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Beacons of Hope and Justice: Trends & Examples of Transformative Adaptation

A Panel & Interactive Session on the State of the U.S. Adaptation Field

Co-Leads: Susanne Moser & Jacqui Patterson • Organizer: Joyce Coffee

The State of the US Adaptation Field Tracking Progress Since 2017



See: <https://kresge.org/content/rising-challenge-together>

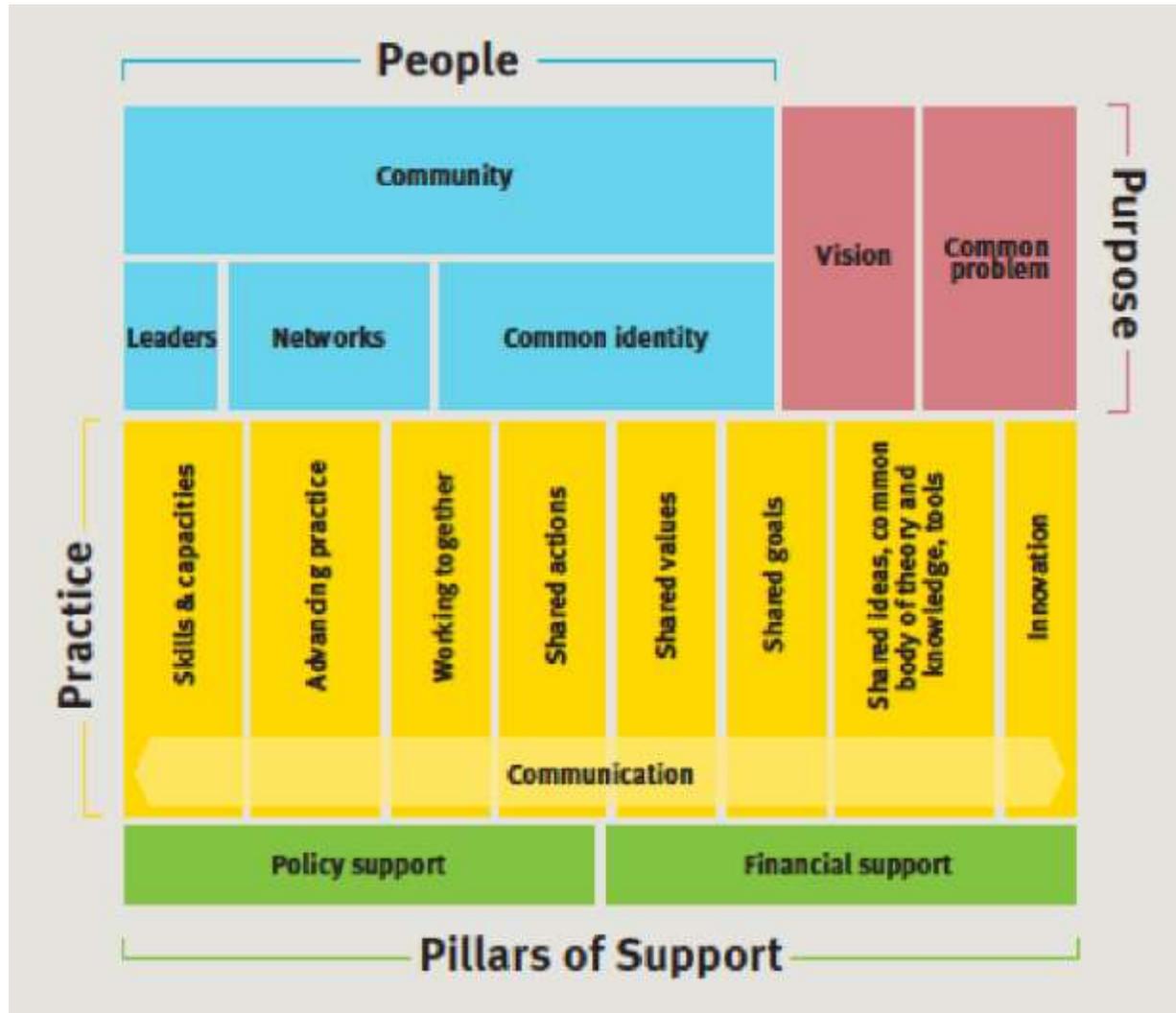
Benefits of a Strong Field

- Necessary expertise & skilled workforce
- Clarity on good/best practices and tools, established as “common” practice
- Advancing shared goals and values
- Actor networks (professionals, partners, citizens)
- Ongoing learning
- Adequate training
- Political and public support
- Problems solved effectively, efficiently, and in an integrated manner
- Reduced societal burdens and maximized opportunities



