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EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT AND KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY

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Fostering individual empowerment.

Types of motivation and their impact on energy citizenship.

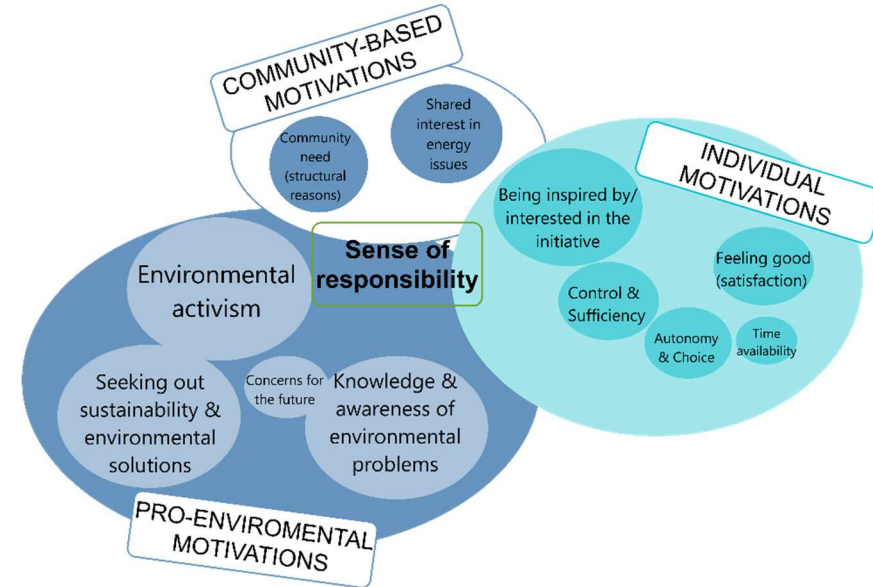
Now that we have answered some basic questions regarding what it means to be motivated, the choices and challenges involved in making changes in one's life, the time has come to place the onus focus on what motivates people (including perhaps yourself) to act, as well as another question we asked at the beginning: *would it be possible to use my personal interests for further (even collective) action on sustainable lifestyles?*

Keep your notes handy, and let's see what other people tell us. Perhaps may well be surprised to learn their motivations are not so far from removed what you yourself have written!

We have conducted in-depth interviews with people whose actions have a positive bearing on the energy transition and who have an impact on others. Either individually (e.g. as social media influencers) or, above all, collectively (e.g. volunteers, workers, founders and members of production and consumption cooperatives, founders and residents of co-housing, policy makers and representatives of citizen participation associations, social movements...). Through these interviews, our aim was to find out what motivates these people to get involved in energy citizenship initiatives, as well as how they have been empowered through these initiatives (but not so fast, for the time being, we will just focus on motivations).

In Figure 1 a series of concepts are displayed. They emerged from asking 52 people regarding their motivations for joining an ENCI initiative. This figure intends to show you the complexity and diversity of human motivations face in moving towards a low-emission energy system.

Figure 1. Factors motivating energy citizenship.



We have tried to simplify it through the large circles that involve three types of motivations: individual, community-based and pro-environmental motivations. Still, care must be taken when interpreting this information! This differentiation is made to contribute to a better understanding of the idea as a whole, although it is clearly difficult to view them as isolated and independent elements. At the heart of everything is a sense of responsibility, both individually, as part of a wider collective and with respect to the environment:

We are not environmental freaks, but we want to contribute to this. The reduction in energy bills is a nice perk. Doing something about the energy transition and climate change since this is the way forward as a society (Interview 28, Energy cooperative).

Firstly, we refer to those motivations with a more individual component (the desire for self-reliance and the ability to choose, control and sufficiency, feeling good, or even there being time on hand to carry out these actions). We also include here the inspiration that certain initiatives (especially collective ones), which are

integrated under the banner of energy citizenship, represent for these people.

Many people make changes in their energy-related behaviour because "There is a choice. I am the one who always says that everyone always has a choice" (Interview 23, individual energy citizen), and it is also important to "start with oneself" (Interview 33, energy cooperative) by incorporating changes in their homes (e.g. DIY solutions, installing solar panels, reducing their use of private transport) which is a first step that people can make in their homes and this is a demonstration of the personal empowerment and choices they feel they have in the matter. Introducing these changes offer people the opportunity to improve their satisfaction with life ["When you do it, it makes you feel good, even if you still don't have much experience." (Interview 6, energy consumption and production association)], even in certain cases by giving people the means that allow them to become self-sufficient ["Owning own energy production micro-solution was an attractive idea to increase self-sufficiency" (Interview 53, cooperation project for renewable energy production)] and regain some control over their lives:

The fact that I use the primary energy of the sun makes me less dependent on energy suppliers who somehow sell gas or oil, and therefore, it makes me more flexible and independent. I can also further increase my degree of independence, technically, by perhaps deciding to install an additional battery storage system at my home, which I have not yet done (...) that makes you more independent, And that's a good feeling (Interview 49, energy cooperative).

