THE INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY ENERGY WORKBOOK

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A Think and Do Tank Manual:

Taking Sustainability From the Blackboard to the Blacktop

A Product of the Clif Bar's Project Slingshot, Focus the Nation and the Cascade Climate Network

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Introduction

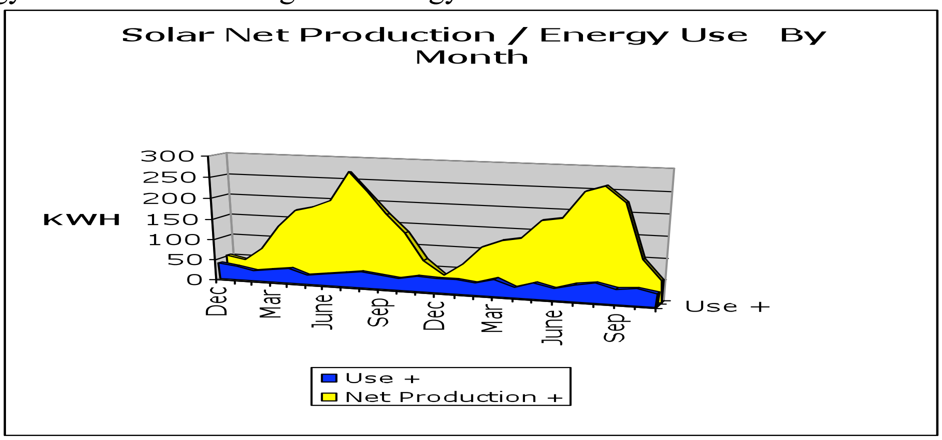
A Path toward Energy Positive Infrastructures

Our current infrastructures are “energy negative” in their relation to the community, environment, and economy because they are taking more energy from the community than they are contributing. This system is wasteful, and is having negative impacts on environmental systems and cycles as well as human health and wellbeing. This is largely due to the archaic fossil fuel energy infrastructure that the current model for energy production utilizes. In this system, centralized power generation plants provide the grid with power for the infrastructures that humans live in. This model creates a situation where individual buildings, and whole cities, consume more power than they produce. The long distance transmission of energy is inefficient, and it allows the consumers to externalize many of the true costs of their energy consumption choices.

Fortunately, there are alternatives to the current energy conundrum. Through a combination of increased energy efficiency and the continued development of local sustainable energy sources, individuals and communities can become “energy positive.” By balancing the equation of energy production and consumption, it is possible to develop self-sustaining community energy economies. These clean energy economies can have neutral or positive impacts on humans and the environment. In order to be truly positive, the system must also work to function at its maximum viable efficiency rate. Functioning at the highest possible efficiency will require the electrical infrastructures to be adaptable.

A fundamental goal of designing a new energy system should be to balance the equation of efficiency and community energy generation potential, and then implement the steps necessary to achieve net energy production. Starting with individual buildings and residences, and moving toward the city and county, we can work to reinvent our energy infrastructure. Some innovative individuals have already accomplished this goal for their personal residence (Figure 1); however, creating an energy positive community will require rethinking the way we capture and consume energy.

Figure 1: Energy Positive house using solar energy.



Source: Jon Carroll; Corvallis, OR

One way to come closer to being energy positive is to increase transmission efficiency. Localizing production will reduce the amount of energy lost in transmission and therefore greatly increase grid efficiency. In contrast to being a transmission line for producers and consumers, the grid can become a distribution and holding mechanism for community-based production of energy. Localizing will incorporate many of the external costs of energy production into the community. This will lead to a transition away from limited and polluting sources. As we localize, time and resources should no longer be wasted in the development of energy infrastructures that require the intensive use of fossil fuels. It is essential that the governmental and societal incentives shift to support the development of efficient renewable energy technology and infrastructure.

The convenient truth about the needed transition to a sustainable energy infrastructure becomes evident when considering the opportunity that a task of this magnitude presents. The outcry from the climate science community regarding the link between fossil fuel combustion and climate change, and expressed by the geological science community regarding the peak and decline of fossil fuels, give great urgency to this need for transition. Given this urgency, millions of jobs must be created in the coming decade to develop a sustainable energy infrastructure for our society. The hefty task of renovating our infrastructure will create a multitude of local jobs. Every old building that needs to be overhauled, every local organic farm, every solar panel or wind turbine, and every alternative transportation project, for example, will create local opportunities for green jobs.

By adopting a system-based and community-led approach, addressing climate change can invigorate the education system, provide pathways from poverty, boost a faltering economy, and work to restore a healthy relationship with the natural systems and cycles of this planet. A reconstruction of community infrastructure on this scale will provide the opportunity to address many of the social impacts of these structures as well. Ensuring equal access to training opportunities for these jobs can provide employment opportunities for all. Those who work in, and want to move away from the various components of the current antiquated and unsustainable economy will be able to find employment in the new energy economy.

An Institute for Community Energy (ICE) is essentially summer jobs for students to help create local green jobs with communities. By engaging in community-driven sustainable energy projects, students can help to catalyze the movement towards a sustainable energy infrastructure. A successful ICE will empower students to act as agents of change in communities, while giving these students a hands-on and contextual learning experience. These Institutes challenge the misconception that we must wait to finish school before becoming active and effective citizens in our larger communities. Through engaging in hands-on improvements and projects at a community scale, we can aid in the transition and acquire knowledge of how to replicate the steps of our projects. By partnering with ICEs, the education system can become a center of innovation and community. This partnership can act as both a catalyst for adaptation, and as a collective memory for what has been tried and what has worked in the process of creating a sustainable future.

An ICE is an effort to bring together members of a given community to transition towards a sustainable energy infrastructure, and to achieve real and tangible improvements in people's lives. By bringing community members together, an ICE will increase a community's potential to realign the structure of power into one in which a transition toward sustainability can be manifested. Our greatest asset as individuals is the capacity to inspire others; an ICE program is an effort to empower communities to share their power.

Institute Set Up

The goal is simple and the vehicle for change is clear. Through running an Institute for Community Energy, you will help replace dirty delocalized energy with clean, renewable, community supported energy. It's time to turn the opportunity in front of you into tangible change in a community. In the following pages, we will walk through our model of a planning process for an ICE. Remember, everything we put here is just a starter for where you can take an ICE. Be creative, be persistent, and have fun!

Choosing a project

One of the most important parts of preparing a successful ICE is finding and choosing an appropriate project. Even if an ICE is funded and well executed, it will be difficult to achieve the ICE's goals if an unrealistic project is chosen. For this reason, it is worth spending ample time choosing an appropriate project. There are many different types of projects that fall under the category of clean, renewable, community supported energy projects. These energy projects can range from urban gardening, to solar installations, to large-scale efficiency efforts. Be inclusive when you are looking for projects. You never know which one might be the perfect opportunity for a productive partnership between an ICE and community members. In an effort to help build community, try to pick a project that is a local effort. This is one way to begin a partnership with the community. Ultimately, it will take a lot of research and listening to find out what a community is working on and find where an ICE fits in.

Begin looking for projects as soon as you can and explore as many venues as possible to find a project. Keep your eyes open and search all over the place. Tons of people have ideas that are good skeletons; they just need some enthusiastic, supportive people to give their project some meat! The following list of organizations and resources may aid in your search for finding clean, renewable community energy projects.

- Your University or College
- Sierra Student Coalition
- U.S. Department of Energy
- Interstate Renewable Energy Council
- National renewable energy Laboratory
- International Energy Agency
- Solar Energies Industries Association
- Prometheus Institute for Sustainable development
- Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium
- El Solutions
- American Wind Energy Association
- Alliance to Save Energy
- Bonneville Power Administration
- Union of Concerned Scientists
- Renewable Northwest

Once you have found projects that are clean and renewable, be sure to check that they are local and community supported. There are many different ways to find if a project is community-supported. Try contacting neighborhood associations, local businesses and other community groups to learn about some of the opinions on a project. This is also a great place to learn about existing local efforts.

