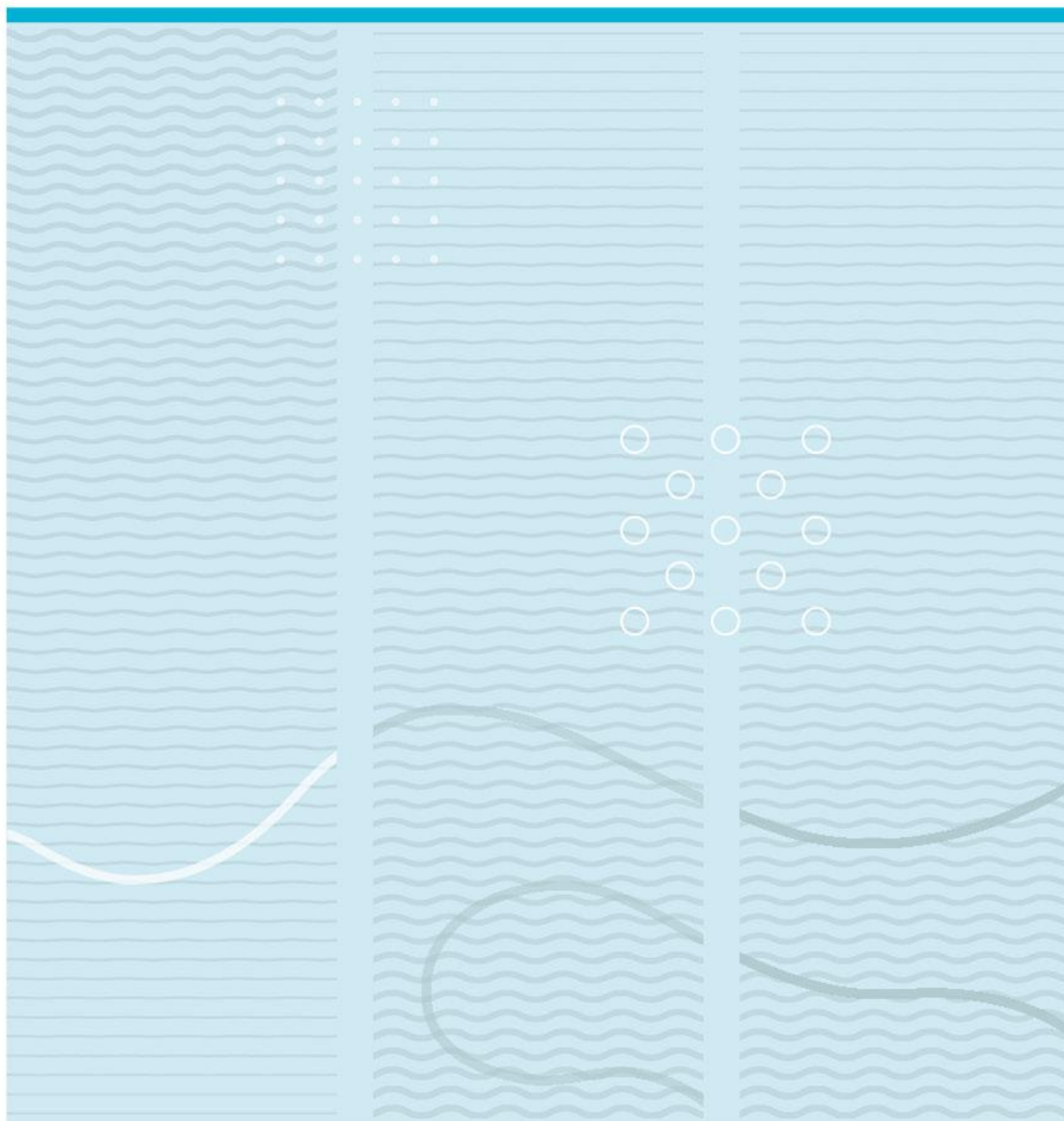


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# Engaging Communities from the Bottom Up

Success Criteria and Obstacles in Norwegian Transition Initiatives



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## Summary

This study aims to get a better understanding of how community engagement and resilience can be built through the Transition movement by focusing on a case study of Norwegian initiatives and the success criteria and obstacles they experience in their daily operations. Norwegian initiatives part of the network Bærekraftige liv Norge (BLN) are examined. The case study employed a triangulation of several research methods. First, a desk study was carried out. Second, an interview with an expert from the international Transition movement was conducted. Third, an online survey targeting core group members from Norwegian Transition initiatives was carried out. Survey data includes answers from 17 core group members from 11 initiatives. The findings indicate that Norwegian Transition initiatives aim to build community engagement and have an impact on their community's social resilience. Several strategies to reach the aim are in place, although the extent varies greatly among initiatives. Identified criteria leading to an initiative's success are often simultaneously experienced as obstacles. This research identified people aspects such as the time capacity, motivation, and skills of engaged individuals and further aspects such as the initiative's access to resources, the ability to reach new people and built and maintained relationships as criteria impacting the initiative's success. To effectively build community engagement and resilience the findings of this research imply that Transition initiatives could benefit from improving their ability to reach the whole spectrum of citizen within their community and strengthening relationships with all community sectors. Furthermore, initiatives could benefit from building out their strategies that aim to influence the local government's processes with the potential to impact the local community.

*Keywords:* transition movement, grassroots movement, Bærekraftige liv Norge, community resilience, community engagement, volunteerism



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## Abbreviations

BL	Bærekraftige Liv
BLN	Bærekraftige Liv Norge
TN	Transition Network
TTT	Transition Town Totnes

# Foreword

This master thesis, “Engaging Communities from the Bottom Up: Success Criteria and Obstacles in Norwegian Transition Initiatives” has been written to graduate in the study program Sustainability Management at the University of South-Eastern Norway.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Ingeborg Nordbø, for the guidance, support, and the motivating words along this study’s research process. A further thank you goes to Professor Per Ingvar Haukeland for the food for thought that inspired this research topic. I want to thank the organization Bærekraftige Liv Norge and all the local Bærekraftige Liv initiatives for their engagement, as well as the survey participants for sharing their important perspectives and experiences with me.

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Selina Ohrnberger



# 1 Introduction

The well-being of humankind and planetary health are threatened by climate change and the loss of biodiversity (IPCC, 2022; WHO, 2021; WWF, 2022). In order to develop towards a future in which both, people and nature thrive a transformational change is inevitable in the ways of “how we produce, how we consume, how we govern, and what we finance” (WWF, 2022, p. 5). The changes needed to address the environmental issues can be understood as sustainability transition (Huttunen et al., 2022). The body of research on sustainability transition has grown rapidly during the past years (Köhler et al., 2019) aiming to better understand “how this change can be facilitated” (Huttunen et al., 2022). Transitions can be put into practice by several actors, such as governments, academia, industry, civil society, and individuals who each follow their own strategies (Köhler et al., 2019). The role of civil society and social movements is more and more being acknowledged in sustainability transition research (Köhler et al., 2019) and the engagement of citizens is seen as a necessity for sustainability transitions (Huttunen et al., 2022). It has been argued that individual action in terms of limiting emissions is valuable but does not have the potential for the change needed given the extent of the global challenges. Grassroots innovations from the bottom up are argued to play an essential role in sustainability transitions (Raj et al., 2022), and thus for addressing those global changes. The Transition movement, a “movement of communities coming together to reimagine and rebuild our world” (Transition Network, 2023 a) is a grassroots movement that puts collective action from the bottom up into practice, intending to find local solutions to global challenges (Transition Network, 2023 a).

## 1.1 The Transition Movement and the Norwegian Context

*“Sustainable development cannot be imposed from above. It will not take root unless people across the country are actively engaged”* (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2002).

The Transition movement states to be a citizen’s movement aiming to mobilize community-level action to address global challenges such as climate change (Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009). The movement states to be guided by principles such as

collaboration, respecting the Earth's resources and positive visioning (Transition Network, 2021). Its way of working is claimed to be based on evidence, as well as done with compassion to turn ideas into reality (Transition Network, 2021). The movement constitutes of small-scale initiatives operating within local geographical areas. Those Transition initiatives aim to foster engagement within their local community (Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009). Each initiative works independently and sets its own strategies and priorities. Themes that are commonly addressed across the movement include community gardening, local food production, repairing, and local currencies (Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009). Initiatives aim to show practical examples of possible solutions and "mak(e)(...) a positive change happen locally" through activities (Transition Network 2023 c). The first initiative, Transition Town Totnes (TTT) in the UK was founded in 2006 by two individuals and inspired the development of further Transition initiatives across the country and internationally (Longhurst & Pataki, 2015). The Transition Network (TN) is a UK charity that got registered in 2009 after the interest grew in connecting and supporting communities involved in the movement (Transition Network, 2023 c). Its aim is the spread of the movement internationally and it is claimed to have become "one of the fastest-growing community-scale initiatives in the world" (Hopkins, 2008). More than 1.100 local initiatives worldwide are registered at the TN as of May 2023 with most initiatives situated in the Global North (Transition Network, 2023 b).

BL Landås was established in 2008 as the first local initiative in Norway and was later registered with the TN. During the following years, more local initiatives got started across the country inspired by Landås, with a majority located in the Bergen region. Bærekraftige liv Norge (BLN) got established in 2014, is situated in Bergen and functions to support the local initiatives. The initiatives are self-organised entities (Bærekraftige liv Norge, 2021). The network's vision is to reduce the ecological footprints and to increase the quality of life for the people in the neighbourhoods where the local initiatives operate in. The local initiatives are described to be the motor of the BLN network to achieve finding sustainable solutions by mobilizing people and creating action. Through collective engagement, ideas are realized in the local communities (Bærekraftige liv Norge, 2021).

A large part of the conducted research on the Transition movement originated in the UK during the first years after the movement's introduction (Seyfang & Smith,

2007; Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009; Bailey et al., 2010; Aiken, 2012). Further research has been conducted during the past decade looking at the movement in other countries like for instance USA, Belgium, and Canada (Polk & Servaes, 2014; Kenis & Mathijs, 2014; Poland et al. 2019). In recent years the movement has also been studied in Norway (Eimhjellen, 2018; Wågsæther & Haarstad, 2021). Previous research focuses especially on the development of the movement in a specific country with the focus on local initiatives through qualitative case study approaches. The Transition movement has not only been praised but has also stood in the light of critiques. Some criticise the movement for being apolitical (Trapese Collective, 2008), others for its lack of diversity (Aiken, 2012).

## **1.2 Focus of Research and Research Question**

It is argued that the Transition movement's primary goal, and at the same time its biggest challenge is community engagement (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2017). Although the concept of community engagement is so central to the movement it has not yet been studied in a very systematic way. Community engagement in Transition initiatives was first investigated by Fernandes-Jesus et al. (2017) by conducting a qualitative study looking at Transition initiatives in Portugal. Creating resilience is communicated to be a fundamental principle of the Transition movement (Transition Network, 2021) and has been argued to be tightly knit to the concept of community engagement (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2015). Previous research has investigated how the term resilience is used and understood in the Transition movement, concluding that there is the need to better understand how resilience can be built (Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009).

The aim of this thesis is therefore to get a better understanding of how community engagement and resilience can be built through the Transition movement, focusing on a case study of 11 Norwegian initiatives and the success criteria and obstacles they experience in their daily operations.

The overall research question of this thesis is: *How to build community engagement and resilience through the Transition movement?*

### 1.3 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is built up in the following manner: Chapter 1 is the **introduction** of the thesis. The Transition movement is presented and put into the Norwegian context. This is followed by presenting the focus of the research and the research question. Chapter 2 provides a **theoretical background** for this study by presenting the concepts of community, community engagement and resilience, by looking into previous studies about the Transition movement, and by presenting theories about the individual's engagement in social movements which includes motivation theory, network theory, and social movement theory. Chapter 3 includes the **methodological approach** by first presenting the meaning of methodology, followed by arguing for the chosen research design. Each research method, including the desk study, the qualitative interview, the online survey, and the content analysis are presented. The chapter ends by explaining the ethical aspects that were considered during the research process. Chapter 4 presents the study's **findings** and **discusses** those in light of the theoretical background. Lastly, Chapter 5 presents the study's **conclusion**. As part of this are the study's limitations discussed, implications given, as well as possible further research presented.

## **2 Theoretical Considerations**

This chapter looks at three main areas of research that are related to community engagement and resilience in the Transition movement and provides a theoretical framing for the presentation of the findings and the discussion in Chapter 4. This chapter is constructed in the following manner: First, an understanding of the central concepts (community, community engagement, and resilience) in this thesis is provided in section 2.1. Section 2.2 looks at what previous research has found in terms of success criteria and obstacles to successful Transition initiatives. Lastly, section 2.3 focuses on the individuals and presents theory related to who the individuals are that engage themselves in movements and why and how those get engaged by exploring motivation theory, network theory, and social movement theory.

### **2.1 Community, Community Engagement and Resilience**

This section provides an overview of how community, community engagement and resilience are conceptualised and understood in academia. It will furthermore be investigated how these concepts are understood by the Transition movement. This theoretical framing helps to better understand what a successful Transition initiative towards building community engagement and resilience is characterised by which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

#### **2.1.1 Community**

Wallerstein et al. (2015) state that “a person’s perspective on community influences his or her view of the community engagement process” (p. 279). With its purpose to foster community-led change for a sustainable future (Transition Network, 2018) it can be concluded that the concept of community plays a central role in the Transition movement. Community is seen as the frame in which the local initiatives put their actions into reality. Aiken (2012) states that community is both, “the destination of the transition”, as well as “the means of action” (p. 93) of getting there. The term community can both, refer to a geographically defined area and be understood as a group of individuals with shared interests or personal characteristics (Wallerstein et al., 2015). CTSA (2011) have summarized four major concepts of community. The systems

perspective describes a community as a geographically defined entity consisting of different parts that aim to fulfil different needs. Each part needs to fulfil its tasks for the community to work well. Interconnectedness within the community is essential. From a social perspective community is seen as a network connecting individuals and organizations. The virtual perspective sees communities as virtual communities connected through digital communication tools. The individual perspective acknowledges that everyone has their own view on community. This view is dynamic and might change over time (CTSA, 2011). Furthermore, CTSA (2011) describe a community as an entity consisting of various diverse groups, social structures, and world views. Head (2007) criticises how the term community often “glosses over the social, economic and cultural differentiation of localities or peoples” (p. 441) and implies an untrue “sense of identity, harmony, cooperation and inclusiveness” (p. 441). This suggests that the term community is vague as it can be understood differently depending on the perspective. It is dynamic in what it means and how this meaning changes over time. It can also have several meanings to one individual simultaneously. This is also acknowledged by Hickey et al. (2015) who believe that community is not static and easy to define, but fluid and opens many interpretations of what is meant by it and how it functions. Kenyon (2002) highlights that in “sustainable communities people believe that the future of the community is in their hands” (p. 8). A prerequisite for that is that the community accounts “for the variety of individual views that exist within it” (Hickey et al., 2015, p. 5). By that, they mean community as “an inclusive and representative entity where the ability of its members to actively speak for and shape its future stands as a central feature of its functioning” (p. 5).

Aiken (2012) describes two perspectives on how the term community is understood by the Transition movement. First, it refers to an understanding of community as working collectively as a group. Second, community is understood as location-bound (Aiken, 2012). Each initiative usually defines a local area in which they operate. This could be a whole municipality, a neighbourhood, or a smaller local area. And within this defined area, a group of individuals works collectively intending to transition this specific area (Aiken, 2012).

## 2.1.2 Community Engagement

Head (2008) defines community engagement as the process of “building institutional bridges between governmental leaders and citizenry” (p. 441) to “solve community problems” (p. 447). Others describe the concept as working collaboratively with groups of people connected by joint interest with the aim to increase the well-being of these people, leading to change for the community and the community members (CDC, 1997; Bowen et al., 2010; Leknoi et al., 2022). Partnerships are often required to get access to resources and lead to a system change (CDC, 1997).

