May, 2022

DIGITALISATION & RESILIENT RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN CLOUGHJORDAN ECOVILLAGE, IRELAND

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Cloughjordan Ecovillage was developed 10 years ago, bringing an influx of residents with high levels of skills, capability and education, and a subsequent increase of enterprise and remote working to an area with low population density and few employment opportunities. The Living Lab spotlights a community enterprise centre within the Ecovillage, with the focal question: how can digitalisation support local livelihoods that contribute to rural regeneration and assist in the transition to a low carbon society?

Stakeholders recognise threats to global supply chains due to shocks caused by environmental, economic, and political factors, and have identified the need to strengthen local supply chains. This would support livelihoods for local producers, artisans, and service providers, reinvigorate the local economy and support regional resilience. They also recognise the need to reduce travel, in line with the global need to cut fossil fuel emissions, and aim to work remotely where possible.

The enterprise centre houses a community owned digital fabrication studio, a new digital farmers market, a digital media studio, and a large event space, and functions as a co-working hub, while supporting the incubation and development of innovative projects. As well as the physical users of the building, many

Living Lab
Scottish Crofting Community
Key Digital Technologies
Digital connectivity, digital platforms
Keywords
Digitalisation; rural; crofting; community
More info: https://www.coigach-assynt.org/, https://desira2020.eu/rural-scotland-united-kingdom/

other stakeholders are connected via digital platforms and peer to peer global networks which share information and skills.

The most significant impacts of digitalisation on the system relate to these innovative projects, that are at the core of the centre's activities. A number of past and present projects would have been inconceivable without digitalisation. Digitalisation has also created global peer to peer networks that share information and skills, which has led to an increase in citizen-led innovation, and allowed regional start-ups to benefit from global experience. This has created a change to the nature of many local livelihoods. Other impacts relate to a reduction in travel to work, which was enabled by the advent of collaborative platforms, and amplified by the pandemic response. This contributes to a reduction in carbon emissions, rural repopulation, and strengthening of local economies, as well as improved quality of life.