

# Synthesis of thematic reflections and construction of a shared vision of a just ecological transition

following the 2024 Stakeholders Assembly of the CoRe Programme  
"Resilient Communities for a Just Ecological Transition"



Transition  
Ecologique  
Juste

The Stakeholder Assembly brings together all the programme's partners every two years, with the aim of building a shared vision of the Just Ecological Transition supported by the collective, and nurturing the partners' practices.

The work carried out at these meetings feeds into the reflections of the Strategic Committee, which in turn will propose a summary document setting out the vision.

The first Stakeholders Assembly in June 2022 was largely devoted to getting to know the partners, the projects they are involved in and the regional dynamics underway. It served to develop a sense of belonging, to lay the foundations for governance and to get to grips with the cross-cutting aspects of the programme, such as capitalisation and research.

The objectives of the second Stakeholders Assembly in May 2024 were to examine in greater depth the issues that make up a Just Ecological Transition, to pool the partners' work on these issues and to identify synergies, avenues of work and elements of a shared vision.

The process of **building a** shared **vision** of a Just Ecological Transition is inherently iterative. This vision is enriched and structured by the circulation between empirical know-how, theoretical knowledge, and the organisations and individuals who make up the collective, in different regions and at different scales.

In this Assembly of Stakeholders, we have chosen to approach the work from two angles, the **HOW** (how we build the vision) and the **WHAT** (what is our vision of a just ecological transition).

This summary will therefore follow the following logic:

1/ **HOW** can we collectively build a shared vision?

2/ **WHAT**: What are the elements that bring us together and that we wish to defend together, and what are the elements that differentiate or even oppose us and that we wish to continue to explore or deepen? What are our operating methods, what are the levers of change that we are activating and that are enabling the transition?

# 1/ HOW?

=> **Be inspired, feel, gather: a vision that is part of a personal and collective commitment**

<b>Inspiring testimonials</b>	Monday morning	Presentation Aravind <a href="#">Presentation Luiza</a>
<b>TEJ proposals</b>	Monday morning	Presentation Alexandre / Kurt / Marion <a href="#">Presentation</a>
<b>Spiritual times</b>	Throughout the week	Texts

It emerged from the discussions and presentations that a just ecological transition is experienced as a commitment, and that it has a central political dimension. For many, it can be based on the text of Laudato Si, but not exclusively. This commitment is based on shared values such as hope, resistance, courage, compassion, love and a sense of community.

The role of women, whether through their struggles, their ability to "take care of" or to "pass on" knowledge and culture, appears to be decisive in this transition.

The fight for respect for fundamental rights is an essential part of this commitment, whether in relation to the State or private players. It is essential to ensure that rights to local resources and forests are respected, to oppose forced relocations, to respect prior consultation, etc...

The link with and respect for Mother Earth is essential, because it is she who generates life.

This raises the question of the urgency and radical nature of action: should we limit ourselves to adaptation strategies, or should we change our model or paradigm? What form should our struggles take?

It is imperative to respect the complexity and diversity of viewpoints and not to propose a single, mechanical, Eurocentric model. This implies a reflection in the terms and concepts used.

## => Living and working together

<b>Drawing up an operating charter</b>	Monday afternoon	<a href="#">Workshop report</a>
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The aim is to propose a system that will enable us to be vigilant about the power relationships that can run through our collective and enable everyone to feel comfortable and included.

Although the tools used will have to be perfected in the future, the introduction of the charter has enabled us to question our practices and to highlight situations of inequality and power relations that we need to change... This process is essential if we are to build a strong and inclusive collective (taking into account intersectionality, relationships between partners, etc.).

## => Networking

<b>Forum on relationship assessment</b>	Monday afternoon	<a href="#">Forum summary</a> <a href="#">Preliminary survey results</a>
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The survey carried out by the university partners (Institut de Sciences Politiques and Institut de recherche pour le développement) on the main principles of a just ecological transition shows that there is real convergence within the CoRe programme. Since the programme was launched, this convergence has focused increasingly on the importance given to the imperative of justice. Equality and the role of each individual are then put forward to achieve it. They reflect the importance given to the principles of empowerment, collective commitment and individual involvement in a just ecological transition.

However, here again, different models of ecological transition are emerging between regional *clusters*<sup>1</sup>. In the literature, there are three main transition models:

- green growth
- planned sobriety
- paradigm shift

<sup>1</sup> Cluster is the word used by researchers to represent the dynamics of players on a regional scale.