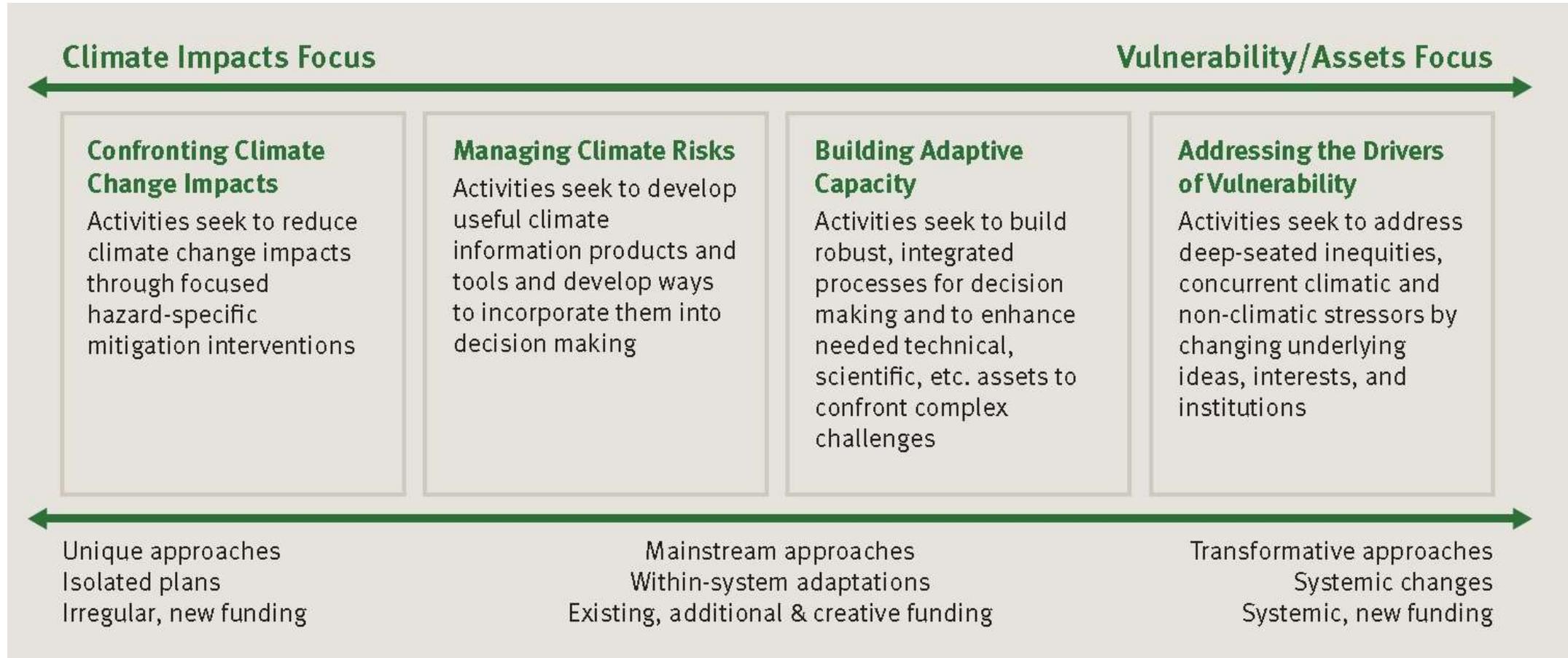
Photo: Sylvia Bal Somerville

The 4-P Field Framework



- **Purpose** – common problem understanding, unifying vision of a better future; shared values; agreed-upon priorities; shared sense of urgency
- **People** – adequate (growth in) numbers; requisite diversity of expertise; good networking; inclusivity; sectors, regions represented; recognizable leadership
- **Practices** – evidence-based “best practices”; prevailing focus of activity; progress matching scope of challenge; adequate communication; skill level among practitioners
- **Pillars of support** – diversity and adequacy of funding/ finance; continuity, coordination of funding streams; policy support at all levels; signals from highly visible leaders to take issue seriously; field-building support

Where Can Climate Adaptation Focus?



