



CHANGE THE COURSE

OUR SHARED VISION



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We're headed for a cliff,
but it's not too late to change course.

CONTENTS

- 4 The Shared Vision
- 6 Transform Politics
- 7 Build Sustainable Local Economies
- 8 Fight for Systemic Justice
- 9 Accelerate Energy Transition
- 11 Build an Emancipatory Culture
- 12 Relics from the Museum of Climate Change
- 14 Successes of Change the Course



Change the Course: People-Powered Strategies for a Stable Climate was a groundbreaking approach to preserving our climate. Through this project RAN posed the question: “What would it look like if we won the battle against climate change?”

Despite the fossil fuel industry and their political allies pushing us toward climate catastrophe, RAN believes a mass social movement can still change the course of history and chart a new direction toward a just and climate-stable future.

Change the Course invited people to create a detailed vision of what that future will look like and develop strategies to get there, step by step.

We can choose now what story we want to tell future generations: that we had the opportunity to change everything and we faltered, or that we wrested power from the dirty energy elite and reclaimed our planet.

Launched in 2014, the first phase of Change the Course included training sessions in 15 cities across the United States. We engaged 700 community activists and energy innovators in two-day-long interactive climate visioning summits. At the summits, our team of RAN trainers facilitated participants to imagine, describe, and draw a bold future in which we have successfully stopped the worst impacts of climate change. Participants explored how new energy, transportation, agriculture, urban planning, and other systems might function in a sustainable and equitable 2050. Once their vision had been articulated, participants identified campaign strategies to achieve their vision and clear, immediate actions to lead us on the way.

In the second phase, RAN unveiled a robust online platform to create a shared, crowdsourced vision of a climate-stable 2050. Tens of thousands of people engaged with the platform to further build the shared vision. Together, activists and organizations can leverage this vision to guide future campaigns and strategies.

Fundamental to this project was prioritizing effective partnerships, particularly with groups doing the bold and visionary work around issues of racial justice and economic justice. Together with a wide variety of organizations, our long-term goal has been creating a collective vision that is as ambitious and representative as the multi-issue, multi-community coalition necessary to achieve transformative change.

Let's build a vision to guide our work.

The climate movement is bigger and bolder than ever before, and we've won huge victories no one would have deemed possible a short time ago.

But will it be enough? For our movement to rise to the challenge of our time, we need a picture of what success would look like to work backwards from.

**We need to build a shared vision of the future
so we can make that vision a reality.**



THE SHARED VISION

After two years of work, the shared vision of the Change the Course project finally took shape. Although we always envisioned this as an evolving vision statement, this has been the predominant consensus to date:

By the year 2050 we'll have worked together to stabilize the climate.

We'll rely less on fossil fuels and more on renewable energy.

We'll have rebuilt our institutions to focus on climate justice and equality.

This is the future we choose to believe in.

We're building a vision of how to get there.

The thousands of people who participated in Change the Course collectively identified five core areas for our work to transform our society.

These Five Core Areas Are:

- Transform Politics,
- Build Sustainable Local Economies,
- Fight for Systemic Justice,
- Accelerate Energy Transition, and
- Build an Emancipatory Culture

