can also end up paying more for what they consume because of energy companies’ different pricing schemes; this is particularly relevant for those who have pay-as-you-go utility metres in their homes.

Research by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has shown that the regressive nature of a carbon tax could be countered by a rebate or compensation for low-income households, for example by increasing the amount of fuel allowances.⁷² However, research published by the Centre for Sustainable Energy

in 2008 has shown that the variation of energy consumption within low-income deciles is too high.⁷³ A carbon tax – even with redistribution of revenues – would still be regressive for many.

Investment in improving the thermal energy efficiency of homes would not only alleviate fuel poverty for many, but would also allow the government to implement a carbon tax. While only a handful of studies have examined the impact of carbon taxes on household emissions, there is evidence to suggest that they have been effective in reducing emissions in the domestic sector. For example, one study in Denmark found that energy consumption was around 10% lower than it would have been without the domestic carbon tax.⁷⁴

Personal Carbon Trading (PCT)

Personal carbon trading (PCT) is a quantity-based instrument – in contrast to taxation as described above – and there are strong arguments that an equal per capita allocation of carbon units is the most equitable policy response.⁷⁵

However, for PCT to achieve its objectives of inducing behaviour change, individuals must be ‘carbon-literate’ – have a good grasp of the causes of carbon emissions, the role they themselves play in producing them, the scope for reductions in one’s personal life, how to manage a carbon budget and so on. Some initiatives are already working to develop these skills, such as the RSA’s Carbon DAQ voluntary online (virtual) carbon market and the Cultivate initiative in Ireland.

4. Climate change and resource scarcity are likely to exacerbate inequalities, and redressing these inequalities is a key adaptive strategy

A report commissioned for Defra’s Cross-Regional Research Programme on climate change impacts adaptation recommended that redressing social inequalities such as those in income, health, housing and education should be a key adaptation strategy. This has been translated into England’s Adaptation Framework, where it is recognised that adaptation policy should ensure that the most vulnerable in society are not ‘doubly disadvantaged’.⁷⁶

The European Commission recently published a report on the social dimensions of environmental policy.⁷⁷ It recognised that, in relation to adaptation strategies, the following should be considered:

- identification of climate risks and communication of these to those affected;
- review of the risks posed, particularly from flooding, to any authority-owned or managed property, taking action to flood-proof these, as far as possible;
- the provision of information on insurance, particularly for non-mortgage holders;
- review of the state of cooling systems in social housing and other residential properties, particularly where the elderly live, followed by the implementation of any necessary action;
- engagement with local health services to ensure that the necessary services are available and advertised to the more vulnerable groups, particularly the elderly;
- review of the possibility of introducing health-based measures including early warning systems – for example, for heatwaves.

The Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research (SNIFFER) recently commissioned research that explored adaptation to the differential impacts of climate change in the UK. The project reiterated lessons learned from adaptation in developing nations, in particular, the importance of community development-based processes for enhancing the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities. It also found that in order to communicate effectively with a diverse range of audiences, clear and consistent messages need to be delivered by trusted individuals and organisations.

5. The ability to access information, and participate in decision-making, on issues related to mitigating and adaptive responses to climate change and resource scarcity

Mitigation

Developing a renewable, decentralised energy and food system will have a significant impact on the resilience of the UK as a whole to future food and energy price shocks, either as a result of climate change or peak oil. But the benefits of such a system go further. There are many local economic benefits, which will improve the prospects for disadvantaged individuals and communities and improve community self-confidence through greater self-reliance. If these practices are participative, they can enable individuals and communities to benefit in terms of greater empowerment

and confidence, skills and capacity for further community-based action.⁷⁸ Community-based initiatives can also create the right conditions for pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour change.

A recent study by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) explored⁷⁹ the role of community-level approaches to mobilising pro-environmental change and the role that local authorities in particular play in making them work effectively. The report proposed six factors that are likely to underpin the success of a community initiative:

- ownership and control;
- relevance to local needs;
- ability to achieve small successes: this is key to maintaining long-term participation;
- sense of satisfaction and well-being;
- receiving an appropriate response from those in authority (important for building trust and confidence);
- a trusted and sustained resource base.

However, the report also suggests that these initiatives are unlikely to arise of their own accord and that informed and issue-led organisations need to take the issues of climate change and sustainability to them.

The authors recommend an active role for local authorities in showing leadership, setting an example and making national policy locally relevant.

Community-based initiatives may be fraught with micro-politics that have the potential to create barriers to full participation. Local authorities may be best placed to provide support and links into the wider community to ensure that these initiatives are inclusive – particularly for socially-excluded groups, or those who move into a community.

Local authorities are best placed to link community initiatives to education as a way of maximising benefits. The report argues, however, that currently local authorities are not performing this role adequately. It recommends that government should provide greater guidance and performance objectives for local authorities.

Adaptation

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies four levels of adaptive capacity from the global to the local level.⁸⁰ Mega (global) – international agreements and conventions,

macro (national) – individual government commitments under the Kyoto Protocol; meso (the community or population-group level) – such as early-warning systems for floods, heatwaves or drought; and micro (at household level)

At each of the lower levels, adaptive capacity depends critically on the levels above.

The state plays a key role, not only through its direct involvement in collective adaptation, but in combating the phenomenon that Professor Neil Adger and colleagues note: ‘many collective adaptation decisions made at local levels end up protecting vested interests against the interests of the less vulnerable.’⁸¹

The roles of civil society associations

Civil society associations may play a role as advocates for local people, particularly marginal and/or vulnerable groups;

Civil society associations might be able to provide relevant expertise and specialist knowledge that might help decision-makers reach out to marginalised and vulnerable groups.

More recent research by Pelling *et al.* (2008) has shown that ties of everyday social

interaction may be a community’s best resource in its capacity to change direction.⁸³

The implication of this is that there should be greater support for social development in organisational and social life more generally.

Resilience

In measuring a system’s resilience, the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research uses indicators that demonstrate the system’s ‘ability to (a) absorb shocks and retain its basic function, (b) self-organise (social institutions and networks), and (c) innovate and learn in face of disturbances.’⁸⁴

Resilience is both a prerequisite for, and a feature of, successful adaptation to the uncertainty concerning climate change impacts and resource scarcity. Recent research commissioned by the Economic and Social Research Council suggests that the provision of public services and levels of social capital are key to why some deprived communities weather exogenous shocks better than others.

This highlights the need for participatory approaches to developing local public services that are tailored to local needs and for integrated policy decisions linking social questions to climate change and resource scarcity are

Box 6: The benefits of participatory approaches to adaptation⁸²

- **Increase sustainability and compliance:**

By building on local capacity and knowledge, and because the participants have ‘ownership’ of any decisions made, they are more likely to comply with them in the long term;

- **Improved responses and encouragement of further participation:**

Working closely with local communities can give decision-makers greater insight into the capacity and needs of the communities. Accordingly, adaptation is likely to be more effective and produce better results. Communities can learn how the decision-making process works and how they can influence it effectively.

- **Increased literacy, adaptive capacity, social capital and empowerment:**

Working and achieving things as a community can strengthen and build adaptive capacity within communities by increasing awareness of the issues, as well

as finding ways to address them. It can also reinforce local organisations, build confidence, skills and the capacity to co-operate, and therefore increase a community’s potential to reduce its vulnerability. This also empowers people and enables them to tackle other current or future challenges, individually and collectively.

- **Increased equity in decision-making:**

Participation in planning, through priority-setting and voicing preferences, as well as in implementation, accords with people’s right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Processes of engagement can improve the likelihood of equity in decision-making and provide solutions for conflict situations.

- **Increased cost-effectiveness in the long-term:**

While participatory approaches to adaptation may require more resources than conventional, externally-driven processes, they may be more cost-effective in the long term. Additionally, a participatory approach is more likely to be sustainable, as it allows the ideas to be tried, tested and refined before adoption.

necessary. In practice, however, they are often treated as distinct entities, which means they can sometimes conflict. Successful integration of social and environmental policy, on the other hand, can bring benefits in both areas.

One example concerns a civil society association in the North East of England. The Durham branch of Friends of the Earth used a job creation grant to create home insulation services for disadvantaged groups, such as pensioners.⁸⁵ As the success of this and other similar projects was recognised, they gained support from local authorities and businesses and rolled the project out across the UK. Current government funding programmes to address issues of fuel poverty are the result of the institutionalisation of these initiatives.⁸⁶

The urgency-agency gap

Despite a sea-change in the past year in public and political concern about climate change and its associated problems, there has been too little effective action by state, market or civil society. One of the results is that statistics from a survey of UK consumers showed that only 7% felt they could do something about it. Of that 7%, only 3% tried to live sustainably.⁸⁷

Additionally, the overtly political context in which climate change and resource scarcity policies are developed means that they are often at odds with what evidence suggests is necessary. The authors' literature review identified seven interwoven factors that contribute to this:

- The triple inequality has resulted in stalemate in international climate negotiations.
- Entrenched technological and social viewpoints that perpetuate a carbon-intensive infrastructure.
- Habitual attitudes to consumption which produce a form of consumption that is unsustainable.
- Neo-liberal economic principles and practice that have changed the balance of power between market, state and civil society.
- Declining trust and support for the institutions of democratic government.
- The interpretation of climate change in predominantly scientific terms by policy-makers, the media and environmental civil society associations which has caused technocratic responses to be prioritised above

issues of social change and the pursuit of predominantly technological and market-based responses above those related to behaviour, values and social change.

- Over-emphasis on efficiency defined in narrow economic terms, rather than more comprehensive measures embracing the effective delivery of social and environmental goals.

Tackling the gap

Paying attention to social justice could be a partial remedy. For example, paying greater attention to fairness is more likely to achieve an ambitious post-Kyoto agreement by building greater consensus between rich and poor countries. Additionally, a socially-'grown' response to climate change in which the sense of ownership of solutions is high, as opposed to a technocratically-devised one, could more effectively create the conditions for a rapid transition, as well as dealing with the barriers created by entrenched habits of carbon use and consumption generally. More open and deliberative processes that facilitate the participation of civil society in decision-making are also likely to shift power imbalances and build trust within civil society and between civil society and state actors. Furthermore, civil society can fill this gap by: holding state, market and other civil society associations to account; raising awareness and increasing public support through campaigning; and addressing habits which perpetuate the excessive use of carbon and over-consumption, and unjust distributions of service provision through direct provision services and mutuality.

2 Part 2: The roles of civil society

This section looks at how civil society in general goes about creating change. Then it looks at what is happening already in civil society to bridge the gap between social justice, resource scarcity and climate change. Next, it looks at a range of obstacles that are preventing further and faster progress. Finally, it offers recommendations to overcome those obstacles.

Dealing with the challenges of climate change, resource scarcity and social justice demands a holistic approach. But there is also a demanding timeframe for change. Over the next decade, civil society, the state, and the market, need to mobilise to deliver a rapid and just transition to a low carbon and high well-being economy. The authors define this as a step-change in responses to climate change and resource scarcity that will prevent catastrophic climate change and simultaneously enhance, rather than undermine, social justice.

This will involve a rapid redistribution of wealth and power both within and between nations. What is required is innovative policy responses, moving away from reliance on market solutions and rethinking current systems of consumption and production.

Creating change and bridging the gap: what is civil society doing?

This section looks at how civil society creates change and the range of activities used to achieve its goals. First, it looks at the basic functions of associations in exerting influence or providing services and the degree to which these functions are performed in an ‘activist’ or ‘engaged’ way, and considers various possible combinations.

Secondly, it charts what civil society does to bridge the gaps in relation to social justice, climate change and resource scarcity. These activities embrace:

- creating a positive future vision;
- creating deliberative spaces;
- raising awareness;

- developing new forms of associational life;
- innovation and practical action at the grassroots;
- holding to account;
- influencing the state and the market.

Examples are then given of civil society associations that are already providing practical responses at the community level in the cases of energy, transport and food. Finally, the chapter looks at outstanding obstacles to change.

Broadly speaking, civil society associations that work to bridge the gap between social justice, resource scarcity and climate change perform two functions – as influencers who aim to shape policy/practice and/or providers who fill gaps in service provision. In either case, they employ two core strategies, engagement and activism. Engagement tends to communicate directly with the current political and economic system by lobbying elected officials, bureaucrats and businesses. Activism either ignores current political or economic systems or takes a more confrontational approach such as public protests, civil disobedience or direct action.

Neither influencers nor providers are exclusively limited to either strategy and there are many examples of groups from both categories who use elements of both. For example, NEA (National Energy Action) is a charity that provides advice on energy efficiency and combines this with campaigning to reducing fuel poverty in the UK.

‘To exaggerate, in the struggle for more sustainable, just and democratic societies, we need civil disobedience before obedience, and more than ever, we need critical citizens and not just law-abiding ones.’

Dr John Barry, Reader in Politics and International Studies and Philosophy, Queen’s University, Belfast⁸⁸



Bridging the gaps

Activity 1: The good society – creating a positive future vision

When interviewed, Tony Kendle of the Eden Project saw hope as the engine of change. He emphasised the importance of creating a narrative that would appeal to people. The Foundation's story is that climate change is 'the big adventure': the challenge is 'how good can we be?'

Similarly, much of the Transition Network's (see below) popularity seems to rest with its positive message and call for collective action, which stands in contrast to the more pessimistic message of many environmental groups or the government's emphasis on individual behaviour change. In both the language of Transition and the approach the movement employs to map out practical steps from where we are now to where we are moving to, the movement combines hope with credible action. Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition Town movement, describes its essence thus:

*'The future with less oil could be preferable to the present – but only if sufficient creativity and imagination is applied early enough in the design of this transition. The environmental movement has been enormously naïve for 40 years in assuming that the way you make people change is to give them depressing, distressing information ... take that approach and all it does is breed apathy, or it feeds a sense of powerlessness. At this time in history, the last thing you need is people feeling powerless.'*⁹⁰

This view is supported by Professor Mike Hulme, former Director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. The growing language of 'fear and terror', he says, is 'an ever-weakening vehicle for effective communication or inducement to behavioural change.'⁹¹

The labour movement's notion of a 'just transition', which is discussed in more detail later in the report, is another example of a positive vision. And it is perhaps for this reason it is gaining traction worldwide.

Unfortunately, the media has not helped shape a more positive view of climate change. An analysis of climate change discourse in tabloid newspapers showed that news articles were

'Political change does not take place until the opponents of government fight for what they're for, rather than simply for what they're against.'

George Monbiot, climate activist⁸⁹



dominated by weather events, polar bears and the rhetoric of politicians, while the prevalent tone of headlines was one of fear, misery and doom.

One of the event participants urged civil society to 'think about the relationship with the media: shape it more, positive visioning, strong storytelling'.

However, the authors found relatively few examples of UK and more generally northern civil society organisations doing this.

Activity 2: Creating deliberative spaces

The notion of a 'just transition' is necessarily contestable. People will have a different understanding of social justice and different views on the trade-offs required to achieve it, especially given growing pressure on resources. Mediation and resolution of these will require the deliberative space that civil society offers.

As respondents to this research made clear:

'The devaluing of the public realm and community interactions means that new spaces are needed for new conversations.'

'A critically important role of civil society is to allow radical conversations – deliberative spaces – but this needs skills, places, etc.'