Once you have found a clean, renewable and community supported project you can start looking deeper into the viability of an ICE and community partnership. There are many characteristics to a project that make it a strong choice. Here are some positive attributes of a potential project:

- Your ICE is capable of achieving tangible progress to help the project.
- There is already a working group for the project. It's better to help an already existing effort rather than start something from scratch. Perhaps the group is an established non-profit or business.
- The project has community volunteers who will continue the project after the ICE leaves. You may be able to identify leaders in the community.
- The project is already going to happen, and you can speed it up or accompany a specialist working on it.
- The project challenges the participants, strengthens their relationships, and connects them to the community.
- The project could use people with expertise in the field that your school excels in. For example, the University of Oregon has a great Architecture program, so maybe it would wise to work with a green building project.

In Depth Research of Possible Projects

There are a lot of different energy projects that are being proposed, and eventually you will find some with good potential. Once you find these projects, we would advise that the following areas be researched. Research the *history* of whether this type of energy project has been attempted in the past, and what the results were. Research if similar projects have been successful in a community. Research the history of the area to be aware of sensitive issues in the community. Try checking the local news to find out if there are current events that could affect an energy project. Lastly, before you partner or work with any group or organization, know the mission statements of those groups. It is important to know the ultimate goals of your partners, and be able to articulate them to other members of the community.

Should the Project be Chosen Before the Funding?

We recommend that a project be chosen before a grant proposal is written. Every funding situation is different, however, we found it easier to write a funding proposal knowing what project the NICE would be focusing on. With a project chosen, it is easier to describe detailed deliverables for your potential funders. Also, funders expect you to have your ducks in a row if they are going to give you money. Sometimes, already having a project picked out helps give this impression. When we were trying to find funding for the NICE, we had already decided to work on the SunNE Project. This was beneficial because potential funders could see that we were working towards a specific, tangible, and replicable goal.

With all of that said, it is possible to get an ICE funded before you have a project picked out. Try bringing a funder multiple project options and maybe the funder will enjoy picking their favorite project from your selection. Either way, start looking for funding options as soon you put down this book. Be adaptive and do what seems to make the most sense for your situation.

Funding Your ICE

Funding is arguably the most crucial aspect of establishing an ICE; it can make or break your efforts. You will need funding if you need to pay for office space, want to throw an event, need to buy office supplies, or to cover other project costs. Funding is also a critical aim of your ICE if your main intention is to provide summer jobs for your ICE coordinators and/or participants. Start looking for funding as soon as you have confirmed the purpose and goals of your ICE. You will be unable to continue with most ICE operations until funds are available. The basic process for funding an ICE requires that you identify funders, draft proposals, and get the funds to your account. The following areas should be investigated to ensure that you give yourself the best chance at receiving funding.

Identify Potential Funders

Learn about your Financial (Fiscal) Year

Typically, a fiscal year (FY) for universities and colleges is determined by the classic semester, trimester, quarterly schedule of the institution, and is based on when students normally attend. These FY's are further broken down into quarters dependent on when the FY starts and ends. They are the cycles that determine when your school's departments will receive and lose funding. It is also important to know that some departments work on a "rollover" plan and some do not. The rollover plans allow departments to keep any unspent money within their department for future use; however, non-rollover plans return unused money from departments back to the central financier of the school. Because of these variances, it will be most beneficial for you to start asking for funding as early as you can define an ICE. This will increase you chances of working within existing funding cycles.

Endowments

An institutional endowment is a large sum of money (sometimes property) that is donated to an institution with the intention of being invested, thus allowing the fund to exist for a longer amount of time. Some schools receive rather large endowments, and others do not. Both public and private institutions can have an endowment. You will need to ask around to confirm whether endowments are an option for funding your ICE. Try asking a seasoned professor or a staff person in the administration building.

College/University Departments

Which departments in your school would benefit directly from funding your ICE? Environmental Studies, Engineering, Sociology, and the Public Policy/Political Sciences are great places to start. The NICE received amazing support from a university's Environmental Studies Department, since two of the NICE coordinators were students in that department. Think outside of the box though! Are there any departments that have funding and would be willing to support a student? Once you have defined roles in the Team Design process, you should consider ways to contact departments and get them to sponsor a student with the needed skill set. The possibilities are endless, because running an ICE will require skills that relate to every aspect of community.

Student Governments and Groups

Many student governments and groups have funding available throughout the year for projects and activities. This is could be another golden opportunity to fund your ICE. Do you know any clubs that need a campaign or a project to work on, and/or be willing to financially or fiscally sponsor your ICE? Creating a student group would be another way to gain access to student government funding. It can be hard to convince universities to spend student dollars on projects that reach beyond the campus, but remember to point out all the ways that participating in an ICE will benefit students and their learning experience.

Grants from Government Programs

Does your city offer grants for youth action or sustainable energy projects? Grants from federal funders will typically provide you with a larger pot of money than cities; however, their requirements and guidelines will typically be stricter than city grants. Try searching for grants that have a focus on renewable energy, student empowerment, or those that try to enforce carbon or Green House Gas reduction.

To increase your likeliness of receiving one of these types of grants, we recommend finding someone who can help you write and/or edit your grant application. Having a professional grant writer to help you write this application is strongly encouraged. However, the more input you have during the grant writing process the better. Make sure to give yourself plenty of time to finish, format, and submit this application. Granters will not extend deadlines for these types of opportunities.

Foundation Grants

Foundation grants are often available and come from a private-source funder, as opposed to a government. Make sure to find out if there are any guidelines your fiscal sponsor must follow before you apply for these grants. It would be good to talk with professors about these types of grants. They should be able to steer you in the right direction, and may even have ties to some foundations.

Other Private Funders

Do you know any generous people who want to help transition the way communities look at energy? Maybe a local business in the area has some extra cash burning a hole in their pocket. Try contacting businesses that produce a good or service you will need during your ICE and asking for in kind donations. Some businesses may even partner with your efforts through corporate sponsorship.

Drafting a Proposal

Considerations Before Making Your Ask

Does your funding cover the salaries of all the participants for the entirety of the scheduled program? The official starting date of your ICE should be specified during one of the first coordinator meetings. At the NICE, we had a timeline spanning about seven weeks of "in office" work. Our funding was also contingent on deliverables that were due about a month after the seven-week program was complete. Because of this, our funding officially spanned eleven weeks. Most ICE's will not likely receive funding for the planning stages. Consider this your "good karma" job.

Make sure your funding request includes materials and other program costs. Don't forget to include the cost of an office space for the duration of your "in office" work. In addition, your funding proposal should account for the cost of materials associated with running an ICE. Your program will need money to spend on office supplies, printing costs, event costs, and most likely some unforeseen expenses. Budget for everything, but work with what you get.

Sample Itemized Funding Proposal:

+Wages per Coordinator
+Wages per Participant
+Office Space
+Materials

- Event costs
- Printing costs
- Office supplies
- Etc.

____

TOTAL FINANCIAL NEED

Tips for Writing a Funding Proposal

Almost every funder will have a different application for providing funding. It is therefore necessary to hone your proposal to represent funder's exact needs. For example, your proposal could be a letter to someone within a department or it might be in the form of a scholarship application. There is no single magic way to ask for money, but here are tips for making a solid proposal:

- Create a specific and itemized list of what the funds are going to be used for.
- Be clear about exactly what the funding source will be gaining from giving you money.
- Save all of your applications and refer to them as starting points for new attempts for funding.
- Shoot high, you never know unless you ask.
- ASK EVERYONE! Grasp any opportunity to make your ICE happen.

