

Impact Report September 2023

# A Just World Where People and Nature Thrive





# Contents

Message from the Chief Executive	4
Our Organisational Goals	6
Impact Highlights & Activity Snapshot	8
Building Movement Power	12
Driving Policy Change	25
Cultivating Our Community	30
Developing Our Organisation	34
Financial Information	36
Thank you	38



# Message from the Chief Executive



## **We need each other, now more than ever**

Dear Friends,

“My name is Oisín and I’m scared.” That’s how I started my speech at the Mary Robinson Climate Conference this year. And I know I’m not alone. The extreme climate events of the last couple of years, the droughts and the deluges, the fires and the floods, represent a moment of breakthrough as well as a moment of breakdown.

For those of us, like the Friends of the Earth community, who have been campaigning on climate action for years, there is the anxiety of seeing the climate breakdown scientists forecast begin to happen before our eyes. For those who have been busy getting on with their lives, there is the rude awakening that climate chaos is not just some

remote possibility or some NGO slogan, it is here and now.

The first thing to say is that it’s totally normal to be anxious. It makes sense to be worried about an existential threat to human civilisation! What matters is how you deal with it, so you don’t get stuck or overwhelmed.

As I have begun to deal with my own climate anxiety more proactively I have picked up some pretty simple tips. Get outdoors, get moving, make time to connect with nature. Talk to others, don’t keep it to yourself. Talk to family and friends, people who care about you or share your concern about climate breakdown. And join with others to take action. Action and community are two antidotes to anxiety.

One such community is of course Friends of the Earth. We’ve recently launched “Cuppa for Climate” to encourage people to gather with friends, neighbours or colleagues to talk about climate change and what we can do about it. Contact us to find out if there is one happening near you, or maybe you can organise one yourself or with that one friend who you already talk to about climate. We’ll give you materials and tips to make for a helpful conversation.

We hope these conversations become a springboard for taking action together. That could start with hill walks or beach cleans but we also hope it involves local campaigning. As decision makers grapple with actually rolling out the policy changes we need to cut pollution, we need local people being visibly and vocally supportive of climate action, whether it's challenging our "car first" culture or demanding more space for nature.

Otherwise local media and local decision makers will only pay attention to those opposing action because they see it as disruptive. We know that climate breakdown would be a much bigger disruption and we have to speak up before it's too late. Our new Act Local campaign will support people to step up and speak out for fast and fair climate action.

We are in a race between tipping points. Between climate and ecological breakdown on the one hand and social and political transformation on the other. Recently, an EPA study found that 36% of people in Ireland are alarmed about climate change and in an Irish Times poll 18% of people said it should be the Government's top priority.

We need to reach those people and invite them in. Together, we can have the leverage to tip the balance in favour of social change and climate safety.

In my favourite piece of climate writing, David Roberts says: "The weight of climate change, like any weight, is easier to bear with others. And if there's anything I've learned in these last 10 years, it's that there are many, many others. They are out there, men and women of extraordinary imagination, courage, and perseverance, pouring themselves into this fight for a better future."

They are out there. Let's invite them in. You are out there. Let's join together. Together, the future is in our hands.

Let's get going,



Oisín Coghlan, Chief Executive  
Friends of the Earth

September 2023

# Our Organisational Goals

## Our Mission

We campaign and build movement power to bring about the system change needed for a just world where people and nature thrive.

## Our Role

Friends of the Earth supports people to unite to transform our world until social justice is the foundation of resilient and regenerative societies that flourish within the ecological limits of our one planet. We have particular experience in participatory education, campaign strategy, shaping public debate and driving policy change. We are committed to joining forces with other organisations and networks, of diverse experiences and perspectives, to build our collective power. We support people and groups working autonomously to connect their local work to the bigger national and international picture. We work with others to make sure our focus is transformational change, often by creating moments that exert maximum pressure on decision-makers.

## Our Values

These values are the foundation of our work. We endeavour to consciously incorporate these into everything we do both internally and externally. They underpin our work and we strive to adopt and integrate them into all of our activities.

- Solidarity, Participation & Inclusion
- Nature and Social Ecology
- People and Communities
- Science and Education
- Social Justice and Climate Justice
- Culture and Creativity
- Transparency and Accountability

## Our Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change is rooted in a commitment to an ongoing process of educating ourselves, engaging and listening to those most impacted by the issues we work on, and in taking collective action to make change.

We are committed to consistently learning and unlearning about the systems of power and oppression that influence our lives and the world around us. We believe we need to understand systems in order to change them effectively.

We believe it is important to be clear in our messaging so we don't shy away from occupying difficult conversational spaces. However, we believe that finding common ground is an essential element of changemaking, so we strive to do so with all who want to make a positive difference in the world.

We believe in challenging ourselves to consistently create more welcoming spaces for people to engage in the process of interrogating the root causes of global injustice. By doing this, we aim to help grow and work with a more critically informed network of change-makers across Ireland.

When individuals and groups are nurtured to critically inform themselves and be supported to learn by doing, they are more likely to take effective collective action to bring about changes in their communities and as part of a mass political movement.

When policymakers are the target of both mass movement campaigns and targeted, evidence-based advocacy, they are compelled to bring about changes in policy and practice.

Friends of the Earth is at the midpoint of our five-year Strategic Plan, which sets out what we hope to achieve by the end of 2025 and how we'll get there. We have covered a lot of ground since 2020, and with this plan we will continue to advance our goals and objectives.

### Our Organisational Goals

Friends of the Earth has four organisational goals to advance our mission:

- **Building movement power**

To contribute to building a diverse and inclusive movement strong enough to bring about system change in a way that supports others' social justice struggles and that aligns with our values.

- **Driving policy change**

To drive a fair and fast transition to a zero-pollution future.

- **Cultivating our community**

To ensure Friends of the Earth supporters feel they are members of a mutually supportive community and present ways for them to participate in and sustain the work of the organisation for as long as it is required.

- **Developing our organisation**

To ensure Friends of the Earth has robust governance and effective management systems, and appropriate financial resources, to maximise our impact and to cultivate a positive working environment.