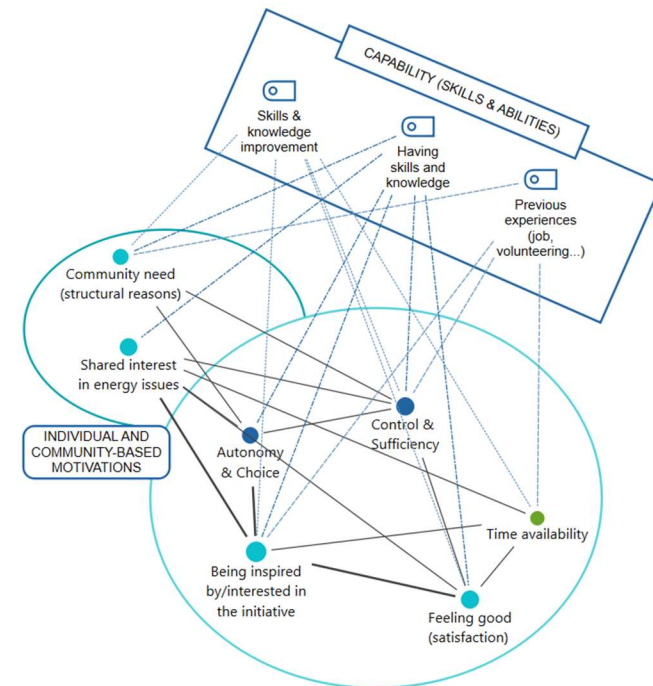
Although to a lesser extent, individual motivation related to the availability of time ["Time, on my part, too, time to be able to think about it and devote to it, well, they gave me the tools to get involved" (Interview 39, energy cooperative)]. It is worth noting that people see their time as both a motivation (e.g. in the case of older people, having the time to devote to these issues that matter to them) and a hindrance, which makes many people reluctant to make certain changes or to become actively involved in collective ECNI initiatives (see '[resources and barriers](#)').

Likewise, if you are thinking about whether you can make changes in your energy-related behaviour, whether or not you have the sufficient skillset, bear in mind that you can learn while you practice! Not all people currently involved in these actions set out from a deep-rooted knowledge of energy-related issues. As one of our respondent points out "at the beginning, I had very little knowledge in this subject. It was not my area of expertise. Definitely. But yes, it's exciting in any case to better

understand how it works" (Interview 9, Mobility cooperative).

Indeed, through contact with other people, groups, and organisations users have gained a better understanding of how the energy system works. Inspiration or interest in the characteristics and functioning of collective energy citizenship agency initiatives has been a driving force for many people to become actively involved in the transition to a zero-emission energy system.

Figure 2. Links between individual and community-based motivation and their relationship with capability



This inspiration was, for some of the respondents, provided not by the initiative directly, rather through people close to them with whom they share an interest. As we said earlier, having people close to them with shared interests is an important driver of behavioural change. It could not be clearer than with this statement: "the first point is that, indeed, you work together to create and work out the project together while having fun together to view a common result" (Interview 49, energy

cooperative). In addition to this, there is also the search for community solutions to structurally based needs (e.g. renovation of buildings, supplying electricity in remote places, fighting together against weather phenomena). Thus we turn to what we call pro-environmental motivations, where we refer to a very broad set of factors. Among the most prominent of these is knowledge and awareness of environmental problems:

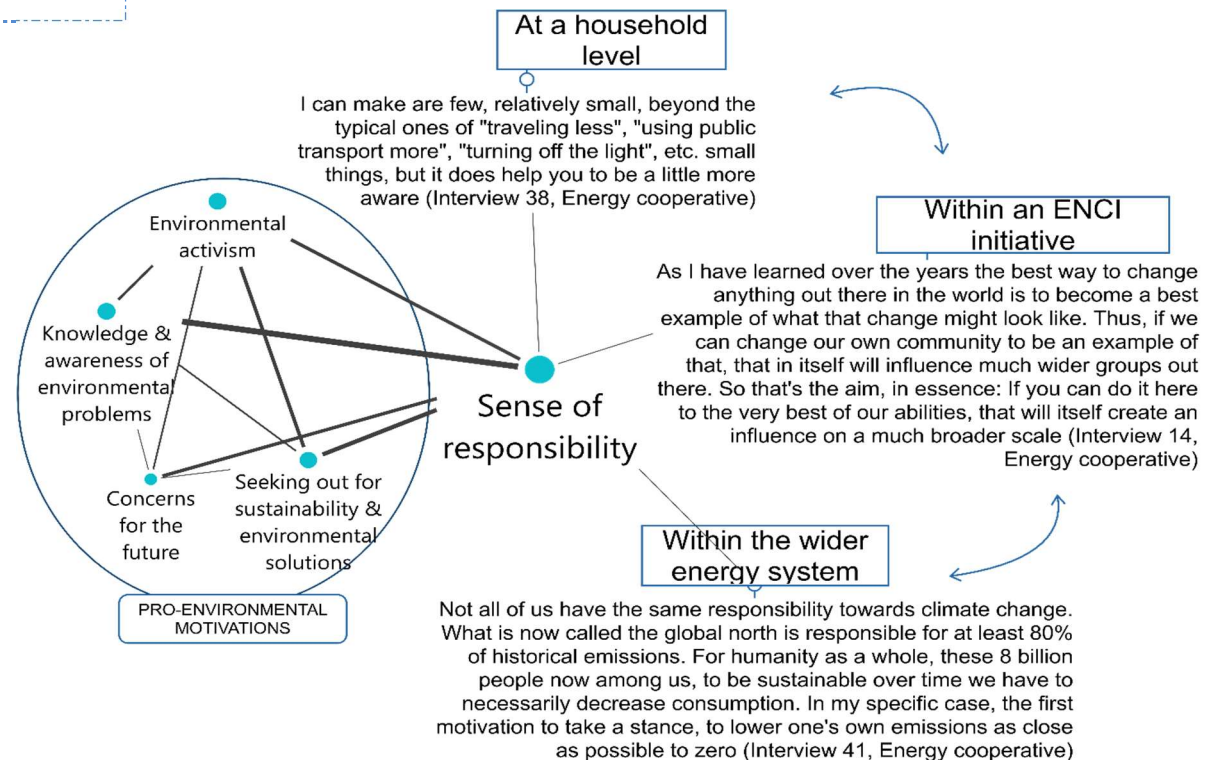
I must admit that the examples of project leaders who have made a lot of things happen and who have organised themselves to do something together, give me quite a few shivers. I hear an example where there were maybe half a dozen citizens, and they managed to convince 1000 people to invest in a project. (...) Huge projects like that are extremely enlightening and inspiring (Interview 7, Energy cooperative).