Community engagement is often stimulated by either policymakers or social organisations such as grassroots (Head, 2008). In other words, it can be encouraged either from bottom-down, or bottom-up approaches. Governments have an impact on community engagement through providing information to citizens or giving out funds. Citizens themselves can organise themselves in groups and independently take the initiative outside of government structures (Head, 2008). A challenge for successfully building community engagement from the bottom up is detected to be the citizens, or organisation’s capacity and motivation for doing so. Head (2008) underlines the importance to build this capacity out. Despite how community engagement is encouraged, the interconnectedness between the citizens and the government seems inevitable. Head (2008) sees it important to look at community engagement from a broader perspective and investigates what the motives are for fostering community engagement by applying a three-sector perspective (government, private, and community sector). Especially relevant for researching Transition initiatives is to look at what community groups gain from engagement. This includes having an impact for the interests they support and hope for a positive change for ordinary citizens and underprivileged groups (Head, 2008). A further gain is that the involvement of local citizens to solve local problems can increase the skills and connections among local people (Head, 2008). This stands in relation to strengthening the self-reliance of local communities and can thus be linked to the concept of resilience which will further be investigated in the next section. Hickey et al. (2015) note a challenge to effectively engage the community. They suggest that approaches have to include both, the determination of how community is understood from different points of view, as well as deciding how such a fluid concept can be purposefully engaged.

In the Transition movement “ideas can be taken up rapidly, widely and effectively because each community takes ownership of the process themselves” (Transition Network, 2021). The local initiatives run by individuals have been described as the level where the ideas are put into action for a transition. Consequently, community engagement is essential for the movement’s success (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2017). Previous findings show that community engagement is a “process and simultaneously a desired outcome” (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2017, p. 1557) in Transition initiatives.

### 2.1.3 Resilience

Resilience is a central concept to the Transition movement and has widely been discussed in previous research. Resilience can be defined as...

*“...the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks . . . resilience is measured by the size of the displacement the system can tolerate and yet return to a state where a given function can be maintained”* (Forbes et al., 2009, p. 22041).

Disturbances can be either of natural- or anthropogenic origin. Natural disturbances include for example floods and landslides whilst anthropogenic disturbances describe events like wars, or technological changes (Wilson, 2014).

Community resilience has been defined by various scholars during the past decades (Tobin, 1999; Adger, 2000; Cutter et al. 2008; Kuir-Ayius, 2016). Those definitions include phrases like being “structurally organized to minimize the effects of disasters...” (Tobin, 1999, p. 13), with having “...the ability (...) to cope with external stresses...” (Adger, 2000, p. 347), or with having “the ability (...) to respond and adapt after disturbance through learning and collaboration...” (Kuir-Ayius, 2016, p. 109). Bourdieu (1987) bases a community’s resilience on the even development of the three capitals. He believes that communities should focus on the economic, social, and environmental capital to be maximal resilient (Wilson, 2012). If not all three capitals are well developed, a community has a low level of resilience and might be rather



vulnerable to disturbances (Wilson, 2012). Others have argued that especially a well-developed social capital is leading to community resilience as it includes elements like social networks or connections between individuals (Wilson, 2012).

Hopkins (2008) describes a resilient community in the *Transition Handbook* as having the “ability to not collapse at first sight of oil or food shortages, and (...) to respond with adaptability to disturbance” (p. 54). It follows that being resilient does not mean a community is stress-free. It rather means taking the assumption that there will always be stress factors, or as Wilson (2012) puts it, communities “are continuously and simultaneously affected by several disturbances at any point in time” (Wilson, 2012, p. 2). Fadel and Chadwick (2020) conclude that resilience is not static but an ongoing process within a community’s development. Communities can never be maximal resilient but can aim towards maximizing their state of resiliency (Wilson, 2012).

The TN bases its understanding of resilience on the definition by Charlie Edwards: “The capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable level of function, structure, and identity” (Edwards, 2009, p. 18). Taking Edward’s definition further, the TN underlines that they see resilience not only as sustaining the current system but to aim for a system change towards “a more sustainable, resilient and enriching low-carbon economy” (Hopkins, 2011, p.45). Hopkins (2008) argues that the concept of resilience goes further than sustainability. A resilient community does not only aim to sustain but rethink the system. Seeing the TN as a community itself, Aiken (2012) describes each community to be working independently by themselves in its own place and size. He states further that the communities are connected and interact with each other at the same time. He concludes that from a TN point of view, “resilience will only be achieved (...) when (...) local communities are both independent and interacting” (Aiken, 2012, p. 95).

To summarize, community, community engagement and resilience are all concepts central to the Transition movement. The TN understands community as a group of individuals living in one area and working collectively towards transitioning this area to improve the well-being of those individuals. Community engagement is part of the movement’s strategy and simultaneously its aim within the initiative’s local community towards building resilience and thus essential for the movement’s success. A community cannot be maximal resilient, much more it is described as an ongoing

process aiming towards maximal resilience. The concepts can be looked at from several perspectives and are thus hard to define. The fluidity and complexity of a community create a challenge for engaging community.

## 2.2 Learnings from Transition Literature

This section investigates what previous research about the Transition movement suggests about success criteria and obstacles of local initiatives towards building community engagement and resilience. Both concepts, community engagement and resilience have been discussed in Chapter 2.1 concluding that they are both tightly knit to the Transition movement in several ways. Out of all studies about the Transition movement that were gathered through the carried out systematic search as will be elaborated in Chapter 3.3.1 five articles were identified as relevant concerning success criteria and obstacles in Transition initiatives for building community engagement and resilience (Feola & Nunes, 2013; Polk & Servaes, 2015; Eimhjellen, 2018; Poland et al., 2019; Wågsæther & Haarstad, 2021). Those serve as the main frame in this section. The findings are presented within the following major themes: volunteerism, governance, funding, relationships, and civil society participation.

**Volunteerism:** Feola and Nunes (2013) see a challenge for Transition initiatives in being highly dependent on the contribution of volunteers. Eimhjellen (2018) sheds light on the volunteer situation in Norway. This helps in understanding the obstacles that Transition initiatives face in terms of volunteerism. He describes a variety of changes in how individuals engage themselves voluntarily today and concludes that volunteers are rather interested in engaging themselves in project-based initiatives that are starting from the grassroots. Those would typically have characteristics such as being self-organised and informal (Eimhjellen, 2018). Voluntary engagement today happens rather irregularly and volunteers often divide their time capacity to engage themselves in several organizations instead of one to satisfy several needs (Eimhjellen, 2018). Moreover, it happens rather in connection to single events instead of committing fully to an organisation (Eimhjellen, 2018). This has also been detected by Poland et al. (2019) who state that engaged individuals are often involved in several organisations and do not spend much time for Transition activities. They see the danger in part-time involvement not being enough “for anchoring new communities of

practice” (Poland et al., 2019, p. 195). Another factor observed by Eimhjellen (2018) is that voluntary engagement today is claimed to be shaped by a higher diversity in terms of motivational factors, organizational forms, and types of action than before. Self-realization is argued to have risen as a motivational factor for volunteering (Eimhjellen, 2018). Several studies suggest the inclusion of a paid position into the initiative as a possible way forward. Arnesen et al. (2016) see a raise in paid positions connected to volunteer organisations. These paid positions include usually administrative tasks to potentially initiating more voluntary engagement. Eimhjellen (2018) believes that a paid position could be beneficial to mobilise and coordinate volunteers and thus be a good way for an organisation to manage their volunteers successfully.

**Governance:** Previous studies found that an initiative’s success is influenced by its leadership. Feola and Nunes (2013) found that the existence and the size of a core group can determine an initiative’s success. Similarly Poland et al.’s (2019) findings show that initiatives usually are successful if they consist of a core group large enough to form a critical mass to have the capacity of sustaining activities and other projects over time. They further argue that the distribution of skills among core group members is an important factor as well. Initiatives are rather successful when skills such as project management or interpersonal conflict are available within the group and distributed among several core group members (Poland et al., 2019). This is underlined by Feola and Nunes (2013) findings which show that initiatives where members accomplished transition-related courses or trainings tend to be successful. Moreover, Feola and Nunes (2013) found that successful initiatives tend to have a further division of members into thematic under groups. Poland et al. (2019) note the danger of burnout in the core group. They detected a connection between how Transition leaders define success and being burned out. The common belief of “more people coming out to events, more projects and more volunteers stepping up to help make things happen, attracting funding, building collaborations with other organisations and municipal government, or people adopting more sustainable ways of living” (p. 191) can lead to frustration. An initiative leader that puts much work into the initiative and experiences that the desired change does not happen or happens slower than expected might give up or be burned out (Poland et al., 2019). Whole core groups that collapse, or single individuals leaving can be an obstacle. The TN calls the “process of passing over

responsibility for ‘holding’ a project” (Transition Network, 2016, p. 1) succession. Poland et al. (2019) found that how the core group deals with succession determines the initiative’s success. Feola and Nunes (2013) found that a legal statutory form, as well as being officially registered with the TN are characteristics of successful initiatives. A motivational factor for initiatives to get a legal status form is the ability to search for funding (Wågsæther & Haarstad, 2021). This has also been detected by Eimhjellen (2018) who underlines the necessity of a certain degree of institutionalisation to function in the long term (Eimhjellen, 2018).

**Recourses:** Access to resources is essential for an initiative’s success. Funding is mentioned to be a major obstacle for initiatives to sustain themselves. Poland et al.’s (2019) study shows that only about a third of the Canadian initiatives that applied for funding receive any. Feola and Nunes (2013) point out the importance of access to material resources for an initiative’s success in addition to financial funding.

**Relationships:** Building and maintaining relationships with other actors are a key success factor (Feola & Nunes, 2013). Poland et al. (2019) found that successful groups manage to cooperate with other groups as well as the local government. Besides that play also cooperation with other actors such as from the private sector or media an important role (Feola & Nunes, 2013). Not only the existence of relationship but also the perception of the initiative by other actors influences its success (Feola & Nunes, 2013). Suitable for this are Polk & Servaes’s (2015) findings. They underline that Transition initiatives should “prioritize the development of communication infrastructures with similarly aligned local groups to not duplicate efforts or compete for recognition and/or funds” (Polk & Servaes, 2015, p. 161).

Feola and Nunes (2013) see the importance of building and maintaining relationships not only on the local level but also globally. They believe that a local initiative’s development is connected to a glocal learning process. Initiative members can benefit through learning from the global network through for instance training to gain more skills useful for transition. Feola and Nunes (2013) summarize the benefits of being part of the international TN with the words “firstly, it generates the grand narrative of transition” and second it “delivers the training that equips local groups with the skills needed to cope with and manage the transition process” (Feola & Nunes, 2013, p. 24).

A factor that stands in relation to an initiative's ability to build relationships is the initiative's location (Feola & Nunes, 2013). Initiatives that are located in a region with a high density of other initiatives are more likely to stand in contact with each other and are thus more likely to be successful. This underlines the importance of offline relations between the initiatives, additionally to the use of digital communication tools to cooperate. Feola and Nunes (2013) conclude that initiatives that are geographically isolated have less physical contact with other initiatives and appear more likely to be discontinued and struggle to thrive.

**Civil Society Participation:** The involvement of the local population in Transition initiatives usually happens through activities. Eimhjellen (2018) suggests focusing on the interests of the local population where the initiative is situated. This allows the planned activities to suit the local interests. Poland et al.'s (2019) findings suggest that successful groups often include a wide variety of themes in their activities and projects, such as food security or social enterprise.

A common obstacle that has widely been discussed in previous research concerns diversity. Feola and Nunes (2013) see it important that a diverse part of the community is represented within the Transition initiative. This means that the full spectrum of citizens is involved in the initiative (Feola & Nunes, 2013; Poland et al., 2019). Initiatives often consist of individuals that are quite similar to each other and individuals from diverse ethical backgrounds, social classes, or age groups stay underrepresented. Polk and Servaes (2015) describe the participants in Transition initiatives as mostly "white, educated, and upper- to middle-class people with the resources to participate" (p. 163). Similarly, Wågsæther and Haarstad (2021) state that most Norwegian initiatives consist of very homogenous groups that often include busy parents with young children. Likewise, Fernandes-Jesus et al.'s (2017) findings show that the movement struggles to include people "beyond the usual middle- and upper-middle-class, middle-aged, highly educated participants, post-materialist progressive white people". Haxeltine and Seyfang (2009) criticize the promotion of educational events in the movement as those "largely fail to attract audiences beyond a core of already-committed activists" (p. 12) and are thus not having the potential for behaviour change. Participants only include the ones already being concerned with environmental issues, and the ones having the time capacity to participate. Those findings suggest that

initiatives are struggling to include diverse parts of their communities. Fernandes-Jesus et al.'s (2017) believe that it is essential for initiatives to find ways of engaging non-engaged community members and include underprivileged social groups. To add to those diversity-related findings Polk and Servaes (2015) offer an interesting perspective. They state that Transition initiatives should “not be seeking to include others but should be seeking to be included by them” (Polk & Servaes, 2015, p. 163). They point out that Transition initiatives need to acknowledge that even before their existence other networks might have already been there and they can learn from those. Another factor concerning citizen involvement that Fernandes-Jesus et al. (2017) point out is the citizen’s belief in change. For change to happen it is essential that the people feel like they can have an actual impact.

In summary, findings from previous research give insights about success criteria and obstacles in Transition initiatives. Mentioned studies in this section were conducted within the last 10 years and a majority of those studies followed a qualitative case study approach whilst looking at the Transition movement in a defined region. Portugal, Canada, and Norway, as well as Massachusetts stood in the focus. Several findings concerning success criteria and obstacles seem to be quite similar and consistent in those studies whilst certain points add to each other as each study has its individual focus.

## **2.3 Engagement in Social Movements**

After providing an understanding of the concepts of community, community engagement, and resilience, as well as learnings from previous research about success criteria and obstacles in Transition initiatives this section looks closer at individuals. For community engagement to exist, it needs a community’s members to be motivated to engage themselves. The social exchange perspective attempts to explain why an individual would engage themselves (CTSA, 2011). It is believed that community members participate in community engagement to receive benefits in exchange for using their time and energy. Those benefits can include factors like learning, networking, or the feeling of solving community issues. Diving deeper into the questions of who engages themselves, as well as why and how individuals engage themselves, theories about motivation, networks, as well as social movements turn out to be useful

in providing different theoretical perspectives on those important questions concerning the engagement of individuals in their community.

### 2.3.1 Motivation and Network Theory

Individuals stand in the centre of the Transition movement and are the ones taking the initiative for local action in their community (Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009). They play thus an active role in transformation. Motivation and network theory are argued to help understand both, why and how individuals join Transition initiatives.

#### 2.3.1.1 *Motivation Theory*

Motivation can be defined as “having the desire and willingness to do something” (Brown, 2007, Preface section, para. 1) and provides thus an explanation for why people behave the way they do. Mitchell and Daniels (2003) differentiate motivation from behaviour. Whilst motivation describes the psychological state, behaviour is described as its outcome (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). The TN provides an overview of typical factors that engaged individuals state as being their motivation for engagement in a local initiative. Those reach from social aspects like simply getting to know people from the local community to wanting to have an actual positive impact on the future (Transition Network, 2016). The social aspects let us assume that social networks are a part of the individual’s motivation for engagement.

Research on motivation exists from scholars worldwide and part of motivation theory is the discussion about human needs (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Needs are the “internal tensions that influence the mediating cognitive processes that result in behavioural variability” (Latham & Pinder, 2005, p. 487). Several models looking at human needs have been developed over the years within motivation theory including Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) and Neef’s work on Human Scale Development (1986).