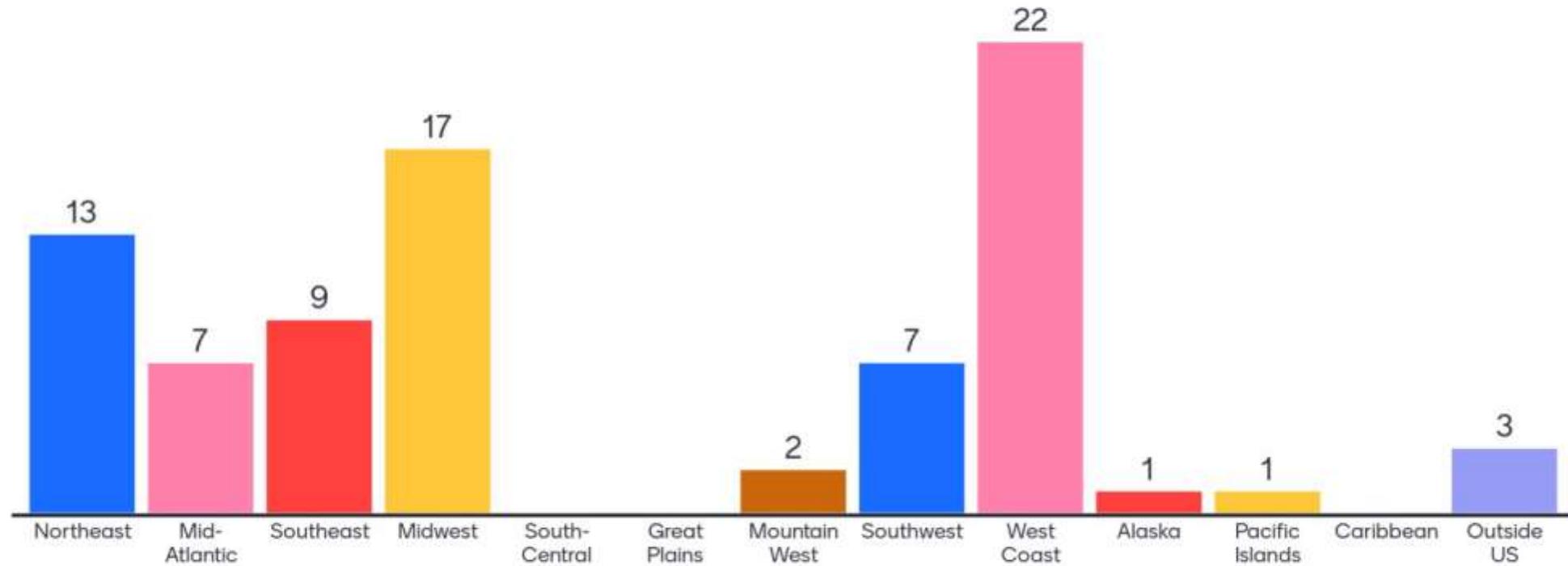
What Do YOU Think?



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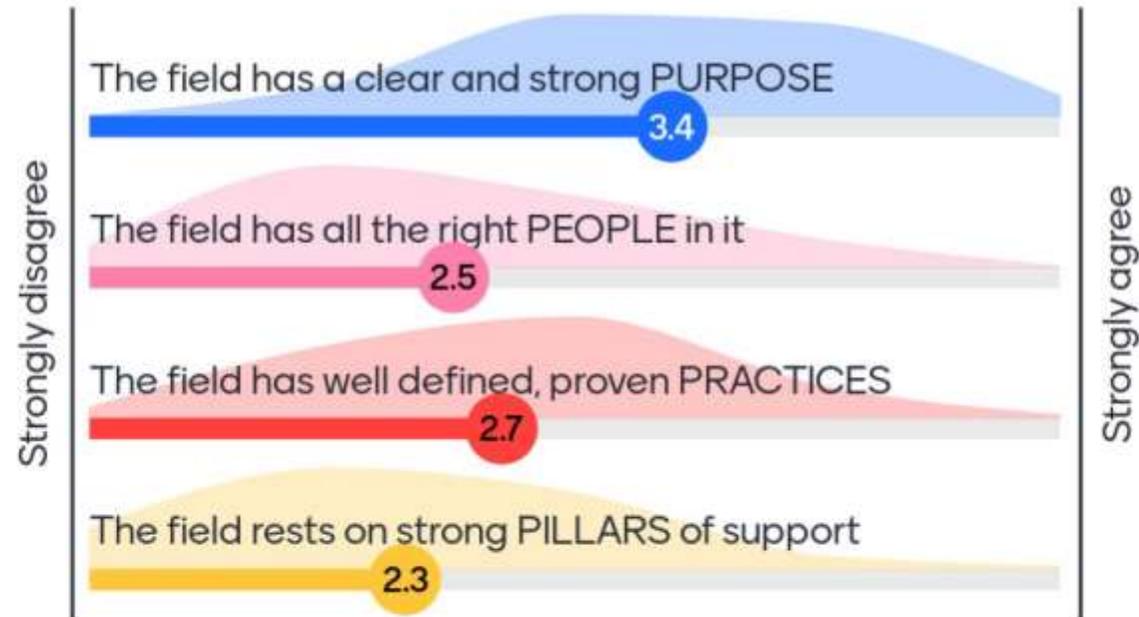
Where do you work?