# Impact Highlights & Activity Snapshot

## Impact Highlights

- The Government finally removed the planning restrictions that meant a school needed to get planning permission to put even a single solar panel on their roof. And then in Budget 2023 declared they would commit funding to “make every school a solar school” as our campaign slogan put it.
- The Government’s own expert review recommended against commercial terminals to import LNG (that’s liquefied fossil methane gas) as they don’t add to energy security.
- Our campaigning with the trade unions pushed the Government to finally set up a Just Transition Taskforce. And our campaigning with social NGOs has piled the pressure on Government to prioritize those at risk of energy poverty in both welfare and retrofitting policies.

**950+**

submissions made to consultations



**600+**

submissions to the Climate Action Plan 2023 consultations



**1,500+**

e-actions to support a strong European Nature Restoration Law



**6,000+**

signatures on e-actions



## In the Media

Public debate on climate change and the environment is growing, especially now that we are seeing the tangible adverse effects of climate change at our doorstep, including the high energy prices in winter or record-high temperatures in July. Friends of the Earth is increasingly called upon to provide insight and expertise to the media. It's important that we appear regularly in print, radio, and online coverage of the climate crisis.

We contracted a media analysis report agency to measure Friends of the Earth's media impact in print and online.

**This analysis does not include TV and the radio, where we also have a powerful presence.**

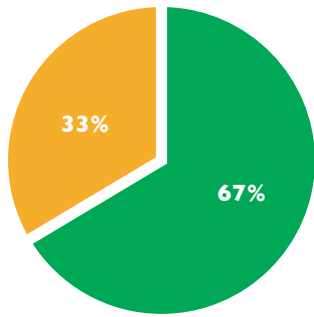
- Friends of the Earth received **499 mentions** across print and online in 2022 up from 434 in 2021. There were 332 online articles (67% coverage) and 167 print articles (33%).
- Scored for "prominence", **12% was prime** (up from 6% in 2021), 56% was significant and 32% was passing.
- Scored for "sentiment", **89% was positive** and 3% was negative.
- **11% was "prime & positive"**, up from 8% in 2021 and 5% in 2020. There was no '**Prime negative**' coverage recorded.
- 49% of the items included one of our **key messages**, with "ending our dependence on fossil fuels" and the need for "climate action" the most featured.
- **Spokespeople** featured 51% of the time with Oisín Coghlan, CEO, featuring in 52 articles.
- Our overall **Media Score** was 83/100, down from 86/100 in 2021, and the same as 2020, well above the industry benchmark of 50/100.
- **Stop Climate Chaos** total volume was 65 mentions and **One Future** total volume was 11 items.

One of the most notable topics covered by the media was our release of the Energy Poverty Report "Still left out in the cold" on the subject of energy poverty and reducing household reliance on fossil fuels. This was referenced 18 times in the space of two days. Getting the word out on climate-related issues is crucial in ensuring people are being informed about the climate crisis and what action is urgently needed to stop the worst of climate breakdown.

# Headline Results

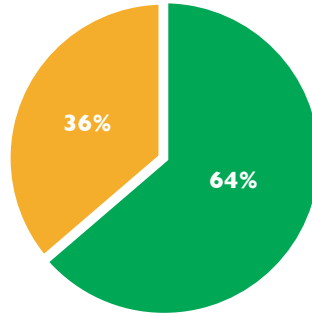
January - December 2022

Media Volume  
Friends of the Earth



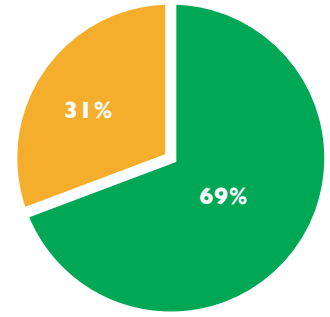
■ Online ■ Print

Media Volume  
One Future



■ Online ■ Print

Media Volume  
Stop Climate Chaos



■ Online ■ Print

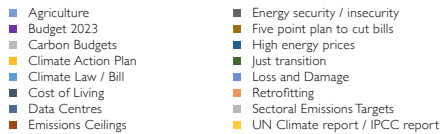
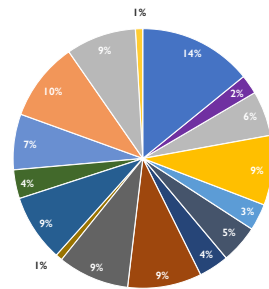
Media Type	Volume Friends of the Earth	Potential Media Reach Friends of the Earth	Volume One Future	Potential Media Reach One Future	Volume Stop Climate Chaos	Potential Media Reach Stop Climate Chaos
Online	332	79.74 M	7	1.62 M	45	12.06 M
Print	167	6.89 M	4	145,926 M	20	789,342 M
<b>Total</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>86.63 M</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.76 M</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>12.85 M</b>

# Key Campaign Issues in the Media

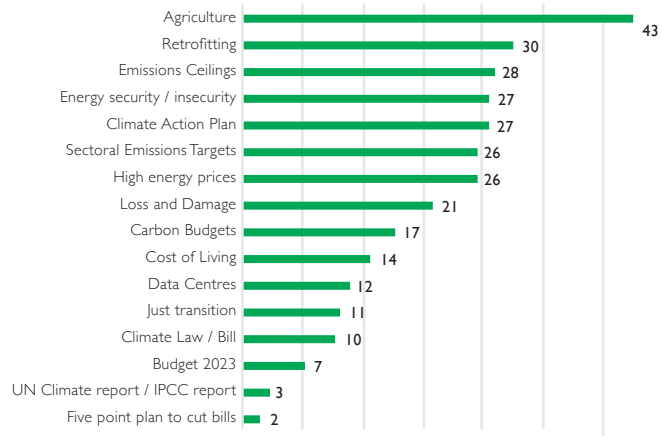
January - December 2022

## Key Campaigns Presence

72%



## Key Campaigns by Volume



## Key Terms

- Volume is the number of print or online articles.
- Potential Media Reach is the potential audience exposed to media content.
- Sentiment (as %) Positive, Negative, Neutral or Balanced sentiment as a percentage of total coverage.
- Prominence (as %) can be rated Prime, Significant or Passing as a percentage of total coverage.
- Prime: headline feature/driver of coverage/main focus of the article.
- Significant: shared coverage/expert opinion but not the main focus of the article.
- Media Score is a score out of 100, it evaluates media coverage rated as Prime and Significant in prominence only. A score out of 100 is assigned to each media piece based on the prominence (Prime or Significant) and sentiment (Positive, Negative or Neutral) of that piece. The overall score is the average score across all the media pieces being analysed.