None of the clusters fit strictly into one of these models, and the visions are much more diverse. They seem less clear-cut, as if it were difficult to express a preference for what should be implemented first.

### => Keep the programme animated

<b>Strategic Committee</b>	Monday morning Friday afternoon	<a href="#">Conclusion of the Assembly by COSTRA</a>
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The CoRe programme has set up a **Strategic Committee** whose tasks are to :

- build and validate the vision of a just ecological transition, based on research, capitalisation, experiments and field projects, as well as on the work of the analysis groups on the programme's 4 strategic axis
- set the broad guidelines for the next phase of the CoRe programme

The Strategic Committee is made up of appointed members :

- Benoit-Xavier Lorida - Director of International Action and Advocacy, Secours Catholique - Caritas France
- Jean Merckaert - Director of the Action and Advocacy France Department of Secours Catholique Caritas France
- The Head of International Advocacy at Secours Catholique Caritas France (currently Acting Head Marion Wintergerst)
- One research representative (alternately CIEDEL and GEMDEV)
- A representative of CCFD, an allied NGO working on issues that converge with ours and with experience of a CPP.

Members representing the partners, appointed collectively by the partners for each geographical area:

- Bibiana Rodriguez - SNPS CC - Colombia, representing the Latin America region
- Abbé Etienne Ndong - Caritas Kaolack, representing the Sahel region
- Dr. Arook Toppo - Caritas Bangladesh, representing Asia
- Suheir Farraj - TAM - Palestine

This committee has been meeting every two months since July 2023, and has begun a cycle of reflexion around the notions of Transition, Ecology and Justice. Holding this second Stakeholder Assembly is an important milestone in the life of this committee. It provides an opportunity :

- for the group of partners and participants : to visualise the committee, to give it legitimacy and confidence, and to understand its role and mandate

- on the other hand, the committee itself becomes aware of the scope of its mission and acknowledges its commitment and its position in relation to the collective.

Throughout the Stakeholders' Assembly, the Strategic Committee adopted a "meta" position to feed its work and its reflexions, a position of observer to analyse the dynamics at work and to extract the basic elements to build a common vision.

The Strategic Committee was thus able to observe and highlight the substantial progress made since the start of the programme in terms of the collective dynamic, the structuring of governance, inter-knowledge and the desire to work together. Different obstacles such as languages, operational difficulties and the lack of a real common strategy still seem to be present.

The very acceptance and understanding of what an ecological transition is, therefore, remains extremely heterogeneous within the collective.

## 2/ WHAT?

A just ecological transition to which the players in the collective aspire can be illustrated in a **"matrix"** fashion.

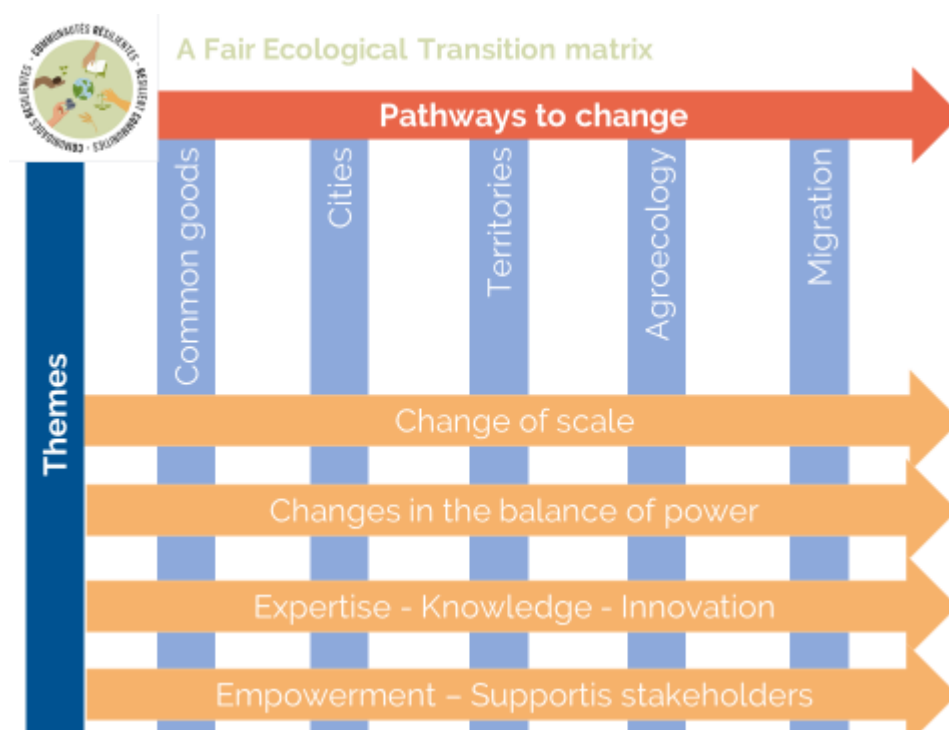
This approach is the one that was favoured in writing the note of intent (NIONG: Note d'Intention ONG, which is the reference document for the CoRe programme, submitted to AFD in 2021). Until now, it has been described in narrative form, and we propose a schematic visualisation here.