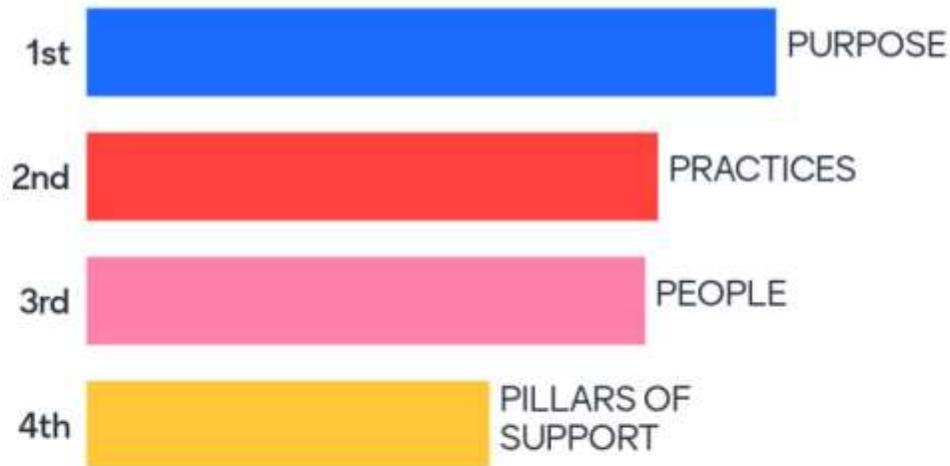
Have you ever heard of the "4Ps" of field-building?



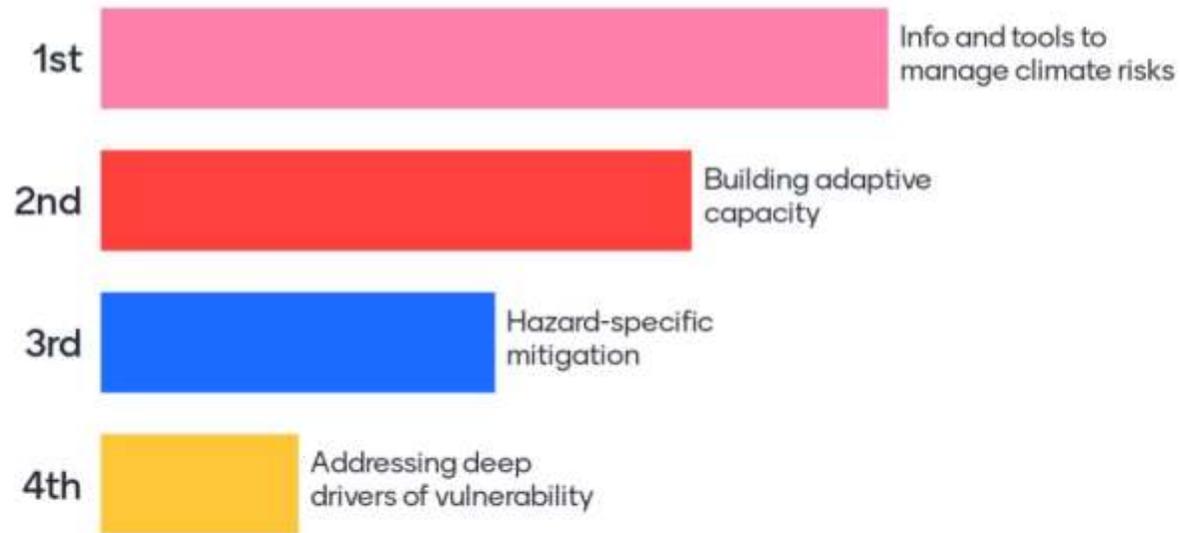
The Current State of the US Adaptation Field