Maslow’s (1943) theory of motivation is based on a hierarchy of human needs. He presents them in a pyramid that represents the hierarchical order. The lower the need is situated, the more fundamental it is. Only once a need in the lower level of the pyramid is fulfilled the next need be satisfied. He includes psychological, safety, love and belonging, esteem- and self-actualization as human needs.

Neef's work on Human Scale Development (1986) gives another perspective on human needs. He provides a taxonomy of fundamental human needs by identifying 9 human needs: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity, and freedom. Those needs can be fulfilled through so-called satisfiers and are understood as interconnected with each other. Satisfiers can have the ability to fulfil several needs simultaneously. Those are called synergic satisfiers (Neef & Hopenhayn, 1990).

Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory (1968) is argued to be one of the most dominant ones within motivation theory (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). It means that specific goals are connected to an individual's motivation. Locke and Latham provide 5 principles for setting goals that stand in connection to high performance: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity (Locke & Latham, 1990).

### *2.3.1.2 Network Theory*

Social networks have been stated as an important motivational factor for engagement in Transition initiatives (Transition Network, 2016). Borgatti and Halgin (2011) describe a network as "a set of actors (...) along with a set of ties of a specified type (such as friendship) that link them" (p.1169). They state that one of the best-known network theories is the strength of weak ties theory by Granovetter (1973).

Granovetter believes that a strong connection between two individuals means that they have much in common. This means, if two individuals have a strong tie with each other and one of them has a strong tie with a third person, this third person is likely to have a tie to the first person as well. This is because individuals tend to have strong ties to other individuals that are alike to themselves (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). Furthermore, Granovetter believes that the so-called bridging ties are the ones leading an individual to innovative information and ideas. He defines a bridging tie as a tie to another individual that is not connected to anyone in the person's friend group yet. This means if one individual out of a friend group has a tie to another individual from outside the friend group, he or she has the opportunity to get new insights that are not yet known in the friend group. Granovetter's theory concludes that individuals with many weak ties have greater access to innovative information. He concludes a group's social capital constitutes by a weak-tie structure which allows the group to collectively reach



their goals by gaining access to resources to respond to external disturbances (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011).

### 2.3.2 Social Movement Theory

*“The voluntary coming together of people in joint action has served as a major engine of social transformation throughout human history”*  
(Almeida, 2019, p. 1).

Social movement theory is argued to help understand who the individuals are that join Transition initiatives. Academic research on individual movement participation started in the 1960s (Almeida, 2019). Throughout the years social movements have been studied intensively among other things to understand individuals’ participation in demonstrations (Heaney & Rojas, 2015). Social movement theory indicates that movements only need to mobilize a small part of all citizens to have an actual impact. Lichbach (1995) goes as far as to state that only five per cent of national citizens are mobilised in movements that “threaten to overthrow national governments” (p. 105). Klandermans (1997) uses the term sympathy pool to describe those individuals out of the whole population that have a positive attitude towards a social movement and are thus more likely to be mobilized to participate than the ones without a positive attitude. Research on movement participation provides factors that explain why some individuals have an increased likelihood of joining a movement and participating in it than others (Almeida, 2019). This is done by first defining the sympathy pool, followed by investigating the factors that make an individual move from being in the sympathy pool to actual participating in the movement (Almeida, 2019). Almeida (2019) summarizes seven factors that influence participation in social movements: (i) Biographical availability, (ii) ideological and political beliefs, (iii) social networks, (iv) membership in organizations, (v) collective identities, (vi) past participation experience, and (vii) new social media technology.

Biographical availability means the availability for participation due to the individual’s stage in life. It is argued that an individual has different time and energy resources depending on which stage in life they are in. This perspective suggests that youth, young adults, and senior citizens, as well as unemployed, part-time employed, students, teachers, and retired are more likely to join due to their flexible schedules.

Political beliefs along with the degree of an individual's concern regarding an issue and experienced grievance have come into focus of social movement research (Almeida, 2019). Research shows for instance that individuals with extreme political beliefs compared to the ones with less extreme beliefs are more likely to participate in demonstrations (Jakobsen & Listhaug, 2014).

Social movement theory furthermore suggests that the amount and strength of ties that an individual has to others in the sympathy pool, in other words, the extent of one's social network, influences the likelihood of participation (Almeida, 2019). It is to mention that this goes both ways. One's ties with individuals from outside the sympathy pool can decrease one's likelihood of participation (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Social movement research investigated an individual's social networks right before participation and found that those who stand in relation to others that participate in a movement are more likely to participate as well (Almeida, 2019; Passy, 2001). If one is for instance invited into the movement by a friend or family member the likelihood to participate is higher (Kitts, 2000).

Next to social networks is the involvement in organisations another factor. Almeida (2019) argues that when people are already involved in organizations, they can be mobilized quickly by recruiting a large number of people from this organization. Furthermore, being involved with organizations that stand in sympathy with a social movement increases the likelihood of participating in the movement (Somma, 2010).

Motivation for participation is high when the individual identifies themselves with the movement and is allowed to act according to their identity (Almeida, 2019). Individuals that have participated in a social movement before are more likely to participate again. One of the reasons might be the gained civic engagement skills.

Last, individuals might participate in a social movement or a specific event when they become aware of it through social media. The exclusive use of social media has the drawback of excluding individuals that have no access to social media (Almeida, 2019).

In summary, social movement theory suggests that individuals are most likely to be mobilized if they already have a positive attitude towards the movement. Several characteristics are identified in social movement theory that influence the likelihood of participating. Thus, social movement theory gives a possible explanation for who the individuals are that most likely engage themselves.

## **3 Methodological Approach**

This chapter is constructed in the following manner: First, the meaning of methodology is introduced in section 3.1. Section 3.2 presents this study's research design. This is followed by describing the used research methods in detail in section 3.3. Section 3.3.1 presents the desk research. Section 3.3.2 presents the qualitative interview. Section 3.3.3 presents the online survey. Section 3.3.4 presents the content analysis. Lastly, section 3.4 presents the ethical aspects that were considered during this study's research process.

### **3.1 Methodology**

The philosophical assumptions that this study is based on are important to elaborate, as they influence the design of the research and the choice of research methods. Those assumptions hold the researcher's view of the world (Creswell, 2009). This study is framed by a social constructivist worldview in which the understanding of the world is seen as influenced by our culture as well as the time in which we live (Burr & Dick, 2017). The understanding of the world is furthermore shaped by our previous research experiences and our field of study (Creswell, 2009). This means that knowledge of the world is socially constructed (Burr & Dick, 2017) and can thus only be obtained through interaction with the participants in the field (Creswell, 2009). The researcher believes that an individual's experiences are subjective and that they strive to understand the world they live in. This implies that experiences mean something else to each individual and the researcher is challenged to look into the complexity of an individual's experiences and the meaning connected to them (Creswell, 2009). Constructivism is based on the following assumptions: (i) Humans engage with the world and construct meanings to their experiences; (ii) those meanings are based on the individual's social perspectives; (iii) and arise from human's interacting with each other (Crotty, 1998).

### **3.2 Research Design**

A study's research design follows from the methodological stance upon which it is designed and can be defined as "the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research question (...) and to its conclusions" (Yin, 2014, p. 28).

To investigate how the Transition movement builds community engagement and resilience this study employed a case study research design. Doing a case study means to systematically gather information about the study subject to fully understand how they operate and function (Lune & Berg, 2017). According to Yin (2014), case studies are a suitable method when (i) the research question is a *how* or *why* question; (ii) the researcher has limited or no control over behavioural events; (iii) and when studying contemporary phenomena. All three points apply to this study's research. The research question that leads this study is a *how* question. The investigated case and the involved individual's behaviour exist outside of the researcher's control. And the Transition initiatives are contemporary operating in local communities across Norway.

Case studies have the benefit to provide more context and meaning than other approaches (Lune & Berg, 2017) and allow an in-depth examination of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, they allow to maintain a real-world perspective and are thus suitable to investigate a real-world case, such as the Transition initiatives. Yin (2014) states that multiple sources of data are required for a case study. In the undertaken study data was collected both through qualitative and quantitative techniques utilizing both a desk study, an interview, and a survey, as will be further elaborated. The use of a triangulation of several data sources has the benefit to assure validity and reliability (Franklin, 2011; Lune & Berg, 2017).

### **3.3 Research Methods**

#### **3.3.1 Desk Study**

To build the theoretical framing in Chapter 2, to plan and carry out the qualitative interview and to design and carry out the online survey it was necessary to first do a desk research. Desk research refers to the process of reviewing literature that originated in the past (Moore, 2013). According to Moore (2013) it is important for a researcher's work to be relevant, that the researcher considers what has been researched before. This presupposes that the researcher should know about relevant previous literature on the topic of the study (Moore, 2013).

The aim with the undertaken desk research was to find secondary, existing data dealing with the topic, hereto gather information about the Transition movement, identify

underlying concepts and theory that set the base for this study and investigate how those are placed within academia. Furthermore, the desk research was done to look into previous studies that looked at the Transition movement and Transition initiatives to investigate what those have found in terms of success criteria and obstacles. This was necessary to identify themes that set the base for the qualitative interview and the online survey.

To find secondary data, keywords needed to be identified (Creswell, 2014). Keywords were identified based on this study's topic and research aim. Further keywords emerged during the research process. Journals, books, and further publications could be identified by searching databases with those keywords (Creswell, 2014). Found literature was skimmed to find out if it is relevant to this study and mapped into three research areas out of which chapter 2 (Theoretical considerations) emerged.

Secondary data was gathered in two ways:

1) Through a systematic search for literature in different databases such as Oria (USN's library catalogue), Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, JSTOR and Google Scholar. Literature looking at the concepts of community, community engagement, and resilience, literature about the Transition movement, as well as theories on motivation, networks and social movements have been identified as relevant to build a theoretical framing.

2) Additionally, data directly from the TN, BLN as well as all local Transition initiatives in Norway such as websites, information from their social media channels, internal reports and further publications were gathered.

Further literature was identified through the snowball method. This method allowed the researcher to find additional sources based on the already identified studies from the systematic search. Sources for the study could thus be expanded and multiplied (Efron & Ravid, 2018).

### **3.3.2 Qualitative Interview**

The qualitative interview was conducted in January 2023 and was done in order to gather information from an expert with experience from the longest-running

Transition initiative, TTT to help identifying themes that are of importance to look at when designing and conducting the survey to study the Norwegian initiatives.

In simple terms interviewing can be described “as a conversation with a purpose” (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 65) and can give valuable data about the perspectives of the interviewee (Lune & Berg, 2017). Possible interviewees were identified based on their knowledge of the research question and long-term involvement within the Transition movement. Relevant knowledge in this case focuses specifically on the successful development of local Transition initiatives. Out of the contacted individuals, one person agreed to an interview. It got conducted on January 27, 2023 using the computer-based tool Zoom. This had the advantage that the interview was not only based on audio but included visuals which created a more natural setting. A physical interview was not possible due to the far distance to the interviewee. Several types of interviews are differentiated by their degree of formality (Lune & Berg, 2017). The researcher decided to conduct an unstandardized interview, which is the least formal of all types. The unstandardized interview is characterized by being unstructured which implies that there is neither a set order of questions nor a specific wording to be used (Lune & Berg, 2017). The challenge of conducting it is that the interviewer “must develop, adapt, and generate questions and follow-up probes appropriate to each given situation” (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 69) as no pre-structure is planned. Before the interview, the researcher provided a loosely structured overview of topics that should be included in the conversation to make sure that no topics are left out during the interview. This topic overview served as an interview guide. The researcher’s role in the interview was to navigate through these topics, and to let the interviewee lead the conversation. Reasonings that led to the decision of choosing an unstandardized interview in this case were to allow a natural flow within the conversation, let the interviewee decide which aspects they see as important to talk about and to provide the opportunity to let the interviewee come up with topics that the researcher has not thought about yet.

The interview was recorded as well as notes were taken. When referring to the data gathered through the interview in this thesis “X” is used instead of the interviewee’s name to protect the individual’s identity.

### 3.3.3 Online Survey

The online survey was conducted in March 2023, targeting the Norwegian initiative's core group members in order to gather primary data about their perspectives and experiences of engagement in Transition initiatives.

Survey research has gained credibility and acceptance in several academic disciplines (McEntee & Vazquez Brust, 2011; Rea & Parker, 2015). Surveys are a quantitative research tool, but were used here to gather both, primary quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys can target both, individuals, and organizations (Klandermans & Smith, 2002). An individual survey is answered by an individual sharing "knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, behaviour, demographics, and other personal characteristics" (Klandermans & Smith, 2002, p. 3). An organizational survey is answered by a responsible person of the organization focusing on the "organisation's structure, resource acquisition and allocation, tactics, collective action, and policy" (Klandermans & Smith, 2002, p. 4). This survey employed both, individual as well as organisational aspects. The reason for this was on the one hand to get an insight into the organizational structures and strategies of each Transition initiative, and on the other hand, to gain insights about the individual's motivations, experiences, and perspectives through the survey's personal questions.

#### 3.3.3.1 *Survey respondents*

The nature of this study which is shaped by the researcher's social constructivist view of the world presupposes that the researcher comes in contact with the participants studied. Participants for the survey were chosen based on their engagement with a local Transition initiative in Norway. The initiatives most likely consist of a group of so-called core group members. This study considers those core group members as the main initiative takers with the most experience from each initiative. The core group might consist of individuals that started the initiative in the first place, individuals that are initiating projects and activities within their initiative now, or individuals coordinating the local initiative. Those core group members were targeted to participate in the online survey to share their important insights about their local initiatives. When referring to the survey participants in this study, the term

*respondent* is used. Table 1 provides an overview of the survey respondents (N1 – N17) with additional information about the Transition initiative they belong to.

*Table 1 Survey respondents and initiatives*

Respondent	Initiative
N1	BL Landås
N2	BL Løvestakken
N3	
N4	
N5	
N6	BL Bø
N7	
N8	
N9	
N10	BL Byhaugen
N11	BL Kaland/Stend
N12	BL Fyllingsdalen og Søreide
N13	BL Kronstad
N14	BL Nordnes
N15	BL Nattland og Sædalen
N16	BL Arna
N17	BL Eidsvåg

### 3.3.3.2 Survey design

The development of the questionnaire is an important step in survey research (Rea & Parker, 2014). The literature gathered through the desk study as well as the previously conducted interview with X resulted in themes (organisation, resources, relationships, people, civil society participation, and impact) that served as the basis for the survey design. The survey was developed with a mix of open- and closed-ended questions in a fixed order. Open-ended questions allow participants to write down the answers in their own words and thus a deeper exploration of the research area (Adams et al., 2014). Where suitable closed-ended questions got included. The reason for this was to make it less time-consuming for the participants to fill out the survey and to gather data that could be presented graphically. Knowing that members of Transition initiatives often struggle with time capacities due to doing this work on a voluntary



base, underlined this decision. A length of maximum fifteen minutes to fill out the survey was aimed for (Rea & Parker, 2014).

Different aspects must be taken into account, such as wording, length, and order of the questions (Smyth, 2016). Smyth (2016) recommends starting the questionnaire with interesting and simple questions. Furthermore, he underlines the use of simple words and a simple sentence structure when formulating questions. One method to order the questions is after similar topic categories. This has the advantage to be quite efficient as the participants can focus on one topic at a time when completing the survey (Smyth, 2016). This study's online survey includes a set of simple opening questions and further questions are bundled into the categories of organizational, individual, and demographic questions. Within each category, the questions are sorted after the previously defined themes. The survey ends with a last open-ended question allowing the participants to formulate final thoughts in their own words.

When designing a questionnaire Smyth (2016) recommends taking a participant-centred perspective. This means that the researcher should be aware of how the participants will perceive the questions. This was considered whilst the developing this study's questionnaire. After several rounds of formulating and ordering the questions, the survey was tested by a core group member of a Transition initiative. The final feedback from the test round got worked into the survey before distribution.

