

Embedding the unembedded – How to involve residents in local transition management processes?





Project/Study region

Local Energy Transition

Experiments for a low-carbon society transformation – Piloting a transition management process in the Bernese Alps (CH)

We initiate, implement, and evaluate a transition management process towards climate neutrality in the Eastern Bernese Oberland region.

Project/Study region

Local Energy Transition

Experiments for a low-carbon society transformation – Piloting a transition management process in the Bernese Alps (CH)

We initiate, implement, and evaluate a transition management process towards climate neutrality in the Eastern Bernese Oberland region.

More specifically, together with local stakeholders, we aim to develop initiatives or ‘energy experiments’ in the following sectors:

- Mobility
- Energy
- Housing
- Tourism
- Private sector (agriculture/forestry)
- Consumption
- Communication, education and participation

Theoretical background

Transition Management

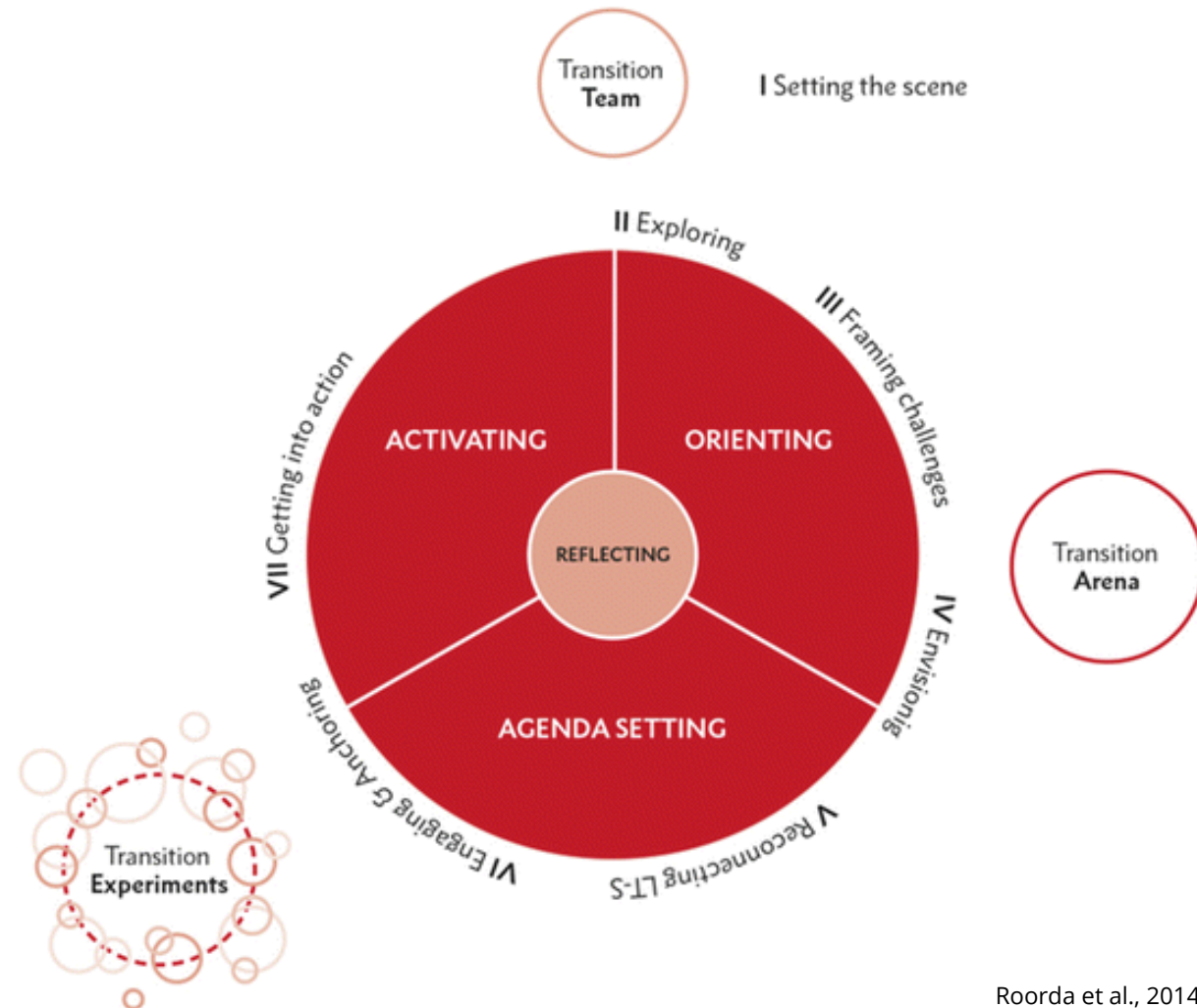
Transition management offers guidance on how to set up a:

“interactive and selective participatory stakeholder searching processes aimed at learning and experimenting” (Grin et al., 2010: 140).

Criticism

Focus on a ‘select’ group of actors might:

- sustain or create unequal power structures (Smith and Stirling, 2010; Hölscher et al., 2018).
- empower some actors might disempower others (Avelino, 2009; 2017, Wittmayer 2015).



Theoretical background

Support of local population is key

Social acceptance by local residents is key for sustainability transitions (Ingold et al., 2019), especially true in a Swiss context.



Einsprachen gegen Biomasse Jungfrau

Inbetriebnahme frühestens ab März 2012

Aus Angst vor Geruchsemissionen haben mehrere Parteien Einsprache gegen die geplante Biogasanlage der Biomasse Jungfrau AG erhoben. Durch die breite Unterstützung, welche die Anlage trotzdem erfährt, ist die Finanzierung zu 90 Prozent gesichert.

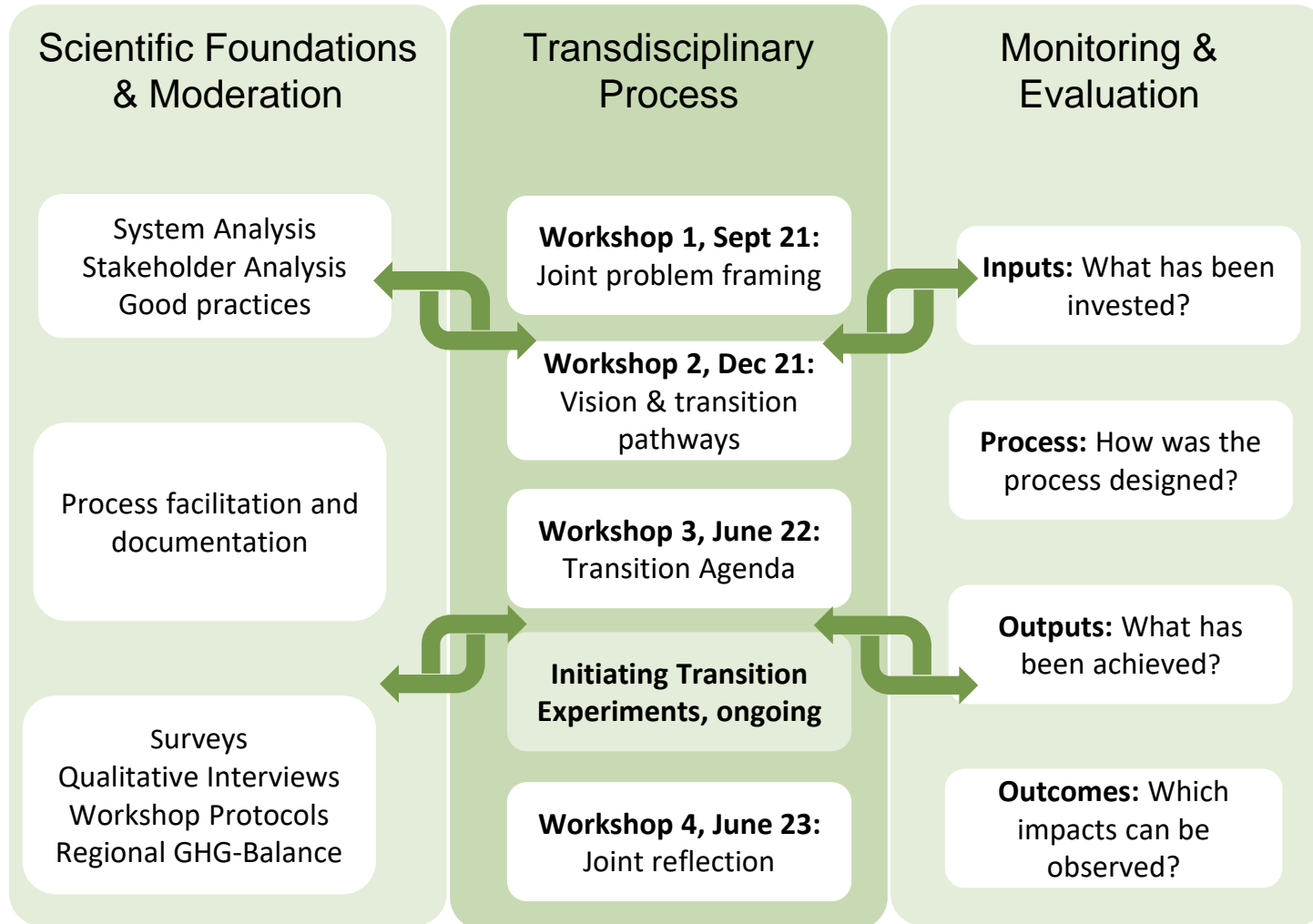
von Florian Wehrli



So könnte die Biogasanlage der Biomasse Jungfrau AG später aussehen. Sie nimmt frühestens ab März 2012 den Betrieb auf.
Bildmontage: Biomasse Jungfrau AG

Theoretical background

Implementation of the transition management process



Transition team facilitates process



Transition arena develops the transition agenda

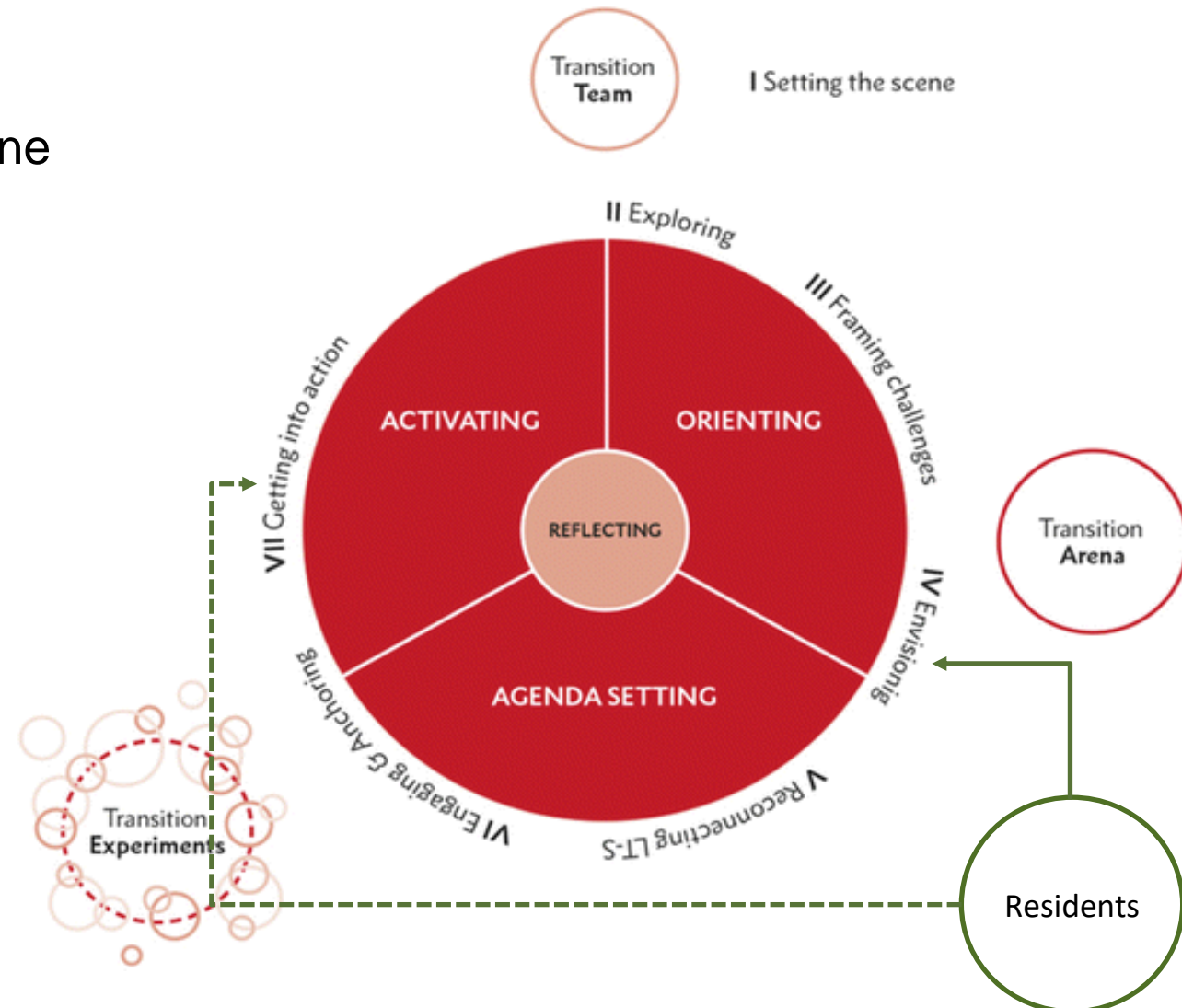
- 40-50 stakeholders: private sector, municipalities, civil society