The aim of this representation is to make it easier to understand the choices and the proceedings of the Stakeholder Assembly, and to visualise how the different exchanges fit into an overall reflexion.

Note that :

- the themes are those associated with regional dynamics and which the projects and experiments in CoRe address (sometimes one or more themes)
- the paths of change are the methods of action or operating modes found in CoRe projects and experiments (one or more paths depending on the case). These are also the changes that were chosen as the object of study in the analysis groups on the strategic axes

The components of vision can be represented as follows:

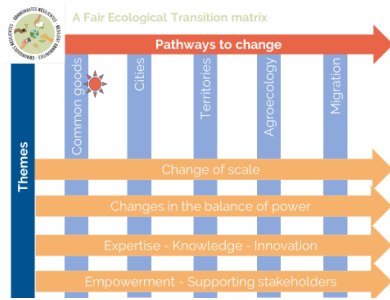


During this second Stakeholders' Meeting, we have chosen to follow this matrix approach and to go into greater depth on certain aspects of it, to identify what brings us together and what we want to defend together, but also what differentiates us and what we want to continue to explore or go into in greater depth, Finally, we wanted to identify what enriches and nourishes us mutually.

It should be remembered that at the first Assembly of Stakeholders held in 2022, a collective effort was made to identify the target to be achieved for a just ecological transition and the paths to get there. The paths for change identified were very similar to those proposed here.



## 2.1 - THEMATICS



=> Common goods

Tuesday morning	<a href="#">Synthesis of the workshop</a>
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Today, we are faced with the question of how to reconcile the essential needs of each individual to ensure their fulfilment, with the planetary limits of what our environment can offer. Faced with this question, and with the duality between resources that belong to the State and those that belong to the private sector, the commons allow us to open up a **third way**, with other ways of perceiving what we call resources, other ways of living and working together.

Several objectives are proposed during this session:

1. Consensus collectively a vision/culture culture of common goods
2. Exchanging and learning from experiences between partners

Regional approaches continue to vary widely, but it is interesting to note that acceptance of the term 'common good' by the different partners crystallises **around water, forests, air, land and seeds**. The partners insist on the need to consider them as common goods and not as resources, a term that would imply the possibility of attributing ownership to one or more entities.

The South American partners also insist on taking account of **ancestral knowledge, traditions and know-how** as common assets. This is expressed in a different way by the Asian partners, who focus on the spirituality of indigenous peoples.

Partners operating in urban areas, particularly in India, mention **access to shade, unpolluted air and a liveable climate**, and **safe public space and shelter** as common goods.

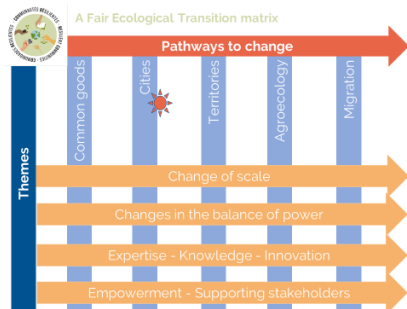
However, more than the management of these commons, and alternative modes of governance (as opposed to exclusively public or exclusively private management, the third approach studied by Elinor Ostrom and mentioned in the introduction), what brings the partners together is **the defense of** these commons.