Over the past 3 years, where have you seen more or less growth in the US adaptation field? (rank: 1 = strongest growth; 4 = weakest growth/decline)



From your perspective, where does MOST adaptation in the US focus on at this time?



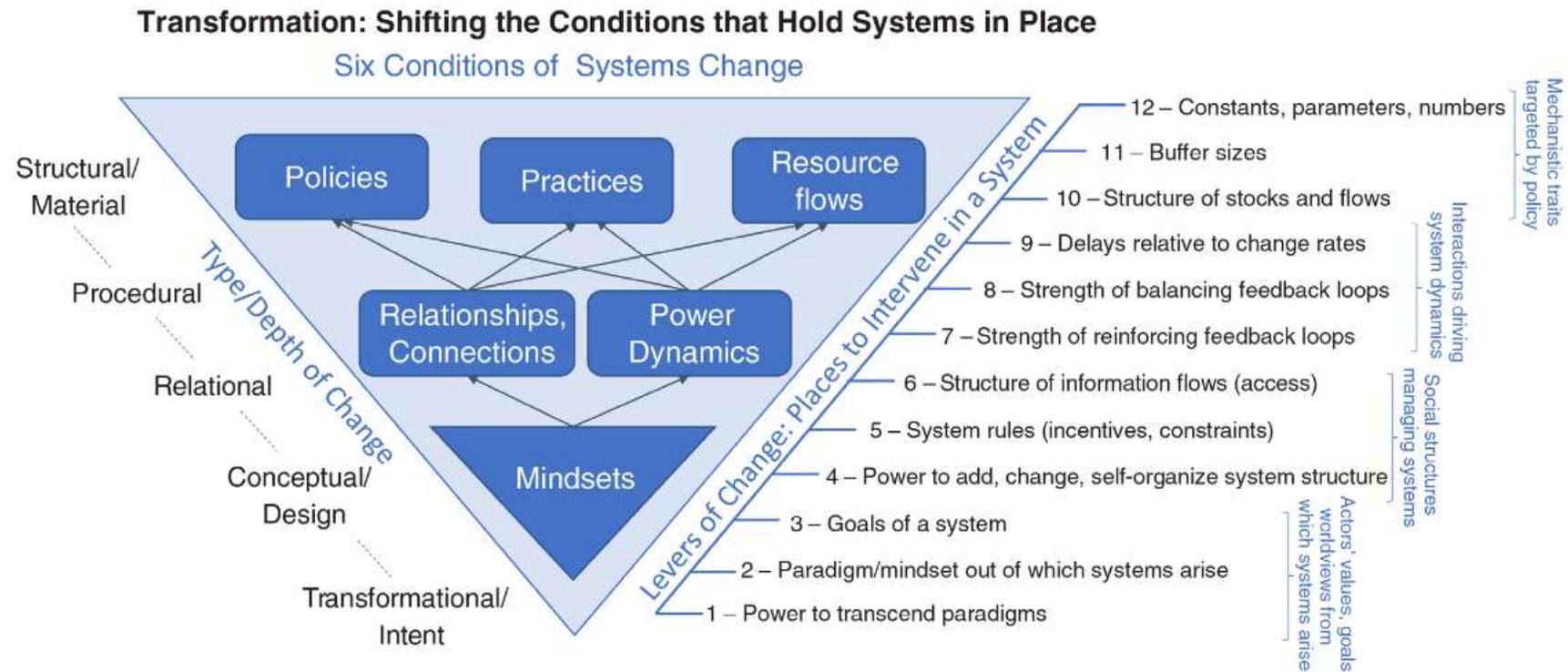
Note: there was just one answer from the participants, as this question was skipped during the session!



Transformative Adaptation

A possible definition

Transformative adaptation goes beyond adjusting existing systems for better fit with current and expected climate; it aims to change them fundamentally to address the root causes of vulnerability and injustice.



