



Inclusive and culturally-rooted Energy Communities



Domain:
Climate Action
and Environment



Place:
Gernika-
Lumo, Spain



Duration:
One day



Target audience:
Citizens, larger public

Mission

This interaction aimed at shaping how people perceive and engage with the concepts of sustainability, community, and innovation. By incorporating dance, music, and collaborative art-making into discussions about energy communities, the interaction provided a unique and memorable experience that went beyond technical knowledge.

Engagement activities

The interaction took the form of a summer course in an energy community, mixing field visits, artistic interventions and courses on sustainable renovation models for energy efficiency, Nature-based Solutions, and positive energy neighborhoods.

Artistic activities

Two standout performances took center stage: the “ARS IN NATURA EST: Dance Performance” by Ross Dantza Eskola and the “ARS IN NATURA EST: Music Performance” by Segundo Olaeta Musika Eskola. Through movement and melody, they captured the essence of the event’s key themes: sustainability, community, and positive energy, demonstrating how these values can be expressed and felt through art.

IMPACT

Unleashing creativity

Emotional connection to nature

Stronger sense of cultural communities

Reflective process for behavioural change

Raising awareness on sustainable practices



WHAT HAPPENED?

The San Fidel TEK initiative was launched in the heart of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve—a region celebrated for its extraordinary blend of environmental richness, cultural heritage, and strong commitment to sustainability. This unique setting made it the perfect backdrop to champion renewable energy and community-driven actions.

The purpose of the interaction was to inspire the rise of new initiatives similar to the San Fidel TEK one, as it sets a powerful example for other regions. To do so, the summer course showcased a unique approach: integrating art and culture into an energy project to make it more relatable and engaging for the local community.

The summer course, during which the interaction was held, brought together local leaders, experts, and community members. Participants explored the practicalities of building energy communities like San Fidel TEK.

The focus was on creating win-win outcomes: tangible benefits for local residents and a meaningful contribution to the environment.

This initiative showed how renewable energy is more than just technology—it's a driver of social transformation.

By blending technical innovation with cultural resonance and collective action,

San Fidel TEK fostered a deeper connection between people, their community, and the planet's future.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

The summer course was carefully designed to guide participants through four dynamic steps:

- **A field visit to the Energy Community**, enhanced by captivating dance and music performances that celebrated local culture and identity.
- **Presentations and discussions**, introduced by the mayor, showcasing the principles and benefits of Energy Communities through real-world use cases, sustainable renovation models for energy efficiency, Nature-based Solutions, and positive energy neighborhoods.
- **A hands-on artistic activity**, merging the concepts of sustainability and creativity to inspire innovative thinking.
- **A site visit to an energy efficiency project**, bringing theory to life and illustrating impactful results.

The focus throughout the interaction was clear: celebrate local identity and foster collective action as key ingredients for achieving meaningful environmental goals.

A standout feature of the event was indeed the introduction of the Living Lab methodology, paired with a cultural and creative perspective, to demonstrate how these approaches can actively involve diverse stakeholders in building successful energy communities. By creating spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and hands-on participation, the interaction not only raised awareness but also showcased how innovative solutions can drive real, transformative change.

By merging practical insights with cultural expression, the event left participants inspired, motivated, and ready to take action in their own communities.



Artistic activities

The artistic elements of the interaction created a dynamic space for participants to actively engage and contribute to the vision of a sustainable and culturally vibrant community. Dance and music, as universal languages, were carefully chosen to transcend barriers and connect with the audience on a deeply emotional level. The goal was clear: not only to inform, but to move and inspire the audience through a powerful, unforgettable experience.

Dance Performance: "ARS IN NATURA EST" by Ross Dantza Eskola:

The day commenced with an inspiring dance performance "ARS IN NATURA EST" by [Ross Dantza Eskola](#). This performance illustrated the harmony between humans, nature, and energy, as dancers brought to life the fluidity and dynamism of natural elements like wind and sunlight. Through their movements, they embodied the flow of renewable energy, weaving a story of connection and sustainability.

The performance encouraged participants to pause and reflect on the relationship between the use of energy and the protection of the environment.