### *3.3.3.3 Survey distribution*

There are different modes of data collection within survey research (McEntee & Vazquez Brust, 2011). This study employed an electronic approach. The survey was conducted with the digital survey administration software Google Forms and got distributed via Mail to the core group members. This approach has the advantage of allowing a geographically scattered target group to be accessed (McEntee & Vazquez Brust, 2011). All Norwegian initiatives that are known by BLN were contacted directly with the request to share the survey with their core group members. BLN provides a list of all registered local initiatives in Norway including a contact person from each initiative. It is here to mention that BLN aims to provide an overview, but a precise number of local initiatives cannot be given because of the network's loose organization

and no existence of a formal membership scheme (Bærekraftig Liv Norge, 2023; Solstrand, personal communication, February 2023). The list found on BLN's website includes a total of 24 initiatives as of May 2023.

Adams et al. (2014) note that online surveys often have low response rates. To aim for a high response rate, the researcher cooperated with BLN. The survey got sent out directly to all initiatives via Mail by the researcher. After 6 days, all initiatives were contacted once again via their social media channels to reach the ones that might not regularly check their Mail inbox. A reminder got sent out another 5 days later to all initiatives that had not replied yet. A total of 17 individuals from 11 initiatives answered the survey. Additionally, 3 initiatives replied to the Mail request with the information to be very little active or completely inactive without having filled out the survey.

The online survey was distributed in English language and can be found in Annex 2. Several respondents answered in Norwegian. When quoting those, self-translated versions in English are used to provide a good reading flow. A footmark is added to provide the original quotation in Norwegian language.

### 3.3.4 Content Analysis

In this section, the process of analysing the primary data gathered in this study is described. First, the analysis process of the interview data, followed by the analysis process of the survey data are presented. All qualitative information needs to be analysed to obtain relevant findings from it (Lune & Berg, 2017). The aim of content analysis is "to identify patterns, themes, assumptions, and meanings" (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 182).

The base for the content analysis of the interview was the recorded file and the notes that were taken from it. Those notes were sorted into thematic categories. The themes were determined both, deductively and inductively. Deductively because the previous desk research revealed themes and inductively because the interview data revealed new themes. Finally, the following themes were identified and set the base for the survey design as mentioned in section 3.3.3.2: Organization, resources, relationships, people, civil society participation, and impacts.

The survey was designed based on those pre-established themes, with several questions within each theme. Which survey question belongs to which theme is marked in Annex 2.

The base for the content analysis of qualitative survey data are the written answers from survey respondents that were provided via Google Forms. Qualitative survey data was sorted thematically into the pre-established themes. Quantitative data from the survey was exported into Excel and graphs were created additionally to the qualitative data and sorted into the themes to visualize the findings.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical aspects were carefully considered during all stages of this research. This is especially relevant when human subjects are involved (Lune & Berg, 2017) which was the case in this research. The qualitative interview as well as the online survey involved the participation of human subjects. It is obligatory to “ensure the rights, privacy, and welfare of the people (...) that form the focus” (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 43) of the study. Lune and Berg (2017) summarize that research ethics often include concerns about “harm, consent, privacy, and the confidentiality of data” (p. 43). Do no harm is one of the most fundamental principles when doing research. This includes physical as well as emotional harm (Lune & Berg, 2017). This chapter provides information on how ethical aspects were considered during the research process. First, it is described how consent is obtained. This is followed by how confidentiality is maintained, including information about how research data is secured. Lastly, the validity and reliability of the research are discussed.

Informed consent means that participation in the study is voluntary without the use of inappropriate elements like manipulation or fraud (Lune & Berg, 2017). The interviewee received information before the planned research project prior to the interview and offered voluntarily to be interviewed as part of this research. A video recording as well as notes of the interview were taken in agreement with the interviewee. A similar approach was followed with the online survey. All participants received information about the research project before answering the survey and could decide voluntarily to take part.

Furthermore, a high level of confidentiality was maintained during this research project. Confidentiality means the removal of all traces that might reveal the participant's identity (Lune & Berg, 2017). This research is registered and reviewed by the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research. This proves that personal data is processed following data protection legislation (Sikt, 2023). Furthermore, the guidelines for the management of research data and for processing personal data at the University of South-Eastern Norway were followed (University of South-Eastern Norway, 2018; University of South-Eastern Norway, 2019). Data about the survey respondents is adapted to make sure not to reveal the respondent's identity. Same with the name of the interviewee which is anonymized in this thesis. Confidentiality is assured by providing a consent form before data collection and letting participants agree with it. All records, data and notes that contain personal information that were gathered as part of this research are stored exclusively on the researcher's personal laptop and will be deleted one year after finalizing the research.

In this last section, the validity and reliability of this study are discussed. Validity refers to the degree of truthfulness of the study's findings (Seale & Filmer, 1998). This comes with the underlying question if the findings can be generalized to the whole population. This study's online survey targeted all local Transition initiatives that are part of BLN. Within each initiative, all core group members were asked to fill out the online survey. The response rate has been pushed through contacting each initiative directly by the researcher, as well as cooperating with BLN. A further reminder was sent out to the initiatives where participation in the online survey was low or missing after 7 days.

Reliability refers to the degree to which the study's findings are repeatable (Bryman, 2004). All steps of the research process were documented and described in Chapter 3 to ensure replicability. This includes both, the data-gathering as well as the analyzing process. A list of all Transition initiatives that were contacted to fill out the online survey (Annex 1), as well as the survey (Annex 2) can be found in the appendix. The interview notes and the survey answers are not included in the appendix but can be provided upon request.

## 4 Findings and Discussion

In this chapter findings from the qualitative interview, the online survey, as well as data directly from BLN are presented and analysed. The chapter is constructed in the following manner: First, the meaning of an initiative's success is framed in section 4.1. This is followed by presenting the findings and discussions following six themes as elaborated on in section 3.3.4: Section 4.2 looks at the initiative's organizational aspects. Section 4.3 presents the initiative's financial resources. Section 4.4 presents the initiative's relationships which is followed by looking into people aspects in section 4.5. Section 4.6 presents the civil society participation in the initiatives. Lastly, section 4.7 looks at their impacts.

### 4.1 A Successful Initiative

To be able to present the findings and discuss them in relation to building community engagement and resilience in Transition initiatives it is necessary to frame the meaning of an initiative's success first. The overview of the concepts of community, community engagement and resilience in Chapter 2.1, as well as the learnings from previous research about the Transition movement in Chapter 2.2 serve as a base for understanding what a successful Transition initiative in terms of building community engagement and resilience is meant by in this study is.

Building community engagement is seen from different perspectives. Based on Fernandes-Jesus et al.'s (2015) understanding of community engagement as the TN's principle, process, as well as aim are success criteria and obstacles in this study based on the initiative's practices for building community engagement within the initiative, as well as their impact on engagement in their local community. Building community engagement is tightly knit to resilience. Fernandes-Jesus et al.'s (2015) put it in the way of community engagement being "a proxy for resilience" (p. 1557). Initiatives aim to achieve community resilience through building community engagement.

Similarly, resilience is understood from two perspectives in this study. First, applying the concept of resilience to Transition initiatives implies that the initiative should function well, be active over the long term, and have the ability to overcome disturbances.

Second, success is seen as the initiative having a positive impact on the resilience of their local community.

In short, initiatives are seen as successful if they manage to operate over the long term by building community engagement in their local community and through that have an impact on their community's resilience.

## 4.2 Organisation

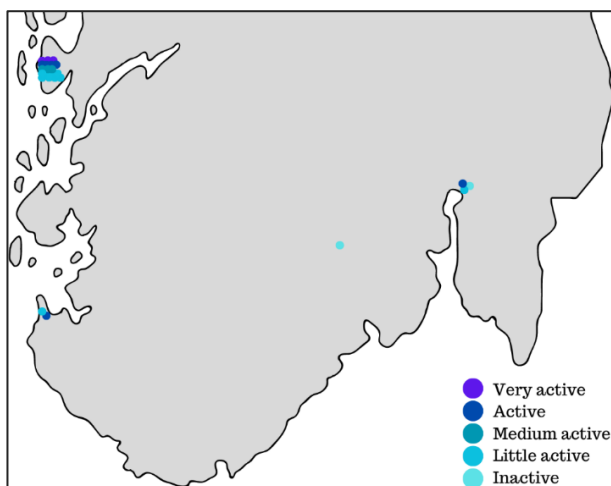
In this section general information about the initiative's organization, including their core group structure, meeting structure and meeting place are presented.

### 4.2.1 The Initiatives

This section looks at the initiative's starting year, activity level, and location. This information is based on the first survey questions which aimed to gather general information about the survey participant's initiatives. Those were asked to state which Transition initiative they are a part of (Question 1), which year their initiative was started (Question 2), how active their initiative is (Question 3), and how their initiative is organized (Question 5). The main findings are summarized in Table 2. The following Figure 1 visualizes the initiative's location in connection to its level of activeness.

*Table 2 Overview of initiatives*

Initiative	Starting Year	Activity Level	Organized by...
BL Landås	2008	very active	daglig leder
BL Løvstakken	2013	very active	core group
BL Bø	2015	not active	core group
BL Byhaugen	2015	active	core group
BL Kaland/Stend	2015	medium active	core group
BL Fyllingsdalen og Søreide	2016	little active	core group
BL Kronstad	2016	active	core group
BL Nordnes	2019	very active	core group
BL Nattland og Sædalen	2019	medium active	core group
BL Arna	2019	little active	core group
BL Eidsvåg	2021	medium active	core group



*Figure 1 Location and activity level of initiatives*

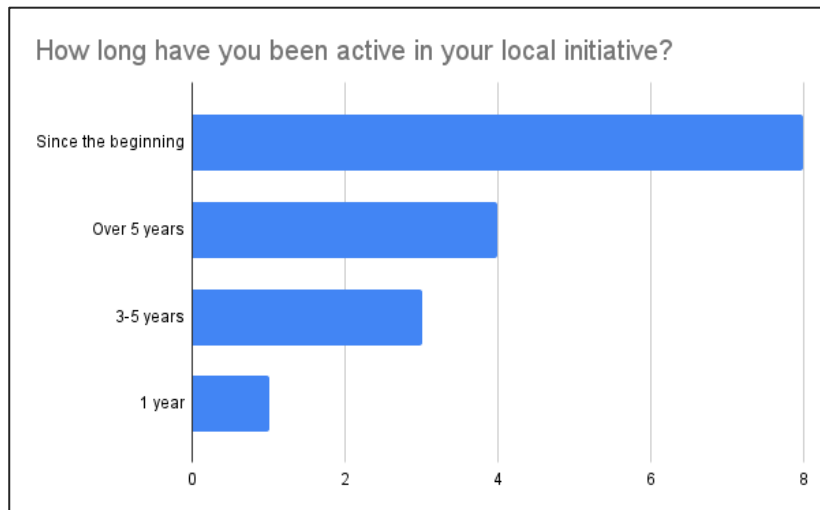
It can be detected that most initiatives are located around Bergen, followed by the Oslo- and Stavanger regions. Furthermore, findings suggest that the level of activeness varies vastly among the initiatives. Several levels of activeness are found in all regions, but the most active ones are the ones located around Bergen. Previous findings by Feola and Nunes (2013) suggest that an initiative's location influences its success and initiatives that are physically isolated tend to struggle to thrive. The answers to the survey question if respondents feel part of a larger movement with their engagement underline the meaning of an initiative's location. One respondent mentions that the physical distance to BLN and other initiatives limits the feeling of being part of the movement (N14) and thus might limit the possibility to get motivation and inspiration. This lets assume that the location can have an impact on an initiative's success, but for a thriving initiative, the criteria are much more complex than being able to pin it down to the location exclusively.

#### 4.2.2 Core Group Structure

As seen in Table 2 most initiatives are organized by a core group. To learn more about the initiative's core group structure the survey asked how many members the core group approximately has at the moment (Question 7), if a high turnover of core group members is experienced (Question 8) and how long the core group members have been active in their local initiative (Question 35). In addition, survey participants were asked to elaborate on the responsibilities of their core group, as well as their own role within (Question 6).

Findings show that core groups consist often of a steady group of about 4-6 individuals, with just a few initiatives that have smaller or bigger core groups.

Respondents share that they do not experience a high turnover of core group members but mention that some engaged individuals might become inactive over time.



*Figure 2 Length of activity*

Findings further show that engaged individuals are often the same as the ones that started the initiative initially. 50 % of the participants have been involved with their initiatives since the beginning and 25 % have been involved over 5 years.

Concerning the core group member's role findings let assume that initiatives are self-organized and governed by a flat structure, but certain core group members might be the *head* of the initiative (N10). Most initiatives have a core group that is entirely based on voluntary work. An exception is BL Landås which has a *daglig leder* in a paid full-time position instead and additional under groups that are run by volunteers. Several of BL Landås' projects have project leaders in small paid work positions. Project leaders are often previously involved volunteers (N1). Concerning the core group's role the findings show two major themes. 5 answers include the perspective of the core group as a facilitator of activities, and includes tasks such as starting activities that are aimed to become self-driven, administrative tasks, social media, or applying for funding (N6, N7, N9, N16, N17). 3 answers include the perspective of the core group being the actual planner and performer of activities over time (N4, N5, N14).

Respondents answers from further survey questions elaborate on the obstacles and needs for the core group to function. Several respondents formulate the need for



more core group members, as many members have a high workload due to too few members. This supports Poland et al.'s (2019) findings of the necessity of a core group large enough to be able to sustain the initiative's projects over time. Further points brought up are that core groups are vulnerable to people leaving or communication issues within, implying that the core groups are faced with challenges for a successful long-term management of volunteers. Core group members see furthermore the necessity of a (paid) person to take responsibility for coordinative/ administrative tasks and to follow up with the volunteers (N2, N7, N14). One respondent even suggests that BLN should support the initiatives by taking over the accounting-related tasks (N14). To initiate more community engagement Eimhjellen (2018) suggests a separation between administrative tasks and volunteer-organized local activities. This underlines the importance and the potential of the implementation of a paid position as it is already done in BL Landås, supporting suggestions from previous research that a paid position is a good way to manage volunteers sustainably and initiate a higher level of engagement among volunteers (Arnesen et al., 2016; Eimhjellen, 2018). A separation between coordinative/ administrative tasks and activity-related tasks seems thus a possible way for further development of the initiatives.

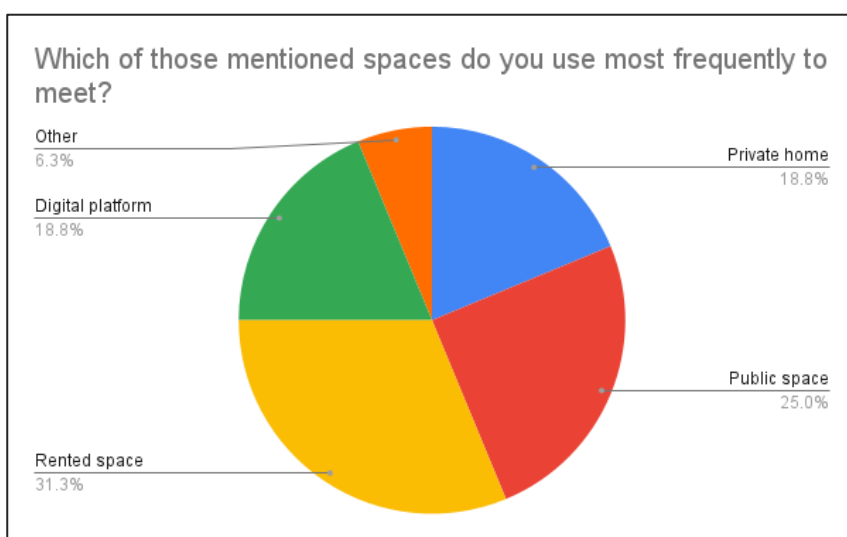
### 4.2.3 Meeting Structure and Place

Respondents were asked to state how often their core group meets (Question 11), as well as in which spaces they most frequently meet (Question 10). The survey offered set answer alternatives for both questions, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 3.