Getting Funding to Your Account

Realistic Deliverables

Out of respect for all parties, make sure that you all will be able to generate all of the specified deliverables for your funders. For example, at the NICE, we received two notable forms of funding: one was the Project Slingshot Scholarship for $10,000 from Clif Bar and Focus the Nation, and the second was a $2,000 stipend provided to a student by a department of the university that this NICE'er was attending. Both of these sources had different accountability mechanisms and requirements. Make sure to sit down with the other ICE coordinators and deduce whether everyone will realistically be able to account for all of these requirements. Students who receive "stipends," and/or internship credit for participating in an ICE, should bottom-line their own requirements to assure that their personal deadlines for their funding and education have been met. Fulfilling these requirements will help ensure that you will receive your funding.

Fiscal Sponsorship

You may find it necessary to find a fiscal sponsor to accept donations and grants on your behalf. There are some donations that you will be able to get if the donor is able to write the donation off on their taxes. Having a fiscal sponsor with a 501-c3, non-profit, tax status will allow your donors this opportunity. Most funders appreciate the ability to write off their donations on their taxes. Do you know a non-profit that would be willing to let you use their tax ID number? Some non-profits will become a fiscal sponsor for a small percentage of your funding.

Getting Money from the Source to the pocket-book

Great! You found a funding source! Most of the hard work is over. Getting the money transferred into your ICE's account can take an exceptionally long time. Usually money has to flow through your fiscal sponsor's account before it can get to you. You'll want to calculate this wait time into your calendar, especially if you have ICE'ers who are depending on their stipend for their summer living expenses. We recommend that you give yourself at least a month to allow for these funds to flow through the necessary "hoops." To make your life easier, make sure that the accountant cuts your check to the person who will be in charge of the finances. Otherwise you may face some serious challenges trying to cash it, thus delaying your awesome project even further.

When you do get your check in hand, make sure that you have someone in your ICE who is dedicated to managing the money with precise records. At the NICE, we established a separate checking account at a local bank to help keep our ICE money separate from our personal money. This proved to be a very reliable way to keep track of our finances because only one person had access to the account. By doing this we ensured that there weren't too many hands in the cookie jar.

Preparing a Cool ICE

So you got the funding, you have a project picked out, and its time to hit the streets! While it would be nice to run to the community that you're working with and start knocking on doors, you should remember to be strategic with all your actions in order to achieve the goal at hand. Many of these actions must be taken during or after the ICE, however, what you do in preparation will play a large part in determining how successful your ICE will be. The process of preparing an ICE will be discussed in more depth in the following section.

Self-assessment

Running an I.C.E. will require discipline in areas of your life that may sometimes get overlooked in daily life. To ensure that you are ready for the various challenges ahead, you should do a simple self-assessment in a few categories. Try to determine if each area is one that you are strong or weak in. This way, you can work with your strengths and develop your weaknesses.

Work Ethic

The fact that you have read this far and are preparing to start an ICE, says a lot about your work ethic and sense of self-discipline. Keep being self-driven! If you are prepared and self-driven, it will help to avoid some of the problems associated with running an ICE.

While most college students are picking up regular day jobs for the summer, you have been fortunate enough to make your own. This is very important to remember. You make your own hours, you make your own deadlines, and you make many important decisions. Most people have a boss looking over their shoulder making sure that they are productive, however, you will find that you may have to fill that role yourself.

For many people, this may create a problem. It becomes easy to get into a "do it later" or "someone else will pick that up" mentality. These mentalities will make it difficult for you to meet important deadlines and be overall successful with your project. To prevent the above, try to set clear standards for office hours and identify exactly which weeks will be devoted to the ICE. Establishing consistent and reasonable times to be at a certain "working area" will help to provide stability for all who are involved with your ICE.

Time Commitment

Make sure that you, personally, can realistically commit as much time as you need to fulfill funding requirements. Once you attain funding, you and your ICE will be committed to your funders. To fulfill these commitments, you must dedicate ample time for working on them. If you have a summer job already, you may consider scaling back your hours or even quitting.

Teamwork

Do you work well in groups and with others? In addition to being self-driven, one must also make an effort to work with others and communicate accordingly. Supporting one-another and communicating openly are essential components of a functional team. One way to help build a team is to get everyone together to hang out a few times before the ICE begins. Make an effort to build good connections with your team, and it will make the whole ICE experience more enjoyable.

Special Skills Assessment

Do you have any special skills that could be utilized in the ICE? Are you bilingual? Are you artistic in any way? Do you know any famous people? These sorts of things may seem useless at times, but an ICE requires that all participants use their skills to push a project forward. You never know when some strange skill could help make your project successful.

Logistics

When it comes down to it, there are certain physical needs of an ICE. Some of these include an office space, food and housing for the ICE interns, and other random needs such as Internet access and clipboards. It is also a great idea to spend some time figuring out what the lay of the land of the community. Having a good understanding of what you have, and the situation you are working with, will help you be more effective with your ICE efforts.

Office and Materials Logistics

An office is a great place to hold Think and Do Tanks, meetings, and to work out of. Having your office in the same neighborhood as the project will make it easier for community members to visit you, volunteer, and come to your events. A central office for the ICE greatly improves the productivity, accessibility, and professionalism of a group. We recommend that searching for an office should be one of the first tasks you take on after getting funding confirmation.

At the NICE, we held all of our Think and Do Tanks in an office at South East Uplift Neighborhood Center. This space was donated to us because they heard about what we were working on and wanted to help. Although this may happen for your ICE, it is still a good idea to include funding for a space in your funding request.

When searching for an office, be sure to utilize all existing connections that you have in the community you are working with. If your school is close to the community, consider getting a classroom for the summer. Perhaps someone has an empty garage with Internet that you can shack up in for a few months. Find a comfortable space, put a logo on the door and go for it!

You might be surprised how much stuff it takes to make a productive working area. Some of these tools include computers, the Internet, a printer, white boards, clipboards, sharpies, flip charts and many other useful items. Make a list of all your needed items and start looking for office supplies.

Finances

Are you good with numbers and keeping an even checkbook? Or, is it hard for you to pay bills on time and remember to keep receipts? These are important questions that should be considered before choosing who bottom-lines finances for your ICE. Depending on your general experience with money, you may want to keep track of the money yourself, or delegate this task to someone else in the group.

If you are taking on the finance coordinator role there are many ways to keep the numbers in check. Before the ICE begins, try to timeline out projected expenditures for the project and do your best to stick to those projections. At the NICE, all of the receipts for expenditures were kept in a folder for safekeeping and a running balance was kept in excel for clarity. Make sure that you establish a clear process for handling your finances before you start to use them.

Housing Logistics

If your ICE program is in the same city as you are currently living in, then housing logistics may be easy. However, an ICE may have people from multiple schools coming together to collaborate, and it is very likely that someone will need a place to stay while they are participating in the ICE program.

This is another place where one should utilize all connections that they have in the city. At the NICE, two of the coordinators moved to Portland, OR and both of them were housed for two months for free. Many communities have generous people that want to support efforts like the ICE; they just need to hear about them. Another way to house outsiders could be renting out a house for the summer. If you can work this into your funding proposal, this could be a fun option for participants.