# Building Movement Power

## **Through our Movement Building programme we aim to:**

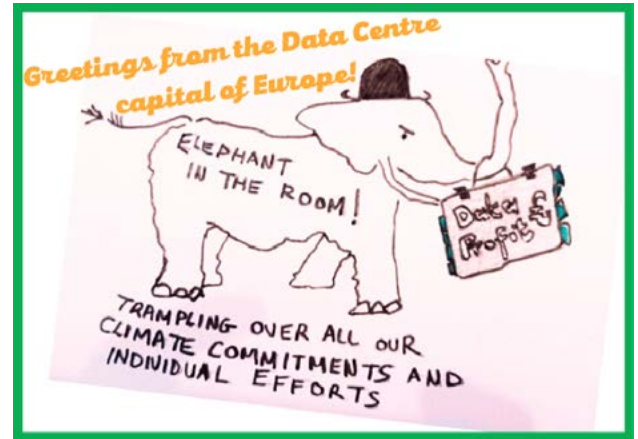
1. Be a central and trusted hub for training and capacity building for individuals and groups who identify as being part of the movement for social justice and environmental sustainability. Our role is to train, mentor, promote reflection, and develop increasing levels of ownership and leadership.
2. Support the development of opportunities and structures for local organising and campaigning that contribute to advancing the missions of Friends of the Earth Ireland and International.
3. Collaborate directly and supportively with other groups and organisations whose work intersects with our mission and aligns with our values and participate actively in efforts to facilitate connections, coordination, collaboration, and mutual support between intersecting causes in the climate movement and wider civil society.

## Informed Action Learning Hub

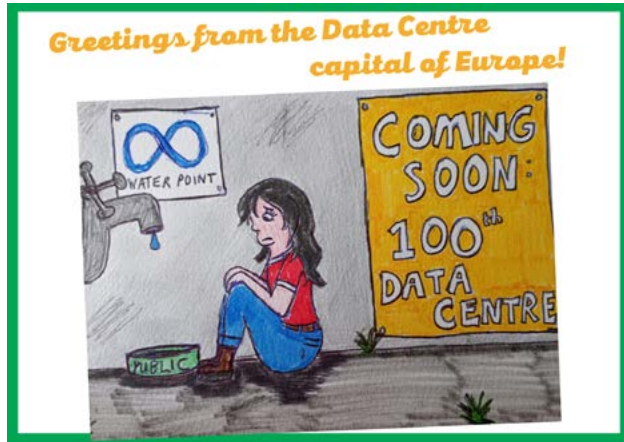
This year we have held four Learning Hub events comprising two webinars - each followed by participatory and interactive workshops to allow participants to delve deeper and take informed action.

This summer series of the Learning Hub had a wider framing of 'Energy For Who?'. In the first part of the series we explored why fighting data centre expansion is crucial for climate action. We were joined by researchers, activists and academics Dr. Patrick Bresnihan of Maynooth University and Dr. Patrick Brodie of UCD who led us in a discussion on why and how we need to challenge data centre expansion in Ireland.

For the follow-up participatory workshop we posted out simple creative packs in advance to participants and on the night we came together online and created postcards and compelling images that could be sent to our decision-makers to show the impacts of gas and energy-guzzling data centres on people and the planet. We asked participants to send us photos of their final designs and we used these to create and print different postcard designs to make available to other supporters to send in to decision makers as part of the wider campaign.







The Learning Hub was developed as part of our commitment to a process of learning and unlearning from the systems of power and oppression that influence our lives and the world around us.

We asked participants whether this series of events changed their attitudes or actions and we received great feedback. One participant said; *“Conversation; creating artwork for postcards; [made me] think differently about how I might make an impact on these issues.”* One participant said; *“[the events] reinforced my commitment to actions I am already taking,”* and another participant said *“it drives me to fight this injustice”*. Some participants also expressed an interest to get more involved on these issues as a result of participating in the Learning Hub.

You can watch back our Learning Hub webinars via the latest news section of our website or via our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@foeireland>). After each Learning Hub we create a wrap up blog which provides an outline of that series and compiles all of the relevant recordings, resources, slides, reading lists which you can come back to again and again for reference.

## New Campaigns Resource and Climate Action Pledge

In April, Friends of the Earth organised its first Campaigns Engagement Webinar to launch our new Campaigns Resource and Climate Action Pledge.

During this webinar, Friends of the Earth staff came together with our supporters to highlight a number of different pathways to get involved in our campaigns and take action in your community.

Our new Campaigns Resource **‘Nuts and Bolts: A Campaign Guide for Grassroots Groups in Ireland’** was created in response to a growing number of queries from community groups who wanted to take climate action in the context of their local communities. This introductory guide covers an extensive range of local organising issues, from simple tips for talking to the media, power analysis, group organising, research tools and how to build allies locally.



## Nuts and Bolts:

## A Campaign Guide for grassroots groups in Ireland



A resource to support grassroots and community groups fighting for climate justice and social justice in Ireland

In the lead up to Earth Day, we invited our supporters and all those who attended our Campaigns Engagement Webinar to sign our new Climate Action Pledge. This pledge invites you to speak up for and take part in climate action, and is still available on our website for you to sign today.