*Table 3 Initiative's meeting structure*

<b>Frequency</b>	Once a week	Once a month	Less than once a month	According to need	Never	Other
<b>Respondent</b>	N4	N15	N3, N9	N1, N2, N3, N5, N6, N9, N10, N11, N12, N13, N14, N16, N17		N7 (not this past year) N8 (1-2 times a year)

The meeting structure varies among initiatives and findings show that most initiatives do not follow a set schedule but meet according to need. N10 elaborates that their initiative holds an annual meeting at the beginning of each year as a celebration of what has been done and to plan for the new year and the core group members additionally communicate about the initiative when they meet each other in the neighbourhood. N7's initiative held meetings earlier but not this past year which is not surprising as the initiative is not active now. Those findings suggest that initiatives are characterized by being rather informal and dynamic entities and it is up to the members to which degree they want to engage themselves as also observed by Eimhjellen (2018).



*Figure 3 Initiative's most frequent meeting space*

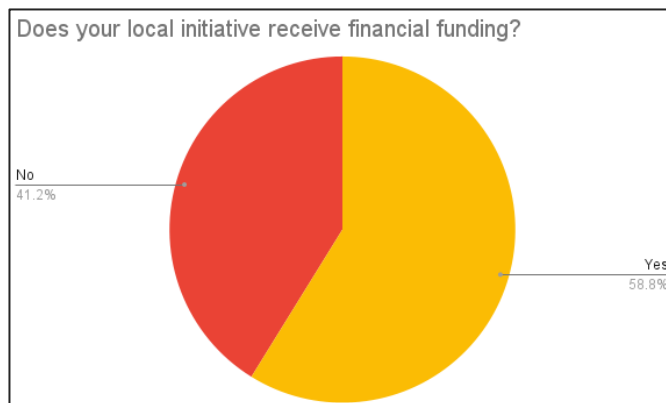
When it comes to meeting spaces findings show that rented spaces, public spaces, private homes and digital platforms are frequently used meeting spaces. BL Byhaugen, BL Landås, BL Nattland og Sædalen, BL Eidsvåg and BL Løvstakken rent a space that can be used for meetings (N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N10, N15, N17). N10 elaborates that their initiative has free access to a building owned by the municipality/Frivilligsentralen. Public spaces are used by BL Bø (N7, N8, N9) and digital platforms by BL Kaland/Stend, BL Kronstad and BL Arna (N11, N13, N16). BL Nordnes and BL Eidsvåg meet most frequently in private homes (N14, N17).

One respondent elaborates that a thriving initiative needs a place to be (N14). This perspective has also X who explains that initiatives get started where there are spaces to be. Some initiatives might create a space, others find ways to get access or

acquire a space where meetings can happen. In the UK those spaces are often community houses or churches (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023).

### 4.3 Financial Resources

Survey participants were asked if their local initiative receives financial funding (Question 16) and if they follow a strategy to search for funding (Question 17). If the initiative has a strategy, respondents had the chance to elaborate on it (Question 17.1).



*Figure 4 Receiving of financial funding*

Core group members from seven initiatives state that their initiative receives funding, while four initiatives do not receive funding. Sources of funding turn out to always be municipality funds. As previous literature argued, community engagement can be stimulated by governments by offering funding (Head, 2008) which is the case in the Norwegian initiatives. Besides applying for funding initiatives do not follow certain funding strategies (N1, N3, N15). BL Løvstakken receives funding additionally through the sale of coffee and food (N3). BL Landås is a registered *Frivilligsentral* which allows them to apply for funding for the full-time *daglig leder* position, which is partly covered by municipality and partly by state grants. N1 states that applying for funds requires a lot of capacity. They argue that if there were more time resources much more funding could be applied for. It seems that Norwegian initiatives have sufficient sources where they can apply for funding, but not the sufficient time for funding related tasks such as to write applications and likewise. Poland et al. (2019) found that only half of the Canadian initiatives apply for funding and of those who do only about a third receives funding. This leads to the assumption that the challenge here are unsuccessful

applications, compared to the situation in Norway where the challenge is the missing time capacity to apply.

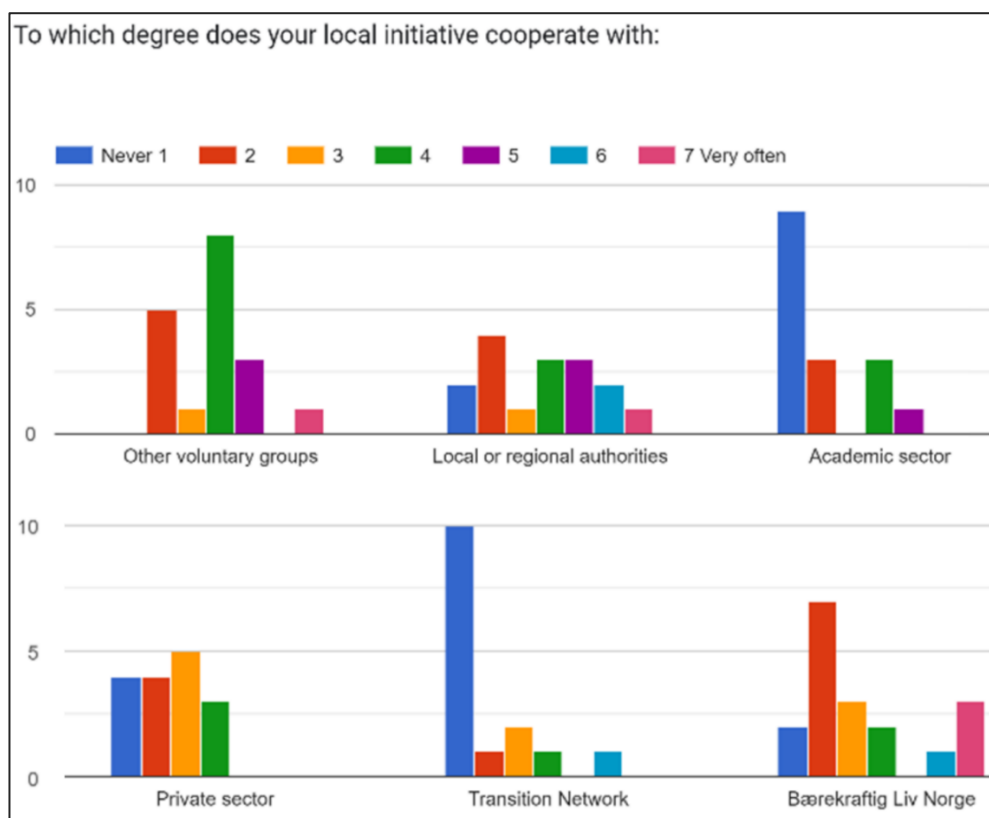
*Table 4 Funding and activity level of initiatives*

Initiative	Activity Level	Funding
BL Landås	very active	yes
BL Løvestakken	very active	yes
BL Bø	not active	no
BL Byhaugen	active	yes
BL Kaland/Stend	medium active	yes
BL Fyllingsdalen og Søreide	little active	no
BL Kronstad	active	no
BL Nordnes	very active	yes
BL Nattland og Sædalen	medium active	yes
BL Arna	little active	no
BL Eidsvåg	medium active	yes

N3 states that a thriving initiative needs financial security. This study demonstrates a correlation between access to financial funding and the activeness of an initiative (Table 4). This correlation is also highlighted by X who sees funding as fundamental, and explains that many initiatives are trying to create income streams by for instance developing enterprises connected to the initiative or by applying for funding (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023). This supports also previous findings that financial security is a success criterion for an initiative to function (Feola & Nunes, 2013; Poland et al., 2019).

## 4.4 Relationships

In this section the initiative's cooperations will be presented. A focus lays on the cooperations to the local government, other voluntary groups and BLN and BL initiatives. Respondents were asked to which degree their initiative cooperates with other voluntary groups, local or regional authorities, the academic and the private sector, the TN, and BLN (Question 18) as such cooperations can be criteria for success or failure. An additional question asked which benefits and drawbacks core group members experience from maintaining those relationships (Question 19).



*Figure 5 Degree of cooperations*

X states that the Transition movement has a complex network structure that constantly evolves and adapts. It is a challenge to fully understand this complex net of relationships (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023). Findings give an insight into initiative's cooperations. They show that relationships with other stakeholders are generally rather weakly pronounced, especially to the academic sector and the TN. When it comes to relationships with other voluntary groups, local or regional authorities, the private sector and BLN respondents share diverse degrees of cooperation.

*Table 5 Degree of cooperation in relation to initiative's activeness*

	Very active – medium active	Little active – not active
Voluntary groups	4,2	1,9
Local or regional government	4,6	2,2
Academic sector	1,7	2,5
Private sector	2,5	2,3
TN	2	1,8
BLN	3,7	2,5

The average degree of cooperation has been investigated by looking at the very active to medium active initiatives and the little active to not active initiatives separately. Findings show that the degree of cooperation to voluntary groups, local or regional governments and BLN are higher pronounced among the active initiatives (Table 5).

*Table 6 Overview benefits and challenges from collaborations*

Collaboration partner	Benefits		Challenges	
Local government	Resources	Get volunteers Meet other people Build a network	Long communication process Vulnerable if responsible persons/contacts change Much applause and little public support	Capacity to build and follow up on voluntary basis
Volunteer groups	Join other group's activities Support and motivation			
BLN	Inspiration Influencing the board			
Media	Publicity			

This study's findings show that local initiatives benefit from building relationships with other voluntary groups, local government, the private sector, and media and respondents recognize the importance of relationships. N6 shares it is *“good to collaborate (...) (and) necessary for (a) change”*. This supports previous findings on Transition initiatives by Feola and Nunes (2013) and Poland et al. (2019) who conclude that relationships are a success criterion due to the benefits received through them. But findings also imply that it is challenging to build and maintain those relationships voluntarily (N1, N2, N7).

#### 4.4.1 Local Government

The most common relationship between initiatives and the local government is the receiving of resources, such as funding or as BL Kaland/Stend and BL Eidsvåg

experienced, being able to use a municipality-owned building. Only one initiative, BL Landås aims to build a relationship with the local government to specifically influence local regulations.

Findings suggest furthermore several challenges that respondents experienced in the relationship with the local government. N2 experienced that it is a long and time-consuming process to communicate with the municipality. They often show much interest in what the initiative does, but there is a dissonance towards giving support. Another obstacle is that once a relationship is established and the contact person in the municipality stops working there or changes roles, the relationship might end with it (N2). This goes in line with X's experience who shares that local governments are often not very supportive to Transition initiatives (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023).

It seems like the relationship between initiatives and the local government is characterized by initiatives being on the receiving end, receiving funding or spaces to be and only one initiative tries to influence the local government's processes. N1 sees an unused potential in cooperation with local government. They experienced that municipalities have many limiting frameworks and see Transition initiatives compared to those as *free runners*. What they mean by that is *"that where partners are often limited by frameworks, we can operate very freely, and the path from idea to action is short<sup>1</sup>"* (N1). They elaborate and suggest that *"if the municipality makes greater use of BL as a collaboration partner, the potential there could be very large<sup>2</sup>"* (N1). The process of engaging community involves building bridges with the local government (Head, 2008). This underlines the importance that initiatives could benefit from building out their capacities to effectively be able to build and maintain a relationship with the local government.

#### 4.4.2 Voluntary Groups

Respondents share several benefits from collaborating with other voluntary groups. Core group members can benefit from support in terms of understanding each

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<sup>1</sup> "...der samarbeidspartnere ofte blir begrenset av rammer, kan vi operere veldig fritt, og veien er kort fra idé til handling" (N1).

<sup>2</sup> "Dersom kommunen i større grad benytter seg av BL som samarbeidspartner, kan potensialet i det være veldig stort" (N1).

other from facing similar problems which can be motivating (N1). Furthermore, one respondent sees the benefit that they get to join events like classes or pop-ups by other groups (N5). N6's initiative initiated a bike repair activity in collaboration with other local organizations, who later independently continued this activity without the direct involvement of the initiative (N6). Thus, collaborations can lead to more engagement among local voluntary groups and strengthen the network between them. A further example of Transition initiatives supporting other local groups can be detected in the Facebook groups that several initiatives host. Those serve as a digital platform for individuals or organizations to share ideas and activities with the local population.

With those strategies Transition initiatives act as a support in initiating engagement instead of competing for volunteers for their own activities which is important to consider. Polk and Servaes (2015) give an interesting perspective on the relationship between Transition initiatives and other local groups. They remind in their study that volunteer-run local organizations working within the sphere of sustainability already existed before the Transition movement put a tag on it. They believe that communication between the Transition initiatives and other existing groups is fundamental (Polk & Servaes, 2015), which goes in line with the mentioned examples of how Transition initiatives cooperate with and support local voluntary organizations. This underlines the importance to build out strategies that are supportive towards other local groups.

Theory on social movements gives a further perspective on the importance of relationships with other local groups. Theory suggests that movements can mobilize individuals that are involved in an organization rapidly (Almeida, 2019). If an organization has a positive attitude to the movement, the likelihood of participation in the movement is increased (Somma, 2010). This would in this case potentially include organizations that work within the sphere of sustainability. This underlines the potential that relationships with other voluntary groups hold for Transition initiatives to have an impact on those, as seen by the given example that other groups independently continued an activity that was initiated by a Transition initiative.



#### 4.4.3 BLN & BL Initiatives

Core group members acknowledge that a global network is beneficial for local initiatives. N6 shares the importance of building a network across initiatives, but sees the volunteer's capacity, as well as missing skills and ideas about how to do so as an obstacle. N1 wishes for more cooperation with other BL initiatives as they see great potential in those relationships. But also acknowledges that initiatives that do not involve paid positions want to use their capacities on their own initiative. With more resources, the relationships between the BL initiatives could be stronger (N1). Similarly, previous literature found that not only relationships on the local but also the global level play a role for an initiative's success. Initiatives can benefit by learning from the global network (Feola & Nunes, 2013).

Feola and Nunes (2013) elaborate that the global TN is beneficial by creating the *grand narrative* and supporting local initiatives by gaining skills to operate successfully. The generation of the grand narrative is visible among Norwegian initiatives whose visions are communicated to be uniform with what BLN generated. BLN states that they support local initiatives by offering them their own part on their website, as well as access to design material. In addition, initiatives receive access to information material on topics such as application writing. N17 states that by taking part in BLN activities, they get inspiration for their local initiative. Knowing that there are other initiatives in the movement nationally and internationally working towards similar goals gives the feeling of not being alone with having hope for a better future (N11, N15). N10 is simultaneously part of the board of BLN and sees the benefit in being able to share what the local initiatives are challenged by and thus able to influence the board. Some respondents do not experience benefits from BLN and formulate wishes. N9 states that they are aware that there is a national organization, but they do not see the benefit of those for their initiative on the local level. The distance to BLN in terms of taking part in common activities is too far (N14). Survey respondents wish more support from BLN in terms of accomplishing accounting tasks (N14) and finding ways to build a stronger network between the local initiatives (N6). BLN seems thus to be perceived as a source of inspiration than an actual distributor of skills.

Findings go in line with previous research that the global network is important for an initiative's successful development. But the limited capacity and skills to build out a global network are a challenge.

## 4.5 People

This section looks at people aspects of the individuals engaged in the initiatives. This includes the core group member's demographics, their motivation, their capacity for engagement, as well as their skills.

### 4.5.1 Core Group Members

Survey participants were asked about their demographics. This included their age (Question 30), gender (Question 31), highest level of completed education (Question 32), current employment status (Question 33), and annual household income (Question 34).