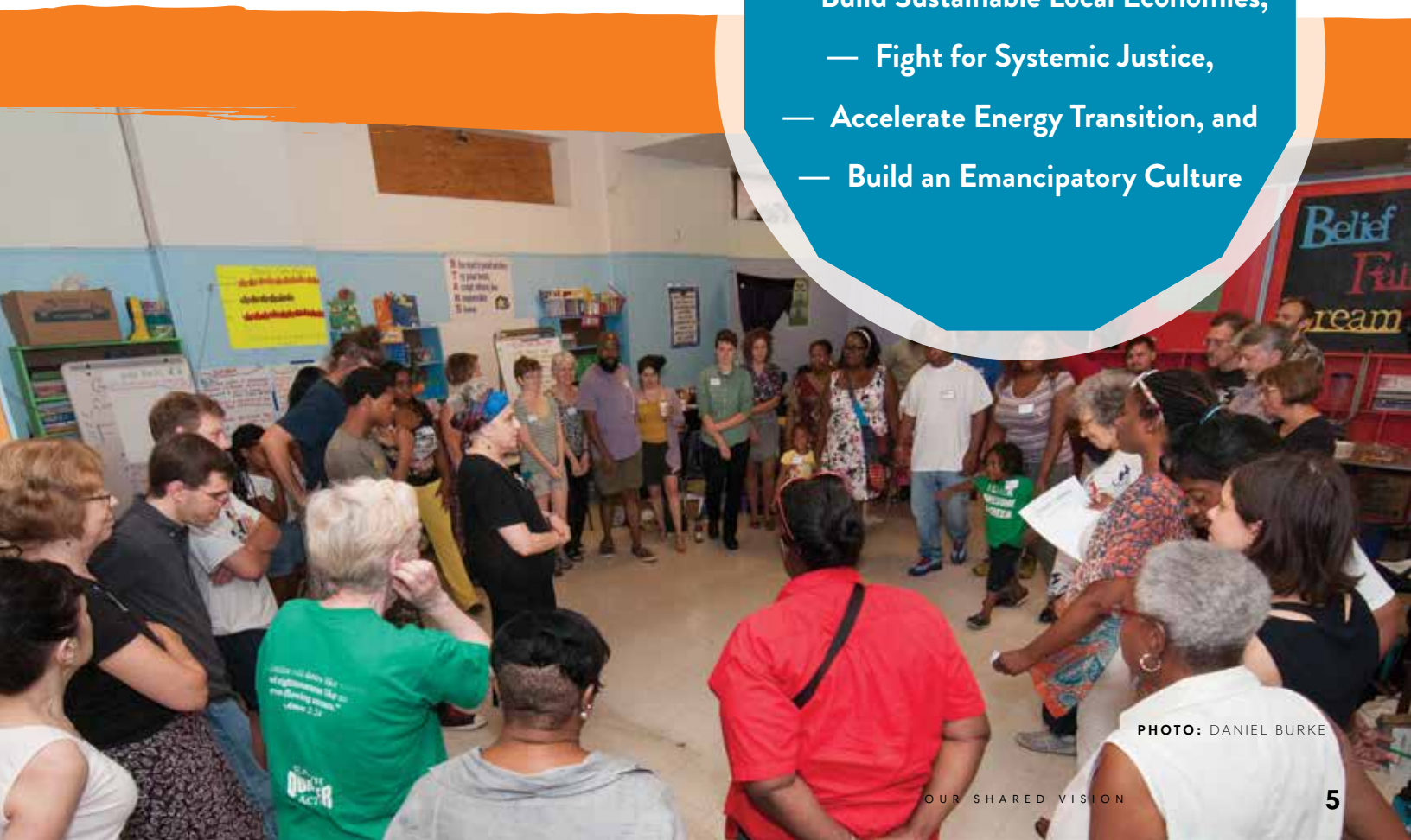


PHOTO: DANIEL BURKE



TRANSFORM POLITICS

We must reclaim the political process for globally responsible citizens from corporate interests and their powerful beneficiaries.

It has become painfully obvious that fossil fuel interests, anti-scientific obstinance, and blind obstructionism have become systemic obstacles to making real legislative progress around climate change. If that path is to hold any promise, clearly a fundamental transformation of the political process becomes necessary.

Campaign finance reform is the most critical and urgent need in this area. That means getting money out of politics in the form of lobbying and closing the revolving door between government and industry.

Change the Course identified many strategies to **transform politics**, including:

- » creating a constitutional amendment to curb the unfettered flow of corporate money into the political process,
- » increasing the transparency and accountability of elected officials,
- » restricting electoral advertising to strictly public financing, and
- » reforming rampant partisan gerrymandering through comprehensive redistricting.

Reclaiming media was seen as an important aspect of changing politics, with strategies including education, increased participation in and local ownership of media.

Another critical issue to emerge is the need to **change corporate governance structures and increase corporate accountability**. The concept of 'Business as Usual' needs to shift from a focus on profits to a broader view of social responsibility, where corporations that commit fraud, environmental crimes, extreme violations of workers' rights, and other offenses face real consequences. Strategies include strengthening regulations and legal mechanisms that would limit or completely revoke corporate charters, levying trade and transaction taxes, and coordinating with global partners to support local sovereignty.

Lastly, our crowd-identified strategies relating to political experimentation included proportional representation, promoting civic culture in schools and workplaces, and technological changes in democratic participation that enable such things as direct legislative input and rank-choice voting.