'There needs to be more accent on...giving a voice and space to the poor to express their interests and opinions on the needed changes.'

But the only example that the researchers were given of such an arena was not encouraging:

'I should point out that Manchester Climate Forum is really just a space that opens up every now and then, for debate, discussion etc. It – and www.manchesterclimatefortnightly.info – try to get folks talking/doing together, with little discernible success.'

The authors, however, came across isolated examples of the creation of such arenas through

this research. Mandy Milano of J & M Sustainable Developers was approached by members of the Cornwall Energy Partnership to help them communicate climate change in the county. She advised going to somewhere that people come together and feel safe. This led to the idea of using pub quizzes,⁹² with a climate change quiz sometimes completely replacing the regular quiz. In these cases, a follow-up talk has been arranged soon after. Several people have told her how valuable they found it to hear directly from scientists and not to be talked down to.

nef's experience with its climate-talk conversation kit was that although it was a useful deliberative mechanism, it failed to create permanent arenas for deliberation on climate change.

This points to a huge gap in civil society's response to these issues.

Box 7: Woking People of Faith Forum⁹³

The Woking People of Faith Forum which promotes religious and cultural harmony in the borough, has provided an important way for the council to communicate with members of different faith organisations and to reach otherwise hard-to-access groups and has been consulted on the revision of the Climate Change Strategy. The Forum has also hosted energy efficiency awareness training through The Energy Care Network (TECN). These schemes have helped identify those eligible for grants for the alleviation of fuel poverty. Additionally, a specific training session was held for Kidmat (the Older Women's Group held at the Mosque). Through the initiative, local residents from ethnic minorities who have incorporated energy efficiency measures into their home have also opened their homes to interested neighbours so they can see the installations and ask questions. This has proved to be a more effective way of engaging with this section of the community than workshops or presentations.

The group has also co-ordinated the translation of information leaflets on environmental issues and services into minority languages, also effective in communicating environmental initiatives.

Activity 3: Raising awareness

Civil society can play a key role in raising awareness of environmental issues, but has not done it well so far, according to respondents:

'We need to be getting the language right – a weakness is the subliminal green middle-class message.'

'As a sector we are bad at communicating in plain language that really resonates with people, and makes people understand what we are talking about.'

Different organisations also took different tacks. For example, one interviewee from a national anti-poverty civil society association said:

'Our role is putting a human face on climate change. In the wider debate there is lots of attention on landscape and on species, but less [about] people.'

Many people emphasised that the starting point of successful communication was addressing the target audience. For example:

'If you are working with people who have very immediate problems, it is difficult to bring in conversations about climate change; it is too difficult and involving. [It is] also difficult to communicate the international aspect. Because of the huge social churn in London, poverty and social exclusion tend to induce a very short-term perspective in people, and is very intensely local.' Interviewee from a London-based community civil society association

'Some farmers do not believe that climate change is caused by human behaviour, so [we] need to sell it to them in a different way, say, by arguing that change makes business sense.' Interviewee from a trade union

The literature review revealed consistent criticisms of the northern environmental movement for the language it uses. Negative, technical and literal, too often it was thought to ignore the impacts of environmental degradation on people's lives and health.⁹⁴

As a result, these organisations have missed an opportunity to unite with social justice and labour movements and create effective alliances that combine all three pillars of sustainability.⁹⁵

Failure to communicate effectively to the wider public and other civil society organisations was described memorably by one of those interviewed for this project as ‘The Basil Fawley approach of shouting louder and louder at foreigners’. This interviewee from an environmental civil society association argued:

‘More subtle or creative approaches [are] required to create behaviour change, including appealing more directly to people’s everyday concerns... rather than appealing to the more abstract or intellectual arguments of climate change or social justice.’

Examples put forward included saving money in the case of improving home energy efficiency or giving children healthier food in the context of local food production.

One organisation’s slogan is ‘Save money – save energy – save the planet’. The ordering of the elements is intentional yet not without problems. Research on human values and behaviour suggests that appeals to economic motivations produce shallower and less enduring responses.⁹⁶ However, appealing to people’s environmental values does not necessarily produce any kind of behavioural change.⁹⁷ For one interviewee, it was a mistake to see climate change in purely environmental terms:

‘... we have so little time to act ... we need to mobilise civil society to clamour for government action and for institutional change. How? We must stop talking about climate change as a strictly environmental problem.’

Another interviewee, from a national network of rural community-based civil society associations, endorsed the approach taken in this project:

‘One challenge is the degree to which we still focus on cutting carbon as opposed to the more holistic message about managing resources. Communication is better where the issue of cost of travel and transport come in.’

Others put the stress on speaking to people’s values which connects well to the earlier activity of creating a positive vision:

‘What is needed is a vision, imagination and better language that connects with people, for example fairness and happiness.’

Professor of Linguistics, George Lakoff argues that ideologies have physical, cultural and political manifestations (frames), and are rarely influenced by facts. He argues:

‘Environmentalists have adopted a set of frames that doesn’t reflect the vital importance of the environment to everything on Earth. The term “the environment” suggests that this is an area of life separate from other areas of life like the economy and jobs, or health or foreign policy. By not linking it to everyday issues, it sounds like a separate category and a luxury in difficult times.’⁹⁸

This was illustrated by one respondent as follows:

“‘We all need to get together to tackle climate change” won’t cut much ice. [Our organisation] is therefore proposing a “new localism” focusing on resilience. This approach avoids mentioning the words “green” and “environment”, which are a turn-off for their board, but “resilience” works.’

A final example emerged from a dialogue in late 2008 between the Green New Deal Group and a range of civil society associations. The group advocates, among other things, targeted investment in energy conservation and renewable energy to help address the recession, energy insecurity and climate change. What followed the dialogue was a direct attempt to describe the Green New Deal in language that explained its simultaneous relevance to social justice and the environment:

‘It’s about jobs; more jobs and secure jobs. And it’s about the skills and training to create and sustain them. It’s about warm homes in winter, protecting us from high and volatile energy prices, and ending fuel poverty. It’s about greater security for our pensions and savings.’⁹⁹

Activity 4: Developing new forms of associational life

Civil society is creating new forms of association that link the issues of climate change and resource scarcity with that of social justice. This complements its historic role as a seedbed for social justice movements. David Ballard, an expert both in climate change communication and in action research, explains how association supports agency:¹⁰⁰

‘On huge issues such as climate change or absolute poverty, most things that are

“meaningful” are very difficult unless we do them with others. Association with other people can support wavering will power and can bring a variety of perspectives to an issue and so lead to better decisions.’

The Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) and the Transition Network (See Box 8) stand out as two of the most active examples of grassroots mobilisation in the area of climate change and social justice. The act of ‘doing something’ about climate change and the environment with others in a community can itself be highly effective in building relationships and strengthening communities, as Sylvia Brown from Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE), the organisation that is driving the RCAN, suggests:

‘Action on the environment is itself a builder of community capacity... the best possible

example is the Transition Town movement. If you focus on the environment by the time you finish you have relatively vibrant communities coming forward. The environment is just a hook for people to get involved.’

Co-operative forms of associational life have also risen to the challenge of bridging the climate change and social justice gap. Energy4All, for example, is a co-operative organisation which has had great success in raising capital for, and then building, wind farms throughout Scotland and the UK.

Civil society associations have been successful in representing vulnerable groups, including women and ethnic minority groups, and in facing climate change and poverty issues – as the case study of the Women’s Environmental Network below makes clear (see Box 10, page 31).

Box 8: The Transition Network

The aim of the Transition Network is to equip communities for the dual challenges of climate change and peak oil, by building community resilience – which is defined as an area’s ‘ability to function indefinitely and to live within its limits, and be able to thrive for having done so’.

The first Transition Town was set up by the movement’s founder, Rob Hopkins, in Totnes. Early successes in Transition Totnes have included:

- a garden share scheme – those who have gardens but don’t tend them are partnered with those who don’t own gardens but wish to grow food, with both parties sharing the produce
- the *Totnes Food Guide*, a comprehensive directory of food producers within five miles of the town.

Totnes, Transition Lewes and Transition Brixton have all launched their own local currencies, trading at one to one with sterling, which can only be used with local

independent stores. This helps to build understanding of local supply chains and to support local small businesses.

In terms of social justice, the Transition movement has a strongly non-hierarchical organisational culture. Groups addressing different areas – food, transport, business and the economy, and communication – are encouraged to form spontaneously and remain open to new members. In reality, however, there are challenges in recruiting people from different backgrounds.

Duncan Law, who founded Transition Town Brixton, suggests a lack of resources constrains the ability to engage with the ‘less active’ citizens of Brixton. Brixton has set up an outreach group to try to engage BME groups in particular.¹⁰¹ But financial constraints mean the Transition movement is very dependent on the internet and email as means of communication, potentially excluding older people or those from poorer backgrounds.

Box 9: Energy4all¹⁰²

Energy4All wind farms are owned or co-owned by local co-operatives. Share interest is returned annually to members at a reasonable rate of return (around 5-7%) and excess profits are used to support local initiatives such as reductions in fuel poverty or conservation trusts. Energy4all now aims to broaden this model by establishing regional investment co-ops that offer democratic, ethical investments to local people and community-friendly capital to renewable energy developers.

Energy4all was created in 2002 due to daily enquiries received by Baywind Co-operative from people looking to replicate the success of Baywind, the UK's first community-owned wind farm. Baywind Co-op has generated enough green electricity to power 1,300 homes a year while paying an attractive return to its 1,350 members (averaging 7% per annum), and supporting local initiatives. Owning a wind farm increases awareness of and involvement in renewable energy developments, maximises financial returns from local resources, and mobilises environmental concern.

Box 11: Women's Environmental Network (WEN) and women's urban agricultural group¹⁰³

WEN's local food project supports women's groups to grow their own fresh and pesticide-free food. WEN was approached by the Jagonari Women's Centre, based in Tower Hamlets in London, for support to secure space to grow traditional Bangladeshi vegetables. Out of this came the Cultivating the Future project, which has now set up the Taste of a Better Future national network of community food growing projects, holding popular Culture Kitchen events that allow women from different groups to come together and share their ideas and experiences as well as the fruits of their plots.

Recently Getting to the Roots, a new programme to train volunteers to support new and existing groups, has been praised for empowering its participants with skills, knowledge and confidence.

Box 10: City Gateway

The City Gateway initiative Green Screen refurbishes redundant electronic equipment and releases it back into the local community's small businesses and charities. Another initiative is Flavour Gateway, a catering enterprise which supports a community cafe at Lansbury Lodge Community Centre, sourcing all its food from Hindgrove Food Co-op and beginning its own community vegetable garden using growbags donated by Groundwork. It is hoped that this will be one of many community gardens to spring up all over East London as part of further Co-op initiatives. A new module on environmental awareness has recently been commissioned from City Gateway to feed into each course stream – training 16-19 year olds in social and environmental responsibility in preparation for progression into the workplace.

Box 12: Capacity Global and Friends of the Earth: Environmental Justice Activist project

The Environmental Justice Activist project is the first UK-wide project working with ordinary people to help transform neighbourhoods under threat from pollution and environmental problems into healthy places to live. Capacity Global, in partnership with Friends of the Earth Scotland, is running a programme of training and advice for 'hands-on' local projects for people who want to ensure they and other communities live in a healthy environment. To date, they have worked with over 200 communities and trained 30 activists. Their work has resulted in the creation of a number of grassroots projects.¹⁰⁴

Box 13: Rural Community Action Network and Bedfordshire Rural Community Council

The Bedfordshire Rural Community Council (BRCC) held an energy efficiency workshop focusing on community buildings, with help from the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN). The event was aimed at those who manage community buildings. The BRCC has also been working with local communities to help them take practical steps to improve their energy efficiency, including community buildings, public spaces and individual households.

As well as energy audits, the BRCC is providing groups and individuals with practical support on sustainable energy and waste action, from no/low-cost measures, such as composting, rainwater harvesting and improved insulation; to capital investment measures, such as solar thermal combined heat systems, ground source heat exchange mechanisms, micro-generation of renewable energy, and other low carbon energy production schemes.

Activity 5: Innovation and practical action at the grassroots

Almost all the boxes in the previous section could have been replicated here, since so many of the new forms of association described above have been set up to take practical action. Civil society is best placed to undertake this, as an event participant noted:

'There is a unique position of civil society groups "on the ground"; they have knowledge and resources that local authorities lack, and this can all be used for advocacy.'

This is particularly true of small, local organisations:

'Small local groups are very efficient. If they have just small seed funding, they will come up with good, practical initiatives. Where they always fall down is they fail to mainstream them.' Interviewee from an Irish social justice civil society association

We've done quite a lot with Oxford City Council, who have recognised that church groups have very good links into the community. So, they have frequently asked us to advertise their schemes for relieving fuel poverty and in particular things like insulation because quite often they find that elderly people don't know

how to apply for things and don't know that the grants are out there to get insulation. But, often, church people know who they are.' Interviewee from a faith-based civil society association

'In housing, the Green Doctor is a team that goes from door to door in deprived communities, offering advice on energy efficiency. They offer advice on behaviour change. Do people understand how the heating system works? Can old people get up to change the light bulb? This is a people-focused behaviour approach. The Green Homes project trains local unemployed people to refurbish council housing up to excellent eco-standards.' Interviewee from a grassroots environmental civil society association

Grassroots organisations provide important sites of innovation, mainly because their approach to problem-solving is dictated by what (often limited) resources are available. This section provides a number of examples of action and innovation by civil society groups, many of them community-based and, while instances might be drawn from right across the board of activity, the authors have chosen examples from areas of energy, food and transport, since the development of a renewable, decentralised energy and food system will make the UK as a whole more resilient to future energy and food price shocks, stemming either from climate change or from peak oil. But there are also other benefits: the improved economic prospects of disadvantaged individuals and communities; the increased degree of confidence, skills and capacity for further community-based action;¹⁰⁵ and the creation of the right conditions for positive environmental and social behaviour change..

Community-based initiatives have grown significantly in the UK over the past decade. For example, a recent project identified that in 2004 over 500 renewable energy projects were supported by programmes with the word 'community' in their title and/or their rationale.¹⁰⁶ The Shell Better Britain Campaign, a grant-making scheme for projects that show both community and environmental benefit, had a network of 26,000 groups in 2002, having almost tripled in size over a ten-year period.¹⁰⁷

Box 14: The UK's first Eco-Mosque

In June 2008, an Eco-Mosque opened in Levenshulme Manchester. Developed by Regensis, a Muslim social enterprise, the EcoMosque concept aims to transform British mosques into dynamic and effective vehicles for social change by acting as an inspiration and model for future mosques, and by providing a framework that the UK's existing 1,700 mosques could use to change and adapt in order to play a more meaningful role in society. The EcoMosque has been built using recycled materials and generates part of its energy from solar panels. There is more to this than simply respect for the environment. Ziauddin Sardar, an adviser to ARC argues that mosques: 'have to provide Muslims living locally with a welcoming space for neighbourhood activities, social gatherings, teaching, counselling and lifelong education. They have to create a sense of identity and moral responsibility. They need to treat women with equality and dignity, not as lesser humans who have to be ushered in through the back door. They have to be able to cope with radicalised young people and be able to redirect their anger in positive directions. They have to be connected to mainstream British society and welcoming of outsiders.'¹⁰⁸

One online survey respondent pointed to the negative social justice implications of centralised high-tech service provision:

'Communities should decide which kind of technologies they need to develop and should always be able to use them to service their own ends. Therefore, many hi-tech solutions will be unsuitable, as they rely on the technocratic elite to use them, far away from the point of use and with potentially adverse side-effects.'