The majority (56,3 %) state their age to be in the range between 40 and 49 years. 75 % of the participants identify as female, whilst 25 % identify as male. A majority (62,5 %) states that their highest level of education is a master's degree or higher and 93,8 % are employed. The annual household income ranges from 751 000 to over 1000 000 NOK for 68,8 % of the participants. Only 31,3 % state their annual income to be between 251 000 and 750 000 NOK.

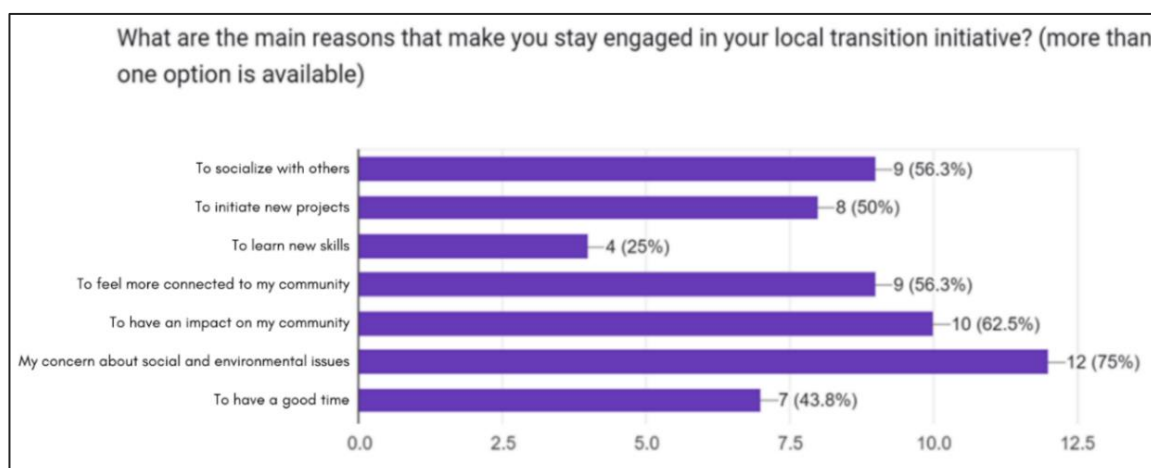
This shows that core group members are rather highly educated, employed, middle-aged individuals, confirming that core groups consist of rather homogenous groups that do not include the full spectrum of citizens (Feola & Nunes, 2013; Servaes, 2015; Poland et al., 2019; Wågsæther & Haarstad, 2021). The demographics of respondents thus align with what has been said about engaged individuals in Transition initiatives in previous literature. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) serves as a possible explanation for this. Individuals might be motivated to engage themselves once basic needs such as psychological and safety needs are fulfilled. In social movement theory however, biographic availability was argued to be a factor influencing the likelihood of an individual joining a movement (Almeida, 2019). The perspective that individuals with a high availability of time such as young adults, senior citizens, or unemployed are likely

to join movements can thus not be confirmed in the case of core group members in Transition initiatives.

#### 4.5.2 Motivation

Respondents were asked through what or who they got motivated to get involved in their initiative in the first place (Question 20) and about the main reasons that make them stay engaged (Question 22).

Findings show that the core group member's motivations for engagement are often their concern for climate change, the wish of having an impact, the earlier involvement in similar initiatives, or being inspired by already existing initiatives like BL Landås. One respondent states that they got approached directly by the already existing core group to become involved. This individual was known to the core group through helping at an event (N9). Two further respondents mention being motivated by knowing already involved people (N8, N14).



*Figure 6 Reasons that make core group members stay engaged*

Survey results show that a common motivator to stay further engaged is the concern about social and environmental issues (75 %), followed by the wish of wanting to have an impact (62,5 %), to socialize with others (56,3 %) and the wish to feel more connected to the local community (56,3 %). Respondents could tick more than one option to answer, hence do the results sum up to more than 100 %.

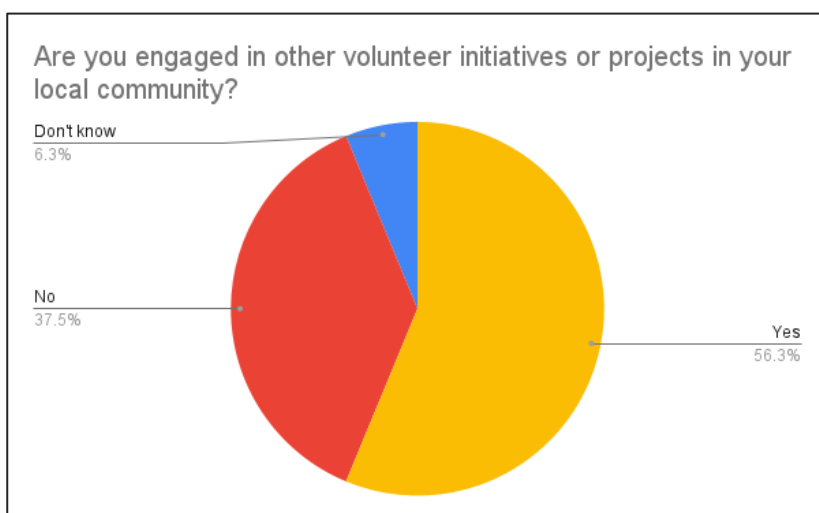
Previously mentioned findings in Chapter 4.4 (Relationships) showed that a network with BLN, other BL initiatives and other voluntary organizations can increase

motivation. BLN shares in their annual report similarly that digital network meetings with all the local initiatives have worked great. A stronger attachment to the BL network can be built and motivation within the local initiatives is positively influenced (Bærekraftige Liv Norge, 2021).

X sees the individual's motivation and wish to further stay engaged in connection to how the initiative's activities are perceived. They explain that individuals want to fulfil their need to participate by engaging themselves in an initiative (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023). They elaborate that successful Transition initiatives manage to meet multiple needs of individuals by creating fulfilling events. Those involve for instance food and fun elements. When people's needs are met it leads to wellbeing (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023).

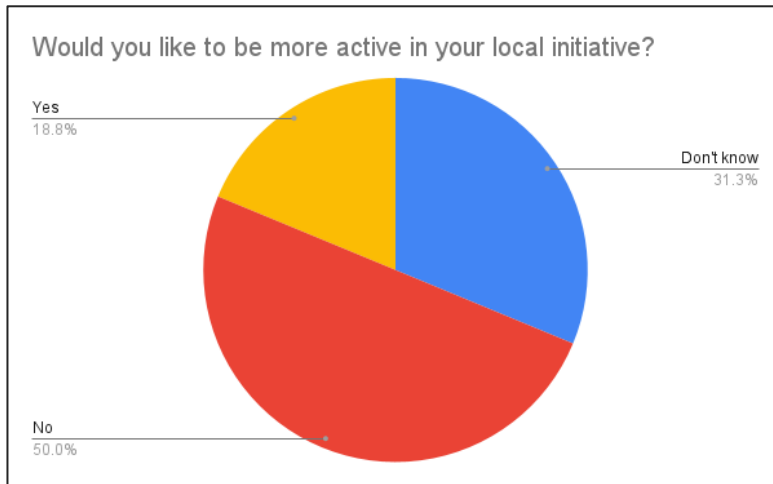
### 4.5.3 Capacity

To learn more about the core group member's capacity the survey asked if they engage themselves in further volunteer initiatives or projects in addition to the Transition initiative (Question 21). Core group members were additionally asked if they would like to be more active in their local initiative (Question 25) and if so, why, or why not (Question 25.1). Furthermore, core group members were asked to indicate which factors hinder them from being actively engaged in their Transition initiative (Question 26). For this question, several answer alternatives were given to choose from.



*Figure 7 Other engagements of core group members*

Findings show that more than half of the core group members are engaged in other voluntary groups besides their engagement in the Transition initiative. This confirms earlier studies that found that volunteers are often involved in several organizations at the same time, dividing their capacities between several engagements (Eimhjellen, 2018; Poland et al., 2019).



*Figure 8 Wish for more active engagement of core group members*

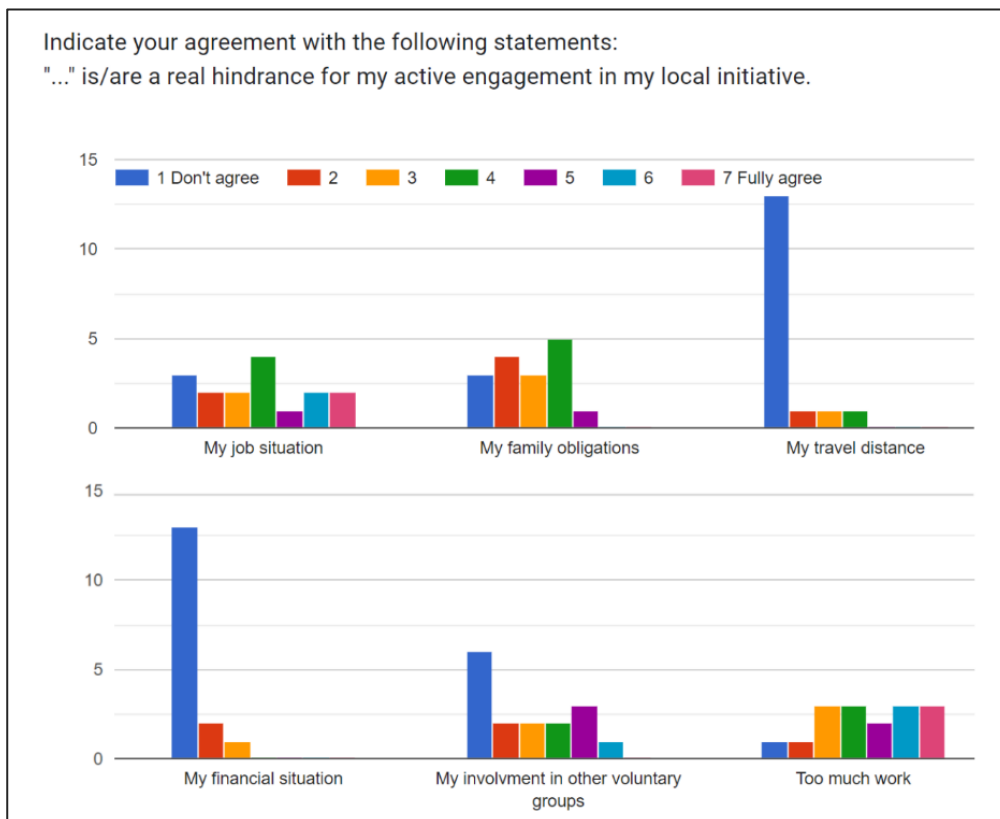
Findings show furthermore that most respondents do either not want to or feel unsure about being more actively involved in their initiative. Only 18,8 % state the wish for more active engagement. Core group members elaborated on this question and gave reasons for and against the wish for more active engagement as summarized in Table 7.

*Table 7 Reasoning for/against the wish for more active engagement*

No, because...	Yes, because...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No time (other engagement, family, work)</li> <li>• Making sure not to get exhausted</li> <li>• Don't want to compete with other local organizations by using capacity for the initiative</li> <li>• Tired to be main initiator</li> <li>• Communication issues in the core group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know more people and want to take more responsibility</li> <li>• Feel that others don't engage themselves</li> </ul>

One statement is interesting to look at in connection to the core group's role as described in Chapter 4.2. N7 reasons to not want to engage themselves further because

they do not want to compete with other local organizations by using more time capacities for the Transition initiative. It seems that initiatives need to find ways to support already existing organizations with similar goals, instead of competing with them for volunteers. This supports the role of initiatives as a facilitator of activities. Transition initiatives need to be clear about their role within the already existing volunteer landscape in the local community and it seems important that they find strategies to support already existing organizations.

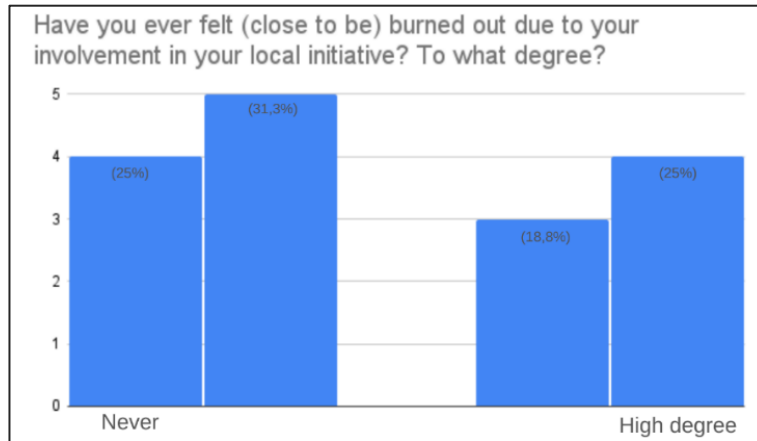


*Figure 9 Reasons that hinder more active engagement*

Respondent's answers concerning reasons that hinder more active engagement show that the travel distance and the financial situation are no hindrances. This is not surprising as initiatives and their core group members operate in small geographical areas, and demographics showed that the respondent's annual household income is rather high. Reasons for hindrance are connected to work, family or other engagements.

### 4.5.3.1 Burnout

Respondents were asked to which degree they have felt burned out due to their involvement in their initiative (Question 27). It was possible to elaborate on this question (Question 27.1).



*Figure 10 Feeling of burnout*

Findings show that burnout is a central topic among core group members. Almost half of the respondents have experienced burnout to a rather high degree and one respondent shares *“sometimes I just want to quit it all”* (N14).

*Table 8 Reasons for burnout*

Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too few volunteers</li> <li>• Too few core group members</li> <li>• High workload in initiative</li> <li>• Little motivation</li> <li>• Dissonance between having ideas &amp; realizing them &amp; available capacity</li> <li>• Communication issues</li> </ul>

Respondents that did not feel burned out elaborated on the reasons why. *“I think it is important that we take care of ourselves and that the time each person can spend in Bærekraftige liv is good enough”* (N17). N5 states that they are aware of their workload and only do as much as they have the strength for. N10 shares that they get energy when they experience that others are thankful for their engagement.

Previous findings have concluded that the feeling of burnout is connected to how individuals define success. If the desired outcome does not happen the way it is

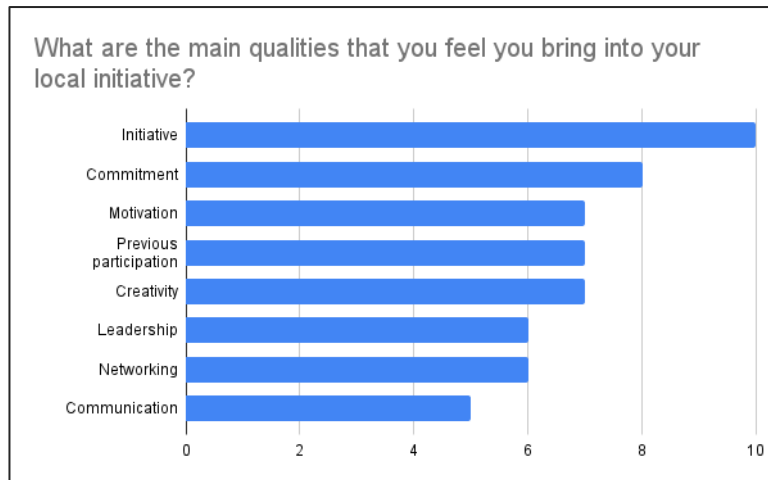
hoped for, the individual might lose motivation and feel burned out (Poland et al., 2019). This leads to the assumption that burnout might be connected to an individual's set goals for their engagement. Thus, goal-setting theory might offer a useful perspective that can be applied to Transition initiatives. The theory implies that individuals need to be aware of their own capacities and set themselves goals that are clear, challenging, include commitment, feedback, and complex tasks (Locke & Latham, 1968). Core group members shared the aim to achieve a change within their local community. Aiming for an impact is a highly complex goal which is hard to measure. Core group members are aware of this, as several also share that it is hard to know which impact their engagement and their local initiative has on the community. Findings also show that core group members have often many ideas and wish to have an impact through their engagement, but do not manage to realize and follow up with all as this takes more capacity than available (N2, N6). Goal setting theory suggests that setting goals that are specific and clear, and thus measurable are needed to achieve them effectively. Committing to the goal is another important aspect. Being committed is influenced by several factors in Transition initiatives. One respondent shares that they feel exhausted by feeling that others in the community do not contribute which led them to feel less committed themselves (N9). Furthermore, does goal-setting theory see the inclusion of feedback as important. An example of how Transition initiatives include feedback is shared by N10 who says that their initiative starts each year with a celebration of what has been achieved during the previous year.