Calendar of Events

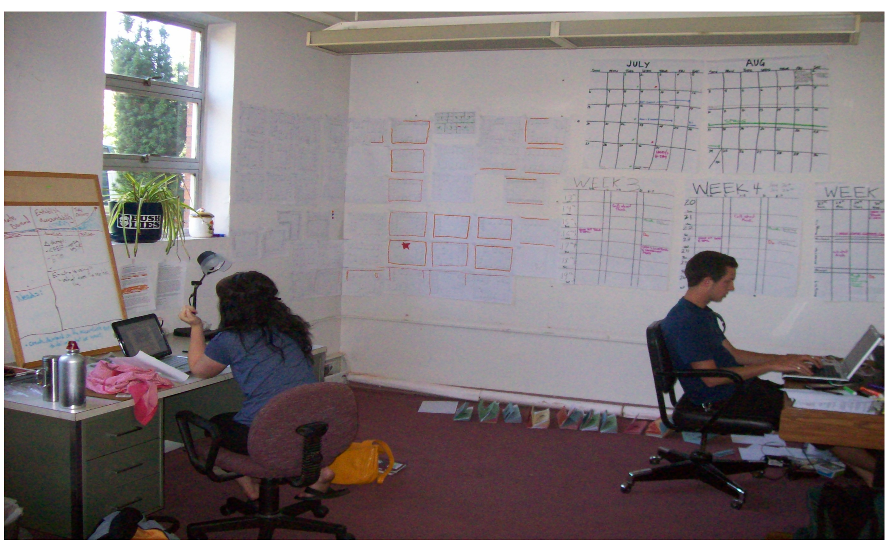
During an ICE, one has to manage a variety of tasks with deadlines and important information. We highly suggest that you start using timelines to write out your weeks, months, and summer in general. On the first timeline, you should write down all the extremely important dates for the ICE including deadlines for our deliverables and program goals. For example, the first NICE calendar of events had the dates and times of all our events, important meetings, unavailable days, goals for community outreach, and program completion.

You can do timelines in a Google document, excel sheet, or out on paper. However you choose to do it, be sure that your timeline is posted in a visible place. This will help keep everyone on the same page for important dates during the ICE. While we recognize that there are many ways to organize, we highly recommend that you utilize timelines when planning an ICE.

Project Logistics and Lay of the Land

During the process of choosing a project, you hopefully learned about where you fit in and what specifically you can do to help the project move forward. Now is the time to delve deeper! Research as much as you can about the project logistics, and the social and political atmosphere around the project. What are the strengths and areas of opportunity for the organization or group that is bottom-lining the project you have chosen? Who are the community players who are in favor or opposed to the project? What do these people stand to gain or lose as a result of the project's success? What resources does the community have to offer to help move the project forward? Basically, what are the social, political, economic, and engineering barriers and solutions to your project's success?

Lots of questions right? Well, that is just scratching the surface of all the challenging questions you will need to answer to move your project forward and run an effective program. Research can be a lot of fun for some folks and a huge drag for others. Either way, it can be a time sink and doesn't have as much creative space as other portions of the Institute. We recommend that you prioritize the information needed and include it on your time line based on when you will need to know each piece of information. This isn't to say "eh... It's not important." Diligent research before the Institute starts can make the whole process smoother and less confusing. We didn't do a very good job of this at the NICE and it bit us in the rear at first.



Team Design

Designing an effective team is essential to creating an effective ICE. The Sierra Club has been conducting a Leadership Development Program in conjunction with Marshall Gantz and Ruth Wagman from Harvard University. Together they have identified many of the key components to designing effective teams. The approach we took to designing our NICE team is derived largely from their research and our past experience, and will be discussed in the following section.

Assembling the Coordinators

The coordinator team acts as a core group that will essentially be accountable for the deliverables of the program. They are the group that is committed 110% to making your ICE a smash! Ideally it will also be a group of people with a diverse array of skills, connections, and backgrounds. A good-sized core is around five to eight people. Any larger, and consistent communication and scheduling become a problem, and any less will create a heavy workload for the coordinators.

Once you have identified your coordinators be sure to bring them together for some team building. Have some fun together but also go over the structure and function of your core team. Identify what the time commitment is for being a coordinator and what it means to be a coordinator as opposed to being an ICE intern or volunteer. It is also a good idea to identify who will be responsible for bottom-lining specific organizational functions. A bottom-liner is someone who is responsible for making sure something gets done, but doesn't necessarily take all the work on alone. For the NICE, we had the program areas of: Media Contact, Do-tank Manager, Think-tank Manager, People Person (a nice way of saying volunteer coordinator), Event Planner, Workbook Manager, and Survey & Report Specialist. The exact roles needed for your program will vary by project. Make sure that the roles are interrelated and that the common purpose they serve is clear, compelling, and will create a tangible step forward for the ICE and its project.

Defining Roles and Team Norms

When people take on a role in a group, they are committing to being accountable for a specific task. The ability to define and design tasks can provide opportunity for the development of the skills and empowerment of an individual. Intentional task design can also promote ownership and pride in an organization and/or project. Tasks should be interdependent, yet individually achievable. Each person should be able to move their specific responsibility forward, but for the overall program to move forward, every person must be successful. This type of structure helps maintain equality in the team while setting up a framework for group accountability.

The roles you choose should be chosen with attention to how the structure you create will function. Will the conditions that are produced by your team structure enable people to be engaged and successful? Will these conditions have a clear set of group norms and guidelines? Do all members of the team agree on what should be done and what should never be done as part of the team? Does everyone understand how a violation of a group norm will be addressed? Is everyone comfortable addressing the violation of a group norm? It is important that the violation of a norm gets addressed because failure to do so sets a new norm by default. Don't hesitate to revisit and edit the group norms when necessary.

A decision making process is one of the most important group norms to establish. It will help clarify the overall process for the Institute as well as help avoid hurt feelings or slow the program down. How many of the coordinators need to be present to have a quorum (enough people to vote)? Does quorum always need to include the bottom-liner for the project area in question?

What kind of decisions can be made by the bottom-liner of a project area, and what decisions need to be made as a whole team? How will all decisions that are made get communicated to the rest of the group and team? Many of these questions and more should be talked about between coordinators and other participants. Coming to consensus on them will help build a strong functional team.

Safe Space

The magnitude of the tasks that ICEs often engage in may create stress and burnout if you don't take the time to do some preventative preparation. The long hours spent in close proximity with the other coordinators and participants can also be a challenge in and of it-self. It is important to take time to create a fun and supportive environment for people to work in. At the NICE, we made a list of things we needed to feel comfortable and a list of things that made us uncomfortable. This list was open for both serious and silly topics and was possibly referenced more often than any other document we created!

In addition to intentionally creating a safe social environment for people to function in, it is also a good idea to intentionally design the overall Institute in ways that provide a supportive context and enabling structure for tasks. Are the resources and coaching available to complete each task? If so, it is important that people feel comfortable asking for help and know who to ask. If not, then it is time to do some searching or re-evaluate the viability of the task. How would you like to be assigned a task that you didn't know how to do, and/or not have the resources needed to do it? Careful task design, and creation of a safe space for people to engage will help avoid this problem.

ICE Program Identity and Story

One of the most common confusions we experienced was when we talked to people about the NICE, and tried to explain its relation to the project we were assisting. Eventually we realized that this was due to our lack of a solid and easily conveyed identity. We learned that a clear identity also helped people see where they fit into the whole ordeal, and assisted them in realizing what they had to contribute to our program and/or project.

An ICE is an amazing program to be a part of, but it can also be difficult to articulate. So, take some time to clarify what your ICE is and get comfortable explaining its identity is to others. It is a good practice to develop an "elevator pitch" about the ICE your team is coordinating. An elevator pitch is basically a 30 second blurb that hits the major points you are trying to convey and sparks an interest to learn more in the listeners. What will the ICE accomplish outside of the goals of moving the project you choose forward? How will it affect participant's lives? How does it fit into the long term and the big picture? By having a cohesive, consistent program and identity, there will be little confusion about your ICE's goals, motives, and tactics.

Team spirit, regardless of the stigma around those words, is essential to creating an environment that people are excited to engage in. Team spirit basically boils down to pride in the work your team is doing and a sense of belonging to the "culture" of that team. To that end, it is essential that the team identity is established in a way that clearly sets membership criterion and identifies the purpose for having the team. People need to be able to understand where they fit into the team in order to have team pride.