## Take the Climate Action Pledge, here's some suggestions:



- Text your favourite radio show when they have someone to discuss climate, to say we need to do more in a faster and fairer way.
- Make sure your local school is asking the Minister for Education to include them in the “Every school a solar school” initiative as soon as possible.
- Call or meet with your local county councillor or another decision maker who can make a difference on any climate issue that matters to you, from building safe cycling routes to school to promoting collective community retrofits that get the best price.
- Call RTE’s Liveline when climate is discussed to make sure there are voices from across the country in every community in favour of climate action on air.
- Host a “Cuppa for Climate” event with Friends of the Earth to give your friends and neighbours somewhere to talk about the climate crisis, the anxiety it causes and how action is the best antidote to anxiety.
- Join a local group active in your area or help to set one up if there isn’t one.
- Hold a demo outside your local county council office if they aren’t taking climate action seriously (or stage a sit-in inside).
- Object to planning permission for a data centre in your area or protesting outside one that’s being built (and tell your local paper and radio station about what you’re doing).
- Organise a fundraiser event to support Friends of Earth’s climate action work through a “Cuppa for Climate” or another activity.

## One Future Campaign

The One Future Campaign for faster and fairer climate action was launched by Friends of the Earth and the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition in January 2020 in the lead-up to the General Elections. One Future campaigns to see real action on climate change, energy systems, transport, emissions and much more. With many local groups within the campaign, it brings people together in their constituency and gives them the tools they need to advocate for change in their local area. Good group dynamics don't happen by accident and it requires planning, participation and preparation. We are delighted that so many people have taken it upon themselves to participate in One Future.

We held a One Future Network Gathering in the Teacher's Club in November 2022. This event brought



together 50 activists from across the One Future network for a full day of activities including: 1) an information session - to build knowledge across the policy landscape, 2) a visioning exercise - to get us thinking about where we're headed and what we can collectively do to get ourselves there as a network of groups and activists, 3) a session on community organising - to hear about and learn from other successful examples of community organising in different contexts to inform our ways of working and help identify key challenges, and 4) a planning exercise looking at the year ahead to identify opportunities and to discuss capacity and resources. This gathering was also importantly our first face to face network event post-Covid restrictions and lockdown, providing us with an opportunity to reconnect with people and nurture the relationships that sustain us through our activism.

In December 2022, One Future activists put pressure on their TD's to deliver radical climate action by organising group calls, community petitions, and emailing decision makers to show the strength of the climate movement in demanding more radical action to be reflected in the Climate Action Plan.

We kicked off 2023 with a One Future Working Group meeting. A number of new working groups were set up 1) One Future Divest



Group, 2) Land use and Biodiversity, 3) Supporting renewables and reducing demand and 4) Better Public Transport.

Our local groups have been continuing to mobilise and take action in their communities. One Future Fingal group did a number of actions opposing Amazon's enormous Data Centre proposal for Huntstown,

collecting over 200 signatures for their appeal locally, including a number of Councillors. One Future Dun Laoghaire group has been meeting regularly to pressure the government to facilitate solar schools. Meeting in People's Park monthly, they have been approaching people, urging them to sign petitions combined with the occasional musical performance by members. Some of them even joined a Climate Flash Mob!





## UN Climate Conference: COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt

COP27 was the 2022 United Nations climate conference in Egypt. As one of the biggest forums for high-level commitments to address the climate crisis, this annual event is crucial to address the issues and push for progress. An event that started almost three decades ago, it brings together nation-states, civil society, climate justice activists, researchers, and journalists from across

the globe. Friends of the Earth Ireland made their presence known by sending Clare O'Connor, our Energy Policy Officer. Coming back from this event, the results were mixed. Some progress was made, but at the same time, old problems continued to leave their mark.





One of the key positives of the event was the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund. This is a historic milestone for climate justice as it means there will be support for the most vulnerable countries affected by climate change, usually the global south. A need that was ignored for many years is finally being listened to. This shows the power of collective pressure and people power. The pressure needs to stay on while the details of how the fund will operate is ironed out.

COP27, unfortunately, highlighted a severe lack of commitment from the EU and Ireland. Ireland must match words with deeds in the Government's new Climate Action Plan which will be published in early December if they want to keep up with their promises. COP27 again failed to make agreements on phasing out fossil fuels, despite the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015.

The strength of the fossil fuel producers and lobbyists is worrying. Ireland must be an example by rejecting further fossil fuel infrastructure and supporting a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. In addition, the EU must make adjustments as the EU only made a slight increase to their emissions reduction ambition in 2022. The EU needs to get serious about its commitment to a global fossil-fuel phase-out and set an EU-wide strategy for the phase-out of coal, oil, and gas.

The results of COP27 made it all the more clear that systematic change is needed to stay within 1.5C by pushing for societal change on a level not seen before. Business as usual, while relying on dubious carbon offsets and carbon market accounting tricks, will not be enough. With COP 28 around the corner, a serious push and collective power are needed in order for real and lasting change to be made.



## Youth Empowerment & Young Friends of the Earth

We live in a time of multi-layered environmental and social injustices. The ecological crisis disproportionately affects communities that have been systematically marginalised, even though these communities are crucial to the climate movement and, therefore, it is essential for their voices to be heard and listened to. One such community is young people.

One of our volunteer arms, Young Friends of the Earth, has grown significantly in the last year and has made its voice heard, from protesting against the expansion of the Garzweiler Coal mine in Germany, to President Biden's Willow Project, a massive oil drilling project that will ruin indigenous lands in Alaska. In July, young people from across Ireland came together for 4 days of skill-sharing and capacity-building at the Summer Climate Camp. The summer gathering was held in the beautiful surroundings of Glendalough County Wicklow.

It was an excellent opportunity for young people to meet like-minded activists, develop campaign and action plans for the upcoming year, and nurture connections and relationships.

Young Friends of the Earth have also been immersing themselves across decision making spaces in Friends of the Earth with a youth representative Molly O' Shea now sitting on the Board of Directors of Friends of the Earth Ireland and Cara Clarke on the Young Friends of the Earth Europe Steering Group. Supporting youth engagement in decision making at all levels is essential in how we recognise the unique and vital role young people can play in how we tackle the climate crisis. Young people will be facing the consequences of climate change, and are therefore critical in strengthening and shaping climate action.



## Acts of Solidarity

Friends of the Earth recognises that the climate crisis is an intersectional issue, and it does not affect everyone equally - it disproportionately impacts communities and people who have been systematically marginalised. When different types of social and environmental injustices intersect, the impact is compounded - further exacerbating already existing inequalities. Throughout the year, Friends of the Earth has shown solidarity with many groups to advocate for and build movement power to bring about the system change needed for a just world where people and nature thrive.