En effet most of them are deprived of it, either because of the deterioration in their quality (pollution, climate change, loss of biodiversity...), the decrease in their quantity (conflit of use, climate change) or simply because they are impossible to access (land pressure in connection with intensive agriculture, deforestation, mining extractivism, laws in connection with agro-industry with regard to seeds for example, territorial conflits)

**What the partners are demanding first and foremost is access to these common goods, which for the vast majority of them means defending the right to and access to territories.**

Several types of response, although not exhaustive, are proposed and shared:

- In Latin America, the issue of common property management has been systematised, in order to have a common narrative on the right to territory based on existing regulations.
- In Asia, the idea is to create a regional platform that would identify violations of land rights as well as existing legal frameworks in the different countries. The challenge is to include people who are affected in order to develop stronger recommendations with them, such as the promotion of the "right to land". The advocacy skills of farmers and community leaders should be strengthened
- In Asia, in the urban environment, common goods must be better considered and integrated into urban planning. The urban commons must be better referenced, analysed and valued, in order to rebuild the urban plans of each city. Sustainable and inclusive urban planning, through a better understanding of our natural and transformed urban spaces, and the involvement of communities in the development of urban plans, could be an important lever for protecting the commons in cities.
- In Africa, seed fairs are organised



=> Cities, urban-rural links

Tuesday afternoon

[Synthesis of the workshop](#)

Of all the projects in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East that make up the CoRe programme, four partners have projects in urban areas. Despite this small number, many organisations are working on rural/urban links, at least through the prism of migration or agriculture/food. We cannot think of a just ecological transition without more than half the world's population. In fact, this was the gamble taken when this theme was included in the CoRe programme: réfléchir à une transition écologique juste et intégrale qui prend en compte et défend de manière commune les enjeux urbains et ruraux, sans remettre en cause la diversité et l'unicité de chaque contexte. This session is therefore an invitation to reflect on differences and similarities, but above all to consider transformative links, interactions and levers for action.

The following elements of the vision emerged:

1/ Economic and service links between town and country :

- There is no clear dividing line between urban and rural, it's a continuum.
- It is proposed to stimulate a circular economy including urban areas and their rural surroundings, by creating strong economic links, providing coherent access to services, including waste management, and encouraging the regeneration of ecosystem protection around cities.
- We need to encourage decentralisation and strengthen small and medium-sized towns.

2/ Agriculture and food

- We need to rethink the food supply chain to initiate links between consumers and producers in order to develop short circuits to relocalise production (and ensure food security by creating networks).

### 3/ Migration

- Manage the migration of young people to cities (for work and study)
- Offrir une formation environnementale et une sensibilisation aux questions climatiques, sensibilisation sur les enjeux urbains tels que la surpopulation
- We need to support the creation of stable livelihoods in rural areas (by giving them the "option to stay" if they so wish).
- Limit migration to cities and promote return to rural areas by encouraging public policies that improve the attractiveness of rural areas, particularly for young people (by offering them the "right to stay" through decent livelihoods and land security).

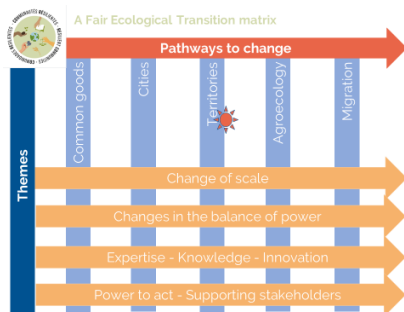
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### 4/Culture and education

- Strengthen education, particularly for young people (for example, to promote family farming or to raise awareness of waste issues).
- Raising awareness of the farming profession, encouraging a change of perspective to make the most of it and make me as noble as anyone else.
- Initiate better communication/dialogue between the urban and rural populations to share experiences and break down stereotypes (proposal to exchange daily lives for a few months to discover the urban/rural area).
- Awareness-raising and dialogue in the city to promote cultural integration and prevent the loss of cultural identity due to discrimination against migrants from rural areas in the cities.

### Methods of action

- Mobilising and empowering communities
- Establishing efficient and inclusive governance



=> Territories

Wednesay morning	<a href="#">Workshop report</a>
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The place of indigenous peoples and their role in an ecological transition are central: because they have this sacred and interdependent link with nature, they act and govern their territories with a view to protecting the forest, different resources and common goods, by refusing to overexploit them. Indigenous peoples help to preserve 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity, even though they represent only 5 to 6% of the world's population and occupy less than a quarter of the Earth's surface.