Communication Structure

A clear set of norms around the process of communicating will help ensure that everyone feels included and that the team is working as a collective. The NICE set a number of norms around group communication. E-mail, Google groups, Google documents, phone calls, notes in the office, and group meetings were the main venues for communication that we identified. We found that daily group planning and debriefing meetings were an excellent practice that helped us all stay on the same page, be supportive of one another, and prioritize tasks. Essentially, we identified effective to communicate tools for our group and created group norms around using them.

In addition to setting clear norms around all of the team's communication venues, we found it particularly critical that the members of the team felt comfortable expressing any concerns, comments, or other types of input to the group. Addressing a group dynamic glitch before it became a problem issue helped us stay positive and productive. It is hard to step forward and voice a concern, and it can also be difficult to take criticism of your actions as a learning opportunity. However, a well-functioning team will create a space for people to communicate openly and honestly with one another.

Institute Design

Institutes for Community Energy can be designed in a multitude of ways. We learned that it is essential to be flexible in order to accommodate for circumstances which you may not foresee. The type of institute you are able to run will be determined by the amount of funding you get and the specific needs of the project you choose. Our initial design for the NICE, plus a few lessons learned, is outlined below. Because of the wide variety of Institute design possibilities we chose to focus predominantly on the underlying principles of what we did, rather than the specific design of the Northwest Institute for Community Energy.

Identify Tangible and Quantifiable Goals

Proper goal setting is essential to running a successful Institute. We used some methods this summer that were very useful and learned some lessons that, had we paid attention to earlier, would have saved a heap of trouble and time. The first thing to remember when setting goals is to set realistic and achievable, yet consequential, goals. Nothing will be more demoralizing than spending a whole summer working your butt off and not achieving the goals you set out to reach, or achieving your goals only to find out that they did nothing to move the project you chose forward. What resources does the team have? How much time do you have? What can you do that will provide a measureable difference for the project you have chosen with those resources in that amount of time? Answering these questions will aid in creating strong goals.

Goals are often a difficult thing to reach, and as in task design, we found that our most attainable goals were interdependent yet individually doable. Initially we set our long-term goals with the assumption that other goals, which were outside the realm of our capacity, would be reached. When these goals, which were out of our control, were not reached it led to our goals being unachievable. It wasn't until we set goals that were independently achievable for our program, that we were able to work toward a stable outcome.

A useful method to setting strategic goals that we utilized was to plan backwards from our long-term project goals (See Goal Setting Grid below). First we established what we hoped to accomplish by the end of the Institute to help the project move forward. We then asked ourselves what we needed to have accomplished half way to the end of the Institute in order to achieve our end goals. Finally we asked ourselves what we would need to do at the beginning of the institute to ensure that we would reach our intermediate and end goals.

After setting our project goals, we set goals for recruitment to the program in a similar manner. We set our end goal for involvement based on what we would need to make the end goal for the project realistic. We then set our intermediate and immediate goals accordingly. As a reality check we compared our immediate goals for involvement with the current group involved to see if we were close to our goals. We also checked the intermediate and immediate goals for the project and involvement against each other. I know right now you are saying, "That's a lot of checking!" Trust us, it is worth it. Another best practice we learned was to subdivide the involvement goals into type of involvement (i.e.: ICE intern, volunteer, think tank attendee, do tank attendee, etc.).

Sample Goal Setting Grid:

Goal Setting	Immediate	Intermediate	Long Term
Campaign	3	2	1
Organizational	6	5	4

Developing a Strategy

Once you have established project goals, have an idea of how many people you will be working with, and have a good understanding of the "lay of the land" surrounding your project; it is time to start developing the structure of your Institute for Community Energy. We found that there were two basic actions we were asking people to do: sit down and think about solutions, and go do something to make those solutions a reality. In other words our calls to action became framed as "Think Tanks" and "Do Tanks." The real trick, we learned, was to make sure that each call to action fell into an overarching strategy. Designing each Tank as a tactic to strategically move the Institute's goals forward allowed us to provide a sense of ownership over the project to members of the community and use our time effectively. Having a clear understanding of our strategy allowed us to design effective tactics.

In a conventional campaign there is often an obvious primary target, people(s) who have the ability to make your end goal happen. Given the primary target, you are then able to identify specific groups or people who have a direct influence over the primary target, these are secondary targets. Public audiences are larger, generally less organized groups that exist within your community. These audiences can give momentum to your project and grant access to previously inaccessible targets. Ultimately, in a grassroots campaign, power is based in the involvement of a broad public audience building momentum that accumulates the support of the secondary targets and pressures the primary target to grant victory to the campaign.

In an unconventional attempt to do grassroots organizing the targets and path are less clear. The NICE "campaign" ended up being an effort to find funding for a feasibility study for the community-owned thermal-energy utility. There are multiple sources of funding for those types of studies and, rather than focusing all of our attention on one funder and picking a "primary target," we elected to work on strengthening the overall grant proposal and to quantify demand for the utility from the project area. Picking a specific funder would have clarified our campaign path significantly; however it was not the assistance that the project managers had expressed a need for. The lack of a conventional campaign path forced us to develop a different strategy. Our strategy was to strengthen the grant proposal by showing consumer demand, technical viability, and economic practicality.

One last thought on strategy, be strategic in general. There will be a multitude of meetings, projects, and favors that will pull your attention away from conducting an Institute that produces a tangible improvement in people's lives. These optional undertakings, while often very valuable, can keep you running in circles while your timeline for reaching the goals of the Institute slips into disrepair. We found it extremely useful to ask ourselves, "How is this strategic? What will this accomplish that will move the Institute closer to one of its goals or to completing one of its tasks?" If we couldn't clearly answer that question, then we would prioritize other time uses that were more directly strategic.

Creating a Strategic Tactic

Crafting a strategic tactic often requires thinking creatively and on a macro-scale. Prepping for a Think or Do Tank can be a task in of itself and will be covered later in this workbook. Making sure that your Tank is strategically constructed is the challenge we are seeking to address in this section. A good tactic will be timely, fun, challenging, constructive, and clearly communicated in context of the overall strategy.

Tactics can be strategic on multiple levels. Each action presents the opportunity to move the project forward and to develop and empower participants. This lesson hit home as the NICE began to come to a close. It became apparent that a well-designed Tank was one that challenged its participants to take more ownership over the project and encouraged them to do so by collectively moving the project forward in a quantified and achievable way. When we were able to clearly communicate the importance of each tactic, or in this case Tank, to the participants of all the Tanks, it worked to create a better sense of community empowerment around the project. Participants were able to see where their particular contribution, when combined with the efforts of others, created a tangible step forward for a sustainability project in their community.

Timeline of Tactics

The first step to creating a strategic tactic is to create a timeline. Timelines, like campaigns, are organic entities that grow and change as the process of organizing unfolds. You will need to revisit your timeline frequently to adapt and refine it, so don't get hung up on the details as you fill it out. Start by creating a calendar that begins "now" and moves through the end of the Institute. It should also span out long enough for you to include any post-Institute follow up that you may want to plan. Fill in all the known events for the community including holidays and neighborhood meetings. Mark any other pertinent dates onto the calendar, such as the start and finish of the Institute, and roughly when you want to have reached your immediate, intermediate, and end goals. This will help in creating tactics that are consistent with the normal actions of the community, as well as help you avoid scheduling conflicting events and other tactical actions.

We found it helpful to create individual timelines for our various project areas and then to compile them onto one master-timeline. In addition, we created another timeline that was specific to the start and finish of the Northwest Institute for Community Energy, and a third one that was used by the coordinators that included all of the work we did before and after the Institute. This helped us design tactics that fit into the timeframe of the Institute. Timelining can be a microcosm within a microcosm ad nausea. Once you have completed an overarching timeline you can, and probably should, spend hours dividing months into weeks and weeks into days, etcetera. As an ICE coordinator, you are presented with the strange privilege of conducting a time-crunched problem solving exercise where the fate of the world could be decided! The more efficiently you manage your time the better.