And another recognised the importance of civil society associations in innovation:

'Civil society is miles ahead of the market and the state and that is where the initiatives come from.'

Energy

A range of civil society activity is already evident in this area, with organisations such as the Centre for Alternative Technology, the Centre for Sustainable Energy, the Transition Network and the Rural Community Action Network taking active steps to support communities. Meanwhile, advocacy organisations such as Help the Aged and the trade unions are campaigning for reduced fuel bills for the

Box 15: CRATE – reducing waste, supporting disadvantaged households and increasing literacy in East Durham¹⁰⁹

CRATE is a project of the voluntary organisation and charity East Durham Partnership (EDP). It was proposed as a social enterprise to bring financial, social and environmental benefits to the area. The enterprise aims to: divert waste going into landfills; support disadvantaged residents and businesses by providing affordable goods; and provide placements and key skills training. CRATE works in partnership with the public sector (Easington District Council), voluntary sector (EDP) and local schools.

So far, CRATE has diverted 200 of tonnes of material (including office furniture) from waste to re-use, and serviced 4612 of households in the last year. The scheme has provided low-income households with re-used furniture and white goods, and new parents with baby gates and cots. CRATE has also sold paint and scrap metal to the private sector and provided textiles, soft toys, books and musical instruments to charities such as Mencap, Scope and the British Heart Foundation.

The enterprise also runs two training centres and is increasing its range of NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) recycling courses. In addition, CRATE is piloting a school recycling club with Shotton Hall School which will be rolled out to schools across the district in the future.

CRATE has been enabled in part through EDP's successful application for Community Recycling and Economic Development (CRED) funds, European Social Funds (ESF) and Coalfield Regeneration Trust (CRT).

elderly and low-income groups. The recent coalition of organisations to lobby for a windfall tax, organised through the lobby group Compass, demonstrated the power of civil society to mobilise rapidly around a well-defined challenge that addresses both climate change and social justice issues.¹¹⁰

Community energy schemes are one area where civil society is having a major impact, offering a serious alternative to the current system. While community initiatives have been advocated for at least the past 30 years, particularly by alternative technology activists, it is only recently that the government has provided support for such schemes.¹¹¹ As well as

benefiting economic regeneration, social cohesion and environmental literacy, a decentralised energy system is simply more efficient. According to Defra, 38% of current UK greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to the energy supply sector.¹¹² Losses in the current supply systems amount to around 65% of the primary energy input.¹¹³

Many energy projects led by civil society associations focus on local, community-scale energy generation. These projects have sometimes been driven by the need to address practical local needs, rather than primarily by wider energy or climate change concerns, as with the Hydro Torrs New Mills (see Box 16)

Others are focused on carbon emissions with a target to become 'carbon neutral'. These projects have energy efficiency at the core of their activities and look to reduce carbon emissions through behavioural changes.

For example, the community group Going Carbon Neutral Ashton Hayes has reported a reduction in carbon emissions of 20% in its first year of implementing energy saving measures through a village-wide energy awareness campaign.¹¹⁴ This group and others like it are looking to help tackle climate change at a local level, collectively. A startling 99.4% of households is engaged in 'environmentally-friendly behaviour'¹¹⁵ – although whether they see the connection

with climate change has not been studied.

The literature review for this research found that, in order for local benefits and acceptance to be maximised, there needs to be a fair distribution of benefits to the community, an open planning procedure and an appropriate scale for the project.

Renewable energy developments often face local opposition because their scale is inappropriate for the surroundings, or there is an unacceptably high ratio of local costs to local benefits, or there is poor communication and consultation with local residents by developers.¹¹⁷ For example, a proposed biomass gas plant in rural Devon was refused planning permission following public opposition. Yet a recent survey in the same area showed that over 69% of the population would support a similar project at the same site if it was smaller in scale and controlled by the community.¹¹⁸

Public ownership of renewable energy schemes can improve people's understanding and appreciation of energy generation and use, as demonstrated in countries across Europe (see Box 17, p. 35). Ownership not only provides a steady stream of income but also allows people to be members of a co-operative committed to maximising social, economic and environmental benefits in the locality and providing a vehicle for decision-making.

Box 16: Torrs Hydro New Mills

Torrs Hydro New Mills Limited (THNML) is the first community-funded and owned hydroelectric scheme in the UK. THNML has installed a 70kW reverse Archimedean screw (originally used to carry water uphill) to create electricity from the Torr Weir on the River Goyt in New Mills in the High Peak of Derbyshire.

The whole project is a long-term investment, with the screw having an expected life of 40 years. Based on official records of river levels over the past 20 years, it is estimated that it will generate 70kW 45% of the time. When the river level is low it will turn off. This will create 260,000 Kilowatt hours (or units) of green electricity annually, saving 4,600 tonnes of CO₂ emissions in its

lifetime and reducing dependency on external non-renewable sources.

THNML estimates that the community will benefit to the tune of around £40,000 to £60,000 in its first ten years (after interest to shareholders and maintenance). After ten years (the period of a bank loan), the community will receive additional monies. Torrs Hydro New Mills Limited is an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) for the Benefit of the Community, and is entirely owned by the local community through the issue of shares.¹¹⁶ A local share offer raised almost £100,000 for the £250,000 project. The remainder was raised through £135,000 in grants, of which the East Midlands Development Agency contributed £75,000, and a bank loan.

Box 17: How do other European Nations compare?¹¹⁹

A recent analysis by the Centre for Sustainable Energy explored the community benefits of wind farms in the UK, Ireland, Denmark, Spain and Germany. The research found that in the UK wind projects tended to rely on voluntary financial contributions from the project developer. In contrast, evidence from Spain, Denmark and Germany suggests that local benefits are built into the fabric of the projects. Benefits take the form of local tax payments, jobs and economic benefits from regional manufacturing. In Denmark and Germany, there are also opportunities for local ownership. This means a much greater autonomy of projects, keeping benefits within the community. This, in turn, has had an impact on the development of wind energy capacity, with Denmark and Germany enjoying much higher rates of wind power installation than the UK.

Box 18: Project 'Light House'

Project 'Light House' aims to make it possible for all homes in two East Anglian villages just north of Cambridge to generate their own power with renewable energy.

The community organisation behind it, HICCA – Histon and Impington Climate Change Action – has approximately 150 active members in the two villages. Since the end of 2007, they have been organising and educating their community around the issue of global warming/climate change. 'Light House' is aimed at developing a minimum of 50 renewable energy 'home focus sites' in the two villages where there are about 3,500 homes. The aim is to have all 50 homes equipped with solar PV systems and other technologies by the end of 2009. The idea is to use these sites to overcome the fear and uncertainty of switching to decentralised power systems, enabling the initiative to reach its ultimate goal of installing renewable energy systems in at least 80% of villages in the area by 2012.

Transport

Greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector are rising, the only sector showing such a rapid rate of growth, yet in a society where car ownership is the norm, people who do not have access to a car are often disadvantaged.¹²¹

A review carried out by the Social Exclusion Unit identified that transport is a significant barrier for many jobseekers, and transport problems

Box 19: International perspectives – 100% renewable energy¹²⁰

In 2004, the world's smallest nation, Niue in the South Pacific, had 70% of its infrastructure destroyed by Cyclone Heta. Once the immediate needs of the population were met, Greenpeace began helping the government to make Niue the first nation to meet all its energy requirements from renewable sources. With one of the highest wind energy intensities in the South Pacific and ample solar resources, Niue is more than able to do this. The project will reduce Niue's dependence on imported fossil fuels, while creating employment because people are trained to maintain and operate the cleaner technologies. The project will also draw new investment into the economy and help promote local businesses.

have also been linked with low participation in – and dropping out of – post-16 education.

The report also found that access to health care facilities such as hospitals is particularly difficult for people who rely on public transport. This leads to missed health appointments and delays in medical treatment. Additionally, older people become housebound or dependent on others for lifts once they can no longer drive while disabled people often find it hard to use the public transport services available to them.¹²²

Civil society is playing a vital role in the transport arena. Civil society organisations argue persuasively for the benefits of more sustainable transport, as well as investing huge energies in building capacity and infrastructure. Sustrans Director Peter Lipman has made an eloquent case for what is wrong with the car and how its use not only contributes to climate change, but also creates new kinds of social divisions:

'[The car] is sold to us as an unmitigated mobility solution, but actually has operated in rather the opposite direction. It is responsible for amazing resource depletion, and operates to exclude rather than include people – it is a divisive technology... This applies even to mortality – if you live in one of the bottom quintiles you are more likely to be killed or seriously injured by a car.'

Civil society is also working to meet the needs of rural communities who may be more dependent on the car, as the Suffolk car share scheme (see Box 22) demonstrates. One challenge noted by Action for Communities in Rural England is that the centralisation and rationalisation of some services as part of public sector efficiency drives – for example doctor’s surgeries and job centres – can make rural communities even more dependent on car usage.

Box 22: Suffolk car share scheme

Suffolk Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE) has teamed up with the local county council and Chamber of Commerce to develop a county-wide car share scheme to help overcome problems of limited public transport, which leaves residents reliant on car use as an expensive and polluting means of getting to work and the shops and accessing public services. It is estimated that an individual agreeing to share a lift at least twice a week could save up to £1,000 a year on the costs of running a car, significantly reducing carbon emissions and individual dependency on fossil fuels.¹²³

Box 23: Hackney Community Transport

Hackney Community Transport (HCT) is working to deliver modern, flexible public transport services in the London borough, tailored to people’s needs at a price they can afford. HCT was founded in 1982 by 13 voluntary groups in Hackney that wanted to buy and share a minibus. Twenty-six years later, HCT has 400 staff, 6 depots and 214 vehicles (based in West Yorkshire and East London). It generates an annual turnover of over £17 million, primarily from public sector contracts (for example, school buses and day-centre transport) and a red bus service in London.

HCT is also a social enterprise, so commercial profits are ploughed back into projects that provide community benefit. Critically, costs are low; average fares are 25% of commercial equivalents. HCT can also offer opportunities for permanent work for local residents.

Food

High-calorie junk food is linked to obesity and several other health problems affecting low-income households. It also relies on an energy-intensive food system that contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.¹²⁴ As Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at London’s City University, notes:

‘What matters is not just what people eat, but also how food is produced and how equitably it is distributed and consumed...If, for instance, consumers are to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption to reduce cardiovascular disease, it surely matters if that fruit generates more long-distance food distribution rather than encouraging more local production.’¹²⁵

Here again, civil society associations are playing a leading role in policy advocacy and campaigning. They are also actively involved in grassroots activity to set up local food projects. Historically, local food production had its roots in addressing food poverty, and local food supplies have played an important role during times of crisis (in World War 2, for example).¹²⁶

Sustain, a membership organisation that advocates better food and more sustainable farming, has played a leading role in getting junk-food adverts aimed at children banned and in pushing the government to set targets for organic farming. Our literature review and interviews revealed an impressive range of local food growing activity driven by civil society around the UK.

For example, local food co-operatives and buying groups are a way for local communities to work together to obtain good food and have more control about where their food comes from. There are many types of food co-ops and buying groups. They share a conviction that, by pooling their buying power and ordering food in bulk directly from suppliers, a group of people can get foods they may not be able to buy locally – often at a more affordable price. The key things these initiatives have in common are:

- they tend to be run by the community for the community;
- they generally rely on the support of volunteers, either in day-to-day running or on the committee;
- they aim to supply produce at more affordable prices than other outlets;
- they are run on a not-for-profit basis.¹²⁷

With strong backing from the Welsh Assembly, the Community Food Co-operative programme in South Wales has helped to launch 180 food co-ops in the past three years, supplying 6,000 families, including in severely disadvantaged parts of the Valleys (see Box 24) and turning over around £1 million.¹²⁸

Box 24 : Trealaw Food Co-op, Rhondda Valley, Wales¹²⁹

The Trealaw Food Co-op, in Wales, was launched in October 2007 and is a local scheme run by volunteers. It allows the community of Trealaw to buy good-quality fruit, vegetables and salads at wholesale prices. The Co-op provides regular advice and runs a Get Cooking course to give people ideas to cook simple, healthy meals. Volunteers make up the food bags and insert recipe cards and leaflets from local organisations such as Age Concern.

Box 25: Growing Communities Hackney¹³⁰

Growing Communities in Hackney, North London, is working to create a sustainable local food system in the borough. Its organic box scheme was the first in London, having started in 1993 with only 30 families using the service. It now supplies over 400 households in Hackney with weekly fruit and vegetables for as little as £6 a box. Most of the salad leaves in the boxes are actually grown in Allens Gardens, the only organically-certified land in London. The Growing Communities farmers' market in Stoke Newington is the only weekly, fully organic market in the UK. Growing Communities is also part of the government's Healthy Start programme.

As well as trying to produce zero-food miles fruit and vegetables, Growing Communities has a strong social justice mission. It places particular emphasis on fostering community and creating volunteering and employment opportunities, as well as providing accessible, high-quality, affordable food to disadvantaged estates. Various initiatives are organised to involve people and to advertise other services provided: school visits, food swaps, seasonal feasts, and so on. In order to run the programme, Growing Communities employs 13 part-time staff, a large team of volunteers and two apprentice gardeners.

Box 26: Urban farming in Middlesbrough

To raise awareness of food miles, improve health and aid the regeneration of Middlesbrough, the local council's regeneration team joined forces with environmental regeneration charity Groundwork to turn over parkland, town-centre planters and other land holdings for fruit and vegetable growing involving around a thousand residents. The eight-month project culminated in a town meal where over 8,000 people shared some of the food that had been grown. Middlesbrough's regeneration team hope to start up a social enterprise restaurant, supplied by community-run food co-operatives.

Civil society associations have also driven forward the development of community-supported agriculture.¹³¹ Community-supported agriculture is a model for partnership between farmers and consumers in which the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared. With roots in Switzerland, Germany and Japan consumers share risks undertaken by farmers, similar to investors in a financial market. Producers have a ready market for their produce, and consumers have access to fresh, local produce that supports environmentally sound agricultural practices and land use.

Fundamental to community-supported agriculture is an understanding of the connection between farmers and those who consume their produce. Because such farms are directly accountable to their consumer members, they strive to provide fresh, high-quality food – typically using organic or biodynamic farming methods. Members of the scheme often commit resources in advance, in cash or kind, by working on the farm for example.

One criticism that is sometimes levelled at localising food production and consumption is the negative impact this could have on producers in developing countries. Supporters, however, highlight the positive impact on food security and the cuts in carbon emissions achieved by avoiding intensive production with chemical fertilisers and the transportation of food over long distances.