In summary, burnout presents a challenge to core group members and those need to find ways to take care of their inner health by being aware of their own capacities and expected outcomes from their engagement. How engaged individuals set their goals can impact how well they can achieve them. Even though part-time involvement is suggested to not be enough to have an actual impact on practices (Poland et al., 2019) it is inevitable for core group members to find an adequate way of engaging themselves whilst being aware of their health. Burned out core group members that spend less time engaging themselves or even leave the initiative can be a challenge for the further functioning of the initiative.



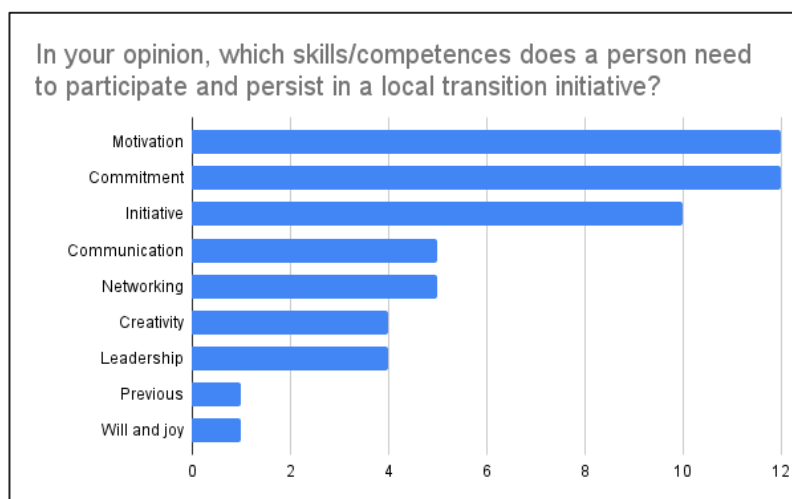
#### 4.5.4 Skills

Respondents were asked which main qualities they bring into their initiative (Question 24) and which skills and competencies a person needs to participate and persist in a Transition initiative (Question 29). Findings indicate that the skills that exist among the engaged individuals have an impact on the initiative's success.



*Figure 11 Core group member's main qualities*

Findings show that initiative is the most mentioned quality that core group members bring into their initiative, followed by commitment and motivation, previous participation experience, and creativity.



*Figure 12 Skills/competences needed to persist in an initiative*

When looking at the skills and competencies needed to persist in a Transition initiative, results differ from what core group members bring in. Personal qualities like

motivation, commitment, and initiative are the most stated skills and competencies that a person needs for participation in a local Transition initiative whilst communication, networking, creativity, leadership, and previous participation experience are stated less often.

Respondents share people characteristics that they see as important for a thriving initiative. They state that it needs *“people with drive and networking skills”* (N6) and *“a (...) lot of energy”* (N7) to coordinate the initiative. Further findings show that several core group members have experience with working in the context of sustainability. N8 shares that in their job they work with transition-related topics. N10 had an earlier work position in an environmental organization, and N17 shares that they were previously involved in a group with a similar aim as the Transition initiative. X shares from their experience that individuals that start an initiative often have an entrepreneurial mindset (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023).

Previous research shows that initiatives where members have skills such as interpersonal conflict, are rather successful (Poland et al., 2019). This applies also to this study’s findings as N16 shared that bad communication in their core group lead to frustration in the past and further engagement was questioned. This situation might have been avoided if more skills in interpersonal conflict were available. Previous research suggests furthermore that not only the skills but also the way those are distributed among the core group members plays a role (Poland et al., 2019). This was also stated by X who underlines the importance of having the know-how divided among several individuals. Firstly, this has the benefit of influencing succession positively, and second, that not one individual is responsible for all work, but tasks can be divided and burnout might be avoided (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023).

## **4.6 Civil Society Participation**

This section dives first into theory to underline the importance of reaching new people. This is followed by sections about how initiatives use communication and activities to engage civil society.

#### 4.6.1 Reaching New People

Findings and theory underline the importance of Transition initiatives in reaching out to new people. Respondents state that it needs a stable pool of volunteers and more people that want to get involved (N4, N11, N12, N13, N15, N16, N17). N1 shares that most of the volunteers engaged in their initiative today are individuals that have earlier attended an activity and stayed involved afterwards. But findings also suggest that respondents see it challenging to get civil society engaged. One participant says, “*it is hard*” (N13) and another acknowledges “*this is where we need to improve*” (N14). This was also shared by X who underlines that it is a major challenge for initiatives to reach new people. X explains that it is essential that Transition initiatives connect to individuals that are different from the ones already involved. They argue that this opens the opportunity to learn new things and to innovate. Successful Transition initiatives manage to constantly innovate and explore new spaces of possibilities. Individuals involved with a Transition initiative are often already interested or concerned about issues like climate change and thus quite alike in some perspectives. Being similar possibly leads to the creation of a *membrane* around the network where only like-minded people are attracted to be engaged (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023). Initiatives are faced with the major challenge of reaching people from outside this *membrane*.

Granovetter’s (1973) theory on networks gives a possible explanation for the importance of reaching new people for a Transition initiative’s successful development. He argues that groups shaped by a weak-tie structure can effectively achieve their goals and are the source of innovative information, which is essential for the initiative’s development. This presupposes for initiatives that engaged individuals should reflect the broad spectrum of individuals found in the local neighbourhood, beyond those that already have strong ties to each other. Additionally, does literature on community imply that communities constitute of various diverse groups with different views of the world (CTSA, 2011). To engage community thoroughly, the whole spectrum of community members needs thus to be represented. What social movement theory describes to be the sympathy pool (Almeida, 2019) indicates which individuals are the most likely to participate in a Transition initiative. The question arises of how Transition initiatives can

reach people from outside of the sympathy pool and aim for targeting diverse groups that represent the community.

#### 4.6.2 Communication

Core group members were asked how their initiative communicates with the local population (Question 12).

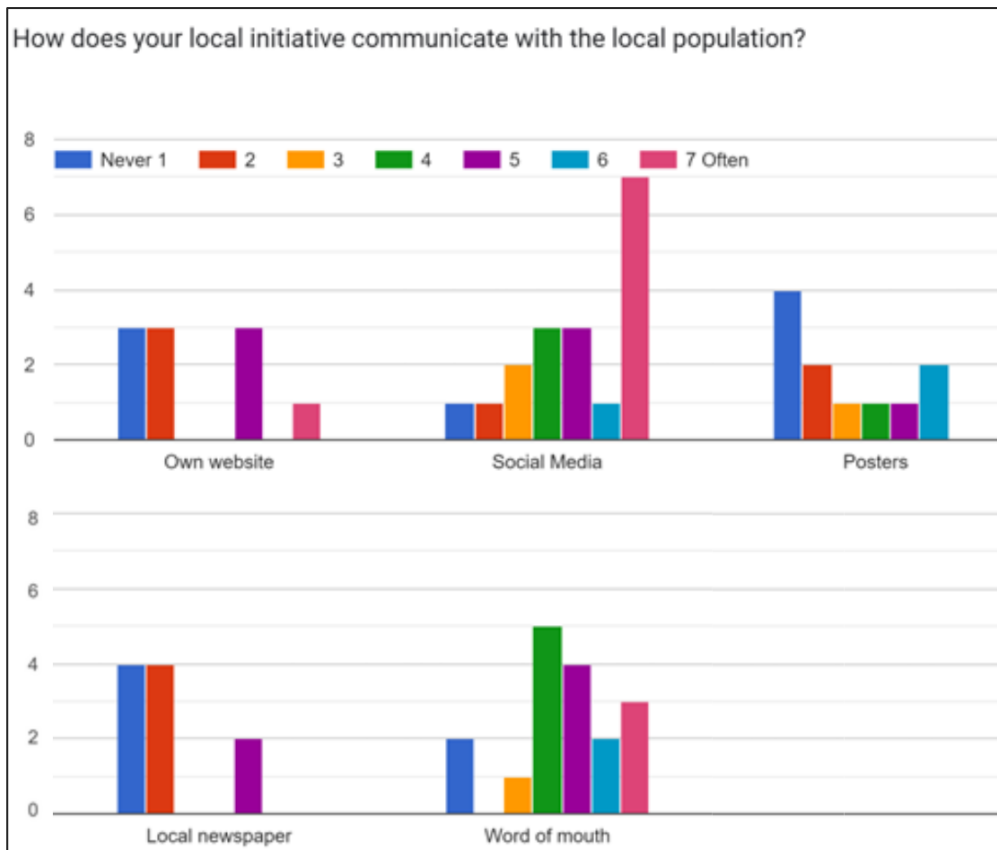


Figure 13 Communication channels with the local population

Findings show that social media is of major importance. N3 states “*more reach out in social media*” specifically as a factor needed for an initiative to thrive. Word of mouth also plays an important role. Some respondents state to use posters and the local newspaper as a communication channel but they seem to play a smaller role than social media and word of mouth. Social movement theory suggests that social media is a good tool to use to motivate individuals to participate in a movement. The exclusive use of social media is argued to have the disadvantage of not reaching individuals that are not present on social media (Almeida, 2019). A communication strategy which does not exclude individuals that are not present on social media is shared by N1. They point

out that they use a variety of communication channels to reach more and different people.

### 4.6.3 Activities

Core group members were asked which activities that were organized by their initiative had the greatest success in terms of local population engagement and what the reasons for success are in their opinion (Question 14). Furthermore, they were asked how their initiative inspires new people to get engaged and respondents had the chance to describe their initiative’s strategies (Question 13).

*Table 9 Success factors of activities in terms of local population engagement*

Activity	Reason(s) for success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets</li> <li>• Repair events</li> <li>• Second hand events</li> <li>• Clothing swap</li> <li>• Dinner</li> <li>• Café</li> <li>• Garden</li> <li>• Courses &amp; lectures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good promotion</li> <li>• Attracts many people</li> <li>• Fun</li> <li>• Inclusion of diverse age groups</li> <li>• Benefits for more than the most engaged ones</li> <li>• Provision of social meeting place</li> <li>• Builds community</li> <li>• Independent continuation</li> </ul>

Several activities were brought up as examples and findings show what reasons respondents see as important to an activity’s success in terms of local population engagement. When activities reach many people, including individuals from diverse age groups (N3), participants receive a benefit (N9) and have a good time participating (N1), community can be built (N1, N5, N16) or the activity independently continued (N6), they are seen as successful. The given reasons are strongly connected to social aspects focusing on people in the neighbourhood to meeting and connecting.

Built upon findings from Question 14 with further input from Question 13 can the following aspects be identified to allow reaching new people through activities for engagement: Themes, location, cocreation & freedom, practicality, and fun.

Themes: N1 shares that their initiative offers activities to a wide range of themes to target different members of the local community. This gives everyone who lives in

the neighbourhood the possibility to find something according to their interest and feels invited to join in. This matches with earlier findings that offering a wide variety of themes in activities is a success factor (Poland et al., 2019).

Location: Location is another aspect brought up by N2 that plays a role in reaching new people. Their initiative uses a green area for activities. People that might not know about the Transition initiative yet and happen to randomly pass by might show interest in what goes on. N1 shares that their initiative offers activities in a variety of locations to reach more people.

Cocreation & freedom: N1 points out that they aim to talk to everyone during their activities and let the participants learn about how the initiative works and how they can get involved. This was also shared by N5 who underlines to let participants “*see what we are working with*” (N5). Meetings, where activities are being planned, are held open for new people to join and have the possibility to give their input and share ideas. Open brainstorming workshops where the whole neighbourhood is invited to come up with ideas that they would like to realize are also held (N1). N9’s initiative works similarly by having the possibility for discussions at meetings. N3 notes that their strategy includes to having open activities where no registration is needed. They also mention the aspect of freedom. Participants should be able to start their own projects. From those findings can be concluded that Norwegian Transition initiatives aim to reach new people and strive to give the participants the feeling of inclusion and freedom. This goes in line with X’s experience who says that successful initiatives facilitate meetings or events that allow for a high rate of co-creation. X states that co-creation helps that individuals not only participate in activities but take ownership of the engagement. Without fulfilling events and the use of participatory methods do initiatives not succeed (X, personal communication, January 27, 2023). Similarly earlier literature highlights the importance for engaging community that individuals have the feeling that they can influence and shape their community (Hickey et al., 2015; Kenyon, 2022), that they feel included, and can share their views. This underlines the importance for Transition initiatives to further focus on the elements of cocreation and freedom within their activities to successfully engage community.

Practical: The aspect of the practicality of activities is brought up by N11. Several initiatives point out that they create practical activities to inspire people (N10, N11).

This could include formats such as vegetarian dinner events, food courses, flea markets, or repair cafés. *“We believe in when people are doing something, this is changing their attitude”* (N10).

Fun: N1 shares that they experience that activities where the fun aspect stands in the focus are especially popular and participants choose sustainable options when they are received as better. *“The more an activity contributes to building a fun and good community, cohesion and identity in the neighbourhood, the more popular they are<sup>3</sup>”* (N1). This is underlined by earlier findings that argued that activities with an educational focus often fail to attract individuals beyond the once that are already involved (Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009).

From those examples can be assumed that Transition initiatives already have strategies in place through which they aim to reach individuals from outside the *membrane*. Both in terms of communication and offering activities. The inclusion of the elements of themes, location, cocreation & freedom, practicality, and fun are argued to have an impact on the ability to reach new people. Neef’s (1986) perspective on human needs explains why individuals are motivated by something by arguing that they want to satisfy their needs and he introduces the term synergic satisfiers. This can be brought into context with this study’s findings on strategies to inspire more people to engage themselves. By offering activities that target diverse groups of individuals by making sure that the just mentioned aspects are included, the initiative has the potential to satisfy several needs and thus functions as a synergic satisfier. Having a needs-based approach seems inevitable to successfully reach the community as a whole and make sure that community members feel that their needs are satisfied through participation, perceiving the activity as positive. In line with Fernandes-Jesus et al.’s (2017) suggestion this study propose that Transition initiatives need to further find ways to reach non-engaged citizen to maximal reach the diversity of individuals found within the community and successfully engage community. Acknowledging that communities consist of different social groups implies that a variety of individual needs exist within one community. It can be derived that those needs vary from community to

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<sup>3</sup> “Jo mer en aktivitet bidrar til å bygge et gøy og godt fellesskap, samhold og identitet i nabolaget, desto mer populære er de” (N1).

community. This indicates that strategies for Transition initiatives to reach the community as a whole need to be individual for each initiative, depending on their community member's needs. In line with Eimhjellen (2018) it is argued that initiatives should focus on the capacities and interests of the local population of their operating area. From this follows that a needs-based approach cannot be uniformly applicable in all communities but should be individual and dynamic to the defined operating area of each Transition initiative.

## 4.7 Impacts

Survey participants were asked if their local initiative or any of their activities has led to a change in their local community (Question 15) and got the chance to elaborate on this question (Question 15.1). Impacts on individual, community, and global level were shared by respondents.

