

The Energy Citizens for Inclusive Decarbonization (INCLUDE) Academy

What

The INCLUDE Academy is a six-month, online leadership development and civic engagement program for decarbonization¹. It will bring together changemakers from across Europe, Africa and Canada in virtual sessions to help them drive change by honing their individual leadership and collective organization skills and by helping them connect to one another and to experts in the energy transition beyond the scope of the program itself. It aims to help people who are interested in making a change in their own communities in order to reduce carbon emissions. It is for people who want support in realizing concrete ideas they already have related to the energy transition, or for those who would like to find that idea. The course will be structured around the Design Thinking² methodology and will apply related methods to achieve the transformation of energy systems at individual, collective, regional and national scales. We bring the theory and concepts; you bring in the action!

Who

Participants will come from different regional and cultural backgrounds, including those from communities that are usually not involved in or sometimes excluded from energy transition discussions. We target two levels of participation:

Leadership participation – Those who intend to initiate a project linked to the energy transition with the help of the INCLUDE Academy and/or those who are already carrying out these activities. Leadership participants will be attending all modules and activities related to the INCLUDE Academy and will be committed to realizing on-the-ground actions as part of their participation in the program.

Casual participation – Those who are interested in getting involved with energy transition/citizenship activities but have not gotten started yet. Casual participants will participate in plenary sessions and will have access to all online resources provided as part of the Academy but can choose not to take part in the group work foreseen in two of the five modules.

¹ Decarbonization is the reduction of carbon dioxide (CO₂) output into the atmosphere from human activity, with the eventual goal of eliminating them. In practice, getting to zero net emissions requires shifting from fossil fuels to alternative low-carbon energy sources, but can include many other activities, such as providing access to low-carbon sources of energy to those who do not have adequate fuel access and energy efficiency measures.

² Design thinking methodology is a way of defining complex problems clearly and coming up with creative solutions to them that has been used widely by businesses all over the world. We are applying this approach for solving societal problems.

Why

Leadership participants will:

- Enhance their own sense of individual and collective efficacy by becoming adept at using design thinking methods for developing and implementing decarbonization initiatives
- Develop or continue developing an implementation plan for their own communities on how to realize existing plans of action supporting energy citizenship
- Start or continue the implementation of existing projects using tools introduced in the Academy
- Receive mentoring and peer support from experts and other community leaders
- Share experiences on common challenges and access to best practices
- Networking and connecting with others sharing similar ideas and visions for the future
- Receive a certificate of competence for design thinking training related to the energy transition

Casual participants will:

- Receive an introduction to the energy transition and their possible role in systems transformation (Module 1 and 2)
- Receive community support for getting started in energy citizenship activities
- Learn and explore their own role within the energy transition
- Receive a certificate of participation

How

The Academy will be made up of five modules. The modules will start in September 2022 and end in April 2023.

Time commitment - On average, the time commitment for leadership participants is expected to be around 5 hours/week, but there will be more or less intense weeks depending on the circumstances of the project you want to realize. The time commitment for casual participants is self-determined, but we expect that a minimum commitment of viewing all online inputs is required.

Three of these modules will take place in real time with all participants while two modules will be group/individual work, supported by facilitators and mentors. Casual participants may choose not to take part in these group work modules. Each module will be structured as an introduction to a new step of design thinking, paired with a particular topic related to the energy transition. Video modules will be made available for specific themes at the start of the Academy.

Language – It is very helpful if participants are able to understand English, though speaking and writing abilities are not absolutely necessary. The plenary discussions will take place in English, but our videos will be subtitled in a variety of additional languages of leadership participants (e.g., North Macedonian, Greek, etc.). Small group discussions will be organized on the basis of common interest and/or challenges related to energy transition issues. Additionally, considerations of language will be taken into account such to ease communication within small group settings.

Learn and practice problem solving for an inclusive energy transition

Modules

1. Introduction to Design Thinking for Change
2. Finding the right problems to solve
3. Finding solutions for an inclusive energy transition
4. Realizing solutions together for an inclusive energy transition
5. Presenting our solutions and getting feedback



Learn about aspects of an inclusive energy transition

Modules

1. What energy citizenship is and how it relates to energy transition
2. Energy access and availability
3. Energy affordability and renewable energy
4. Energy acceptability and changing behavior

Module descriptions

Module 1 – “Introduction to Design Thinking for Change” (Plenary in real-time) // “What is energy citizenship and how does it relate to the energy transition?”

- Produce a common understanding of the issues based on perceptions and personal context of the participants.
- Storytelling of shared and differentiated needs.
- Define goals of participation for the Academy.
- Systems mapping of community context, connecting individual and collective scales of action.

Module 2 – “Finding the right problems to solve” (Plenary in real-time) // “Aspects of an inclusive energy transition – energy access and availability”

- Working in groups or individually, participants will define a specific problem that they would like to work on.
- Problem statements will be related back to the needs and goals defined in Module 1, as well as explore how they are exhibited at various scales of action (individual, collective, regional/national).

Module 3 – “Finding solutions for an inclusive energy transition” (Group work, flexible timing) // “Aspects of an inclusive energy transition – energy affordability and renewable energy”

- Groups/individuals will produce a problem statement.
- Groups will brainstorm a set of initial ideas for how to approach the defined problem.

Module 4 – “Realizing solutions together for an inclusive energy transition” (Group work, flexible timing) // “Aspects of an inclusive energy transition – energy acceptability and changing behavior”

- Groups/individuals will refine ideas based on input from mentors and peers.
- Groups/individuals will generate an implementation plan for realizing ideas.
- Groups/individuals will implement ideas to the extent possible matching time and context.

Module 5 - “Presenting our solutions and getting feedback” (Plenary in real-time)

- Groups/individuals will report on implementation process.
- Outcomes-in-progress are presented (depending on the COVID situation, there is a possibility for organizing in-person presentation at various locations).

Eligibility

Leadership participants will show motivation and commitment based on previous work done in areas related to energy or citizenship, including topics such as poverty and community development. They will be expected to commit to the full amount of time in the Academy. We will limit this group of participants to 25-30 people.

Casual participants will be open to any and all who have interest in the topic.

For all participants, we are looking for a gender-balanced, diverse group of people from all ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, ages and coming from different walks of life.

More about the H2020 ENCLUDE project

The overall vision of the European Commission-funded Horizon 2020 “Energy Citizens for Inclusive Decarbonization (ENCLUDE)” project is to help the European Union (EU) fulfil its promise of a just and inclusive decarbonization pathway through sharing and co-creating new knowledge and practices that maximize the number and diversity of citizens who are willing and able to contribute to the energy transition. The ENCLUDE Consortium consists of twelve European partners and one Canadian partner. The partners’ institutions are leading universities, research institutes, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and a nongovernmental organization. ENCLUDE is dedicated not only to the co-creation of new knowledge with stakeholders about the emergence and consolidation of energy citizenship but also to the uptake of this knowledge to mobilize action for decarbonization, taking into account the interests and struggles of diverse citizen groups, including vulnerable and underrepresented communities, which are not usually invited or expected to participate in these civic processes.

Find us here: <https://encludeproject.eu>

Get in touch with us on LinkedIn ([ENCLUDE](#)) or Twitter ([@encludeproject](#))

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