

CENTRE FOR DEVELOPME AND ENVIRONMENT 8th Network of Early Career Researchers in Sustainability Transitions Conference 2023 Re-imagining Transitions – Beyond established methods and concepts

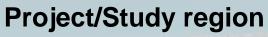
# Embedding the unembedded – How to involve residents in local transition management processes?



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Local Energy Transition
Experiments for a low-carbon
society transformation — Piloting a
transition management process in
the Bernese Alps (CH)

We <u>initiate</u>, <u>implement</u>, and <u>evaluate</u> 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



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## Theoretical background

## Transition Management

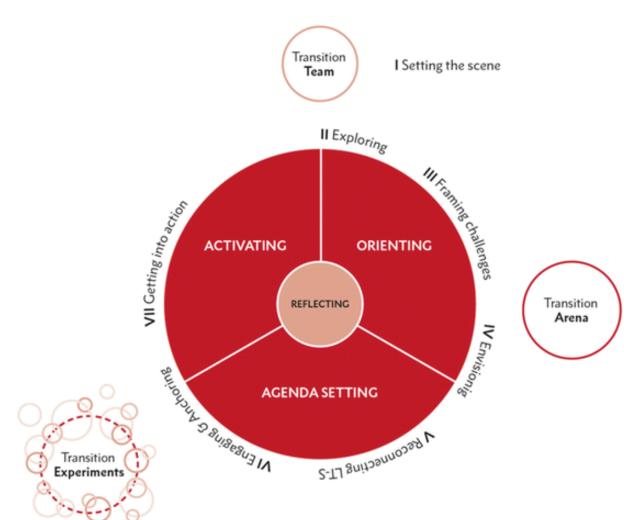
Transition management offers guidance on how to set up a:

"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).





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# Theoretical background

Support of local population is key

Social acceptance by local residents is key for sustainability transtions (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.

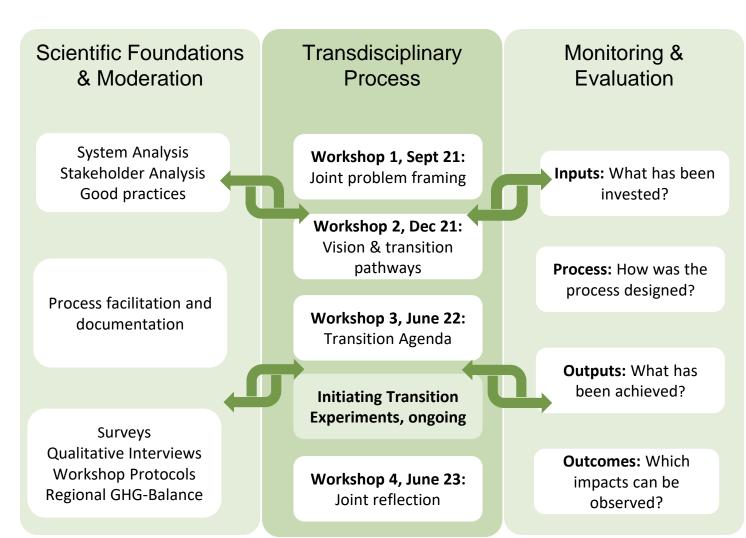
Bildmontage: Biomasse Jungfrau AG



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# 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

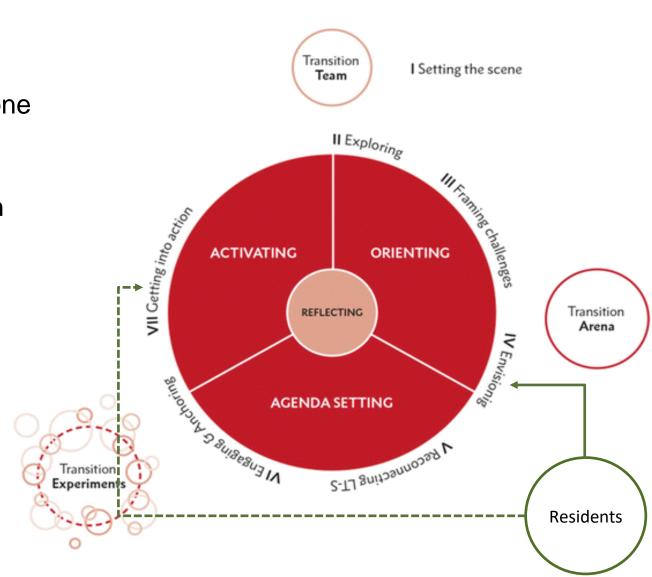


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## Research questions

- 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?