### 4.7.1 Individual Level

Initiatives create activities that aim to show sustainable alternatives or practices to potentially impact individual behaviour. This can include teaching skills by offering courses or aiming to reduce consumption by organizing a flea market or a clothing swap activity. *“Our experience is that people are willing to make sustainable choices if they are perceived as better than the alternative”* (N1). But it is hard to know which impact which activity has on individual behaviour in the long term.

### 4.7.2 Community Level

Impacts on the community level include both, impacts on the community's social capital and the local government.

#### 4.7.2.1 *Community's Social Capital*

Impacts on the community's social capital happen both, on the individual, as well as organizational level. On the individual level, there are impacts mentioned concerning a strengthened social network within the neighbourhood. N2 shares that their initiative impacted that people with different backgrounds and cultures get the chance to get to know each other which led to an increased connection and a feeling of



belonging within a neighbourhood with difficult living conditions. N1 experienced an increase of individuals moving into the neighbourhood with BL as a reason for the choice. N14 shares that their initiative led to a change in their local community by having created new spaces for locals to meet each other. Similarly N17 shares that individuals now have a forum where they “*can pitch their ideas and find other people who are interested in the same things*” (N17).

On the organizational level does N7 share an impact through facilitating other initiatives or projects. The municipality in cooperation with a local sports club has continued a bike repair event independently every year after it has originally been initiated through the Transition initiative. Similarly other organisations continue with concepts like repair café and clothing swaps (N7). Those findings underline the importance and the potential of collaborations with other organizations to build community engagement and possibly foster new activities in the local community.

Findings imply that initiatives have an impact on the community’s social capital by functioning as a platform, digitally on social media and/or physically, where locals and organizations can meet up, get to know each other, and possibly collectively realize ideas or start collaborations.

#### **4.7.2.2 Local Government**

The impact on the local government is rather weakly pronounced among the initiatives. Exclusively N1 shares that their initiative works specifically towards influencing municipality practices. They initiated several projects around biological diversity through which they actively seek to influence the way the municipality manages green areas.

#### **4.7.3 Global Level**

N1 elaborates that they aim to not only have an impact on the local community but also on a larger scale. They state that their initiative has developed into a *living social laboratory*. By that, they mean that problems are identified, and solutions tested on the local level to potentially being implemented in other areas or on a larger scale.

Norwegian initiatives aim to have an impact, but findings show that the degree is often unknown. Thus, it is hard to know precisely to which extent Transition initiatives

are responsible for changes on individual, local and global level. Respondents share: *“Sources of change vary (...). Hard to say what effects activities have”* (N6). *“We hope so – but we do not know”* (N10). Similarly previous research concludes that movement leaders understand their engagement by “planting seeds whose eventual fruition cannot be guaranteed” (Poland et al., 2019, p. 195-196). Scholars have argued in previous research that part-time involvement in the initiative is not enough to root a culture of sustainable practices on personal and community level (Bailey, Hopkins & Wilson, 2010; Poland et al., 2019). In line with this, respondents share that they are often involved in several organizations simultaneously and divide their capacities for engagement. N16 states specifically to not be able to engage themselves regularly with the Transition initiative and wonders if this leads to change.

## 5 Conclusion

This research has aimed to get a better understanding of how community engagement and resilience can be built through the Transition movement, focusing on a case study of 11 Norwegian initiatives and the success criteria and obstacles they experience in their daily operations.

The overall research question of this thesis was: *How to build community engagement and resilience through the Transition movement?*

The findings are based on a desk research, a qualitative interview with an expert from the international Transition movement, as well as on an online survey that targeted the Norwegian initiatives. The findings have been presented and analysed in the frame of six themes: (i) The way the initiatives are organized, (ii) their access to resources, (iii) the built and maintained relationships with other stakeholders, (iv) the motivation, skills, and time capacity of the individuals involved, (v) the way the initiative engages the civil society, (vi) and the initiative's impact.

The Transition movement aims to build community engagement and resilience through the local initiatives. Findings suggest that the Norwegian initiative's impact on their community's resilience is to a large part towards social resilience. By initiating meeting places, digitally and physically in their community, initiatives allow individuals with different backgrounds, bound through living in the same neighbourhood to get to know each other and thus strengthen the connection between them. The high fluctuation in terms of activity level across the initiatives in Norway indicates that BL initiatives themselves have a rather low level of resilience and are affected by several disturbances. This could be global disturbances like the COVID-19 pandemic but also disturbances on a smaller scale such as conflicts in the core group or the feeling of burnout of engaged individuals. Those disturbances can have an impact on the initiative's success. Initiatives will always be faced with disturbances and are challenged to operate within their always evolving and changing environment. It is therefore important that the initiatives are aware of which criteria impact their success.

In conclusion, success criteria and obstacles cannot completely be differentiated from each other. Criteria leading to an initiative's success are often simultaneously

experienced as obstacles. Criteria identified in this research include people aspects such as the time capacity, motivation, and skills of engaged individuals and further aspects such as access to resources, the ability to reach new people, and the built and maintained relationships.

The time capacity has a major impact on an initiative's ability to operate successfully. Engaged individuals are busy people that divide their time capacities often between several engagements, work, and family obligations. Burnout through the engagement is a central topic that core group members experience and those are challenged by balancing engaging themselves whilst taking care of their inner health. The time capacity sets the frame and limits to what is possible to achieve, such as applying for funding, building, and maintaining relationships, getting administrative tasks done, and reaching out to new people by organizing activities. The potential of the inclusion of a paid position which implies a separation between coordinative/ administrative and activity-related tasks has been discussed as a possible way for the further development of the initiatives. Furthermore, motivation is identified as a criterion impacting the initiative's success. Motivation is needed to participate and persist in a Transition initiative and is again influenced by the individual's network, the initiative's location, and its relationships to BLN, BL initiatives, and other voluntary groups. Available skills among the core group members have also an impact on an initiative's success. Missing skills on how to build a network across BL initiatives for instance limits the possibility of doing so.

The access to resources is identified as a further criterion that impacts an initiative's success. This includes both, financial funding, and a place to be. Both can be provided by the local government, which underlines the importance of building bridges to the local government. A further criterion is the ability of the initiative to reach new people. Activities are identified to be the place where initiatives get in contact with community members with the aim to inspire them for more sustainable behaviour and to motivate them to become engaged with the initiative. This study identified several aspects that allow initiatives to successfully reach new people and that influence which individuals from the community are reached. Those aspects include themes, locations, cocreation & freedom, practicality, and fun. In terms of reaching new people this study's findings imply that initiatives could benefit from strengthening their strategies

to reach the diverse spectrum of citizen found within their local community to build community engagement. Lastly, relationships are identified as a criterion for an initiative's success. As already described initiatives benefit from relationships with other stakeholders such as voluntary groups, the local government, other Transition initiatives, and the national network by receiving necessary resources such as funding, the use of a building, skills, motivation, and inspiration to keep functioning and to build community engagement in the long term. To more effectively build community engagement and resilience do the findings of this research imply that Transition movement initiatives could benefit from strengthening their relationships with all community sectors. To do so it is important for initiatives to understand the volunteer landscape of their community and acknowledge the structures and organizations that have already existed before the Transition initiative got started. Instead of competing for volunteers, Transition initiatives could benefit from strengthening their strategies to support other local groups with similar aims. Furthermore, in terms of cooperating with the local government do findings imply that initiatives could benefit from not only maintaining the relationship to receiving resources but to furthermore strengthen their strategies that aim to influence the local government's processes to potentially impact the local community.

## **5.1 Limitations**

This research is based on a case study of 11 initiatives and provides thus only a partial picture of the Transition movement in Norway. Furthermore, it is limited by the perspective of the core group members of those initiatives. Perspectives from engaged individuals that are not part of the core group and individuals that are not part of any of the Norwegian initiatives are not included. Also, other Transition initiatives that exist in Norway without being part of the BLN network are not included in this study.

A further limitation is the strict time frame in which the study was conducted. This had a say in terms of the chosen research methods. In-depth interviews with core group members were considered as an alternative to the chosen method of a survey. The online survey turned out to be more beneficial. First, because core group members have very limited time capacities, and the survey has the advantage that it can be filled out independently at any time. And second, it allowed to get in contact with all

initiatives within the limited timeframe of the study, and could thus provide new insights into seeing trends and patterns across the Norwegian initiatives.

Whilst these given reasons limit the results of this study, are the findings valid and reliable as argued for in chapter 3.4.

## **5.2 Further Research and Implications**

The study showed that local governments play an essential role in influencing a Transition initiative's success. Public policy encourages a community's capacity for engagement by providing for instance funding opportunities and further access to resources, such as a building to use for activities. Thus, further research should address possible ways for local governments' collaborating with the Transition initiatives, and success criteria and obstacles for a successful cooperation. How can local governments benefit from supporting Transition initiatives by collaborating with them?

In conclusion, this study's findings support many of the findings from previous case studies looking at initiatives in other countries, and internationally. This shows that Norwegian initiatives experience similar challenges as initiatives elsewhere. Similarly do this study's findings also go in line with what X has shared about successful Transition initiatives during the interview. A major difference concerning the initiatives access to funding could be identified. Whilst previous research concluded that initiatives struggle to receive funding because of unsuccessful applications (Poland et al., 2019) did this study find, that Norwegian initiatives have sufficient sources to apply for funding but are challenged by the limited time capacity to apply for them. Overall, this study adds to the existing body of research on the meaning of bottom-up movements in the facilitation of transition towards more resilient communities through community engagement by examining the case of Norwegian Transition initiatives. Findings strengthen the understanding of success criteria and obstacles that Transition initiatives face in their daily operations. New insights on building community engagement and resilience through the Transition movement that hold valuable learnings for the further development of local Transition initiatives could be provided.

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# Annexes

## Annex 1: List of contacted initiatives

- Bærekraftige liv Arna
- Bærekraftige liv Apeltun / Skjold
- Bærekraftige liv Blåbærstien / Nesodden
- Bærekraftige liv Bø i Telemark
- Bærekraftige liv Byhaugen
- Bærekraftige liv Eidsvåg
- Bærekraftige liv Fyllingsdalen og Søreide
- Bærekraftige liv Hellen
- Bærekraftige liv Holmlia
- Bærekraftige liv Kaland/Stend
- Bærekraftige liv Kronstad
- Bærekraftige liv Landås
- Bærekraftige liv Løvestakken
- Bærekraftige liv Minde
- Bærekraftige liv Mortensrud
- Bærekraftige liv Nattland og Sædalen
- Bærekraftige liv Nesttun
- Bærekraftige liv Nordnes
- Bærekraftige liv på Os
- Bærekraftige liv Sletten
- Bærekraftige liv Samnanger
- Bærekraftige liv Sandviken
- Bærekraftige liv på Trones i Sandnes
- Bærekraftige liv Ulset

## Organisation

**1. I am part of the core group in the following Transition initiative:**

- Bærekraftige liv Arna
- Bærekraftige liv Apeltun / Skjold
- Bærekraftige liv Blåbærstien / Nesodden
- Bærekraftige liv Bø i Telemark
- Bærekraftige liv Byhaugen
- Bærekraftige liv Eidsvåg
- Bærekraftige liv Fyllingsdalen og Søreide
- Bærekraftige liv Hellen
- Bærekraftige liv Holmlia
- Bærekraftige liv Kaland/Stend
- Bærekraftige liv Kronstad
- Bærekraftige liv Landås
- Bærekraftige liv Løvestakken
- Bærekraftige liv Minde
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- Bærekraftige liv Nordnes
- Bærekraftige liv på Os
- Bærekraftige liv Sletten
- Bærekraftige liv Samnanger
- Bærekraftige liv Sandviken
- Bærekraftige liv på Trones i Sandnes
- Bærekraftige liv Ulset

**2. In which year was your local initiative started?**

---



**3. How active is your local initiative?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not active	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very active

**4. What is the vision of your local initiative?**

---

**5. How is your local initiative organized? We have:**

- A core group
- Sub groups
- A paid position / paid positions
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Please elaborate on the responsibilities of your core group and your own role within:**

---

**7. How many members does your core group approximately have at the moment?**

- 3 or less
- 4 – 6
- 7 – 9
- 10 or more
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Do you experience a high turnover of core group members?**

---

**9. How does your core group meet?**

- Digital platform (e.g. Zoom)
- Our groups owns a space
- Our group rents a space
- Public space

- Private home
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Which of those mentioned spaces do you use most frequently to meet?**

- Digital platform (e.g. Zoom)
- Own space
- Rented space
- Public space
- Private home
- Other

**11. How often does your core group meet?**

- Once a week
- Once a month
- Less than once a month
- According to need
- Never
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Civil society participation

**12. How does your local initiative communicate with the local population?**

	Never 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Often
Own website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Posters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. How does your local initiative inspire new people to engage themselves? Describe your strategies:

---

14. Which activities that your local initiative has organized have had the greatest success in terms of local population engagement? What are reasons for the success in your opinion?

---

## Impacts

15. Has your local initiative or any of your activities led to a change in your local community?

- Yes, through influencing local politics
- Yes, through facilitating other initiatives or projects in my local community
- No
- Don't know
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

15.1. Please elaborate on those changes:

---

## Resources

16. Does your local initiative receive financial funding?

- No, we don't receive financial funding
- Yes, through municipality funds
- Yes, through EU funds
- Yes, through crowdfunding
- Yes, through donations
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does your local initiative have strategies to search for funding?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

17.1. If yes, please elaborate on which strategies:

---

## Relationships

18. To which degree does your local initiative cooperate with:

	Never 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very often
Other voluntary groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local or regional authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transition Network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bærekraftige Liv Norge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Which benefits/drawbacks did you experience from maintaining those relationships?

---

## People

20. What (and who) motivated you to get involved in your local initiative in the first place?

---

**21. Are you engaged in other volunteer initiatives or projects in your local community?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**21.1. Please elaborate on those initiatives or projects:**

---

**22. What are the main reasons that make you stay engaged in your local Transition initiative?**

- To socialize with others
- To initiate new projects
- To learn new skills
- To feel more connected to my community
- To have an impact on my community
- My concern about social and environmental issues
- To have a good time
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**23. Do you feel part of a larger movement with your engagement in your local initiative? Why/Why not?**

---

**24. What are the main qualities that you feel you bring into your local initiative?**

- Motivation
- Initiative
- Commitment
- Communication
- Networking
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Previous participation experience

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**25. Would you like to be more active in your local initiative?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**25.1. Please elaborate why/why not:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**26. Indicate your agreement with the following statements:**

**“...” is/are a real hindrance for my active engagement in my local initiative.**

	1 Don't agree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Fully agree
My job situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My family obligations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My travel distance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My financial situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My involvement in other voluntary groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too much work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**27. Have you ever felt (close to be) burned out due to your involvement in your local initiative? To what degree?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	High degree

27.1. Please elaborate:

---

28. What meaning does the term “community” have to you?

---

29. In your opinion, which skills/competences does a person need to participate and persist in a local Transition initiative?

- Motivation
- Initiative
- Commitment
- Communication
- Networking
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Previous participation experience
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Demographics

30. What is your age?

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 29
- 30 – 39
- 40 – 49
- 50 – 59
- 60 – 69
- 70 +
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

31. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

- Other

**32. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or higher

**33. What is your current employment status?**

- Employed
- Not employed, looking for work
- Not employed, not looking for work
- Student
- Retired
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**34. What is your annual household income?**

- Under 250 000
- 251 000 – 500 000
- 501 000 – 750 000
- 751 000 – 1000 000
- Over 1000 000

**35. How long have you been active in your local initiative?**

- Since the beginning
- Over 5 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 2 – 3 years
- 1 year
- Don't know
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Other

36. In your opinion what does your local initiative need to thrive and operate successfully (short/long term)?

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37. Are there final thoughts you would like to share?

---