Purpose of Panel: Exploring Progress • Sharing Examples of Transformative Adaptation

Tracking Progress of Field Development Over Time

The Flow of Things

- Introduction
- Interactive Polling on the State of the Field
- Panel on Beacons of Hope & Justice
- Discussion in Small Groups
- Reporting back
- Adjourn



Photo: NPS

Panelists

- **Jacqueline Patterson** (Moderator)
Founder and Executive Director, [The Chisholm Legacy Project](#)
- **Katherine Eglund**
Co-Founder, [Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate & Health Organization \(EEEECHO\)](#)
- **Suzanne Burnes**
Director, [Just Growth Portfolio, Partnership for Southern Equity](#)
- **Jalisa Mauldin**
Indiana Outreach Coordinator, [Faith in Place](#)

Small-Group Discussion

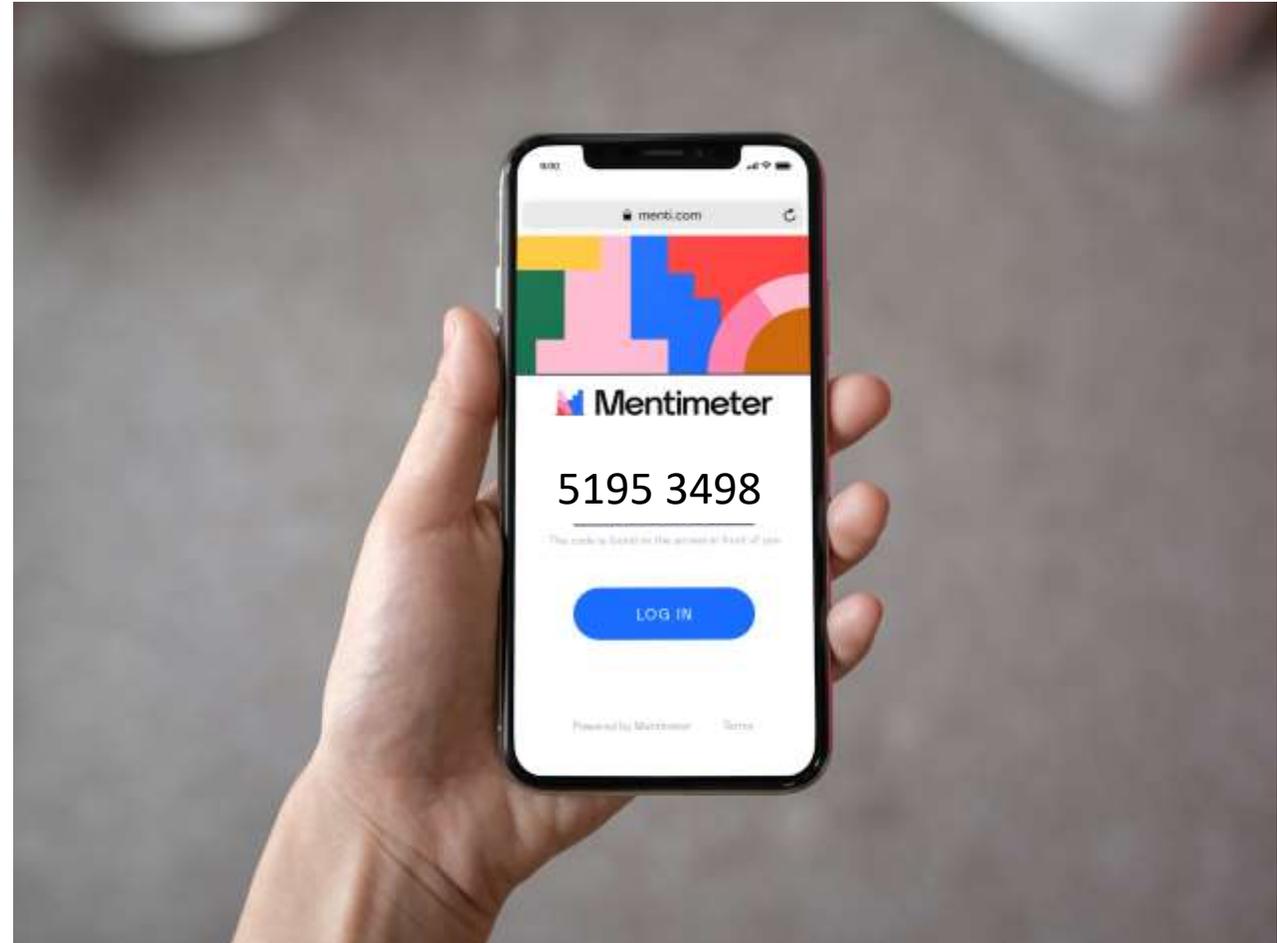


- What was most inspiring about the examples you heard on the table?
- Share any “beacons of hope and justice” that you see in your community or your work.
- How does this session deepen your understanding of “transformative” adaptation?