The vision elements are as follows:

**Group level :**

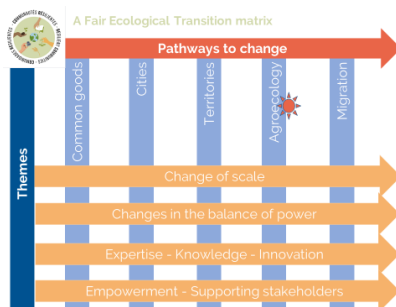
- Importance of awareness-raising/community mobilisation, advocacy and access to rights
- Interest in the strategies and working methods presented and used in various contexts: participatory mapping, for example.
- The importance of traditional skills, the connection with nature and alternative lifestyles,

**Societal level :**

- Respecting, recognising and learning from indigenous peoples. In most contexts, it is necessary to take into account the notions of spirituality and integral ecology. Community experience is the basis and must be documented, taking care not to fall into a romantic and idealised vision. Affirming our solidarity with indigenous peoples
- Land issues, securing and defending territories in the face of uncoordinated economic challenges: similar situations of land grabbing and mega-projects have been observed in all the indigenous territories supported by CoRe's partners. The importance of community mobilisation and the civic participation of local people and players must be emphasised, with particular attention paid to women and young people. Support should also be given to advocacy initiatives led by indigenous peoples, not by intermediaries.

## Questions :

- A question of scale and ambition? Constant to-ing and fro-ing between local action and collective ambition
- The question of transition? Who transits? This term does not speak to indigenous peoples
- The commodification of nature: asserting our opposition
- The link between patriarchy and capitalism, and the impact on women
- Questioning false good energy solutions, for example (how the promotion of electric mobility has repercussions on extractivism).
- Taking account of the spiritual challenges of ecological transformation



=> Agroecology and food

Wednesday afternoon

[Workshop report](#)

The following elements of a fair ecological vision and avenues for advocacy emerged:

- Educating young people/ Building skills in agro-ecology. Public funding to support education.
- Raising awareness among public authorities and society.
- Supporting agro-ecology in public policy.
- **Reflexion around organic, farmers' seeds and focus on non-reproducible seeds.**
- Campaigns against agro-industrial lobbies
- Strengthening the role of women: promoting agro-ecology and access to land.
- Inputs: public policies can promote organic inputs and limit the use of pesticides, synthetic products and GMOs
- Recognition of agri-ecological products and fair and equitable access to markets (e.g. school canteens).
- Respect land issues: access to resources and land recognition.
- Recognition of family farming, which ensures food security
- Promoting access to water for all.
- Denouncing the impact of climate change and promoting adaptation policies on food systems
- Denounce and improve unequal trade agreements (e.g. EU-MERCOSUR) that penalise farmers in both the "South" and the "North".
- Combating land grabbing, particularly in indigenous territories (ILO Convention 169)

The following questions were raised:

How can we integrate the subject of managing the commons: land and forests, seed houses, water? Make the link between urban and rural in terms of circuits and waste management.

How to overcome the obstacles: monoculture model, chemical agriculture, land pressure, land grabbing. Insecurity (areas of armed conflict). Dominant patriarchal model (unequal access to land, decision-making, income-sharing).

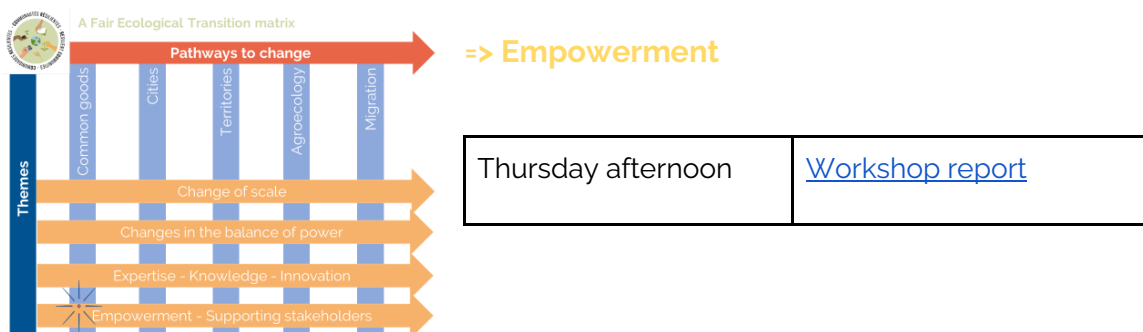
The battle over ideas needs to be intensified: beware of the terms "sustainable" growth and "clean" energy. If we want to reduce our carbon footprint, what are we giving up? Links between companies and governments, pesticide companies, processed food companies, etc.