Last September, we joined 20,000 people in Dublin for the Cost of Living March, calling on the Government to “heat our homes, not our planet” ahead of Budget 2023. The energy crisis affects everyone, but disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable in our society. The energy crisis shows the urgent need and importance of taking ambitious action to move away from fossil fuels dependency in our heating systems and work collaboratively with climate and nature activists and experts to transition us towards renewable energies.



In November, we gathered at Dublin's Famine Memorial for the COP27 Global Day of Action, standing in solidarity with communities experiencing extreme hunger as a result of the climate crisis and its underlying drivers, most notably colonialism and exploitative capitalism. Friends of the Earth organised a supporter event to take place after the action. For this we hosted Colm O'Regan's comedy show “Climate Worrier” in the Smock Alley Theatre.





In February 2023, Friends of the Earth joined the Ireland for All march to show both our support and solidarity, and to extend a big welcome to migrants and refugees, embracing diversity not division. We also joined follow-up events including inviting supporters to join us in celebrating World Refugee Day in June in front of the Garden of Remembrance.

Feminism and climate action is also an essential subject we aim to raise awareness of annually around International Women's Day. This year, our Network Development Coordinator - Rosi Leonord, wrote a piece on the importance of taking a feminist approach to climate action, which can be found on our website.

Solidarity is vital in creating lasting change. We'd like to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who showed up to any of these events and for representing the climate movement.





## Climate Change Extractivism and Colonialism

In late November 2022, Friends of the Earth hosted a weekend training focused on Climate Change, Extractivism and Colonialism, that took place in the beautiful Gyreum Eco Lodge in Co. Sligo. For this, we brought together climate activists, local organisers and community educators to delve into topics including: Historical Colonisation, Modern-day Colonialism, Extractivism and Colonialism and Solidarity and Justice. The training weekend focused on building participants knowledge and understanding of the nuances and complexities of these issues through immersive exercises and group activities.

Following the training participants were supported to establish a community of practice. An extractivism group has been established and they meet regularly. This group has developed further introductory resources and materials on these issues and have been piloting and running workshops with these developed resources and games.



# Driving Policy Change

## Through our Driving Policy Change programme we aim to:

1. Establish a new climate governance regime in Ireland that drives the development and adoption of policies to eliminate emissions in all sectors, based on legally-binding carbon budgets, expert advice, and parliamentary accountability.
2. Ensure Ireland's climate-polluting emissions are on track for a 50% reduction by 2030, and Ireland's actual fair share of climate action is a key issue in the next electoral cycle.
3. Prevent a lock-in to fossil gas and enable Ireland to become an international example of the struggle to break the grip of the fossil fuel industry on policy-making.
4. Shape public debate on key issues related to our mission. To create a public understanding that much of the change we wish to see will generate positive impacts and opportunities, not costs and hardships. To bring justice and fairness to the centre of the debate about climate and environmental issues - change should happen when justice and fairness require it, even if it is not popular with everyone, especially the rich and powerful.

## Faster and Fairer Climate Action

Faster and Fairer Climate Action is our overarching campaign to eliminate polluting emissions fast enough to prevent complete climate breakdown and fairly enough to leave no one behind. Some of this work is done through the Stop Climate Chaos coalition we coordinate.

With the Climate Law signed and the announcement of the Climate Action plan at the end of 2022, Friends of the Earth has been keeping a close eye to ensure that the promises made are being kept. We have critiqued Fianna Fail and Fine Gael for not addressing the transport targets despite their binding commitments to cut polluting emissions from transport in half by 2030. For any changes that need to be made, the longer one waits to take the first steps, the more disruptive and complex it will be.

## Warm Homes for All

Our Warm Homes for All campaign is built upon Friends of the Earth's core values of social and climate justice and with the key focus that we have to reduce Ireland's dependence on fossil fuels. The biggest energy crisis since the 1970s is still ongoing which has caused issues such as affordability, pollution, and supply. Unfortunately, it doesn't stop there, burning fossil fuels in our homes puts us at more significant health risks that range from respiratory illness to heart problems.

Friends of the Earth has released various statements highlighting the health impacts of fossil fuels in our

homes. Currently, 11% of Irish homes rely primarily on solid fuels for home heating. Air pollution levels in Ireland in 2021 failed to meet the WHO's Air Quality guidelines for health and it has been estimated that air pollution causes 1,300 premature deaths per year in Ireland. Children living in cold houses are twice as likely to suffer from respiratory issues than those living in warm houses. On top of that, research shows it also has an impact on our mental health.

Changes can be made to benefit both people's physical health and mental health while at the same time having an economy-wide benefit. The government has committed to making substantial improvements to 30% of Ireland's housing by 2030, which is half a million homes. Friends of the Earth is committed to keeping the government accountable to ensure this actually happens, while at the same time keep pushing for additional effective measures to be taken.



## Energy Poverty

The rising costs of energy prices continues to disproportionately impact households in the bottom 20% of the income distribution who continue to pay an increasing amount on energy on top of the rising rent and food prices. The number of Irish families unable to heat their homes more than doubled in 2022 as a result of inadequate incomes, high energy costs, and inefficient housing.



## Left out in the Cold

March's major highlight was the publication of our report "Still Left out in the Cold" on the subject of energy poverty and reducing household reliance on fossil fuels. It received extensive media coverage.

This research report has input from 32 experts across housing, poverty, climate and energy, and unpacks how current policies on housing, climate and social protection are limited to address the root causes of energy deprivation. The report is a result of fieldwork, research and analysis across a number of areas. It analyses recent housing energy and climate policy, such as the Government's new Energy Poverty Action Plan and the latest Climate Action Plan. The research report shows that a change in approach to all levels of government is urgently needed to ensure Ireland responds to the climate and energy price crisis. It highlights 49 separate recommendations to the Government, which include recommendations on retrofitting including social housing, regulations for rental properties, a better core social welfare rate, and the establishment of an Energy Poverty Act and the creation of a Just Transition Commission.