Another answer is to argue for a globalised network of local activism, in order to address the economic and social needs of developing countries reliant on food exports. This could prioritise Fairtrade certification for exported

products such as pineapples, or seek to develop more direct, not-for-profit relationships between consumers in the developed world and producers in developing countries.¹³²

Banana Link is taking this approach. The organisation aims to build solidarity between UK consumers and workers in Central America (farmers, labourers and retailers) to improve working conditions and local environments. At the same time, the organisation lobbies for improvements to trade policies at the international level. Another example is Just Change Tea, an organisation that directly exports tea from tribes in Southern India to an estate in Luton (see Box 27).¹³³

Box 27: Just Change and Marsh Farm, Luton

Marsh Farm, a city farm based on an estate in Luton, developed a new estate-based social enterprise called Just Change Marsh Farm, which distributes a range of goods purchased directly from the Adivasi people of India and other international partners in a 'community to community' trading arrangement. The Adivasi tea growers, meanwhile, have established direct trading relationships with community groups all over India. They sell their tea from Orissa in the North (where it is bought by 30,000 members through 18 community shops), to Kerala in the South (where women's self-help groups are selling it through their retail community shops).

Box 28: The Slow Food Movement

The Slow Food movement aims to preserve agricultural biodiversity, culinary traditions and cultures. It is against the standardisation and homogenisation of flavours and the loss of unique food cultures, including traditional farming and food preparation techniques.

By 2007 the Slow Food movement was claiming membership in excess of 80,000 in over 100 countries worldwide. It has emerged as a resistance movement to fast food, to the effects of industrialised agriculture and food processing on the environment, public health and communities around the world. In this spirit, the movement is closely associated with the other major movement that is highly critical of the advent and impact of industrialised agriculture – the organic agriculture movement.

These are only a few of the examples of locally-based responses to the problems of sustainable development. The degree of ingenuity, enterprise and commitment they involve is clear. However, while innovation and community action are two important strands of the UK's sustainable development strategy, as yet they have not been linked in government thinking.¹³⁴ Our discussions with civil society associations and the evidence from the literature review suggest that policy has yet to recognise the significance of these initiatives, beyond rhetoric. By contrast, the current socio-technological system can direct innovations along specific channels, which might not ultimately prove sustainable.¹³⁵ This, the authors believe, is an opportunity that is being missed by policy-makers and a defect that needs to be remedied.

Activity 6: Holding to account

Peter Newell argues that accountability is: 'essentially about power: the division of rights and responsibilities between state, market and civil society actors and the means of realising these.'¹³⁶ As such, holding to account or civil redress, is a key tool for civil society associations to exert power, and right some of the power imbalances that exist within governance systems.

Strategies employed at both the national and international level include lobbying, seeking access to negotiating delegations, exposing non-compliance with targets and commitments, protest, media work and alternative reporting. For example, Friends of the Earth and Help the Aged recently filed for a judicial review at the High Court after the government failed to meet its legal obligations to reduce fuel poverty. While making the court application, the two charities also called upon the government to identify accurately all those households who are facing hardship and set a minimum standard of energy efficiency for all households suffering from fuel poverty.

The recent ratification of the Århus Convention by the EU and the UK gives civil society new powers with which to challenge the legality of decisions made by public authorities that appear to contravene national or European environmental law. The Convention grants citizens rights to obtain environmental information, to participate in environmental decision-making and to appeal to courts or non-judicial bodies.

However, costs entailed on means of legal redress can be high, prohibitively so for many civil society associations. For example, in a recent judicial review (still the government's preferred means of redress for civil society associations) Friends of the Earth (FoE) challenged the Environment Agency's decision to issue a licence to a company to scrap a number of ships in Hartlepool.¹³⁷ On the day before the proceedings, the company in question warned that, if FoE lost the case, they would seek £100,000 of legal costs from FoE. While FoE won the case, at the start it had no way of knowing the level of costs that it could face. Many smaller civil society associations would be deterred by this, although small civil society associations, such as the Environmental Law Foundation often have

a useful brokerage function, bringing individuals and lawyers prepared to act on a pro bono basis together. The Working Group on Access to Environmental Justice recommended several ways to address the prohibitive cost of legal action, in particular, a more generous use of costs protection, which can cap, in advance, the liability for costs.

A number of other forms of legislation can be used by civil society associations to hold public authorities to account for failing to meet legislative requirements. For example, Capacity Global used the Race Relations Amendment Act to raise awareness of anti-discrimination law and how it could be used to challenge the unjust negative impacts of environmental policy (see Box 29).

Box 29: Using equality law to challenge consultation procedures

Capacity Global argued that the expansion of Heathrow Airport would affect one of the most diverse communities in London, and will have a significant environmental and social impact. The negative effects do not necessarily affect all groups equally.

In November 2007, when the government began consultation on the expansion, it failed to address the effects of the airport in terms of race, disability, age or gender. Some of these groups were already suffering from environmental injustice from the existing airport. For example, one study found that 91% of the 35 schools in the area it looked at already had noise levels which exceeded World Health Organisation guidelines. Noise can impair the educational performance of children, affecting in particular pupils with English

as a second language. There is also evidence that noise leads to impaired reading comprehension and recognition memory in children as well as reducing motivation and poor long-term memory.

Following legal representations, the Department of Transport accepted that a detailed equalities assessment needed to be carried out. When this was published in September 2008, the evidence indicated that all the expansion options being considered by the government would result in increased noise and poorer air quality and that different groups in the Heathrow area would experience different effects. For example, eight out of the nine wards in the London Borough of Hounslow that would experience increased noise have high levels of Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and three also have higher-than-average numbers of children.

The market also needs to be held to account, as one online survey respondent said:

'The relationship to the private sector should shift from a CSR [corporate social responsibility] and marketing relationship, to one of holding to account. Civil society has a function to ensure accountability.'

Many interviewees, including those with a purely UK remit, felt the problem of a just transition was a global challenge and would require global action. Globalisation was seen generally as weakening

the state and civil society's ability to create positive change, with particular concerns about tax and the failure to create a global framework to reduce carbon emissions in a fair way across developing and developed states. Some felt that UK civil society organisations lacked knowledge of these issues and should be doing more to address them.

Most felt that the private sector, being primarily focused on profit, was not set up and should not be expected to make the links between climate change and fairness. But, as one contributor to the online survey pointed out:

'It is not in the market's interests to further social justice, but it is in the market's interests to take action against climate change, and this shows in how the two are approached.'

One respondent suggested that civil society should attempt to influence the market through 'investor power' (for example by using the lever of pensions) but generally, the market was viewed with suspicion rather than as a possible partner, and there were views that civil society risked being tarred with the market brush or even swallowed whole if relations became too close:

'Corporate social responsibility shows the danger that civil society is co-opted by market.'

Another online survey respondent said:

'The market has invaded civil society thinking. This leads to privatised solutions.'

The last comment resonates with the heated debate about the voluntary carbon offset market. Offsets were first developed by a civil society public partnership in 1989 (by 2006 it had grown to €62.6 million). However, voluntary carbon offsets have been seen as a form of neo-colonialism and criticised both for their lack of scientific and environmental integrity and for the way they appear to excuse 'business as usual' responses to climate change (see Box 30).

Activity 7: Influencing government

The need to influence government is clear. In the present research, the state was felt to be the major constraint on civil society action to create a just transition. For example, one interviewee, from an Irish think-tank, argued:

'The first job of a political party is to get re-elected ... governments put economic sustainability above social and environmental sustainability, and it's only when either social or environmental sustainability impinges on economic sustainability that they feel they can take any notice of them.'

While the state is felt to be moving in the right direction, respondents to this research generally felt that it is not moving quickly enough and that it is not structured so as to join up policy agendas as effectively as civil society associations do. Nor is it providing clear leadership:

Box 30: The voluntary offset market

In 1989 the first carbon-offset project was launched by a consortium that included the US power company, Applied Energy Services (AES), environmental think-tank the World Resources Institute, the official US aid agency USAID and the development NGO CARE. The basic idea is that by paying someone else to absorb or avoid the release of a tonne of CO₂ elsewhere, the purchaser can in principle, 'offset' his or her emissions because climate change is a non-localised problem and greenhouse gases spread evenly throughout the atmosphere, so reducing them anywhere contributes to overall climate protection.

While only 2% of UK consumers offset, the volume of carbon that is being offset is growing. Climatecare, a voluntary offset company, has seen a 500% increase in the purchase of offsets in three years. Offsetting is often viewed by businesses as a way to be seen to be doing something about climate change.

Standard offsetting, however, does not challenge the root cause of climate change – unsustainable levels of energy consumption and production. Instead offsetting inadvertently excuses 'business as usual' responses to climate change rather than challenging lifestyle/behaviour and the current economic paradigm.

'Advice must have credibility. People are asked – do I go for a ground source heat pump, wind generator or solar panel? We are unable to give people a cost-benefit analysis of one or the other because costs are changing so much. This is also because of government intervention... There are too many ways of counting carbon. They are not rigorous. We are unsure if it's just carbon we should be counting. There is no agreed approach to doing these things.'

Interviewee from a national network of rural community-based civil society associations

'There has been a lack of leadership from government. Around 2004, both Defra and the DCLG commissioned work to look at the issue of environmental inequality...but they have not looked at these in a co-ordinated way. Both produced different documents but are not acting on them. They lack the focus and drive to bring these policies together.' Interviewee from a national anti-poverty civil society association

Increased policy leadership and certainty is also something business has called for. In 2006, for example, the Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change called on the government to provide a clear and ambitious framework for the 'transition to a low carbon economy'. In an open letter, the consortium referred to 'the "Catch 22" situation in which governments refrain from introducing new policies to reduce emissions because they fear business resistance, while companies find it difficult to take their investments in low carbon solutions to scale because of the lack of long-term climate policies.'¹³⁸

For some, however, civil society should be exerting more pressure on the government to act. Comments from the online survey were:

'Government follows rather than leads when it has to make unpopular decisions. Civil society creates the space that allows them to be brave. For example, civil society associations create the mood for political agreement, such as the International Criminal Court.'

'Systems of government, be they democratic, autocratic or shades in between, will tend to follow public opinion – and public opinion is difficult to mobilise on crises with time-delayed consequences, no matter how serious those consequences appear to be.'

Despite a lack of policy certainty from government, there are opportunities for civil society to engage with policy-makers, as a number of those interviewed recognised:

'We've seen in the last ten years a remarkable growth of the responsiveness of government to civil society. There is much more opportunity now to interact with the state.' Interviewee from a social justice civil society association

'The third sector understands [environmental inequality in the UK] and the local government gets it more. Local government now has local indicators and there is one for climate change and adaptation. A third of local authorities have actually chosen it as a priority. A third of local area agreements now have this as a key performance indicator.' Interviewee from an environmental grassroots civil society association

In fact, according to one source, the government privately asked the green lobby to 'do a Jubilee 2000' in order to generate mass pressure externally on ministers¹³⁹ and to enable the government to act more positively on climate change. In similar strain, Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, said recently:

*'When you think about all the big historic movements – from the suffragettes, to anti-apartheid, to sexual equality in the 1960s – all the big political movements had popular mobilisation... Maybe it's an odd thing for someone in Government to say, but I just think there's a real opportunity and a need here.'*¹⁴⁰

What are the barriers to action?

Early in this report, the authors described a number of factors that explain why action to address social justice, climate change and resource scarcity is not proportionate to the urgency of the issues.

These included the unequal distribution of impacts from, and responsibilities for, climate change and the unequal costs of, and resources available for, mitigation and adaptation between rich and poor, habitual 'carbon-intensive' ways of resource use both industrially and domestically, declining trust in officialdom, and seeing climate change in predominantly scientific and economic terms.

But research for this project revealed a number of other important barriers.

Lack of awareness

One online survey respondent said:

'The biggest challenges are awareness-raising in the community and education of local government (search for "Peak oil" on Kent County Council, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks council websites – total hits = nil).'

While government recognises the need for sustainable development, neo-liberal economic orthodoxy is frequently an obstacle to pursuit of it, particularly at the regional and local levels. Another survey respondent said:

'People are absolutely terrified that we question economic growth as a shibboleth. Every single local authority and RDA and national government says this is one of our primary objectives. How do you question these fundamental core ideologies?'

Paul Chatterton, climate activist and academic looked at this problem with reference to the North East of England, a region with high levels of unemployment and deprivation.¹⁴¹ The author identifies three key barriers.

First, debates on 'strong' sustainability are marginalised at the international and national level. Second, sustainability is still viewed as an add-on rather than a core objective of regional policy. Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) find it difficult to pursue such alternatives because of the pressure to engage with the international competitive economy. This is particularly true in RDAs that are grappling with high levels of deprivation, such as in the North East of England, where the mandate is to provide jobs at all costs. Third, to pursue a 'strong' sustainability approach requires a fundamental shift in the way economic development is viewed. However, the lack of deliberative spaces, particularly evident in the North East, means that there are limited opportunities for those involved to explore and reconcile conflicting views.

Lack of state capacity

A number of interviewees felt that the state was retreating from its role as a guarantor of certain key services which are relied on by marginalised groups. For example, one interviewee from a national rural community network said:

'The state is withdrawing fast in rural areas and will have resource constraints in the future ... Increasing centralisation of services means people find it more difficult to access them. The cost of delivery of mobile services gets too great. Services withdraw ... It is the cost of transport that will be the undoing of rural communities in terms of sustainable development. It will be more challenging to get people to and from health clinics, and also getting people to job centres which is of course especially important in an economic recession ... Low-level intermediate support is disappearing completely, yet it is an essential part of rural life.'

Undue influence of the market

This particular obstacle is explored in more detail in a review commissioned as part of Carnegie UK Trust's Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society. The argument is that globalisation and the neo-liberal

economic paradigm have created an imbalance of power between civil society, the state and the market with the influence of civil society associations consequently much reduced.

The market is often able to exert influence on the state in ways that civil society associations cannot. This preferential position continues to be a barrier to progressive policies that prioritise social and environmental goals above economic performance. But most of all, it undermines democracy.

A coalition of civil society associations, for example, recently called for a windfall tax on the profits of large energy firms to provide funds for redressing fuel poverty. This fell on deaf ears, despite the failure of government to meet fuel poverty reduction targets and the large profits energy companies had reportedly made from rising oil and gas prices and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

On a positive note, the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency (a coalition of civil society associations) recently launched a campaign calling for greater regulation and transparency of lobbying practice, with the intention of bringing UK practice up to par with that of the US, where the 2007 Honest Leadership and Open Government Act was a landmark in ensuring probity in lobbying.¹⁴²

Overcoming obstacles to change: the future roles of civil society associations

How are the obstacles outlined in the previous chapter to be overcome? This chapter suggests that there are two overarching challenges for the sector as a whole to address in order to bridge successfully climate change, resource scarcity and social justice. These are:

- the need for a significant escalation in the scale and scope of collaboration between different actors and movements, and
- the need to adopt a 'strong' sustainability model that is in keeping with the best available science on resource scarcity and averting catastrophic climate change.

Future drivers of civil society

Figure 5, below, summarises and simplifies key points from the report *The Shape of Civil Society to Come*, produced by the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society as part of its futures work.