Transition networks implement experiments of the transition agenda

- 10 initial project ideas

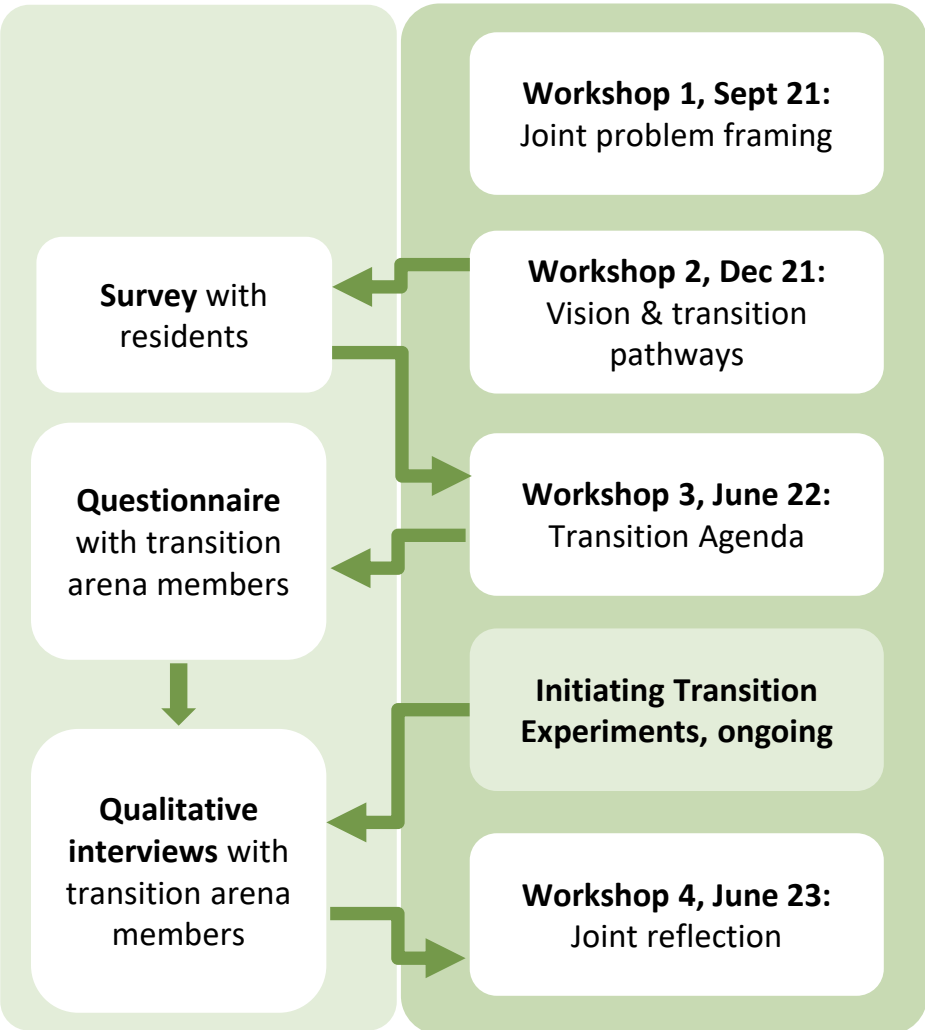
Research questions

- How do residents judge the visioning done by local stakeholders in the transition arena?
- How do residents evaluate the transition process?
- How do local stakeholders perceive the inclusion of residents?
- How do local stakeholders use the feedback of the residents?



Data & methods

Inclusion of residents



Survey

- Residents evaluated the visions developed in the transition arena and could become active themselves.
- Results of the survey served as a key input for workshop 3.

Workshop 3

- Protocols of workshops exercises as well as questionnaire

Qualitative interviews

- 4 member of the transition team
- 11 members of the transition arena

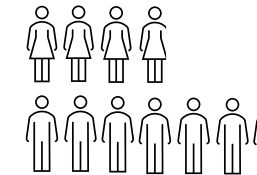
No. of Respondents



Mean age



Gender



Results

How do residents perceive the visioning done by local stakeholders?

- All visions were positively evaluated
- Visions from private sector (agriculture & forestry) were supported most
- Visions from mobility often less supported