Upon timelining to your heart's content, take a step back and examine the timeline for spaces where a tactic would fit strategically. In general, tactics should build on one another and be a fun and creative space for people to engage in the Institute for Community Energy. A typical progression of tactics might create a unified demand, identify a solution, and achieve the solution. It is essential that these tactics attract people to the project in order to create lasting change. The ICE only lasts for a summer, but the community is undertaking a long-term project that will require the hands of many. In addition, there are people in the community who have particular skills, knowledge, and connections that will help the program immensely.

Crafting a timeline of tactics will allow you to see how these tactics combine to apply continued pressure on the situation while working toward its resolution. You should also take care to create tactics that are realistic for your situation, given your resources. In addition, tactics that drag on too long can become boring and lose the attention of your participants. People are giving you their time and energy; make sure that their participation is worthwhile and enjoyable.

Composing ICE Project Messaging and Identifying Frames

Similar to creating a team identity, composing good messaging around your project goals will help people identify with the project, and see how their assistance will become an integral part of the success of the project. When community organizing, we often found ourselves acting as mediators and connectors for individuals and groups in the community. The ability to communicate our goals in a clear and compelling style is a skill we identified as fundamental to building an effective community around the project goals.

Messaging is a very broad topic and identifying sub-divisions within this realm will assist in preparing to communicate your goals to people. There is often a slogan and a story which, told in the context of the values of your audience, become a specifically framed message for that audience. We found it useful to maintain a "messaging bank" in which we stored and tracked our various framings of our overall story. By initially identifying a multitude of talking points, which we could pick and choose from based on our audience, we were better prepared for the various conversations we ended up having about the project.

Running an ICE

When running an Institute for Community Energy, one must understand that the ICE is a huge learning experience for all who participate in it. There will be multiple learning experiences while running an ICE, so be continually looking to improve and adapt the ICE's structure in order to function more efficiently. The following model for conducting an ICE is based on how the Northwest Institute for Community Energy was run and includes some lessons learned from that experience.

Running a Think and Do Tank

It's time to get you're feet on the street! All of your plans are worth nothing if you can't put them into action. So get motivated and inspired to have some fun helping a community realize its potential. Remember that the ICE is designed to be a learning experience, and every mistake made is an opportunity for that learning. So get to work and start learning!

The goal of the ICE is to build community around a clean energy project, and to help move that project forward. As we designed tactics for the NICE we found it beneficial to divide this broad statement into two realms.

1) **Build lasting community support surrounding the energy project.**
2) **Advance the energy project with the built community support.**

While very similar, each of those goals can require different tactics to achieve them. Luckily, a strategy for achieving both of those goals can be worked into the design of each ICE. Through strategically designing Think Tanks and Do Tanks, you can effectively work towards both goals. In the Think Tanks, you can bring community members together to learn about the project and get invested mentally. In the Do Tanks, you can build more community support for the project and give willing volunteers a chance to get physically invested. During the NICE we used a Think Tank to compile and edit a community energy survey, which was then used in Do Tanks to help gather information needed to move the SunNE project forward. Another way that you can optimize the combined results of your Think and Do Tanks is to use them as tactics strengthen the community-based working group.

We decided early that we needed to have a SunNE Project Working group after we left. After getting dozens of community members into our Think and Do Tanks, we were able to put together a group of eight dedicated community members to form a community-based working group. They are meeting once a week and doing the ground work to keep the SunNE Project moving forward. Remember, a good organizer can organize themselves out of job, so try to do this during your time in a community.

When setting up one of these groups, be very personal and pointed with your discussions with the potential members. Give people a call and have a good conversation with them about the project. Explain the importance of forming a working group and directly invite them to the first meeting. Since you are planning this meeting from the beginning, find a time that works for the most people to be there. We suggest that you are present for at least the first meeting that the working group has. This will give you time to help the group with your experience and pass on important information on the project. You should have lists of interested people by this point as well too, so be sure to give those to the group.

In the following sections we will discuss how to effectively use the Think and Do Tanks to achieve the ICE's goals. We'll also provide tips for how to develop lasting leaders, facilitate meetings, enter a community, work with the media, and plan successful events. These skills will aid you in making your time effective while running the ICE.

Effectively Using Think Tanks

When most people think of a Think Tank, it reminds them of politics and scheming, but this is not what an ICE Think Tank is designed for. Think Tanks in your ICE can be used strategically to build community support around the project. For example, you can engage the community in having pointed discussions, and split into working groups to move the project forward. It's a beautiful thing when people come together around a productively addressing a challenge and work to move forward. There are two kinds of power in this world, money power and people power. By bringing community together to work, you are making people aware of their people power. At Think Tanks, you can work towards building lasting support for the project through interesting conversations and various types of research. The people who are most likely to keep working on the project after the ICE leaves are those that came to the Think and Do tanks. Bringing community members together will also create a diversity of thoughts, from a variety of people, and produce stronger solutions.

At the NICE, we had a discussion topic for every Think Tank on Tuesdays at 6:00pm in our office. We would recruit attendees, (see next section for recruitment tips) get some vegetarian pizza and facilitate a discussion on how to move the project forward. Some of our discussion topics included renewable energy, climate justice, and environmental ethics. Once the juices were flowing on those topics, we would discuss various ways to move the energy project forward. Following that, working groups would work together to create solutions to the identified barriers. We then compared notes as a starting point for focusing our efforts to move the project forward. That is one way that the Think Tanks and Do Tanks strategically complement each other. For the Think Tank Manager, it is important to have you own agenda for making the Tank successful.

Sample Think Tank Agenda:

5:45-5:50 - Pick up Pizza and clean the office for guests
5:50-6:10 - People show up and mingle (have some pizza)
6:10-6:15 - People Introductions and brief on the Project
6:15-6:30 - Discussion on articles about Renewable energy
7:00-7:15 - Discuss Energy Project and roadblocks
7:15-7:30 - Break into working groups
7:30-7:45 - Compare solutions and ideas
7:45-8:00 - Debrief session, establish next steps, and go home!

While each community has the potential to come together for a project, there are ways that you can tactfully help people work together. Through strategic leadership development, facilitating skills, and some good debriefing, you can take the potential of willing community members, and turn them into a strong working group for the project. By building your skills in these areas, you will have more success in building lasting community support.

Leadership Development

While some students may live in the same community as a project, it is best to assume that after the ICE is over, there will be considerably less student involvement with the project. While this may sound like a bad thing, using Think Tanks strategically should help establish a community-based working group by the time the Institute is over. It's important to recruit and develop community leaders in order to have more people working on the job while you are there, and to help ensure someone will take charge of the efforts after you leave.

While doing your Think and Do Tanks, be sure to keep an eye out for potential leaders. If you think that you have found someone to step up into that role, meet with them for a one-on-one discussion about their involvement in the project. By working with these people on developing a strategy for completing the project, they develop a stronger sense of ownership over the project and acquire some of the necessary skills. Developing community member ownership and skills is extremely important if you want the project efforts to last after the ICE is over.

The Sierra Student Coalition outlines some tips for the process of leadership development in its Student Environmental Leadership Summer Programs, Sprogs. These tips and principles are provided below and proved to be very useful for designing strategic NICE Think Tanks.