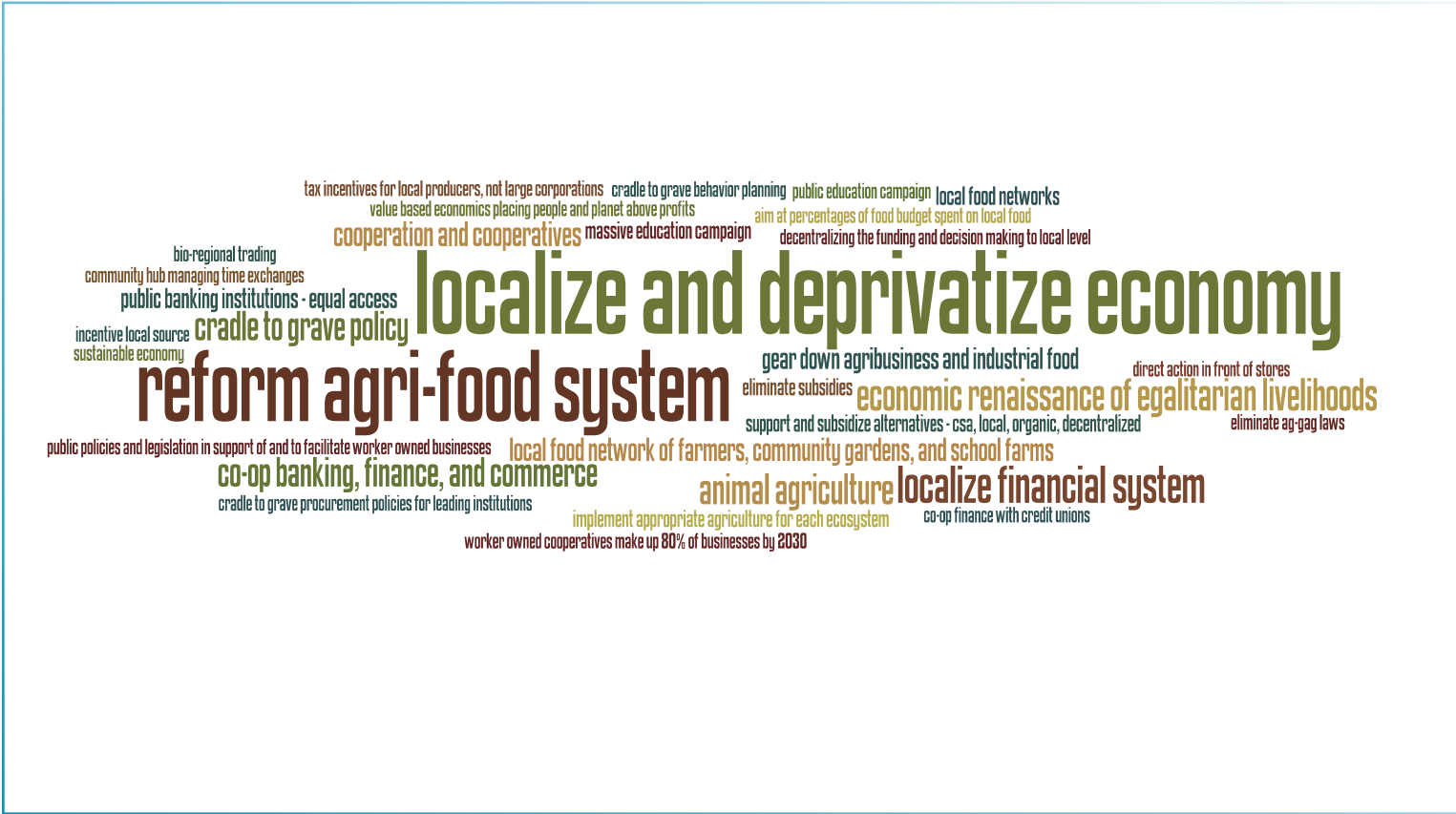
BUILD SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMIES

We must build strong, sustainable local economies that are more independent of the global economy. Founded on progressive ecological advances, such economies can provide more egalitarian livelihoods.

Strategies identified to achieve **local economic sovereignty** include policies such as tariffs against non-local goods and subsidies for local goods, the formation of locally based business networks of shared values, the development of locally based community-run banks and local currency.

Many Change the Course participants identified a need to **transform the agri-food system**, with strategies including strengthening the local food system network of farmers, supporting and promoting community gardens, Community Supported Agriculture projects, and schools supporting research in agroecology and education to promote local sustainable organic agriculture.

Other related strategies included setting goals for community-wide percentages of the food budget spent on local food, reducing the consumption of products from non-local agribusiness through boycotts, eliminating institutional purchases of non-local foods, eliminating subsidies to non-local foods, and litigation against agribusiness where appropriate.