One lever would be legal recognition of agroecology and encouragement for its deployment, public policies in support of agroecology. Encourage demand through purchases by local and national authorities (canteens, local markets, etc.). Why not a food security system (like social security), fight against chemical products, including illicit ones?

local governance with stakeholder participation.

Include all the costs of food (environment, health, etc.) in the debate (see the SCCF study on hidden food costs in France).

## 2.2 - PATHS OF CHANGE



Empowerment and its development is a key issue in the CoRe programme.

We share the idea that, in order to reduce inequalities, it is necessary to strengthen the capacities of individuals and groups acting within their territories, to reach out to them and support them, so that the "beneficiary" populations are able to be actors in their own development, to speak out and take responsibility for defending the effectiveness of their rights, to be actors in the development of their territories and the reasoned management of their resources.

In the CoRe collective, expertise in the logic of social transformation and the development of the power to act are present at all levels:

- strengthening the players who are closest to the community
- strengthening communities that take action to defend their rights

As part of the CoRe programme, this strengthening of the players is designed to serve the just ecological transition.

We therefore felt it was important to share **the different approaches and visions** of the programme's partners on empowerment.

A few examples were shared:

The **CIEDEL**, for example, by supporting certain partners in the processes of which in turn will support the communities.

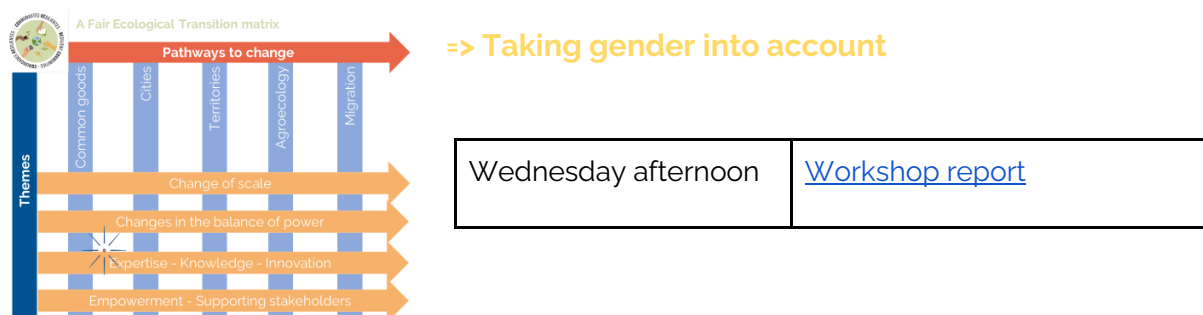
**IGSSS** works with a **community-led development** approach, going out to meet people, starting with what they know and empowering them by building on their needs. The key concepts of community-led development are: opportunities, resources, value systems, wisdom and change. The aim is to strengthen community institutions, avoid creating parallel structures and encourage peer coordinators and young people involved in advocacy work.



**Caritas Kaolack** focuses on raising awareness of the problems encountered. This involves training teams, requires knowledge of what has been experienced elsewhere, and highlighting what has been learned. A progress monitoring system is needed to measure transformations.

The **SCCF** has developed a pedagogy of **Accompaniment for Local Social Change** (ACSL), and is adopting the **Change Oriented Approach** (COA).

We also wanted to take a step back and look at our practices, as partners in the programme, to find out what is holding us back from strengthening our own power to act and what we can do to develop it. In this way, by effet mirroring, we will be able to change the way we look at empowering the communities we support.



The acquisition of certain types of expertise, the circulation of knowledge within the group and innovation in projects are all factors of change that we have an intuition for.

At the crossroads of these paths to change lies the gender approach.

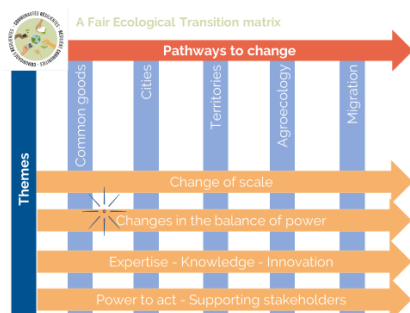
In effet, it is legitimate to wonder about the place of women in the transmission of knowledge, but also about the vulnerabilities they may experience in accessing knowledge.

Furthermore, in order to understand and address specific vulnerabilities and make the most of their know-how, the organisations that support the communities seem to need to have the necessary expertise.