-Principles of Leadership Development-

- Cast a wide net - leaders are developed not born, ask everyone
- Start with the best fit for the role - know that your time is valuable and you need to prioritize
- Lead by Example - be a role model for potential leaders; set the high water mark for achieving goals
- Raise the bar - develop leaders by raising standards/expectations, not by nitpicking over specific skills

-Role of the Organizer-

- Recognize leadership potential - you need to be able to identify raw and undeveloped talent
- You are the strategist - you have the big picture and plan, always be two steps ahead
- Provide Training - teach them basic skills to aid in their success

Facilitating Meetings

Each Think Tank meeting will be an opportunity to engage community members and interns in conversations about the project. To ensure that these discussions are useful and productive, it's very important to understand what it takes to run a productive meeting. First, there are important roles that should be filled when you start a meeting. You need to have a facilitator, a time keeper, and a notes taker. The facilitator is not in control, but their job is to keep conversation on topic and moving forward. The time keeper gives updates every fifteen minutes or half hour. Lastly, but arguably most importantly, the notes taker needs to get everyone's contact information who is at the meeting and send them detailed notes on the conversation. Once you have these roles filled, you can start putting together a really fun and productive meeting.

-Meeting Tips-

- Try to start and end on time
- Don't spend too much time on one issue
- Sit in a circle
- Have an agenda and set times for each item
- Encourage participation
- Don't all talk at once
- Pass around sign in sheet at the beginning
- Have fun!
- Try keeping notes up on a flip chart or something visible for the entire group

Debriefing

As said earlier, each ICE will be a learning experience for all participants and each Think and Do Tank will provide a great time for learning. One great way to clarify learning is through debriefing after an event. Whether it's a Think Tank, a Do Tank, a general meeting, or a large event, if you debrief right after it you will learn a lot about what you can improve for next time. Each debrief should be a short discussion about how the event went, highlighting things that went well and things that should be changed.

After the first NICE Think Tank, we took about fifteen minutes to talk about the Tank and learn from it. There were notes about everything from the pizza topping to our recruitment strategy. Since you are working with the community, it is important to get regular input from them and event debriefs are a great time to get feed back. It is also a good practice to put the lessons learned up on the wall of your office to reflect on.

Effectively Using Do Tanks

To be effective with your actions during the ICE it is important to find a balance between planning action and taking action. The Think Tanks serve as a great time to plan some of your actions, but the Do Tanks are the grassroots work needed to reach out to the neighborhood. Do Tanks are another time to get community members to together for the project, and to move the project forward. The goal of each Do Tank can be totally different each time. At the NICE, we had two Do Tanks to do an initial information drop, four Do Tanks to get a hundred completed surveys from the neighborhood, and a final Do Tank to advertize our community energy festival. You should utilize the able volunteers that show up to Do Tanks to put the move in moving forward.

There are multiple steps to prep for a Do Tank but first you must decide the goal of the Do Tank. Do you want to flyer the neighborhood for your event, or go door to door and have conversations about the project? When volunteers show up to the Do Tank, you want to give them a clear concise goal of what they are working towards. Be sure to effectively use the time that people volunteer to achieve the goal. Most people don't have much time, so you want to have something ready for them to do when they show up. At the NICE, we would make a short agenda for each Do Tank.

Sample Do Tank Agenda:

5:45-5:50 - Pick up popsicles and any last minute printed materials
5:50-6:10 - People show up and mingle (have some popsicles)
6:10-6:15 - Lay out goal of Do Tank - 100 surveys total… how many tonight?
6:15-6:20 - Brief group on principles of canvassing and the project's canvassing wrap
6:20-6:25 - Practice wrap
6:25-6:30 – Hand out canvassing materials and pick canvas routes
6:30-7:45 - Canvas
7:45-8:00 - Debrief and go home!

Each section on the agenda takes preparation and should be considered by your Do Tank Manager. The Do Tank Manager will bottom-line these efforts but also delegate tasks that he/she needs help with. Some preparation tasks include ordering pizza, confirming a meeting room, printing materials, phone-banking to recruit, and making canvas routes. These were some of tasks we did for the NICE Do Tanks, but your tasks may look completely different (maybe cupcakes instead of popsicles).

No matter the specifics of your Do Tank, organizing a successful Do Tank requires a variety of skills. In the following section, we will discuss the need to respectfully enter a community, how to recruit people to your Tanks, how to work with the media, some general event planning guidelines, and how to transition the project from the ICE to the community's working group.

Entering a Community

If your goal is to help build community around a project, it is important to understand how to humbly approach a community and share skills without alienating community members. You want to gently guide the community in a more strategic direction without distancing individuals or groups from the project. You can enter a community and build good relationships, as long as you are intentional and respectful with your actions.

At the N.I.C.E., we visited multiple Neighborhood Association meetings as well as Business Association meetings. This was a great way for us to introduce ourselves to many of the key individuals in the community. Once you have established connections, utilize those connections to have inclusive Think and Do Tanks.

-Sierra Student Coalitions Principles to Entering a Community-

1) Know the lay of the land

- Research information about the community's social, political, economic, and cultural past and present.
- Research past and present status of community activism around the project
- Find groups and individuals already working on similar issues
- Identify leaders and influential people in the community

2) Go in Gently/Respect what Exists

- You have two ears and one mouth - Listen at least twice as much as you speak
- Don't assume that you know everything about organizing and be willing to take constructive criticism.

3) One on Ones

- Once you have identified leaders and key individuals, meet with them!
- These meetings should be natural and comfortable, never rigid
- Tips for one on ones:
    - Create human connection
    - Get contact info
    - Identify self interest
    - Try to be allies in your efforts

Recruitment

Many organizers have a story about their first event and how no one showed up. It's tough to get people to step out of their daily routines to come and get involved. Good planning and some strategic efforts can ensure that you will always have attendees. For both the Think and Do Tanks, participants are arguably the most important aspect of the event. With out minds and bodies, how do you Think or Do? So, here is a crash course on how to "get butts in seats."

First, it's good to have an idea of why people would show up to your events and use those to your advantage. Here are some motives for involvement:

- **Altruism**: general concern for the issue and want to do good
- **Self Interest**: direct personal impact
- **Transaction**: they receive something tangible in return
- **Social Need**: meet people, community, become part of a team

Understanding these motives will help you when you are framing your event and messaging it to people. Which of these motives are related to the project? Formulate your message around these motives and it will appeal to a larger crowd. Also when you're formulating your message, you want to ask, "Who do we want to know about this event?" This is your target audience and your message should be designed to appeal to that audience.

Once you have your message and have identified your audience, go get the word out! There are a variety of ways to get the word out about your event and they all cost time or money. If you have money, then you can explore more of the conventional methods of advertising, but most grassroots organizers manage on a low budget. Luckily, there are ton of ways to get the word out about your event with little to no cost. Some ways are much more effective in different environments, and that is your judgment call. Here are some ideas for cheap grassroots outreach:

- Make announcements about your event at other events
- Poster/flyers
- Media (see next section for more details)
- Announce to other groups
- Tabling
- Leafleting
- Friend to Friend
- Facebook
- Listservs
- Door to Door
- **Phonebanking (Especially Effective)**

Be repetitive. Inform everyone over and over and over and over and over and over. Most people have to be reminded multiple times before they remember to attend an event or meeting. However, its important not over bug people. By sending too many e-mails or phone calls, people can get annoyed. Try to find the balance between the two extremes.

Media

Getting a big newsbreak or press hit can be a major moral booster for a campaign or a potential project. Since thousands of people who would otherwise have no knowledge of your project read the newspaper or watch TV, there is great effect from a media hit. Good media can put pressure on your target, generate a buzz around your project, educate the public, generally spread the word, recruit for events, and be a good moral booster for your group.

Whether you are trying to get more attention on your project or get people to an event, it's important to work with the media during your ICE. While there are tons of media sources in most cities, it's difficult to get onto the waves without some effort. During NICE, we were fortunate enough to get a good story in Oregon's largest newspaper on the day of our main event. With some persistence, you can get media to look at your project. There are many ways to get attention from the media, so don't just bank on one way to get in there.

General Media Tips

- **Make Strategic Contacts –** Follow a timeline for notifying the press. Send them a press advisory, do a follow up call, and send them a press release. Make sure you are talking to the right people at the right time. If you simply remind the front desk person about your events, there is a small chance that the right person will get reminded about your project. Establish contacts with the decision makers in the news team.