FIGHT FOR SYSTEMIC JUSTICE

We must build more just economic, social, and political arrangements that center marginalized groups.

The most popular strategies here include policies to provide **guaranteed basic services for all people**. Building a social safety net of preventative health care, living wages, free public internet and net neutrality, free and equitable support for healthy early childhoods, and other essentials of life would provide the foundation of a just and inclusive society. This initiative would also increase participation in democratic governance of marginalized groups.

The second set of strategies, **creating and defending the rights of the marginalized**, could be accomplished through the establishment of laws involving tribal and city councils, as well as passing laws providing rights to nature and ecosystems.

Education reform was another popular strategy, including free public education through college, dismantling and reorganizing the education bureaucracy, creating greater societal value for teachers, and real-world school desegregation.

Criminal justice reform, the last strategy in this area of work, is aimed at ending mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline, decriminalizing addictive drugs, funding treatment centers, an intentional and national campaign to fight racism and police abuse, and spreading restorative justice praxis.

One clear step in achieving these goals involves **anti-oppression work** — listening to people most impacted and acknowledging, educating about, and promoting non-white-male reality. General tactics to achieve all the aims of this pillar include direct action, general strikes, demonstration neighborhoods, and juxtaposing climate denial with inequality in discourse.





ACCELERATE ENERGY TRANSITION

We must **transition away from the most carbon-intensive energy sources** — coal, oil and gas — and rapidly adopt and scale up truly clean, renewable energy technologies. In a climate-stable society, our economy will no longer be dependent on fossil fuels.

Strategies to achieve this accelerated energy transition involve **mass citizen action**; social, political, and economic engagement; and increased public education on climate and energy issues. Change the Course participants called for mass marches and direct action that highlights the fossil fuel industry's role in climate change.

Many participants alluded to the importance of the first area of work (**transforming politics**) as a prerequisite to achieving this pillar. Specifically, creating a clear separation between the energy industry and our governments is a priority.

Other strategies identified by participants included fossil-free divestment campaigns, carbon taxation, national renewable energy standards, renewable energy-based transportation development, and changing the largest internet companies and the internet backbone to renewable power.

voter/public education and mobilization market our future climate march/direct action
grassroots coalitions to take on fossil fuel power
national renewable portfolio standard shift to social rather than corporate managed economy carbon tax divestment from fossil industry
sustainable transport energy and climate education transform economics of energy
phase out fossil fuel
green the internet



BUILD AN EMANCIPATORY CULTURE

We must build an emancipatory culture involving alliances between communities that share humanistic and environmental values.

This area of work is focused on fostering a **shift away from consumerism** and toward greater altruistic expression in making societal decisions with future generations in mind.

Strategies to get us there emphasize:

- » personal and group investment of time and effort to connect with and understand others (mentoring, educating, exchanging views, creating art, volunteering, and self-reflection),
- » investment in long-term **relationship building** with humanistic change-making organizations and movements as well as marginalized groups most affected by climate change (climate justice), and
- » spreading an understanding and practices around the notion that “personal is political,” i.e. that individual consumer decisions are not just private and isolated choices but instead can and should be strategic collective actions that have the power to determine political and social outcomes.





Our path to climate stability is through
SOCIAL JUSTICE »



Our path to climate stability is through
ECONOMIC SYSTEM CHANGE »



Our path to climate stability is through
POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION »



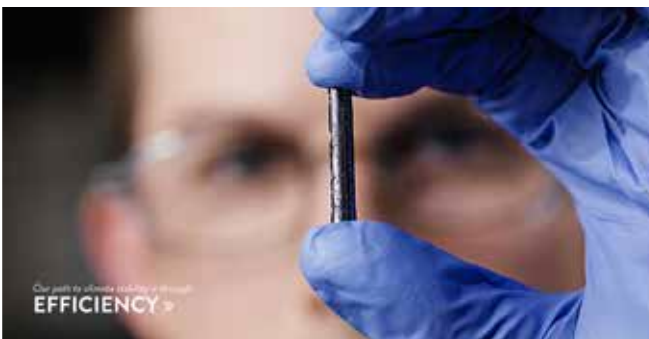
Our path to climate stability is through
GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT POWER »



Our path to climate stability is through
LOCALIZATION »



Our path to climate stability is through
POLICY SHIFT »



Our path to climate stability is through
EFFICIENCY »



Our path to climate stability is through
COMMUNITY »



Our path to climate stability is through
GLOBAL JUSTICE »





RELICS FROM THE MUSEUM OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The Museum of Climate Change explores the systems and institutions that have had an impact on our climate. During our Change the Course visioning exercises, participants were invited to submit 'relics' to a Museum of Climate Change.