Music Performance: "ARS IN NATURA EST" by Segundo Olaeta Musika Eskola:

The musical performance by [Segundo Olaeta Musika Eskola](#) continued the artistic narrative. The music, composed specifically for this event, incorporated natural sounds and rhythms that mirrored the landscape of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve. The performance blended traditional Basque music with contemporary elements, creating a soundscape that celebrated local culture while looking towards a sustainable future.

Both the dance and music performances powerfully conveyed a central message: sustainability and innovation are more than just technical or scientific concepts—they are deeply intertwined with culture and community. They encouraged the audience to reflect on how energy use and environmental stewardship are inherently connected to the cultural local identity.

Artistic Joint Work: Putting Learnings into Practice

Participants finally took part in a collaborative artistic workshop, turning the day's discussions into creative expression. Guided by local artists, participants used mixed media to create a visual representation of a "positive energy neighborhood." Divided into teams, each group focused on a specific aspect of energy communities, such as solar energy, community engagement, or the natural environment.

This highly interactive activity fostered a sense of shared ownership and allowed participants, regardless of artistic background, to actively engage with the project's themes.

The completed artworks were proudly displayed in a communal space, serving as an inspiring visual reminder of the collaboration and ideas shared during the event.

Find the artists:

- [Segundo Olaeta Musika Eskola](#)
- [Ross Dantza Eskola](#)



Impact of the interaction

Unleashing Creativity to Solve Energy Challenges:

This interaction showcased how culture and creativity can unlock innovative solutions to complex challenges like sustainability and energy saving. Through active participation in artistic joint work, attendees witnessed firsthand how creative processes can address real-world issues in Energy Communities and sustainable practices. By framing sustainability as not just a technical challenge but as an opportunity for imaginative and holistic thinking, the event demonstrated how inclusive and collaborative approaches can lead to impactful solutions that drives results.

Building Community Through Collaboration:

The collaborative spirit of the artistic performances, featuring local artists and San Fidel students, created a powerful sense of community among participants. Working together in a Living Lab grounded in co-creation illustrated the shared efforts required to build successful energy communities, reinforcing the idea that everyone's contribution is valuable. The sense of shared purpose and belonging, cultivated through the artistic approach, encouraged attendees to see themselves as active contributors to their local communities, fostering initiatives that align with sustainability principles.

Rethinking Public Engagement:

The cultural and artistic approach demonstrated new, creative ways to communicate complex topics like energy, sustainability, architecture, urbanism, and Nature-based Solutions. Through storytelling, visual arts, and performance, participants—particularly public authorities and local administrations—learned how to connect with their audiences in more engaging and relatable ways. This approach provides tools to inspire citizens, making societal and environmental challenges accessible and actionable for diverse audiences.

Inspiring Personal Reflection and Change:

Art has the power to spark personal reflection, encouraging individuals to rethink their behaviours, beliefs, and roles within broader systems. The performances and artistic activities prompted participants to consider their personal environmental impact and how they can actively contribute to a sustainable future. This reflective process is expected to inspire meaningful behavioural changes, as attendees integrate the values of sustainability and energy consciousness into their everyday lives.

From adjusting energy consumption habits to engaging in local initiatives, the ripple effects of this experience will extend well beyond the event.



Integrating art into our discussions about energy and sustainability brought a new dimension to our understanding. It's not just about the technical solutions, but about how we, as a community, connect with these changes on a deeper, cultural level.

Jose Maria Gorroño Echebarrieta,
Mayor of Gernika-Lumo



To ensure the successful replication of its innovative approach, GAIA highlights five essential strategies:

- Build a Collaborative Framework: Use the Quadruple Helix model to engage academia, industry, government, and civil society with clearly defined shared goals.
- Promote Active Participation and Co-Creation: Facilitate regular workshops and inclusive co-creation sessions to develop innovative solutions involving all stakeholders.
- Leverage Cultural Narratives and Art: Transform technical concepts into compelling stories. Through storytelling, art and media make energy efficiency and sustainability tangible, relatable, and inspiring for a wider audience.
- Pilot, Learn, and Share: Start small, think big. Implement pilot projects to test innovative ideas, document key learnings, and develop real-life case studies. Share successes and challenges to inspire and guide others toward broader adoption.
- Monitor, Evaluate, and Evolve: Define clear metrics for success and establish regular feedback loops. By continuously assessing impact and refining methods, ensure the approach remains relevant and effective over time.



Resources

The organisation of the event in San Fidel cost €770.



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