The results of this report show again the importance of phasing out fossil fuels from our homes and making sure that those at risk of energy poverty are looked after in the transition to cleaner, renewable and cheaper energy.





## Get off Gas

Our Get off Gas campaign is focused on preventing Irish communities from becoming locked into the use of fossil gas. Friends of the Earth is campaigning to stop the Government from making decisions and investments that would keep Ireland dependent on fossil gas for years to come. Gas is a harmful fossil fuel. At the very least half of all existing gas reserves need to stay in the ground if we are serious about the Paris Agreement goal to stay below the 1.5C.

Fracked gas in particular is extremely polluted and it has a number of significant impacts on not just the environment, but on human rights and public health as well. As Ireland has one of the strongest legislative bans on fracking, Ireland can be a role model for many countries.

In October, thirty-four Irish environmental organisations, including Friends of the Earth, sent a joint submission to the Department of Environment, Climate, and Communication consultation on the “Review of the Security of Energy Supply of Ireland’s Electricity and Natural Gas Systems.” This submission demands that the policy against the import of fracked gas must become law. This was in light of the expert review of energy security commissioned by the Government early in 2022 that was carried out by CEPA technical consultants, who pushed against commercial LNG. Subsequently, Friends of the Earth published new research produced by the University College of Cork MaREI (Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine) on “Irish electricity and gas demand to 2050 in the context of climate commitments,” which Friends of the Earth is using to urge the Government

to rethink its current approach to energy security in a number of ways.

Get off Gas has been a continuous effort in the last year through submissions, mentions in the media, and a call to action to our supporters through e-actions and workshops. At the same time, alternatives were put forward. For instance, the first offshore wind energy auction, a landmark day for Ireland, highlighted a way to power the Irish future with clean, affordable, and reliable Irish renewable energies. Ireland’s offshore wind resource is one of the best in the world and Ireland should develop this rapidly and responsibly in order to contribute to a healthier and safer planet and future.

Alternatives are there, the government needs to implement this to transition from gas to sustainable, cheap and healthy alternative sources.





## Solar Schools Project

One of our big successes this past year was our Solar Schools project, both on the ground and at policy level. On the ground, the 8 schools that won our Solar Schools competition finally got their panels installed. Installation had been delayed by Covid and also by planning barriers.

This practical demonstration project, the challenges it faced and the mobilising and advocacy around it, had the desired effect. In September 2022, the Government finally removed the requirement for planning permission to put even one solar panel on a school.

In the Budget in October we scored an even bigger win, when the Government announced that they were committing money to “make every school a solar school” in the words of our campaign slogan.

Earlier in the year people finally started to get paid for the electricity they generate on their roofs and supply the grid. Together these campaigning wins made 2022 a landmark year both for solar energy and for community participation in the energy transition. The next task is to ensure the Government delivers on its solar schools promise and all schools across Ireland are getting solar panels as fast as possible.



# Cultivating Our Community



Friends of the Earth simply wouldn't exist without our community of supporters. Our work relies greatly on the power of the collective to push for and create change. It's the community and fellowship we have in each other at Friends of the Earth that helps to strengthen and sustain all that we do. We are so grateful to have so many wonderful and diverse supporters joining us to help achieve a just world where people and nature thrive. Thank you for making all of this possible!

Our supporter care work aims to remind Friends of the Earth supporters that they are members of a mutually supportive community and to create space for us to come together in solidarity. Through this work Friends of the Earth presents ways for you to participate in and offer support to help sustain the work of the organisation and the wider climate movement.

We are now another year further, leaving the Covid pandemic more behind us. Although it is becoming a faint memory, Covid has changed our organisation in

many ways as we are continuing to work from home and the team is now spread across the country. We continue with a great mix of in-person and online events to facilitate as many of our supporters as we can. This has given us more opportunities to connect with existing supporters and also reach new supporters in a meaningful way.

Our Learning Hub and System Change Seminars Series have been brought online with growing numbers of attendance each time, while also providing action-based learning such as poster making. We have supporter events all over the country, both in person and online, some of which have been highlighted in this report. From recurring One Future meetups to our launch of Cuppa for Climate, there are many ways where we continue to connect with our community.

At Friends of the Earth we value and appreciate the role of the arts in the climate and wider environmental movement not only for provoking and communicating but also for helping us to reimagine a better world and for simply taking time for pleasure, joy and celebration.

As part of the COP27 Global Day of Action in November, we invited our supporters to join us at Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin for a special performance of 'Climate Worrier' by Colm O'Regan. In his performance that night Colm explained that his show and new book, which has the same title, are his way of contributing to the climate movement - he doesn't just want to make people laugh, he wants to inspire and activate people into doing something to help the climate crisis. He is asking people to just do

something, anything, and to start by talking about the climate crisis with friends and family and to call up Joe Duffy to tell him too!

After the show, Friends of the Earth team member Megan Maria Ayers facilitated a rich panel discussion on the theme of having a 'Climate Conversation' as a way to inspire our peers into action. Our guest panel included feminist and LGBTQ activist Ailbhe Smyth, social worker and psychotherapist who specialises in climate anxiety John Sharry, Go Dance for Change founder and community organiser Karen Aguiar and of course comedian and star of the night Colm O'Regan.

Our new initiative, Cuppa for Climate, was very much inspired by our event at Smock Alley and other events we have hosted in the past where we bring people together with the intention of building community to strengthen our collective action on climate.



## Launching Cuppa for Climate

Cuppa for Climate, which was launched to celebrate Earth Day this year, is a new initiative to bring people together around climate action in their community. It's a coffee morning with a climate action twist, and offers space for people to explore and talk about climate action over a cuppa while fundraising to support our vital work on climate. A toolkit provides prompts and ideas to help people have a climate conversation and find ways of bringing climate action to their communities.

Our launch event at Bewleys Café in Dublin brought together lots of our supporters to experience what a Cuppa for Climate is all about and invited them to host their own gatherings in their community. The event was kicked off with a panel discussion chaired by our CEO, Oisín Coghlan, with speakers Sarah O'Suilleabhain,

Carol-Anne O'Brien and Molly O'Shea who spoke about their involvement in a number of climate action groups (pictured below). With plenty of Bewley's signature buns, coffee and teas, people took part in a climate conversation in small groups.