Figure 5: The shape of civil society to come: Key drivers of change

Drivers	Results
Migration (and thence diversity)	New communities of interest. Rise in the number of ethnic minority groups. New forms of associational life.
Growing socio-economic inequality	Conflict and disparity between different groups. Inequality of access to health care, housing, education and technology. Rise in small, single-issue, groups. Will these replace or supplement traditional forms of civil society association?
Regulation of civil society	Divisions between service providers and advocacy organisations. Pressure to meet targets, compliance costs. Increased role of third sector in service provision, leading to conformity of governance and loss of distinctiveness.
Increasing focus on well-being	Evolution of a 'sustainability' ethic. Role of civil society may change from an oppositional model to one about building systems for sustainability. Who speaks for future generations? Divergent values along generational and cultural lines.
Rising individualism	Focus on the rights of the individual. Do volunteers see their participation in a more transactional way, used for personal development? Social cohesion under pressure. How do we create public spaces where differences can be explored? Divergent values.
New technologies	Fragmentation of the public arena. Who to trust as an information source? New media enable users to avoid issues and views that do not reflect their own opinions ('The Daily Me'). Digital exclusion from public arena.
Disengagement from formal politics	Rise of single-issue campaigns. Increasing gap between civil society and politics. How do civil society associations connect informal (participatory) politics with formal (representative) politics? Privatisation of public arena.
Visibility of the security state	Marginalisation of dissent Much more stringent security legislation in Europe and the US makes it harder to oppose similar restrictive laws elsewhere.

Key Challenge 1: Significantly increasing the scope and scale of collaboration

The majority of civil society associations interviewed felt that in order to embrace new agendas, different elements of civil society need to collaborate. 'We need to be making the connection between different agendas,' said one. 'We need to find something that we all agree on (eg warm homes) and then take the action to deal with it.' While another spoke of the importance of 'finding areas of overlap – even when there isn't a common analysis of the problem'.

One interviewee from a national anti-poverty civil society association remarked:

'The correct attitude is to recognise that the danger of climate change is that it exacerbates existing inequalities and that climate change is part of an anti-poverty strategy. Many of the anti-poverty strategies do contribute to a carbon reduction strategy.'

Another area where tensions need to be resolved is in relations between the environmental and labour movements.¹⁴³ In general, these tensions have arisen from environmental policy proposals that displace jobs. It is clear why such tensions continue to surface. Transitions have often been poorly managed with the transition from industrialism to a service economy and the implementation of environmental policies all having had negative social and economic effects because no broader societal effort was made to limit the damage.

Despite their ostensible commitment to climate change, some trade unions have supported the expansion of Heathrow Airport. A number of interviewees saw this as a source of tension between movements and within existing coalitions, particularly as Heathrow has become a symbol of government inaction on climate change.

But while interviewees felt that the environmental movement needed to be more sympathetic to employment issues, they acknowledged that recent economic developments offered hope for a more joined-up approach. In particular, policies for large-scale green employment generation provide an area of overlap – the so-called just transition. Indeed, definitions of just transitions often explicitly recognise the historical conflicts between the environmental and labour movements. For example, the Public

Health Institute defines a just transition as:

*'A process to ameliorate the conflict between jobs and the environment... It brings organised labour, the traditional environmental community and the people of colour environmental justice movement together to develop policies and relationships to avert clashes. Through a process of dialogue and common projects these groups are defining a policy of just transition that calls for financing a fair and equitable transition for workers and communities in environmentally sensitive industries as we necessarily move forwards towards more sustainable production.'*¹⁴⁴

The vision of a just transition has thus inspired a growing blue-green coalition (labour and environmental movements), particularly in the US and European nations.

The benefits of coalitions

Coalitions of civil society associations were widely recognised as having a number of benefits: synergy of membership/strength in numbers; pooling of resources and expertise; access to specialist research; increased profile and therefore access/leverage; and increased newsworthiness means that the coalition is more likely to attract media attention. For example, one interviewee from an international development civil society association stated:

'Coalitions such as Make Poverty History (MPH) bring together disparate groups such as, in the case of MPH, anti-war protesters, development education [organisations] and environmental groups. Providing an umbrella to shelter under and a shared platform stops organisations worrying about loss of identity. Community involvement and working together with the mass media is very powerful.'

As part of the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, Steven Burkeman, an independent consultant, explored the role of foundations in bridging the gap between climate change and social justice.¹⁴⁵ From conversations with a number of UK and European foundations, Burkeman identified a range of preconditions for successful collaboration. Many of these reflect the findings of other analyses and could be generally applicable to a wider range of civil society associations:¹⁴⁶

- commonality of values;
- agreed objectives;
- a clear lead partner;
- personal chemistry – successful collaborations are often founded on strong personal relationships and develop organically.

Although the dominant view is that collaboration increases the influence and effectiveness of civil society associations, Burkeman also identified a number of disadvantages or risks. Core messages, goals and big ideas can be diluted if a group has to work to a lowest common denominator in order to stay together. Collaboration can also slow things down, as time has to be found for meetings and administration. This is also noted by an online guide produced by Friends of the Earth, which, however, also suggests a solution to tensions that may arise within a long-term alliance: 'Sometimes it is easier to form an ad-hoc alliance that rallies behind a campaign's goal, but takes no further positions...An assemblage of like-minded groups with even less encumbrance (and less influence) is a network where members work towards common goals and sometimes tally behind a specific event or short-term goal.'¹⁴⁷

However, civil society associations concerned with falling funds or declining numbers of members are less likely to consider forming a coalition.¹⁴⁸ This is particularly relevant during the current recession, where a number of large pressure groups have found funding has dried up or subscriptions have fallen.¹⁴⁹

In view of the disadvantages, there has to be a clear gain that makes collaboration valuable and makes the costs worthwhile. In the case of mobilising around a specific issue, a short-term transient alliance may be more effective.

The effectiveness of coalitions for 'bridging'

nef's own experience and research has shown that coalitions can be extremely effective in bridging the gap between social justice and climate change. The Working Group on Climate Change and Development co-chaired by nef and the International Institute for Environment and Development was perhaps the first coalition that sought to bring environmental and international development civil society associations together to recognise the synergies between their work and develop a joint advocacy platform.

The Working Group first met in early 2005, and since that time climate change/social justice has soared up the agenda of many civil society associations operating at the international level. This is also supported by the literature reviewed by the present researchers. Catalysts to bridging included: coalition-building and linking up with grassroots civil society associations; strong leadership within the organisation; and the 'socialisation' of the issue of climate change, particularly through linking up with grassroots experiences.

Barriers to bridging the issues are strongly related to availability of resources, understanding of the synergies between their core work programmes and climate change, and institutional buy-in and inertia of large, professional, bureaucratic international development civil society associations.

Different values or emphases among different organisations also influence the formation of coalitions, as the balance between these values guides the identification of challenges and proposal of solutions.¹⁵⁰ Coalitions tend to form either around goals of economic efficiency and ecological sustainability or around ecological sustainability and social justice, but harmonising all three is harder and, unless civil society associations oppose the current neo-liberal economic model, it is difficult, if not impossible to marry all three elements. While the historical tensions between the environmental and labour movements are emblematic of this, evidence suggests it can also act as a barrier within the environmental movement and between civil society associations in the global North and South.

The strategy of Climate Action Network (CAN), for instance, is mainly led by three large northern environmental organisations – World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. The coalition was established in 1989 and has been the dominant civil society presence at climate negotiations since the formation of the UNFCCC. CAN is guided by values of economic efficiency and ecological sustainability.

Conversely, the climate justice movement consists of a number of northern and southern networks of civil society associations, including CorpWatch, OilWatch, the Rainforest Action Network and Third World Network. Rather than engaging with policy-makers, the movement tends to focus on direct action such as protests or summits that coincide with the UNFCCC Conference of

the Parties held in late November every year. In contrast to CAN, the climate justice movement's guiding values are ecological sustainability and social justice. While CAN ardently supports the Kyoto Protocol, climate justice movement supporters contest the balance of responsibility and associated commitments contained within it. Opposing views of what is just have therefore prevented the alliance of two significant coalitions at the international climate negotiations.

Linking the local to the global

Local action on climate change will underpin the UK and Ireland's transition to a low carbon economy. In particular, local governments will play a key role in its success. They are in a strong position to introduce policies that are both 'climate-friendly' (policies that do not undermine attempts to reduce emissions targets) and 'climate-proof' (policies that do not undermine adaptation policy) because they are more likely to recognise the needs of their constituencies, and also because participatory processes are involved in their decisions.

Civil society associations can also be a leading force in pressurising local governments to implement environmental policies. There are a number of local authorities who have proven that ambitious local climate change policies are compatible with national climate change and energy policies, for example, Kirklees and Woking borough councils.

Indeed, there are a number of international examples that show how effective civil society associations can be at pushing local governments to implement local environmental policies, independently of central government. As yet, however, there is little evidence that local civil society associations have been active in their areas on specifically climate change policy, while national civil society associations generally focus their attention on national policies and lobbying. It may be that there needs to be a closer alliance between traditional environmental and social justice pressure groups and grassroots organisations that are either putting sustainability into practice, or have the potential to influence climate policies at the local level. This view is supported by a recent International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) publication on transition to a sustainable future.¹⁵¹

As an example, a group of concerned citizens, dissatisfied with Manchester City Council's 'Call to Action on Climate Change,' written by a non-local consultancy and with very little consultation, came together to write a 'Call to Real Action'. The document contains a number of ideas about how the people of Manchester, and its City Council, can respond to climate change – both reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the inevitable changes. The group now plans to use the Sustainable Communities Act (2007) to push through the document, its actions and key messages. They hope their

Box 31: Examples of coalitions

Working Group on Climate Change and Development

This is a coalition of internationally-focused environmental and development organisations based in the UK. The Working Group on Climate Change and Development set out to document the impacts of climate change from the point of view of practical, community-based organisations engaged in designing responses to a changing environment.

With international recognition, the 'coalition of the willing' model has been replicated in both northern and southern nations. However, it is interesting that the alliance was formed from the observation that neither environmental nor international development civil society associations were making direct links between climate change and social justice agendas. Bringing these organisations together not only

created a strong platform for joint campaigning at the international level, but it also pushed 'climate justice' up the agenda within the organisations themselves.

Roundtable on Climate Change and Poverty in the UK

The Roundtable on Climate Change and Poverty in the UK recognised the relative lack of discussion within the government and between civil society associations about the links between poverty and climate change in the UK. The coalition formed in 2008 and includes Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, Help the Aged, Green Alliance, Capacity Global and nef. Its first report *Tackling Climate Change, Reducing Poverty* describes a range of initiatives involving local groups across the country.¹⁵² The report concludes that the two issues are so intricately connected that they must be tackled together. It indicates ways in which government can simultaneously address poverty and climate change, and argues for rapid change.

approach will be replicated by other community groups and, in particular, Transition Towns.

Examples of effective coalitions

Interviewees pointed to the effectiveness of the Working Group on Climate Change and Development (see Box 31, p. 46) and the Stop Climate Chaos coalition as positive examples. However, a number of interviewees also recognised that while Stop Climate Chaos is intended to repeat the success of Make Poverty History, currently there is a lack of shared agendas, which has limited its influence.

There are earlier examples from the 1970s oil crises, when trade unions and the alternative technology and environmental movements joined forces to address the problem of rising unemployment due to industrial decline. In those days, trade unions began to develop alternative industrial strategies for their members' firms as a way of preventing job cuts and advancing ideas for innovation.¹⁵³ One famous example is the Lucas Plan (see Box 32).

Box 32: The Lucas Plan

In 1976, workers at the Lucas Aerospace Company, a firm that designed and manufactured military aircraft systems, developed their own alternative corporate plan. The Lucas Plan, as it became known, was a response to the management's streamlining programme that would have resulted in a 20% reduction in the workforce. The Lucas Plan proposed that the firm produced more socially responsible goods.

The final document included over 150 product ideas. There was also economic and engineering analysis, and some working prototypes.¹⁵⁴ Alternative technology activists became involved and suggested that skills and production capabilities at Lucas could also be used to manufacture alternative energy technologies such as wind turbines, heat pumps and fuel cells.¹⁵⁵

However, as economies recovered from the oil crises, the environment dropped down the political and public agenda. The move to the political right in the 1980s stymied the diffusion of alternative technology projects. The support that the movement had received from some radical local authorities and trade unions receded under the Thatcher government as their power was eroded.¹⁵⁶

Box 33: Alliance of Religions and Conservation¹⁵⁷

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) was founded in 1995 and is a secular civil society association that supports religious groups to develop environmental programmes that are based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices. ARC works with faith groups to integrate environmental sustainability into six key areas: land and assets, education, media, health, lifestyle (sustainable consumption) and advocacy.

One example of an initiative developed by ARC is a relationship between the Diocese of Manchester and World Wildlife Fund (WWF), through which, the Diocese has created an environmental policy ensure that sustainability is taken account of in all Diocesan planning and that the whole Diocese implements measures to reduce its environmental impact.

Manchester is also home to one of the largest Muslim communities in Britain and the largest Jewish population outside London. Chinese, Afro-Caribbean, Asian and central European communities are also well established, each with their own faiths. As such, the initiative also aims to connect to other faith groups in the Manchester area through their environmental programme.

Overall, there is a great deal of scope for increased co-operation both between civil society associations, both in order to increase their clout and to embody the links between climate change and social justice, and between civil society associations and other sectors.

While there is clear evidence that coalitions of civil society organisations are beginning to happen at the national level, there is less evidence for vertical coalitions between local and national groups. Yet, this could have a catalytic effect on linking the issues of social justice and climate change, and empowering local groups to apply pressure to their local governments.

As to cross-sector relations between civil society associations and the market, respondents to this research suggest that there is still a long way to go. The basic interests and values of the two sectors seem, at present, to be too distinct for very many significant collaborations to have taken place. This is illustrated by an interviewee from a social justice civil society association:

'The market is ultimately self-interested. Its objective is to create profit and reinvest into its own growth. CSR is never going to be more than a gesture, so of course it is not going to be progressive in spotting any social justice issues. The market will respond to them under pressure only.'

Key Challenge 2: Adopting a model for change that will sufficiently address the issues

There is a general feeling that civil society is more progressive than the market and the state, and is more radical in terms of embracing the climate justice policy agenda. 'I am pretty sceptical of what the state can do,' said one interviewee, 'the dynamics of politics are so short-term and focused on winning the next election; it feels like they are just caught up with governance'.

Now is the time to be radical, however, according to one interviewee from an environmental group. Recognising the unique circumstances of the 'triple crunch' the interviewee, from a national sustainable transport civil society association, stated:

'I would argue that we are in a classic time of paradigm shifting. We are at a time when our model is deeply stressed. Fractures are manifest with increases in greenhouse gases, resource scarcity, economic growth, topsoil, water availability. Everything happening at once. When paradigms crumble people become more open.'

The 'mainstream' view of sustainable development emphasises decoupling economic growth from environmental despoliation (including climate change). This is the kind of approach that Andrew Dobson, Professor of Environmental Politics at Keele University describes as 'weak sustainability... managerial approach to environmental problems, secure in the belief that they can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption'.¹⁵⁸ With this approach, sustainability is pursued mainly through market-based initiatives (polluter-pays policies, eco-taxes, government purchasing initiatives, consumer education campaigns and voluntary eco-labelling schemes) – the 'ecological modernisation' of the economy.