This awareness is a call to action, especially when it is intertwined with concern for the future that will be left behind for coming generations [*"We did not inherit this earth from our parents, we have it on loan from our children". That appealed to me enormously. I wanted to try it for my son and for other kids*] (Interview 14, Energy cooperative)]. This leads many people to become actively involved in a wide array of environmental movements, organisations, and activist groups to react against social and, above all, political inertia [*"we can't expect everything from the state. We also need citizens to get involved, if only to go and prod our elected representatives to spring them into action, but also, I think, to further themselves through these actions"*] (Interview 6, energy consumption and production association)]. In other cases, instead of getting involved in a visible way, they try to make their small contributions by finding environmental and sustainable solutions that are helpful to other people [*"I don't do it for, you know, honour and glory. It's just that, intrinsically, I think we should also help people or citizens or businesses here to reach the next level in terms of sustainability"*] (Interview 29, Energy Cooperative). It involves everyone doing our part:

I think that we can act from an individual point of view and that's what will be useful. It's not so much about responsibility or I would say that everybody should take care of producing their own energy. But if you want to be useful, if you want to do something that has an impact, do something very concrete that you can do, that doesn't cost much (Interview 7, Energy cooperative).

Therefore, we conclude by returning to the concept of responsibility that drives most of our respondents to act at different levels (on an individual level, through initiatives and by trying to influence the wider energy system), as we try to illustrate in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Pro-environmental motivations and the sense of responsibility: different levels of action.



[Please, go to „List of commitments for action”]

List of commitments for action

Being an Energy Citizen is not a matter of all or nothing. It ranges from baby steps to full-scale actions. The level of commitment depends on yourself, your motivations and interests, your perception of your capacities, autonomy and choices. We encourage you to start by committing yourself to a few actions. Let's see what you think of these:

- I will reduce my energy consumption through new habits, such as turning off appliances on standby or turning the light off when it is not needed.
- I will start becoming involved by making changes in my home, such as controlling my energy consumption with web or mobile applications.
- I will investigate the advantages of installing solar panel and think whether is worth it to be self-sufficient.
- I will participate in a more transformative change, e.g. I will find out about how to install solar panels (or another type of system) in my place and what advantages it would bring to the community to be able to discuss it and carry it out.
- I already control my energy consumption at home, but now I want to involve more people and create social awareness, both in my workplace and within my inner circle. I will propose the idea of participating to some extent in the energy transition and converting the building into an energetically sustainable one.
- I will learn more about energy communities and the energy transition (e.g. going to conferences and workshops where I can learn about others' experiences and gain scientific knowledge).
- I will join a group of people with whom I share the same interest related to the energy transition and who inspire me to move forward in this topic, or even I can even become the motivation for others.
- I am already involved in energy transition, but I think that the current legislation falls short and with my experience I can contribute valuable ideas. I will initiate the procedure so that citizens can propose to congress the adoption of legislative measures to promote energy citizenship.
- I will find out about planes and government and European projects to participate in any of them. These projects can provide me with a lot of knowledge that will enrich me and new companies with which to share ideas and create a community.
- I have knowledge and contacts. I am going to start a transforming energy citizenship project in which different citizens, associations, political parties and organizations can participate, and that has a greater impact on energy sovereignty at the local level.
- I have knowledge and I want to share it with others. I will do informative workshops, both for the general public and for people active in the energy transition. I want to be a driver and help for others.
- I am willing to actively participate in demonstrations or strikes, even to initiate it with different contacts (NGOs, unions...) to demand changes. We are very concerned and not everything is in our hands, so we demand more responsibility from the rulers and we want the whole world to see it.