In the museum of 2050, these relics represent a bygone era when we pushed ourselves to the brink of irreversible climate change. These relics may be items we rely on in 2015, but we can imagine them obsolete in a future when we have transitioned to a low-carbon world.

MUSEUM of CLIMATE CHANGE



THE PLANNED KEystone XL PIPELINE, c.2015

Composition of relic: Planned pipeline carrying 800,000 barrels a day of toxic tar sands bitumen from Alberta, Canada, to the Gulf Coast. Factors that led us to abandon this object: Pressure from the #NoKXL movement, in... [more](#)



CORP \$\$ IN CAMPAIGNS, c.2020

Composition of relic: We changed the political system in the US to get \$\$ out of politics. Factors that led us to abandon this object: A major shift in people powered campaigns from 2017-2020 led to a... [more](#)



COAL FIRED POWER PLANT, c.2025

Composition of relic: Metal, coal. Factors that led us to abandon this object: Air and water pollution, carbon emissions, rise of cheap renewable energy led us to abandon this object. Obstacles in the way of... [more](#)



OIL DERRICK, c.2030

Composition of relic: Metal, oil. Factors that led us to abandon this object: Depletion of "standard" oil sources, outrage at dangers of extreme oil drilling, rise of cheap renewable energy. Obstacles in the way of... [more](#)



PETROLEUM BASED FERTILIZERS, c.2030

Composition of relic: With the decline of fossil fuel extraction so came the fall of the byproducts that were unnecessary and equally harmful. Petroleum based fertilizers were once used on a majority of monoculture, factory farms.... [more](#)



BIG BANKS, c.2017

Composition of relic: Credits, debits, derivatives, computers, buildings, lobbyists. Factors that led us to abandon this object: Public outrage after next banker-generated financial crisis compels breakup of big banks. Obstacles in the way of this... [more](#)



RAINFOREST DEFORESTATION, c.2025

Composition of relic: This terrible assault on nature involved chopping down the world's rainforests for profit at the expense of biodiversity and livelihoods. This assault threatened to destroy all of the world's rainforests and forests. Factors that... [more](#)



VEHICLES WITH LOW GAS MILEAGE, c.2018

Composition of relic: Cars with awful gas mileage, only getting 10-20 miles to the gallon were completely phased out. From now on our cars get 40-50 miles to the gallon. Factors that led us to abandon... [more](#)