Such a strategy relies on the assumptions that small acts of individual consumers (sustainable consumption) will be enough to change the market and that technology will be able to deliver 'green' products.¹⁵⁹ However, there is a growing view that 'ecological modernisation' has not been effective in reducing carbon emissions. Its failure can be explained by reference to the Kaya Identity, a relationship that informs the IPCC emissions scenarios. The Kaya Identity shows that total man made emissions depend on four variables:¹⁶⁰

- population;
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita;
- energy use per unit of GDP (energy intensity);
- emissions per unit of energy consumed (carbon intensity of energy).

Ecological modernisation only deals with the last two of these variables. Energy intensity is expected to decline over time through improvements in efficiency of the production of energy and other goods and services. Carbon intensity of energy varies according to improvements in the efficiency of carbon-based energy supplies, and the relative decarbonisation of the energy supply, which, in turn, occurs through the development of renewable energy technology (such as hydro, solar, geothermal and biomass systems) and nuclear power (fission).

It is worth noting, however, that once the construction, waste storage and decommissioning costs of nuclear power plants are taken into account, the carbon savings are negligible.¹⁶¹ Novel technologies such as carbon capture and storage and nuclear fusion are expected to play a significant role in the decarbonisation of the energy supply. But neither are likely to be commercially viable within the next 30-40 years.¹⁶² So while it is often argued that technological innovation can improve efficiency and lead to decarbonisation of the economy, recent evidence challenges this view. Instead of energy and carbon intensity declining, both have risen in recent years, reversing the trend of previous decades. Economic growth is underpinned by energy from fossil fuels so emissions are climbing.

One interesting comment from a respondent to the online survey referred to the need to avoid reliance on such 'technofixes', arguing:

'What would happen if we came up with technological fixes is that business would come up with sticking plaster solutions in the expectation, not necessarily unrealistic, that technology in general would bring us out of the hole. It is vital for us to find a way to disabuse us as a nation of such misconceptions.'

Sustainable consumption

A number of researchers have argued that 'sustainable consumerism' assumes that consumers will be motivated to act on environmental knowledge and pro-environmental values. However, underlying this is an implicit assumption that individuals are free to make choices.¹⁶³

In addition, an extensive review of the factors motivating pro-environmental behaviour change revealed that the drivers of consumption are complex¹⁶⁴ and that simply providing information to consumers will not produce pro-environmental behaviour. Instead, the report argues that there are four key interventions that need to be made to address the 'sustainable consumption' agenda within policy. These are the provision of access to services (such as recycling facilities and public transport); greater rules, regulations and operating conditions for businesses; government leadership (for example, prioritisation in government policy, consistent messages); and community-based initiatives.

Barriers to sustainable consumption include disempowerment, the feeling that individual action will not make the necessary changes and disenchantment with corporate green marketing. Then again, institutional consumption, which includes producer consumption, public procurement and most investment products means that a significant proportion of decisions is made outside the sphere of influence of individual consumers.¹⁶⁵ Additionally, scholars have pointed out that advertisers are more powerful and better-resourced

than their target audience, and have called for much stronger public control of commercial media – extending at least as far as exerting strong advertising standards, and possibly including restrictions on specific forms of stealth marketing.¹⁶⁶

A number of those interviewed recognised the impact consumerism has had on civil society. An interviewee from a Scottish anti-poverty civil society association commented:

'The role of civil society asserts the importance of citizenship. The voice of citizens is underused – we just take a consumerist role...civil society has had more muscle in the past, both in other places (e.g. anti-apartheid) and in other times (e.g. the women's movement).'

Further to these arguments, and as Michael Maniates, Professor of Political Science and Environmental Science at Allegheny College in the US, points out:

*'When responsibility for environmental problems is individualised, there is little room to ponder institutions, the nature and exercise of political power, or ways of collectively changing the distribution of power and influence in society.'*¹⁶⁷

This viewpoint was supported by an interviewee from a faith-based civil society association, who argued:

'The first barrier to bridging social justice and climate change is consumerism. This inhibits people's understanding of their consciousness. We should promote detachment from consumerism.'

In the view of the researchers, sustainable consumption has a role to play only when it is not individualised. Ulrich Beck in his book *Power in a Global Age*,¹⁶⁸ argues that, in a consumer society, the refusal to purchase, if co-ordinated, can function in a political sense like the withdrawal of labour. Although civil society has hardly begun to exploit this power, history has many positive examples to draw on, from the sugar boycotts against the slave trade to the boycott of South African goods during apartheid. Historically, trade unions and faith groups have been instrumental in this type of widespread consumer activism.

'The first barrier to bridging social justice and climate change is consumerism. This inhibits people's understanding of their consciousness. We should promote detachment from consumerism.'

Interviewee from a faith-based civil society association



Towards ecological citizenship

We need not sustainable consumption or ecological modernisation but ecological citizenship, whereby responses to global environmental change focus on lifestyle change, collective action and global solidarity. Pursuing strategies that promote ecological citizenship, such as community-based initiatives, are likely to be more effective and just. Scholars have also pointed to the role of ecological citizenship in enhancing adaptive capacity within communities and civil society associations have a central role to play in developing and delivering strategies that promote it. Community-based initiatives, for example, have the potential to create the conditions for positive environmental and social change because civil society associations play a central role in the development and governance of such initiatives.

Ecological citizenship is most clearly pursued by the alternative technology movement, which promotes solutions that are small-scale, ecologically sound, resource-efficient, long-lasting and participatory.¹⁶⁹ This movement grew in force during the 1970s oil crises. Many of the projects it advocates existed long before the movement became labelled as such (allotments, organic food, small-scale hydro and wind power). Other examples of initiatives the movement promote include solar heating, biogas, autonomous housing (housing that can function independently of public water/drainage and utility systems), waste water recycling, and heat pumps.

However, the differences in perspective between the alternative technology movement and the state and private sectors were too great to influence policies at the time.¹⁷⁰

The same is still largely true, with the emphasis of policy on carbon capture and storage from 'clean coal' and the revival of a nuclear programme. However, as discussed in more detail elsewhere in this report, there are many benefits associated with decentralised renewable energy and food systems in terms of climate change, resource scarcity and social justice. It is therefore crucial that civil society associations mobilise to ensure that these local schemes are not undermined by macro-solutions. Furthermore, civil society associations need to ensure that the Green New Deal is not allowed to drop down the political agenda once public attention moves elsewhere.¹⁷¹

A number of civil society associations interviewed saw civil society as a more progressive player than either the market or the state in developing innovative public policy and practical responses:

'The role of civil society is more progressive than the market and the state. It is more radical in terms of being able to pick up on ideas like this [bridging the gap between climate change, resource scarcity and social justice]' Interviewee from a national anti-poverty civil society association

'As far as we are concerned, our job is to develop ideas to identify problems and propose ways around them... Civil servants are not very adventurous thinkers. You don't look to the civil service for a novel idea. This is a role that civil society plays. Politicians do welcome policy advice.' Interviewee from a Irish think-tank

3 Part 3: The future roles of civil society associations: conclusions and recommendations

The need for a rapid and just transition

The premise of this report is that a step-change in responses to climate change and resource scarcity is needed to prevent catastrophic climate change and simultaneously enhance, rather than undermine, social justice. It also suggests that the overarching role of civil society associations during the next decade should be to help deliver a rapid transition to a low carbon, high-well-being economy that is built on, and helps to guarantee, social justice (see Box 34). If this goal is adopted, it has the potential to become a uniting vision for civil society.

Box 34: Principles of climate justice

Existing socio-economic inequalities can increase vulnerability and undermine adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change and resource scarcity. Climate justice can therefore be defined as a combination of:

- the collective human right to a healthy and safe environment and the responsibility to maintain it;
- an entitlement to a fair and sustainable share of natural resources and ecosystem services and the right not to suffer disproportionately from climate change impacts, policies, regulations or laws;
- the civil right to be able to access environmental information and participate in decision-making.

This concept needs to be understood as operating within and between nations, and between generations.

Failure to meet this challenge could mean that the coming decades are characterised by a series of self-reinforcing social, economic and ecological crises. The unpredictable nature of

the changes means that their effects are likely to be non-linear, so policy responses also need to be fresh, radical and non-linear in character, both in terms of mitigation to prevent climate change, and adaptation to the conditions it creates. Typical policy responses, which tend to be cautious are sure to fail because they cannot keep up with the pace of environmental change.

Civil society associations perform roles ranging from influencing political processes, to providing services, both as alternatives to the mainstream and in compensating where there are deficits. Both of these categories might employ strategies of engagement and activism or a combination of the two.

The characteristics of a rapid and just transition

In order to fulfil the goal of a rapid and just transition, three principal strategies need to be addressed within the climate justice framework. These are:

- mitigation strategies that recognise the core objectives of ecological citizenship: lifestyle change, collective action and global solidarity if they are to effectively address the challenges;
- adaptation strategies that are participatory, community-led and just;
- the development of resilient local economies and communities that are able to cope with the uncertain or unknown risks (for example, extreme weather events, peak oil, migration).

The authors of this report recommend that civil society associations should not seek to compensate for a lack of action by the state and the market. The challenge will not be met by one sector acting alone and each will have its own proper roles and responsibilities.

Corporations and government policy-makers will need to recognise and help remove some

of the barriers that impede progress. These include a power imbalance (between state, market and civil society and between states at the international level), a lack of infrastructure, and a preoccupation with incremental ecological modernisation strategies. Unless barriers like these are removed, transition will fall at the first hurdle.

This paper makes six recommendations to government that they believe are necessary to create the conditions for a rapid and just transition. These are:

1. The immediate convening of a multi-stakeholder group, possibly to be called the Commission for a Rapid and Just Transition, that will include cross-party representation, business leaders and civil society representatives. The Commission will both influence the social justice (national and international), labour and environmental movements, and map out the course of a rapid transition in keeping with the real environmental timeframe for action, with specific attention to existing interdependencies with developing nations (like tourism and food production).
2. The demonstration of strong leadership and the development of consistent, progressive climate policies. In the case of atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases, we need an unequivocal commitment to meeting a 350ppm CO₂e target within ten years. Too much is being left to individual choice and responsibility. The laudable aims and targets of the Climate Change Bill should have been linked explicitly to transport policy, and specifically to airport expansion.
3. Making climate justice the guiding principle of all policy decisions. While the UK Treasury has formalised central government advice on the treatment of different income groups in policy appraisal, an amendment needs to be made to ensure that policy appraisals ensure that economic, social and environmental (both adaptation and mitigation) policies are aligned and do not run counter to one another. As a first step, government should apply a windfall tax on energy companies that have reaped the benefits of rising oil and gas prices. This will raise revenue which can be invested in climate justice action – for example, the retrofitting of homes with insulation to eliminate fuel poverty within 18 months.
4. Recognising that an ecological modernisation strategy based on centralised approaches, technology and the market is insufficient given the scale of the challenges and the speed at which they need to be addressed. The government should provide the policy environment which will allow the full potential of a diverse array of community-based initiatives to contribute significantly to achieving ambitious emission reductions and alternative systems of service provision.
5. Imposing tighter regulation and greater transparency on lobbying practice in central government and at international negotiations.
6. Imposing tighter regulation on the marketing of ‘carbon-addictive’ consumption and misleading or confusing corporate advertising of goods and services that have an impact on climate change – sometimes referred to in the shorthand as ‘greenwashing’.

The central role of civil society

The authors call on all civil society associations to review their objectives in the light of the challenges civilisation faces in the next 50 years. A society under pressure can demonstrate solidarity or unruly individualism. Civil society has a big part to play in securing the former of these conditions.

At the project event held in November 2008, one participant asked: ‘What about Carlisle pensioners’ chess club? How relevant really is climate change to them?’ Clearly, to their club’s purpose, not at all. But, while a large environmental pressure group will aim to influence elected officials, bureaucrats and businesses, a community group such as a chess club is made up of people who will experience the impacts and responses to climate change and, through its social network, can provide mutual support and share information and best practice, increasing the adaptive capacity and resilience of its members.

A civil society that recognises this is more likely to perceive its role in allowing a ‘good society’ to flourish into the future. Civil society associations need to offer the ‘arena for public deliberation’ that is central to a rapid and just transition.

Given this, in addition to the Commission for Rapid Transition, civil society associations could unite and co-ordinate themselves to form a Civil Society Contingency Forum (see Box 35). The Forum would be open to all civil society associations through an appropriate representative structure, with the objective to co-ordinate and focus deliberation on the future challenges to civil society during the rapid and just transition. Time is of the essence. The current economic crisis creates uncertainty and a state of flux which can be seen as an opportunity for civil society to influence transformation toward greater social justice and sustainability.

The alternatives are 'learning by shock', and reactive responses to crises once they have occurred. Experience with, for example, counter-terrorism legislation shows that it is difficult to manage social justice claims when in the midst or immediate aftermath of a crisis. Following the atrocities of 9/11, many Western democracies rushed through counter-terror legislation, which has long-term implications for civil liberties.

The research findings also suggest that adaptation delivered at the local level needs to be achieved through participatory processes if it is to be both effective and socially just. Communities have knowledge and experience of local needs, and a participatory approach is more likely to avoid distributional injustices.

In the context of mitigation, renewable energy schemes that have previously provoked hostile local reactions have become more acceptable if participatory approaches to planning and development are used. Participation must be meaningful and not simply token, however. The fuller social benefits are only realised when schemes are of an appropriate scale, and communities are offered the opportunity to be involved in ownership. Ultimately this points away from rigid, top-down approaches and 'blueprint' planning, and toward decentralised policymaking.

Box 35: The Civil Society Contingency Forum

The UK government has a Civil Contingency Committee (more commonly referred to as COBRA) with a remit: 'to co-ordinate the preparation of plans for ensuring in an emergency the supplies and services essential to the life of the community; to keep these plans under regular review; to supervise their prompt and effective implementation in specific emergencies.'

Following a similar logic, the aim of a Civil Contingency Forum would be to identify and resolve conflicts or barriers to action within civil society, and anticipate and prepare for future tensions. This would enable preparation of co-ordinated responses before more dramatic impacts are apparent. It would go beyond simply identifying risks, and contribute directly to adaptation decision-making. Civil society could then assume a more active role in shaping events and outcomes rather than merely responding to needs that arise from environmental change and resource scarcity. Governance would have to be central to the Forum's

constitution. Experience at international level has shown that increasing deliberative spaces often simply means that already well-resourced groups get a bigger platform.

Given the complexity of the challenges climate change and resource scarcity will bring, The Forum should have a number of working groups focussing on issues such as: food; energy, transport, water; health, gender, international relations and conflict resolution. Each working group would act as a hub for sharing best practice and supporting the development of low carbon and socially-just solutions at the local level. This would also serve as an effective way of disseminating and diffusing grassroots innovation, and displacing systems of service provision where they are inefficient, high-carbon and/or fail to deliver on social goals.

In addition, through a TransitionWatch, The Forum could also act as a 'watchdog', holding the state and market to account on domestic and international climate change policy and issues of environmental/ climate justice.