There is a working group which is specifically addressing this issue (Axis 3 of the strategic axes of analysis), and which will deliver its analyses in the first half of 2025. However, the Assembly of Stakeholders has also endeavoured to bring out common reflexions on taking gender into account in the CoRe programme.

Here are the conclusions of the discussions:

- 1- The gender perspective must be an integral part of the way our organisation functions as a collective, but also of our intentions and our exchanges. It is our role as organisations to support this.
- 2- The gender perspective must be taken into account across the board, at all stages of projects, from consultation, planning and implementation to evaluation. The gender issue should be integrated into all projects.
- 3 - As a CoRe collective, we need to set ourselves common guidelines/common frame of reference: what is the gender perspective for us? How do we conceptualise it? We can't agree on everything, but we can choose common guidelines.
- 4 - These guidelines should not impose constraints, but open up opportunities, taking into account the diversity of contexts and gender issues present in the different territories of the programme. Whatever the region, we need to understand the power relationships and the place of men and women in local contexts.



### 3.3- Influence

Wednesday afternoon

[Workshop report](#)

In order to work towards a just ecological transition on a larger scale, it is not only important to implement concrete actions on the ground, but it is also necessary to create structural changes. To this end, one of the aims of the CoRe programme is to establish a common influence strategy in order to strengthen the impact of the différents members. The purpose of this workshop was to start laying the foundations for this strategy.

# CONCLUSION

The consensus at the end of this week and all the work that followed is that defending the rights of indigenous peoples and territories is central to a just ecological transition.

**The issue of territories** had already been identified at the last Assembly of Stakeholders. It was formalised as one of the three fundamental rights to be respected in order to achieve a just ecological transition. This rights-based approach was also validated by the Strategic Committee. It is now up to the collective to examine this territory-based approach in greater depth and to specify the focus to be given to this vast and complex approach: land rights and recognition? right to territorial governance? conflicts of use? right to safe and legal migration? right to live in a healthy environment free from pollution? rights of nature?

A change of development model and paradigm also seems essential in everyone's eyes.

To achieve this transition, **gender equality** will be essential and must be systematic.

**The role of influence** is paramount. A multi-scale strategy needs to be devised, and a reflexamination of the different modes of influence needs to be considered, depending on the targets and the different spaces, because we know that democratic space is not equally accessible everywhere. Between more traditional political advocacy, and the construction of **new positive and engaging narratives**, there are several possible positions. It will also be essential to think with other players and work in networks, other civil society organisations, but also to réfléchir action with private and institutional players.

The issue of identity and know-how was highlighted several times in the various workshops. Knowing how to enhance, share and recognise them will be at the heart of the efforts to be made. By putting innovations and traditional and ancestral knowledge into dialogue and into perspective, by recognising the different spiritualities as factors in setting things in motion and as a prism for relationships with others and with nature.

As mentioned above, a proposal to consider a just ecological transition could be translated **by simultaneous and inseparable access** to three bodies of rights:

**- the right to live with dignity from one's work and from the land:** to have a decent income, to have dignified access to food (defence of agro-ecology, social economy, etc.)

**the right to live in the territory of one's choice:** protecting environmental migration, resisting extractivist pressures and land grabbing, living in pollution-free zones, the right to live in safety, the rights of indigenous peoples, the specific role of young people, etc.

**the right to live in connection:** cosmovision, the relationship between the living and the non-living, inclusion, exchange of knowledge, participation in civic life, governance, the specific role of women, gender equality, human rights, social justice, etc.

This proposal was not discussed at the Stakeholders' Meeting, but was approved by the Strategy Committee. It will be further developed and discussed in the coming months.

The debates and workshops highlighted the fact that the right ecological transition can only be approached in a systemic way: even if we try to narrow it down by theme, we can see that the issues are intimately linked. Take, for example, the issue of agriculture, which is closely linked to the issues of food, access to land and other common goods, etc., or the defence of common goods, which touches on territorial management and modes of governance, etc.

The initial intuition is confirmed, as are the words of Pope Francis: "there are not two crises, one social and the other environmental, but a single complex socio-environmental crisis" or "everything is linked".

This makes the responses complex, particularly in terms of how to defend them and how to advocate and influence. These efforts will certainly need to maintain a minimum of thematic approaches. For the rest, and in particular for our modes of action, we will have to do more work on the levers of change.

Among them, **strengthening the power to act of the players**, whether at the level of the organisations or the communities supported, appears to be a central lever clearly identified by all the organisations.