- **Be professional and confidant –** Use official logos and titles when dealing with the media. You are a respectful potential news source and they should see that when you are talking with them. Also, make them feel like they are lucky to have you call them and inform them about your event or project. If you don't really believe in your news story, how can you expect them to?

- **Flavor up Your Message –** The media wants to cover something that will make people's jaws drop. Make your project sound like you found the holy-grail. Don't lie about what you are doing, but be very particular with your messaging and framing when trying to catch the eye of the media. Also, if you can connect your story to something that is already getting headlines, they will be more likely to come check you out.

Event Planning

A large event can be a great capstone to your efforts on a project, or get the ball rolling in the right direction. You can get good media for a fun event or just bring people together who are excited about your project. An event is a tactic that can be very time consuming, so be sure it is the most strategic option when you decide to do one. By using the timeline that you formed at the begging, you can be sure your event fits in with the goal of your ICE.

At the NICE, we wanted to bring people together around the SunNE project, show them the site that the project would be based out of, and introduce the community to some of the key players for the project. Community members were educated about the project and then given the options for involvement. They could fill out a helpful survey, sign a card in support of the project, and/or sign up for the SunNE Working group. As a result, the community energy festival was successful in strategically moving us toward the goals of our Institute.

For more information on how to have success with the media, plan great events and many of the other skills we have touched upon in the "Running a Think and Do Tank," visit the Sierra Student Coalition's web site, ssc.org.

Conclusion

The challenge of addressing the anthropogenic drivers of climate change, immense as it is, is also an enormous opportunity. In a similar fashion to the industrial revolution, the sustainable revolution can shape and revitalize the political, social, and economic structures in which we live today. Through addressing our impacts on the carbon cycle we have the opportunity to create new and better ways of relating to our earth's natural systems from within our social systems. In many ways, this revolution can improve the quality of life for humans as well.

It is imperative that our methods of living are not stagnant, but are able to adapt and adjust as new technology and knowledge becomes available. We have learned that, at our current rate of consumption, and with our current methods of production, we will neither be able to sustain our quality of life, nor will other developing nations be able to achieve a similar quality of life by replicating our model of society. However, the knowledge and technology to begin to transition to a more sustainable lifestyle is becoming increasingly available.

First and foremost, a transition away from our usage of fossilized carbon energy to power our society is necessary. It is uncertain as to when or how the fossil fuel industry will fall. However, whether it is due to intelligent, informed, and compassionate decision making, or due to the drastic necessity, this industry will eventually fade away. Even if humans are able to develop successful methods of Carbon sequestration and reduce anthropogenic contributions to climate change, the ability to locate and harvest this limited resource will inevitably peak and decline. As it does, it will cause socioeconomic stresses that typically result in poverty and violence.

Fossil fuels are woven into the fabric of our current societal structure. Our transportation, food production, energy infrastructure, and even our textiles are largely dependent on a bountiful supply of cheap fossil fuels. As this supply runs short, the fabric of our society will begin to weaken and tear, unless it is replaced. Our ability to develop viable resource alternatives will diminish with the supply of our current resources. Every expenditure of resources and time towards developing more fossil fuel infrastructures, we are only causing more environmental degradation and increasing the speed at which these fossil fuel resources will crash and cause societal harm.

Ultimately it will take the efficient use of a combination of regionally based solutions that are clean and renewable to address many of the root causes of climate change. The hefty task of renovating our infrastructure will create a multitude of local jobs. Every old building that needs to be overhauled, every local organic farm, every solar panel or wind turbine, and every alternative transportation project, for example, will create local opportunities for jobs. If we choose to, we can utilize these jobs to create a transition to a more sustainable, just, and prosperous future for all.

Through a system based approach, rather than a piece wise approach, we can work to address economic and social inequity as we improve our interactions with the ecological systems of this planet. By ensuring access to training opportunities, the local jobs in the new sustainable economy can provide employment opportunities for those who had formally worked in the various components of the antiquated and unsustainable economy. These jobs also provide us the opportunity to revitalize the middle class and create pathways from poverty. Efficient use reduces waste and pollution, and as a result, human health will also improve and the cost of maintaining heath will decrease.

Though these goals are broad and far reaching, and some may say more idealistic than realistic, the transition they will create is as crucial as it is urgent and challenging. There have been periods in history when average people have overcome incredible challenges in the face of powerful adversity. These generations become defined by their reaction to these challenges in the pages of history. Every living generation at this point in time will be defined by our action or inaction in regards to climate change and its root causes. The context of that definition is our choice. Will we be the weak and irresponsible generation that shrank away from this challenge and continued the business as usual approach to interacting with the biotic and social communities of this planet? Or will we rise to the challenge and proclaim that we will dedicate our lives to ending this climate crisis within our lifetimes, because failing to do so is unconscionable; and we will work to make our vision of a sustainable, just, and prosperous tomorrow a reality? The results of our business as usual approach are becoming more obvious with every day, but the results of creatively and consciously addressing our challenge have the capability to write history in a vastly more optimistic and positive manner. Which one will it be? The choice is ours, as individuals and as a collective, to make. Let us engage in a healthy and productive dialogue to make sure that the sustainable wave of change is one that lifts all people into a better future.

The Institute for Community Energy workbook is still under construction and needs you to add to it! The NICE people will always be working on it, and we need your input! Please add your ideas to all of our categories and keep this workbook alive! If it is ever evolving, then it will keep getting better and better for others who pick it up! Thank you for reading this far and considering this important step towards a sustainable future.

Special Thanks from the NICE

Great challenges lie ahead for generations to come, but nothing makes us more optimistic about the future than the potential of unified communities. When communities come together around a central goal of moving towards a better future, amazing things can happen. In the Sunnyside Neighborhood, we saw an inspiring amount of passion, generosity and compassion from its community members. These members could have easily carried on with their lives, but instead took the time and energy to help with the SunNE, NICE, or both.

Quite simply, without the generosity of a variety of groups, the NICE would have never existed. So, we would like to begin by thanking Focus the Nation and Clif Bar, Alex, Laura, Minna, and Caron, for their foresight and trust in awarding us the $10,000 Slingshot Award. We would like to thank John Sorenson and Midtech Energy for thinking up the SunNE project and letting us be a part of its progress. In addition, we appreciate the help of the Institute for Culture and Ecology who contributed its support for one of our project coordinators, Pat Mannhard-- we were so lucky to be able to work with him this summer! We would also like to thank Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Program and the NW Sierra Club Chapter for donating office space for the NICE. We also appreciated donations from local businesses like Noah's Bagels, Global Exchange, Katelyn Freeman and the Dollar Scholar.

Individuals in the community also made the entire NICE experience a pleasure for all participants. We'd like to thank Jeanne and Shelly for letting NICE coordinators (and Betty!) stay in their homes right in the neighborhood. We felt very welcome and cannot express how fortunate we felt being taken into your homes. A Big thanks goes to Jeff Hammarlund and Professor Steven Kolmes for your guidance and support. We'd like to thank Seth, Aaron, Josh, Roberto, Peter, Charles, Anne, and anyone else who has or will contribute to the efforts of the SunNE working group.

Our friends and family members always deserve many thanks. For the NICE this is no exception. Your support and participation was key in making our summer the amazing experience it was. Having you all show up to our Think and Do Tanks, drop by the office, or come to one of our other events added a particular sense of warmth to the atmosphere… in a good way… not like the bad-global-warming-atmospheric-thing way… you get the picture. Brendan, Christine, Michaela, Jenny, Meryl, Sean, Rene (Chica), Camila, Sasha, Julian, Zeke, JP, Jesse J, Malorie, Brady, Camara, Tasha, and all those nice faces whose names we cant remember, you all rock!!! Lets keep building our future!