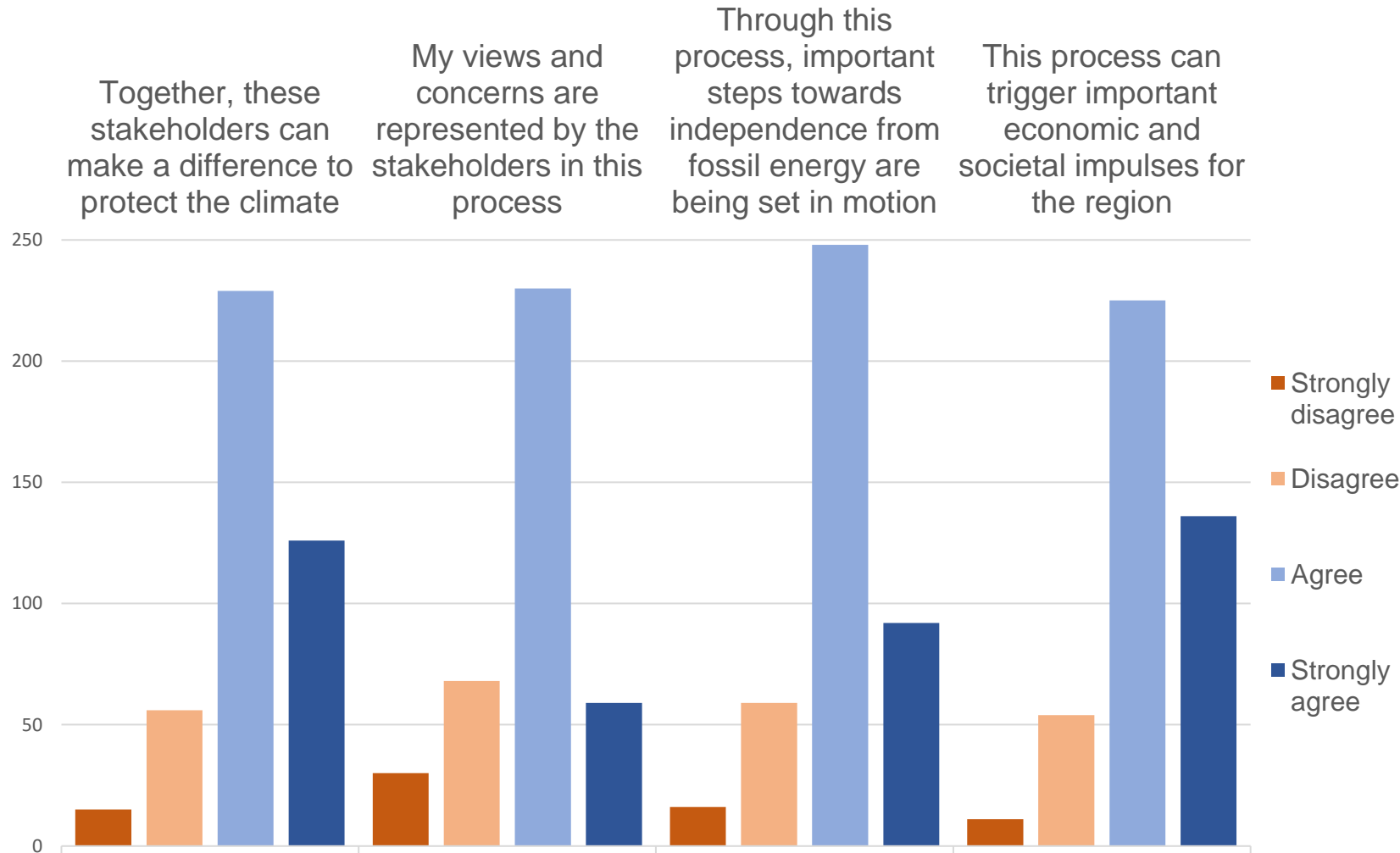
Heating systems

Fossil-fueled heating systems are replaced with systems based on regional renewable energy. The required energy is produced by the building's own facilities as much as possible.

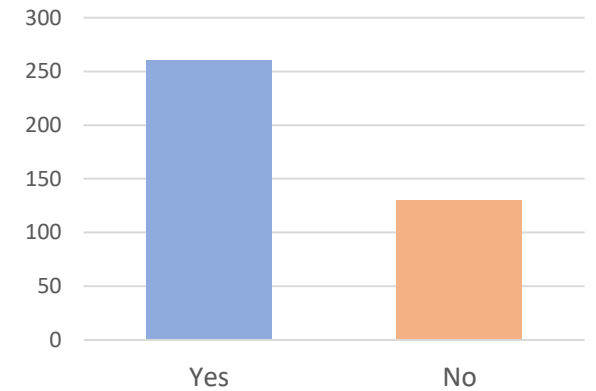


Results

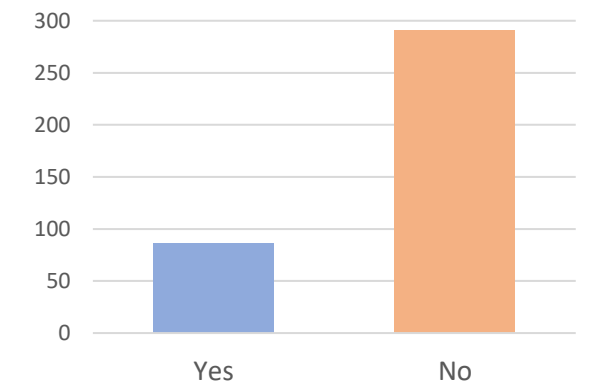
How do residents evaluate the transition process?



Would you like to be informed about the survey and the process?



Would you like to actively participate in the process (for example by taking part in future events)?



Results

Use of input from residents in workshop

Sector

Housing

Visions

Building standards

All residential, industrial and commercial buildings as well as infrastructure buildings in the region comply with current standards in terms of construction, insulation and heating and produce more energy over the year than they consume.

Building materials

Construction materials for new buildings and renovations have a carbon-neutral or -negative balance and are certified for circular economy. Construction projects are given a binding carbon-budget for construction and operation.

Heating systems

Fossil-fueled heating systems are replaced with systems based on regional renewable energy. The required energy is produced by the building's own facilities as much as possible.

Skilled workforce

Local architecture and planning offices, building owners, construction companies, licensing authorities and other relevant actors in the construction sector have well-trained specialists at their disposal who provide homeowners with up-to-date, correct and comprehensible information regarding home renovations.