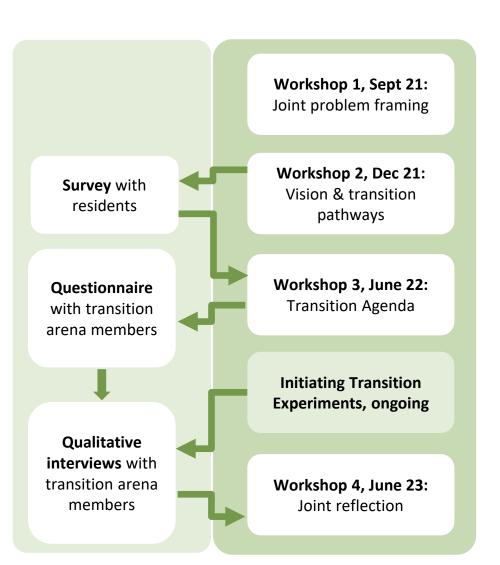


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## Data & methods

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CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMEN AND ENVIRONMENT 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

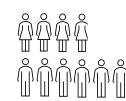
No. of Respondents

Mean age

54 years

Gender

519





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## Results

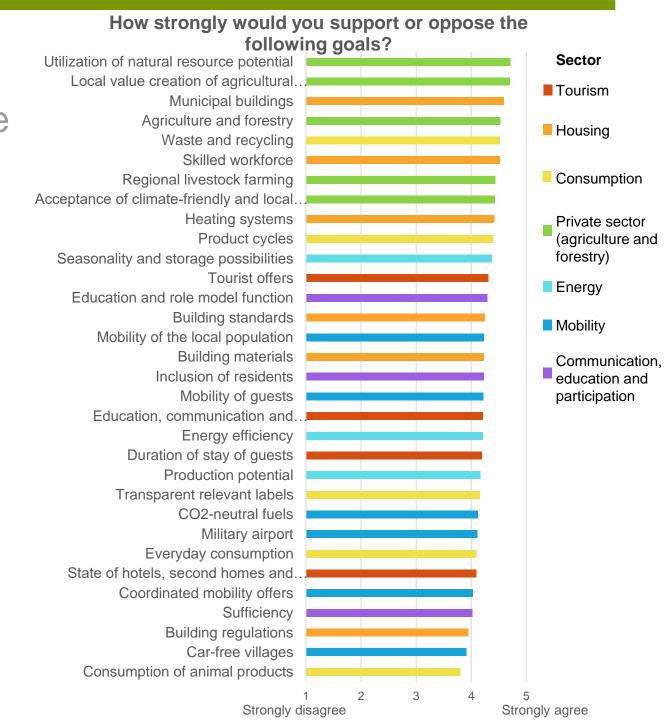
How do residents perceive the visioning done by local stakeholders?

- 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.