Hosting a Cuppa for Climate is easy and can be organised in the comfort of your home, workplace, or as part of another activity. From Inchicore in Dublin to a hike in the Wicklow mountains, from coffee mornings to a clothes swap, and an eco-culture event with a Mexican traditional dance, people all over Ireland have found and keep finding creative ways to host their own Cuppa for Climate.

The feedback has been great, and we love to see the enthusiasm and positive energy being brought to this initiative from communities across the country. Connection and bringing people together has been a significant outcome for many Cuppa's, which is essential for creating





and sustaining resilient and strong climate actions groups. We are so excited to now have the Cuppa for Climate toolkit ready and available and to have the resources to support people like you across Ireland who wish to host a climate conversation, take action with your community and raise funds to support our work.

Thanks to the continued support of people like you, who put their hands up to host and fundraise at events like Cuppa for Climate and chip in to support our fundraising appeals, the Friends of the Earth team has continued to grow in skills, expertise and strength, welcoming several new staff across the team.



**If you've been inspired to host your own Cuppa for Climate with your friends, family, colleagues or neighbours, reach out and we can help you get started!**





# Developing our Organisation

## Message from the Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Dear Supporters, Partners, and Friends,

I am delighted to contribute to this Impact Report for the first time and to give you an update on how we are developing our organisation with your support.

I joined the team in Autumn 2022 to support the Friends of the Earth team as it grows and to free up Oisín's time to focus on what he does best. My aim is to consolidate the efforts made over the last couple of years to grow the organisation, put appropriate systems in place to support this growth, and uphold strong compliance and governance standards.

### **Growth and Talent**

By the end of 2023 our staff team will have tripled in size from 2019! While we still often feel we aren't doing enough in the face of the climate emergency, we are a stronger team than ever before. It is a privilege to work among such a talented, hard-working and passionate group of people.

### **Resilience and Agility**

Covid meant that we transitioned to hybrid working and this has allowed us to hire talented people from all over the country, reducing commuting times (and emissions!) for our staff, and improving their work life balance. Working on the biggest crisis of our times can be emotionally taxing so we have also put new supports in place for our team.

## **Stability and Efficiency**

We are diversifying our sources of funding to ensure stability and the smooth delivery of our programmes. We also spent some time recently looking at our ways of working: streamlining our meetings, upskilling our staff, using technology even better and giving our Board more usable monitoring data. We are also in the process of reviewing most of our policies and procedures over the course of 2023.

## **Transparency and Accountability**

For the third year now we are successfully reporting as compliant with the Charities Governance Code to the Charities Regulator. We have implemented an accounting software package and started our transition to SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) which is the best practice accounting methodology for income and expenditure as a charity. Our commitment to transparency is not just a promise but a fundamental principle guiding every action we take.

## **Looking Ahead**

Thanks to your generous support we go into 2024 better equipped to deliver our important work and with a renewed sense of purpose.

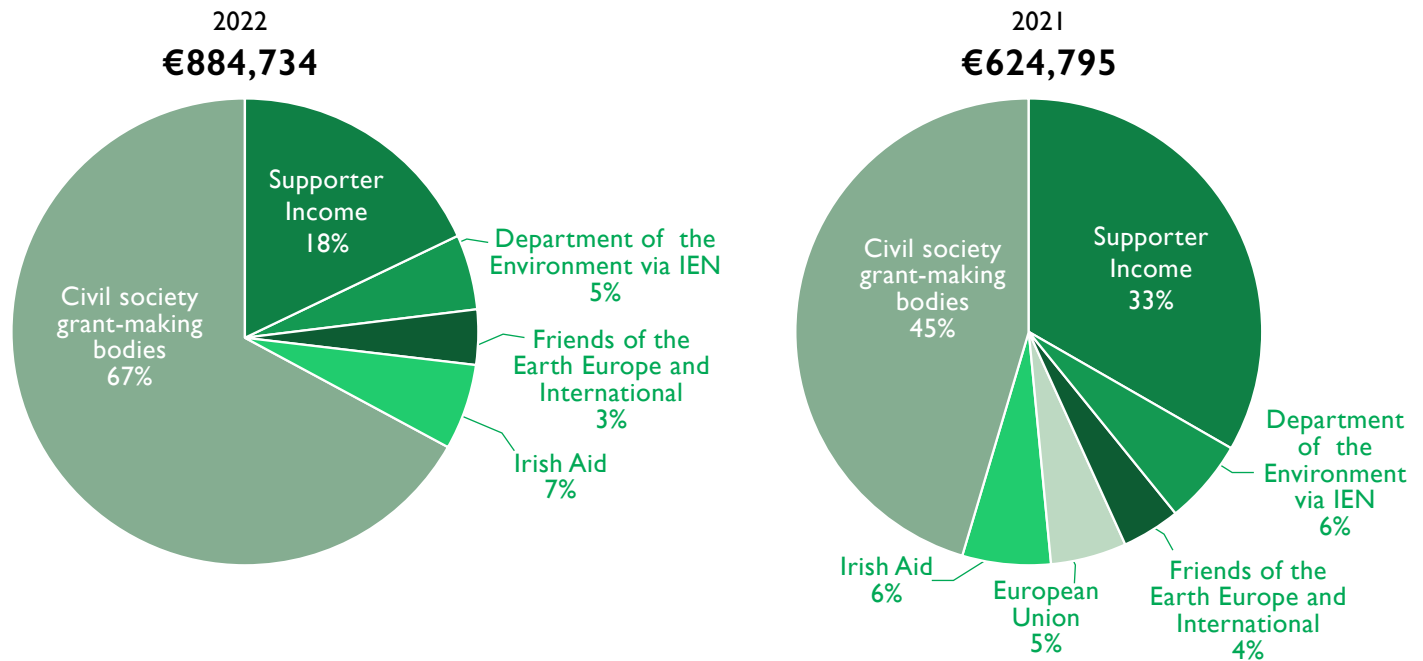
In solidarity,



*Anne L'Hénoret*  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Friends of the Earth