Communal buildings

The region promotes sustainable construction, especially for municipal buildings.

Priorities based on assessment

GHG

Reduct. Synergies Residents



GHG

Reduct. Synergies Residents



GHG

Reduct. Synergies Residents



GHG

Reduct. Synergies Residents



GHG

Reduct. Synergies Residents



Transition pathways

Step 3: Establish incentives

Step 2: Define standards and share knowledge

Step 1: Create easily accessible knowledge hubs

Step 3: Establish incentives

Step 2: Create binding regulations

Step 3: Realize lighthouse projects

Step 2: Climate-neutrality integrated in professionals' education

Step 1: Establish collaboration among professional associations, education institutes, authorities

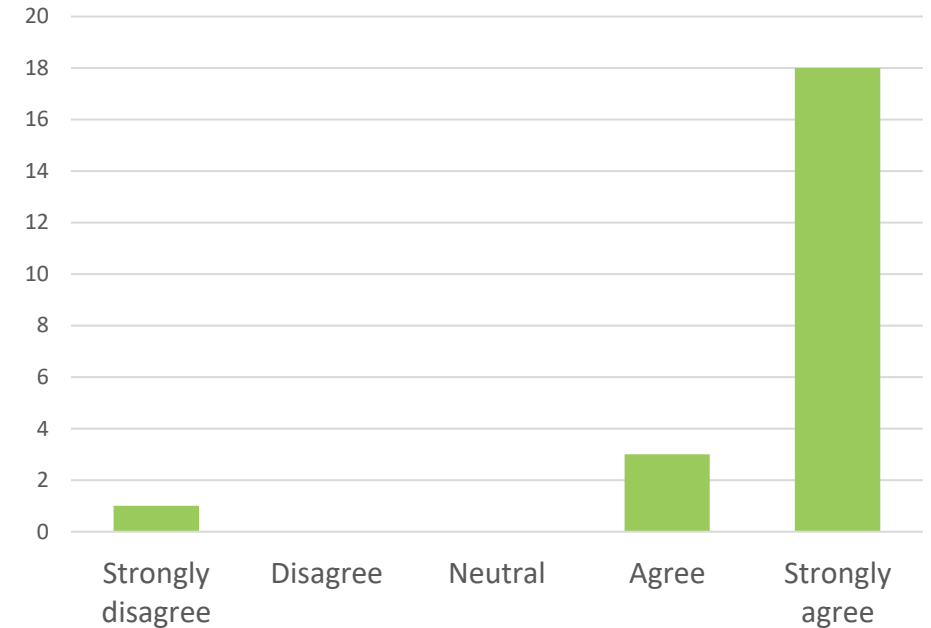
Results

How do local stakeholders perceive the inclusion of residents?

“It was an important input, to see on which issues residents would have a positive attitude towards the implementation.”

“Very important, however more communication has to happen to activate the local population as well, communication, communication, communication.”

I find it important that the opinion of the residents towards the visions, was taken up in the survey