Five core functions for civil society to contribute to rapid and socially-just transition

To achieve a rapid and socially-just transition, the authors make five key recommendations for civil society associations, regardless of their functions. All are things that civil society already does, but in a patchwork and often haphazard fashion. The authors' analysis suggests that these need to become organisationally central, systematic and coherent if civil society is to play its role in tackling climate change while upholding social justice.

Civil society associations represent a powerful, dormant force. To contribute fully to the transition process, they need to prioritise:

- collaborative and collective action;
- communication;
- being inclusive;
- holding to account;
- innovation and scaling-up.

Collaborative and collective action

Greater general collaboration, as described above, is of crucial importance for civil society associations. Practical experience has shown that, among groups with a national remit, coalition building is a catalysing step for civil society associations to bridge climate change, resource scarcity and social justice agendas. The benefits include strength in numbers; the pooling of resources and expertise; access to specialist research often beyond the reach of individual organisations; and increased profile, access, leverage and media attention.

The roles these organisations can play include:

Influencing and engaging coalitions

Examples include the Working Group on Climate Change and Development, Stop Climate Chaos, Roundtable on Climate Change and Poverty in the UK, Roundtable on Environmental Refugees and Green New Deal Group. These coalitions have been able to promote awareness and raise the profile of climate change within their sector and beyond (capturing the attention of state actors at the national and international level, for

example). The Working Group on Climate Change and Development model has been replicated by a number of international development and environmental civil society associations in developed and developing nations. In the context of the UK and Ireland, given that research suggests there is little understanding of the social effects on already-socially-excluded groups such as the elderly and BME groups, civil society associations working in this area are advised to follow a similar model.

Integrated movements

Examples include the so-called blue-green coalitions, the environmental justice movement, the just transition movement, the climate justice movement. These movements include networks of both grassroots and larger professional civil society associations. Their objectives may be similar to influencing coalitions but they adopt more activist strategies. For example, organising protests, direct action and litigation. These movements operate at the national or international level. Through wide networks of different civil society associations, they also share best practice and build capacity with local civil society associations.

Alliances for adaptation and resilience

Examples include Transition Towns, community groups and faith groups. These tend to focus on practical grassroots responses. The social capital of such groups has the potential to increase adaptive capacity and resilience to local risks. Partnerships with local authorities or other civil society associations can provide support, resources, expertise and skills and ensure that alliances remain open and inclusive of the wider local community and socially-excluded groups. The current emphasis of many environmental civil society associations has been on top-down responses, with little emphasis on adaptation. However, a rapid and just transition requires an integrated approach to both mitigation and adaptation, coupled with a significant scaling-up of community-led initiatives. Environmental civil society associations are well placed to bridge the gap between high-level policy processes and practical grassroots initiatives.

Conflict resolution

Collaborative and collective action can allow for conflict resolution. Groups primarily concerned with social justice emphasised the failure of the green movement to engage or include marginalised

groups, especially the community sector and the BME community. Separately, both rural campaign groups and trade unions felt the ‘nimbyism’ of green groups undermined the planning system. Conversely, green groups were critical of other groups’ treatment of their own issues as if they were detached from an environmental context, something admitted by a union participant: ‘As a trade union we are in favour of the expansion of Heathrow Airport. If Heathrow is not expanded, we lose thousands of new jobs. We look at things in the immediacy – today, tomorrow, next year, next five years. The environment is not about the immediacy, it is about 20, 30, 40, 50 years hence. We wouldn’t have any members if we took this approach because we wouldn’t be fighting their cause at that point in time.’

Communication

The closeness of civil society associations to their constituencies puts them in a much better position to communicate the issues of social justice, climate change and resource scarcity, than either the government or the private sector.

They can also reach a wide range of audiences, especially those who find information on the issues ‘hard to hear’. This, for example, was the focus of an Eden Foundation project. Where the larger members of civil society who have considerable budgets to spend on fundraising and campaigning are concerned – groups for example such as Oxfam, Action and the NSPCC – their messages can be as universally-distributed as commercial advertising.

A particular challenge is to discuss climate change in ways that make it a less scientific and therefore inaccessible issue – in effect to ‘socialise’ it. This means:

- changing the language to focus more on social than on physical and biological impacts. To achieve this, stronger relationships with climate scientists and researchers will be required;
- making their work more inclusive from the perspective of other organisations
- communicating the fact that climate change goes beyond counting carbon. Climate change is about society as a whole, social justice, the need for adaptation, resilience and a new economic system;
- adopting campaign terms such as a ‘just transition’ to build a movement of change.

Being inclusive

Civil society associations can act to increase inclusivity. Recent research on personal and social well-being shows that the UK suffers from high levels of disengagement. Young people, in particular, report the lowest levels of trust and the weakest sense of belonging of any country in Europe. There are a number of civil society responses to climate change, but the evidence suggests that these have generally been led by, and mostly included, middle-class groups in areas of relative economic security.¹⁷² Civil society associations working in communities need to engage more with the socially-excluded and those in areas of relative economic disadvantage.

Civil society associations can help ensure that when people move into a new community, they become connected to the life of that community. As climate change increasingly drives human migration within and between nations, they can work together to address the negative language that shrouds the issue of forced migration.

At both a theoretical and practical level, greater inclusivity can also contribute to the development of more holistic and long-term approaches. A number of organisations are already developing such approaches.

Groundwork UK, one of the largest service-based charities in the UK focusing on improving the environment in disadvantaged areas, argued that climate change had simply become ‘part and parcel of what we do’.

Oxfam GB pointed out: ‘There is no point campaigning for better housing if the housing is going to be affected by the impacts of climate change through flooding or rising temperatures.’

The Campaign for Greener Healthcare has highlighted what it calls ‘high-carbon lifestyle diseases’, pointing out that ‘if we walk/cycle more, and eat less red meat, we are both reducing carbon emissions and protecting our own health from the so called “diseases of affluence”: Coronary heart disease, obesity, diabetes, certain cancers, etc.’

However, there are also examples where this bridging is incomplete. For example, while Global Action Plan linked global distributive justice to its environmental ideals, it had not developed a formal position on the links between the

two. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England also had gaps yet to be bridged:

'CPRE [Campaign for the Protection of Rural England] at grassroots level needs to make the link between adaptation to sea level rise and the urgent need for action to mitigate climate change. Our mapping local food networks project, involving collaboration with some Transition Towns, combined with the threat to food security through loss of good arable land, could help us make the connections with social justice.'

Holding to account

Another aspect of addressing current power imbalances is the task of holding different actors to account. This includes ensuring that policy innovations generated by civil society associations – carbon offsetting and the rise of bio-fuels, for example – are not misappropriated.

CorpWatch sees climate justice as 'holding fossil fuel corporations accountable'. CERES (the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies) and ICCR (Interfaith Centre for Corporate Responsibility) use their investor power to hold firms to account for their performance on climate change. Similarly, the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) operates by organising a number of institutional investors collectively to 'sign a single global request for disclosure of information on greenhouse gas emissions'. Many of its members, however, have large and sometimes growing stakes in fossil fuel industries.

In under two years, the Rainforest Action Network organised more than 60 public protests at Citibank branches across the US, as well as orchestrating online actions to put pressure on the firm. In the UK, the Stop Esso Campaign organised a boycott of petrol stations in 2003 which, over a six-week period, cost the business £454 million.

Holding to account through activism is likely to be particularly relevant to trade unions. But a number of other civil society associations, such as philanthropic trusts and foundations and faith groups, have the potential to fulfil similar roles.

Effective forms of activism include:

Shareholder activism

There are a growing number of shareholder resolutions on climate change, particularly in the US. In 2005, state and city pensioners, labour foundations, religious and other institutional shareholders filed 30 global warming resolutions requesting financial risk and disclosure plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This was three times the number of similar resolutions in 2000-2001.

Political activism

Trade unions were successful in mobilising boycotts against the apartheid regime in South Africa in the 1980s. Recently, they have been using similar tactics in relation to the crisis in Gaza by organising the boycott of Israeli goods. Civil society associations could mobilise large groups of political consumers. Additionally, they could call for trade sanctions against nations that do not comply with international climate change agreements (see Box 36). Campaigning in the UK led by Friends of the Earth but involving a wide range of civil society groups, led to passing of the Climate Change Act.

In the contemporary Transition Movement, social justice is implicit rather than explicit. The Trade Union Congress has adopted the term 'just transition' to reflect an acceptance of the need for radical but also fair change.¹⁷³ This builds on experience in the US, where new pollution legislation threatened the loss of many jobs. US trade unions argued for the creation of 'transition' jobs for these workers, rather than simply opposing the legislation. The peace movement made similar proposals to deal with the jobs that would be lost if the nuclear industry was shut down.

Legal activism

With their financial resources, their experience in using the courts to deal with labour issues, and their access to legal expertise, trade unions are well positioned to be legal activists. There is a growing body of legal cases that demonstrates the potential for trade unions and other civil society associations to address judicially the linked issues of social justice and climate change. This is an option to turn to when other forms of influencing and action have failed.

Through the Aarhus Convention, there is now a strong and growing environmental rights agenda based in law. Each new case will set powerful political precedents about what governments can be expected to be called to account for, while raising awareness about the means to do so. This could usher in a new era of accountability. This is likely to be accompanied by an increased ability to prove environmental causation and an increased use of the law to defend people's rights to a healthy environment.

For example, Myles Allen, a leading climate scientist, recently noted that climate science is beginning to reach the point 'that when an adverse weather event occurs, we can quantify how much more likely it was made by human activity'.¹⁷⁴

As a result, people suffering from environmental harm will be more able to seek redress and defend themselves in future. Furthermore, following the pattern of legal action against tobacco companies, there may be a case for litigation against firms that have deliberately sought to misinform civil society or the state on environmental matters.

New requirements, such as the duty to consult, engage and involve (duty to involve) place an obligation on public authorities to provide information, consultation and involvement opportunities to local people or representatives of local people. The duty to involve, therefore, has the potential to enhance local resilience and social capital and increase the effectiveness of adaptation to challenges such as climate change and resource scarcity.

Capacity Global have also demonstrated how equalities law, such as the Race Relations Amendment Act can be used could be used to challenge the unjust negative impacts of environmental policy.

Civil society associations can build the capacity of individuals, communities and other civil society associations to take legal action against violation of their human rights. This has often been a core objective of environmental justice civil society associations. In the UK the environmental justice organisation Capacity Global is involved with Friends of the Earth in running events which train people in using the planning system, environmental regulations and the law. Lawyers

Box 6: Trade sanctions for non-compliance

Enforcement mechanisms for international multilateral environmental or social agreements are notoriously weak. Because of this, alternative approaches based on economic sanctions have been considered. Currently, however, no trade measures explicitly deal with climate change; although measures such as border tax adjustments (BTAs) have been considered in order to deal with nations failing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

In 1992, the European Commission was considering the introduction of a climate change tax and a GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) Dispute Settlement Panel ruled that the tax was consistent with Article III of GATT and that the effective BTA was not an unacceptable restraint on trade. Examples of the application of unilateral trade measures such as this raise the possibility of legitimate trade measures being used to pursue the goals of the UNFCCC and any agreement recognised within this framework.

In 2003, nef published a report which proposed that trade measures such as a BTA could be used to pressure the United States over climate change and its non-compliance with the Kyoto Protocol.¹⁷⁵ At the time, Pascal Lamy the then European Commissioner for Trade (now the Director-General of the WTO) admitted that that the EU would be within its rights to pursue this course of action. In early January 2008, the president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, caused shockwaves by stating publicly that trade sanctions against the US was a possible course of action for the EU.¹⁷⁶

in Capacity Global's Rights and Justice Centre provide free legal advice and representation.

As the International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP) notes: 'Even if lawsuits cannot themselves provide long-term or far-reaching solutions to the human rights problems raised by climate change, litigation can nevertheless be an effective strategy. At a minimum, a well-constructed case draws attention to harmful effects that might otherwise sink below public radar and in particular puts a name and a face to an otherwise abstract suffering of individuals. Further, legal actions provide impetus and expression to those most affected by the harms of climate change, and can thus

become a motor of social or civic mobilisation for policy change... tort litigation can present polluters with costly trials and the uncomfortable prospect of debilitating damages and reputation costs, all of which encourage behavioural change.'

The European Convention on Human Rights has been used successfully in a few European cases to protect environmental rights.¹⁷⁷ Those most relevant to the UK include a case against the UK government regarding noise pollution from Heathrow airport.

Activist accounting

Using research and high-profile media campaigns to expose bad practice or non-compliance by the state or private sector (and even by other civil society associations) can damage reputations and encourage behaviour change. For example, a social, ecological and anti-corporate campaign group called Platform produced a report that exposed the Royal Bank of Scotland's corporate financing of oil and gas projects. The report, *The Oil and Gas Bank*, also exposed the social impacts that RBS's corporate financing was having on indigenous peoples by fuelling conflict, increasing environmental despoliation and affecting health and well-being.¹⁷⁸

Innovation and scaling-up

Free of the considerations of electoral politics or the limitation, in most cases, of fiduciary duties, civil society associations are more at liberty to innovate. This is a unique advantage of the sector which should be maximised.

Civil society associations provide arenas where policy entrepreneurs can come together to innovate. The Green New Deal is one example. It combined expertise from civil society associations on banking, climate change, social and financial exclusion, and energy. The Transition Network describes itself as presiding over the UK's largest social experiment. Community groups and grassroots organisations are under-appreciated sites of innovation that deserve greater support and attention. Community activists are often willing to try things voluntarily, to experiment and risk failure in a way that other sectors would balk at.

Civil society associations have a distinctive competence in innovation. The government needs to broaden its conception of innovation beyond the commercial sector, recognising the

value of civil society in creating solutions to new challenges, particularly at the grassroots level.

Local projects could be joined up through a learning network. The people and organisations involved could share their experiences through organised online debates or other culturally appropriate mechanisms. An example of an existing learning network is OneClimate.net. This is an online civil society association that offers a platform for organisations around the world to devise innovative ideas and actions to counter climate change. Then there is scope for significant scaling-up of effective measures and responses.

Research into the field of transition management indicates the transformative potential of local innovation if taken to scale.¹⁷⁹ For example, the growth of community energy schemes, if scaled up across the UK, could displace significant parts of the centralised energy system. In Denmark, grassroots innovators played a central role in the creation of a world-leading wind industry.¹⁸⁰ To achieve this, though, several event participants thought that the devolution of political power was needed:

'[The UK] government should give local government a stronger role in energy issues generally. We have a very highly-centralised approach to energy policy... the Home Energy Conservation Act has been a shambles. But there is the assumption in [the] DTI that energy policy is a national thing and local government doesn't have much of a role ... It's got to be delivered through things like housing policy and be delivered closer to the ground.'

Immediate priorities

Given that this report is about a complex, transformational agenda it is important to address and order priorities. This section addresses immediate priorities, ones that flow from external events that are already set. And it points to the priorities that flow logically from a necessary sequence to plan and implement the insights and conclusions of this report.