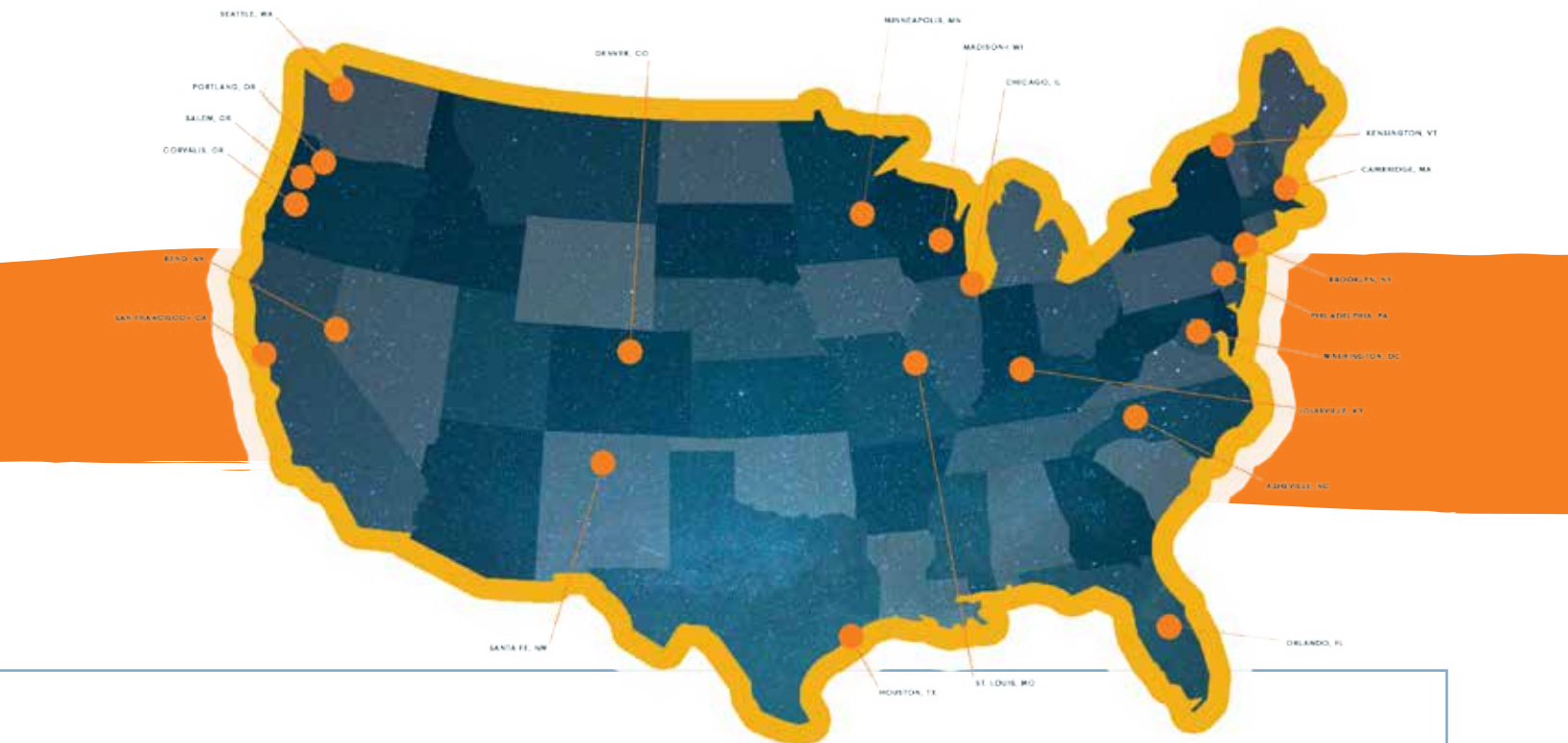




SUCCESSES OF CHANGE THE COURSE

Mass engagement

In 2014 and 2015, more than 10,000 people participated in Change the Course by attending in-person workshops in 22 cities and engaging with the Change the Course Digital and Social Media platforms.



Thinking positively about the future was novel and transformative

Participants were inspired to engage more with their own communities, and some experienced psychological transformation as a result of conceptualizing the future in a positive way. In the climate movement and many other social justice movements, the focus is on fighting or stopping things in the present, often from an entrenched and sometimes despairing outlook. Thinking positively about the future broke through people's habits of thinking negatively and forced them to envision an outcome they were fighting for rather than against. But thinking positively doesn't mean denying the negative; one participant remarked, *"It's important to think long-term, holistically, acknowledge emotions about the future, positive and negative, fears and hopes."*

Participants appreciated the visioning of the future accomplished collaboratively by the group in a powerful and energetic space. Change the Course provided participants with valuable and repeatable experiences and training that helped them be more effective organizers. The process was also energizing and inspiring for groups to re-engage their movements with a future-facing orientation they didn't have before. The structure and tools to facilitate the thinking process (e.g. climate relics museum and other visioning exercises) were empowering and provided new ways for participants to think about climate change beyond stagnant talking points.

Concrete Ripple Effects

Specific outcomes that emerged as a result of the Change the Course summits included:

- » New campaigns, including **Green Justice Philly**, an Indigenous-led campaign in NM, a coal and prison industry campaign in MO, and **Keep It In the Ground** at RAN;
- » Ideas for new solutions that led to future campaigns utilizing the strategic visioning process from Change the Course, including corporate accountability efforts and a campaign for accountable state-controlled banks;
- » Additional regional networking events organized by people who first connected through Change the Course;
- » Strengthened alignments and actions between constituencies; for example, RAN was able to build out our network of frontline communities involved with direct action to stop extractive projects;
- » An innovative new visioning tool used for long-term strategizing both within RAN and with the greater movement;
- » Strengthened local and regional networks; Change the Course linked up previously unconnected partners and brought up alignment opportunities and ideas for new campaigns;
- » Participants gaining new campaign strategy skills.

GET INSPIRED

Find and share world changing stories & examples of people fighting climate change.

+ ADD YOUR INSPIRATION

FIGHT IT

Identify the pillars that are holding up the current system and strategize on how to tear them down.

+ IDENTIFY A TARGET

BUILD IT

Share ideas on how to move us towards the climate stable future we envision.

+ ADD YOUR IDEA





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