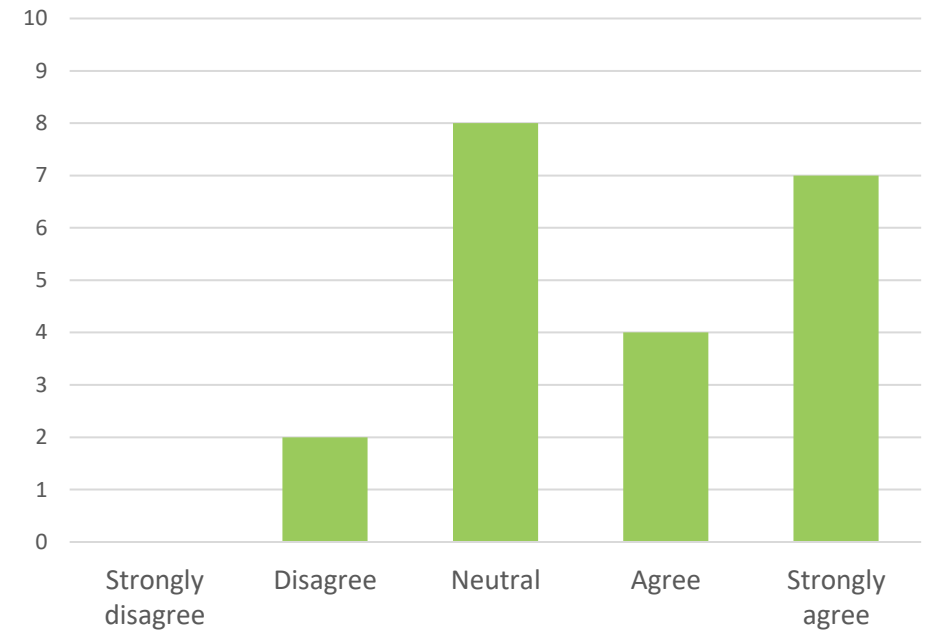
Results

How do local stakeholders use the feedback of the residents?

"Specific link between the group discussions and survey results was sometimes difficult to establish."

"One should always keep public opinion in mind, regarding public appeals or votes, on the other hand, it should not be the main issues during project development."

The results of the survey with residents supported the development of transition pathways.



Discussion

Inclusion of residents in transition management process

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local stakeholders highly valued the involvement of residents → provides direction• Residents judged the transition process and visions positively → could enhance legitimacy and transparency• Survey can be a tool to make the transition process public and gather support for 'transition networks' (i.e., individuals that want to support the implementation of projects).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local stakeholders found it difficult to use the feedback of the residents → maybe more guidance from researchers is needed.• Positive feedback on visions should not be mistaken as support for concrete projects (i.e. the transition experiments).• Few residents showed up at subsequent events → more communication necessary

Thank you!

Project website:

https://www.cde.unibe.ch/research/projects/local_energy_transition_experiments_for_a_low_carbon_society/index_eng.html



References

- Avelino, F. (2009). Empowerment and the challenge of applying transition management to ongoing projects. *Policy Sciences*, 42(4), 369. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-009-9102-6>
- Avelino, F. (2017). Power in Sustainability Transitions: Analysing power and (dis)empowerment in transformative change towards sustainability. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 27(6), 505–520. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.1777>
- Hölscher, K., Avelino, F., & Wittmayer, J. M. (2018). Empowering Actors in Transition Management in and for Cities. In N. Frantzeskaki, K. Hölscher, M. Bach, & F. Avelino (Eds.), *Co-creating Sustainable Urban Futures* (Vol. 11, pp. 131–158). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69273-9_4
- Ingold, K., Stadelmann-Steffen, I., & Kammermann, L. (2019). The acceptance of instruments in instrument mix situations: Citizens' perspective on Swiss energy transition. *Research Policy*, 48(10), 103694. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2018.10.018>
- Nevens, F., Frantzeskaki, N., Gorissen, L., & Loorbach, D. (2013). Urban Transition Labs: co-creating transformative action for sustainable cities. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 50, 111-122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2012.12.001>
- Roorda, C., Wittmayer, J., Hennemann, P., Van Steenbergen, F., Frantzeskaki, N., & Loorbach, D. (2014). *Transition management in the urban context: Guidance manual*. RIFT, Erasmus University Rot-terdam, Rotterdam. https://drift.eur.nl/app/uploads/2016/11/DRIFT-Transition_management_in_the_urban_context-guidance_manual.pdf
- Smith, A., & Stirling, A. (2010). The Politics of Social-ecological Resilience and Sustainable Socio-technical Transitions. *Ecology and Society*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-03218-150111>
- Wittmayer, J. M., van Steenbergen, F., Rok, A., & Roorda, C. (2015). Governing sustainability: a dialogue between Local Agenda 21 and transition management. *Local Environment*, 21(8), 939-955. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2015.1050658>

Images:

- Jungfrauzeitung [Image] (2011). Einsprachen gegen Biomasse Jungfrau. <https://www.jungfrauzeitung.ch/artikel/112235/>
- Überparteiliches Komitee gegen das Stromfresser-Gesetz (ÜKSG). (2023). Downloads. <https://stromfresser-gesetz-nein.ch/downloads/>