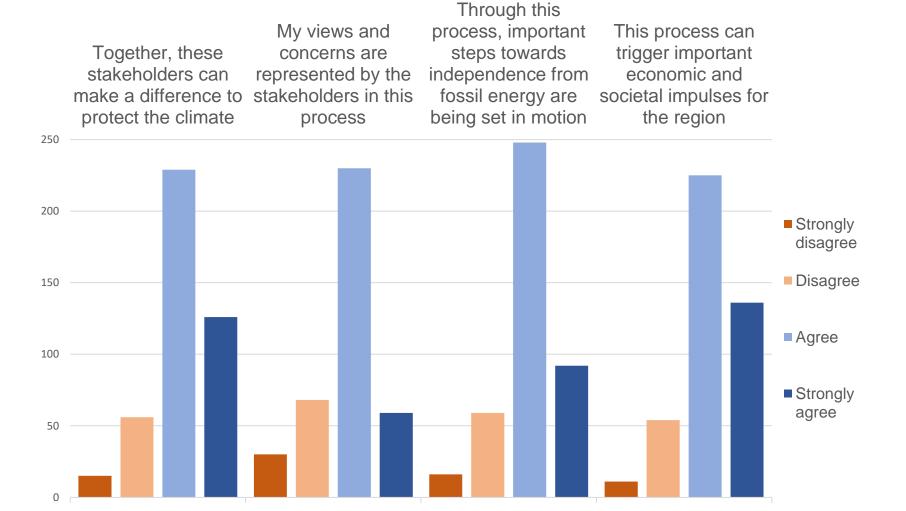


## Results

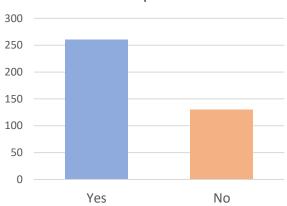
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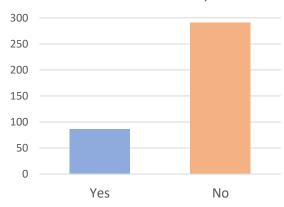
# How do residents evaluate the transition process?



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)?





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## Results

Use of input from residents in workshop

## Sector Housing

#### **Visions**

Priorities based on assessment

#### **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.

#### GHG Reduct. Synergies Residents

#### **Building materials**

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

## Reduct. Synergies Residents

#### **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.

#### GHG Reduct. Synergies Residents

#### 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

#### **Transition pathways**

Step 2: Define standards and share

knowledge

Step 3: Establish

incentives

Step 2: Create binding regulations

Step 3: Establish

incentives

Step 1: Create easily accessible knowledge hubs

Step 3: Realize lighthouse projects

Step 2: Climateneutrality integrated in professionals' education

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



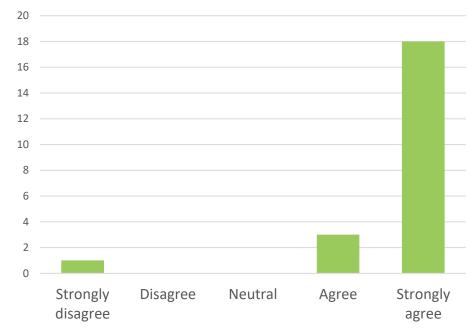
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## Results

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 the residents towards the visions, was taken up in the survey





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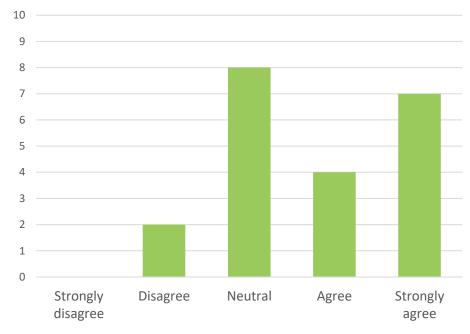
## Results

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.





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## Discussion

## Inclusion of residents in transition management process

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul> <li>Local stakeholders highly valued the involvement of residents → provides direction</li> <li>Residents judged the transition process and visions positively → could enhance legitimacy and transparency</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Local stakeholders found it difficult to use     the feedback of the residents → maybe     more guidance from researchers is     needed.</li> </ul>
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> <li>Positive feedback on visions should not be mistaken as support for concrete projects (i.e. the transition experiments).</li> <li>Few residents showed up at subsequent events → more communication necessary</li> </ul>



# Thank you!

#### **Project website:**

https://www.cde.unibe.ch/research/projects/local\_energy\_transit\_ion\_experiments\_for\_a\_low\_carbon\_society/index\_eng.html





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