Mobilising around the international day of action for a 350 target in the lead-up to Copenhagen* and future events

At the time of writing, there are less than six months* until the 15th Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC where, it is hoped, the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol will be agreed. Based on our conclusions about climate justice, the parameters of a framework for an equitable and just transition to a low carbon society should include:

- a) equity and justice among people alive today and between current and future generations should be the basis of a formal global climate change framework;
- b) a 'safe' level of warming correlated to a given concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere;
- c) recognition of an equal claim by all to the assimilative capacity of the atmosphere. Large historic emissions imply acquired obligations;
- d) recognition that environmental effectiveness of climate policy based on precaution should be central. But, without respecting and reconciling equity, historical responsibility and ecological debt, an international deal will be politically unworkable.
- e) following from the above, an automatic and 'apolitical' mechanism for redistributing the costs of adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change;
- f) recognition that the current global economic system is inefficient at delivering human development and well-being, and perpetuates certain inequalities and an unbalanced distribution of costs and benefits in a warming world.

To achieve global co-operation, the values rooted in these propositions need to be reflected in the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol. Yet, because of the complicated politics involved in the negotiations, many believe it unlikely that this will be achieved in the time left to agree a post-2012 deal therefore, as a matter of urgency, civil society associations need to mobilise to ensure that it does happen. In particular, the agreement will have to fulfil the UNFCCC commitment to avoid dangerous climate change (defined as exceeding an average surface temperature of 2°C).

In line with the most up-to-date scientific understanding, this means recognition of the 350ppm CO₂e target. The group 350 (www.350.org) organised an international 'day of action' in October 2009, where civil society associations, from grassroots activists to large environmental pressure groups in both developed and developing nations around the world, took part in a diverse range of actions from protests to bike rides.

Establish the Commission for a Rapid and Just Transition

The authors recommend the immediate development of a multi-stakeholder group, The Commission for a Rapid and Just Transition, that will include representatives from across all the main political parties, business leaders, and civil society representatives that have both influencing and providing roles, from social justice (national and international), labour and environmental movements.

In particular, the Commission should seek to map out a five-year plan to plot the course of a rapid transition, with specific attention to existing interdependencies with developing nations.

Establish the Civil Society Contingency Forum

Civil society needs to grasp the current economic crisis as a positive opportunity for transformation. The authors recommend the establishment of a Civil Society Contingency Forum that meets regularly to develop advance, cross-sectoral planning for the external shocks likely to emerge due to climate change and resource scarcity.

* Readers should note that this report was written before Copenhagen 2009. At the time of publishing, the council intends to reconvene in order to address the failures of the 2009 conference, and these parameters should still apply to any future discussions.

Investing in community projects that help build resilience to climate change

Developing a sustainable, decentralised energy and food system will have a significant impact on the resilience of the UK as a whole to future energy and food shocks. But the benefits of such a system go further than simply acting as a buffer against price fluctuations. There are local economic benefits, which will improve the prospects for disadvantaged individuals and communities and boost community self-confidence through greater self-reliance, with clear social justice implications. While government rhetoric is strong on local, community-based initiatives, the level of funding necessary to scale up grassroots initiatives simply is not sufficient.

Use the Sustainable Communities Act

The Sustainable Communities Act, which became law in 2007, challenges local authorities and local communities to collaborate in order to find creative ways to decentralise services to meet local needs affordably. The Local Works website – developed to follow up the success of the campaigning coalition which drove the process of getting the bill on the statute book – suggests ways in which the Act could be used to create community well-being and economic resilience, including local renewable energy generation.¹⁸¹ While the Act has yet to be tested in practice, there is growing interest among community organisations in using it to push forward local action on localisation, economic resilience and climate action.

To date, over one hundred local authorities have committed to using the Act.

Let communities help re-power the UK with energy efficiency and clean energy

Our centralised energy infrastructure is extremely inefficient, and needs to be overhauled as part of the transition towards a low carbon economy. A Greenpeace report estimated that up to two-thirds of potential energy is wasted as a result of inefficiencies.¹⁸² Not including energy lost from converting heat energy to electricity – which at best is 50% efficient – a further 5-7% is lost in the transmission of electricity over cabling and substations. Some large-scale renewables lend themselves to a centralised system, such as hydroelectric power and its pumped storage

facilities, or large offshore wind farms, but the large majority of renewables function far more efficiently and practically if they are integrated into a decentralised energy system where power is generated at, or near to, the point of use.

Community engagement with the development of renewable energy projects is critical for their deployment. This is particularly relevant to wind and biomass installations, which have often met with hostile responses from local communities. Wind is the most commercially-competitive renewable energy source, yet it still faces a number of barriers. This includes public opposition, embedding wind generators into electricity generation networks and land-use planning. Community engagement from the start of a project will mean that it is less likely to be viewed as contentious by the public. However, consultation is not sufficient. The scale of the scheme, the fair distribution of ownership, control and benefits are also crucial. Therefore we recommend that:

- community engagement techniques should be employed to take communities through a process of improving literacy and designing solutions that are locally relevant;
- development should offer the opportunity for local ownership and control;
- local and regional government should seek to provide an enabling environment for grassroots groups and co-operatives. This could be achieved by easing planning restrictions on land and housing and the development of micro-renewable projects;
- local government should also provide more support to voluntary and community organisations that are applying for state funding for projects addressing community sustainability. For example, recent figures suggest that only half of the £48 million assigned to the UK's Low Carbon Buildings Programme fund has been allocated;¹⁸³
- feed-in tariff legislation of the type that has proved highly successful in Germany should be introduced in the UK as soon as possible. In 2007, 130,000 solar photo-voltaic systems were installed in Germany, compared to just 270 such systems in the UK. While the UK government recently announced that it will initiate a feed-in tariff scheme, it is unlikely to be launched until April 2010 at the earliest.

One barrier to the take-up of community renewable energy schemes based on co-operative investment models is that they need to be a certain size in order to justify costs associated with the issue of shares while also delivering a competitive market return on investment. A detailed series of proposals on efficiency and renewable heat and electricity can be found in the joint report of the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy.¹⁸⁴

The priority of financing

A rapid and just transition will require resources. In some cases, this means arguing for the reallocation of existing resources, in others it calls for new, innovative financing mechanisms. It also means exploring how best to apply existing local financial infrastructures and services, such as community development finance initiatives, to the task of rapid transition. This section highlights a range of potential funding sources.

A windfall tax – to tackle fuel poverty

There are complicated links between climate policy, energy policy and the government's approach to general taxation. A significant amount of central government revenue – about £1 in every £12 – comes from taxing oil and gas. This has been higher than the receipts from corporation tax, and more than twice the total duties on alcohol and tobacco. Two major issues are raised by the fact that the public purse has come to rely on a high and fairly stable income stream from fossil fuel-related activities. First, in the context of climate change, is the huge revenue from fossil fuels serving as a powerful deterrent to government to 'kick the fossil fuel habit'. The second issue is how the country will handle the changed income effects of drastically reducing fossil fuel use. With oil companies still reporting very large profits in spite of the recent fall in the price of oil from its high peak in 2008, there is potential for windfall taxes on producers to offset the potentially regressive effects of higher energy taxes.¹⁸⁵

Compared to Norway, a producer which has built up a substantial national financial safety net through what was, in effect, a recurrent windfall tax on fossil fuels, Britain's income from oil has not been invested in the country's long-term security. Windfall taxes could be set to become more

attractive, as the government is likely to view the scope for substantial new consumption taxes as limited. One proposal made by nef and WWF is to follow Norway's example and set up an Oil Legacy Fund, paid for primarily by a windfall tax on oil and gas company profits.¹⁸⁶ The revenue raised would be invested in bringing about a transition to a sustainable, efficient, decentralised energy system.

In January 2005, Martin O'Neill, Labour Chair of the UK Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee, endorsed the idea of a windfall tax to help people in fuel poverty and there are historical precedents with windfall taxes introduced by both Labour and Conservative governments in the 1980s and 1990s. While a recent call by Compass for a one-off windfall tax was rejected, the authors recommend that civil society associations should now mobilise around a renewed call for such a tax and an Oil Legacy Fund. In addition to eliminating fuel poverty, some of the revenues from the windfall tax could be placed in a ring-fenced fund for upgrading planned social housing developments to zero-carbon status.¹⁸⁷

A green investment bank

The credit crisis led directly to a significant shift in the ownership structure of British banking. The public, through the government, now has a major – and in some cases, a majority – stake in the high street banks. This means that the government is in a position to directly influence the banks' lending strategies. Proposals have been made for a green investment bank to finance transition and new infrastructures has been suggested, with one suggestion being to redesignate the Royal Bank of Scotland, which is now in majority public ownership, to support transition to a green economy through providing direct investment, loans and guarantees to leverage greater private sector funds.

Local green bonds

As stated in a recent report by the Green New Deal Group,¹⁸⁸ local authority bonds could be a major vehicle for investment in decarbonising enterprises, in particular investment in fuel-efficiency projects and micro-renewable energy. In the US, there is a \$2 trillion (£1 trillion) municipal bond market. This means has been little used in the UK so far, apart from Transport for London's successful £600 million bond issues. Yet this source of funding could be promoted relatively easily if the returns on the money saved from low carbon investments, minus their

cost, were used to repay such bonds. There are no legal constraints on local authorities raising funds through issuing their own bonds, but it has not been encouraged by governments since the 1980s.

Such local authority bonds could be spent on ensuring energy efficiency and providing renewable energy for each of the country's three million council tenants, many of whom are, or will be, facing fuel poverty, as well as for all other local authority-owned or -controlled buildings, such as town halls, schools, hospitals and transport infrastructure. Local authority bonds could be an investment route for pension funds and even individual savings to help fund major expansion of decarbonising enterprises. Bonds would be tax-free up to an agreed limit to attract local green investors – an adapted ISA product could work.

Integrating community-based initiatives in planning energy futures

In spite of severe restrictions on public finances, the government is publicly committed to investing in the creation of hundreds of thousands of green jobs. For maximum benefit to the public purse, it should seek to mobilise civil society in this process, by using some of the funding to support nascent or existing community renewable energy, food and transport programmes where the local multiplier effect is likely to be highest. Because fuel poverty is increasing, programmes aimed at improving home insulation and fuel efficiency in disadvantaged areas should be included.

Governments have not so far been supportive of decentralised responses to energy insecurity and the current government appears to prefer a new generation of nuclear and new 'clean coal' power stations over a programme of serious decentralisation. Yet, from a social justice perspective, centralised energy schemes are unlikely to provide the multiple benefits of community-based initiatives such as skills, local economic development, social capital, community cohesion, environmental literacy and pro-environmental behaviour change.

Exploring personal carbon entitlements

To guarantee both environmental integrity in terms of carbon savings, and equity in distributing collective constraints on the use of carbon, some form of 'cap and trade' system

represents probably the best way forward – in other words, a quantity-based instrument in contrast to a tax (price-based instrument).¹⁸⁹

A personal carbon-trading scheme would need to be introduced in concert with a number of other measures to help individuals live within their carbon ration.¹⁹⁰ This should include, most fundamentally, improvements in the thermal (energy efficiency) characteristics of people's homes. Additionally, there is a need for measures such as smart meters (real-time monitoring of home-energy use), informed electricity and gas billing, greater emphasis on electricity disclosure (of fuel mix and carbon content), energy labelling on all appliances and electronics, energy-rated homes (Home Information Packs), changes to petrol pumps to provide detailed information on carbon emissions and awareness raising.¹⁹¹

In general, the authors believe the main features of a personal carbon-trading scheme should be:¹⁹²

- equal rations for all individuals (children would receive half of the adult quota);
- tradable rations (those who use less than their entitlement could sell the surplus to those who use more);
- year-on-year reduction of the ration, signalled well in advance;
- personal transport (including aviation) and household energy use included;
- a mandatory, not voluntary, character.

Personal transport would need to be included because, as one study points out, if a 'cap and trade' scheme only covered home energy use, it would have a regressive impact on low-income households. To help facilitate behaviour change, individuals would need to be 'carbon-literate' – have a good grasp of the causes of carbon emissions, the role they themselves play in producing them, the scope for reductions in one's personal life, and how to manage a carbon budget.¹⁹³ Some initiatives are already working to develop these skills, such as the RSA's Carbon DAQ voluntary online (virtual) carbon market. Civil society associations should work to increase the carbon literacy of their constituencies. They should also pilot personal carbon-trading schemes, either by linking to existing schemes or creating their own.

Appendix 1

Although the following example is scarcely an illustration of what civil society can do in respect of food security, in that its success depended on a strong, centralised government, it is worth including since it shows what is possible given conviction and commitment among policy-makers.

Cuba: increasing food security through urban farming

Following the imposition of the US trade embargo on Cuba, the Soviet Union became Cuba's primary trade partner. Sugar and tobacco were exported to the Soviet Union in return for oil – some of which was re-exported to earn convertible currency. The favourable terms of trade for exports meant that a disproportionate amount of land was assigned to export crops grown in a highly industrialised monocrop agricultural system.

Cuba was so dependent on its Soviet trading partner that its economic plight quickly became desperate when the Soviet Union collapsed. In what became known as the 'Special Period in Peacetime', oil imports dropped by more than 50%, with a significant impact on fuel available for the economy and agriculture, and foreign exchange earnings from oil fell to zero. Wheat and grains for human consumption decreased by 50%, as did other foodstuffs.

The loss of oil resulted in a rapid shift to biofertilisers and biopesticides and a return to animal traction. The large-scale state farms were not compatible with these alternative farming methods, but small-scale farms were able to respond quickly and boost production above previous levels. Recognising this, the government acknowledged that small-scale management systems were essential for organic farming. In 1993, it issued a decree that terminated state farms and turned them into basic units of co-operative production – worker-owned enterprises or co-operatives. Over 80% of state-owned farms were redistributed in this way.

The huge food shortage that Cuba faced in the early years of the 'Special Period in Peacetime' was overcome within five years, thanks to the country's multitude of new small-scale and urban farms. Food shortages and the rise in food prices made urban agriculture very profitable. With state backing, there was an explosion in the growth of urban farming. Lots and backyards in Cuban cities now support food crops and farm animals – relying almost exclusively on organic techniques.

The Cuban experience illustrates that a nation's population can become virtually self-reliant in food production with small- and medium-scale farms and co-operatives, and using ecologically sound practices. It suggests that globally, in developed and developing nations, there is a vast untapped potential for urban farming. In Havana alone, there are more than 26,000 food gardens, spreading across 2,400 hectares of land and producing around 25,000 tonnes of food.¹⁹⁴

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Climate change and resource scarcity have always been issues of social justice because some parts of society will feel their effects more markedly than others, and these are likely to be people who are already suffering some form of deprivation. This problem is aggravated by the inability of the disadvantaged to influence climate-related policy decisions. Recognising the importance of civil society associations in responding to the challenges of climate change and growing pressure on resources, this report explores their future role in bridging the climate change, resource scarcity and social justice divide by doing four things: mapping out the challenges facing civil society associations and their constituencies over the next 30 years; exploring the interplay between social justice, resource scarcity and climate change in the UK and Ireland; identifying how civil society associations are addressing climate justice and the difficulties that still need to be resolved; finally, it puts forward a number of recommendations for the future role of civil society associations in achieving a rapid and just transition to a low carbon economy.

Published on behalf of the Commission
by the Carnegie UK Trust

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ISBN 978-0-900259-66-1

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