# Financial Information

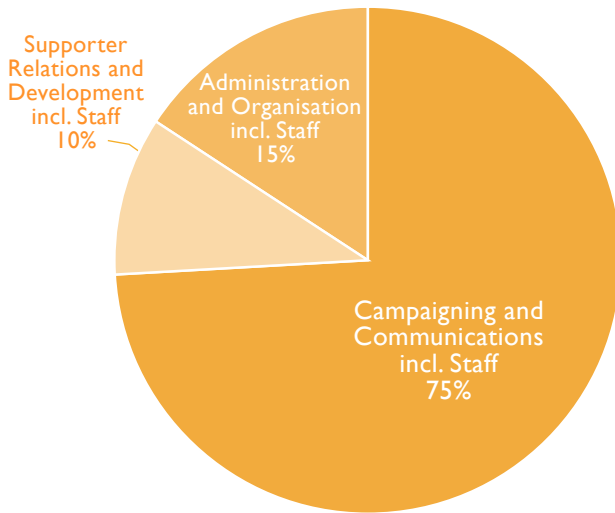
## Income



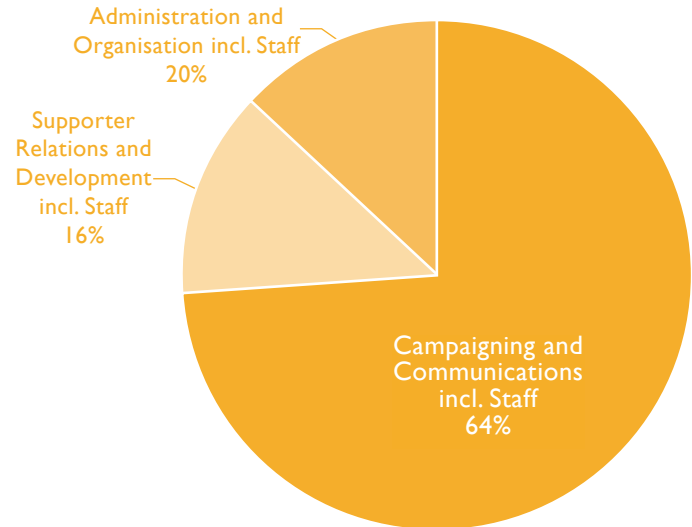
	2022		2021	
Supporter Income	18%	€ 162,048	33%	€ 209,219
Department of the Environment via IEN	5%	€ 46,318	6%	€ 37,779
Friends of the Earth Europe & International	3%	€ 29,119	4%	€ 23,152
European Union	0%	€ -	5%	€ 32,478
Irish Aid	7%	€ 57,612	6%	€ 38,097
Civil society grant-making bodies	67%	€ 589,637	45%	€ 284,070
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>€ 884,734</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>€ 624,795</b>

## Expenditure

2022  
**€915,761**



2021  
**€526,172**



		2022		2021
Campaigning And Communications incl. Staff	75%	€ 684,623	64%	€ 339,063
Supporter Relations & Development incl. Staff	10%	€ 90,511	16%	€ 84,064
Admin & Organisation incl. Staff	15%	€ 140,627	20%	€ 103,045
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>€ 915,761</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>€ 526,172</b>



# Thank you

We hope you have enjoyed reading our Impact Report and seeing all that we have achieved.

We'd like to express a special thank you to all members of the Friends of the Earth community. Our organisation can only thrive with your involvement and support whether it's participating in workshops, e-actions, showing up to our events or donating funds, you are making a difference and helping us campaign for a better world. It is through you that we can achieve all we have mentioned in this report. We are proud to have a strong community united in the goal of securing a fairer and better world for all. It is only through collective action that we can sustain the push for effective change. Thank you for making our impact possible.

The staff at Friends of the Earth are committed to our role in supporting and being a voice for the wider climate movement. Our organisation has grown and keeps on growing - from a team of one person to sixteen people today! With our growing team we are becoming more effective in going the distance and advocating for solutions to the most prominent social and environmental problems we are faced with today. Thank you for your involvement and commitment to our work.



Climate action comes in many forms, whether it is giving your time, using your skills or making a financial contribution. It is through people power and diversity in action that we will achieve our goals. Thank you for showing up for climate justice, doing your bit to help the planet, and for supporting a fair and just transition away from fossil fuels to a world where people and nature thrive.

## Our Staff Team

Oisín Coghlan, Chief Executive  
Anne L'Hénoret, Deputy Chief Executive  
Audrey Vallier, Head of Finance and Operations  
Claudia Tormey, Head of Supporter Care and Fundraising  
Deidre Duff, Head of Communications  
Emma Jayne Geraghty, Head of Movement Building  
Jerry Mac Eville, Head of Policy Change  
Aaron Downey, Global Citizenship Education and Activism Support Officer  
Clare O'Connor, Energy Policy Officer  
Claudia Dallek, Finance Manager  
Kevin O'Farrell, Communications and Events Support Officer  
Laragh McCann, Communications Officer  
Rose Anne White, Administrator and Assistant to the CEO  
Rosi Leonard, Network Development Coordinator  
Ruth Jedidja Stael, Supporter Care and Fundraising Officer  
Sadhbh O'Neill, Senior Climate Advisor

## And thank you to our colleagues who moved on in the last year:

Bríd Walsh, Climate Policy Coordinator  
Megan Maria Ayers, Supporter Care and Fundraising Officer

Illustration on front cover by Iris Aghedo  
Graphic Designer: Vanessa Coskey

## Our Board of Directors

Marion Briggs, Co-Chairperson  
Colm Ó Cuanacháin, Co-Chairperson  
Anna Pringle, Company Secretary  
Emma Lane-Spollen, Treasurer  
David Heller  
David Joyce  
Justin Moran  
Molly O'Shea  
Sarah O'Suilleabhain  
Valery Molay

Friends of the Earth Ireland CLG is a company limited by guarantee (a not-for-profit company), registered with the Companies Office in Dublin (No. 383678). We are registered with the Charities Regulator and our Registered Charity Number (RCN) is 20205807.

# Impact Report September 2023

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