Reporting Back from Small Group Discussions

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What was most inspiring to you about the "beacons of hope and justice" shared on the panel?

People

Stopping the coal plant

Overcoming a coal power plant and shutting it down!

Taking time to listen

The examples of effecting change - more people showing up and getting things shut down

Don't be afraid to tackle big problems

People will care about what you say, if they think they care about you

Realistic about time commitment

A reminder to listen, listen, listen.

The effectiveness of listening

Faith in places program successes

Transformation is happening on so many levels

Hearing about the coal plant closure. I admire the moral courage and persistence of the community.

Breathing room

That there are unbelievable success stories. It can be done.

The coal plant story



What was most inspiring to you about the "beacons of hope and justice" shared on the panel?

Many people recognizing the importance of process

Courage and moral clarity of the speakers

Change can be made from all levels, from all people, and from all communities. Power can be achieved, even when it is not given.

Hearing lived experiences

Sometimes you have to call people out

"Community learned from the scientists, and scientists learned from the community."

Having courage to speak up

Giving things breathing room

Calling out the wrongs that have been done by decision makers historically.

Building Relationships and trust

"Don't ever let somebody tell you what you can't do or go up against." - re: stopping the coal plant

The perseverance and strength of community and joining together

Patience

Hard work takes time. Put in the time, effort into understanding, listening with an open heart and mind.

Intentional listening and learning

Hearing the wins! And also appreciated the point to let it breathe- that trust and relationships take time

What was most inspiring to you about the "beacons of hope and justice" shared on the panel?

Community organizing and connecting to power

Stop coal

The deeply intersectional and relational approaches to adaptation

Really struck by how transformative, future oriented work is grounded in an understanding of and contact with the past

The power of listening. Maybe every organization should have a Chief Listening Officer?!

Persistence

Thinking big

Creating safe spaces for people to come together to learn and advocate for justice

Risk taking

Reciprocity can and should take place throughout the project (at ALL phases!)

Community justiceNeed for deep listening

It's all about (people driven, community based) civics! Is civics transformative adaptation we don't talk about?

Successful intersectional collaborations

Good things take time

That the stories and efforts shared were truly community-led

Going big but also allowing for slowness

What was most inspiring to you about the "beacons of hope and justice" shared on the panel?

Decades of work led to actual tangible changes to improve health and environment

Getting out of your bubble

Collaborating with other practitioners that don't see themselves as adaptation practitioners, but are

Breathing room

Transformation is happening

"Breathing room"

Breathing room to plant seeds for the future

Wood pellets! I'm going to go back and look at our smoke strategy and make sure we aren't doing harm there

long term coalition building

Remaining focused on transformation in the face of resistance and incremental progress

If it isn't a just climate action, it isn't transformative

showing up daily, doing the work, being dogged incrementally, leads to sudden transformation.

Speaking truth to power

Alternative (non-climate-centered) stories of hope

When you're doing work that's meant to push our current limitations, being told "no" doesn't mean you're on the wrong track!

Leaving breathing room for transformation-- change takes time to see

What was most inspiring to you about the "beacons of hope and justice" shared on the panel?

Context matters!

The span of a career that starts with coal shutting down and then going to the cantankerous politician

Transformation is about accelerating relationships

Responses that relate to the intersectionality of the issues - inspiring to zoom out and form larger connections

The transformation happening between individuals just by showing up every day

women in power!

Many spiders can tie up a lion

Going outside your bubble

Breathing room

Recentering the south as a region of great strength and power for positive change

Longevity of advocacy careers - inspired by folks who've been doing the work for a long time AND are still at it!

The wisdom of the youngest panelist

Free Palestine 🍷

Meet the community where they're at

Thinking big

Listening to new perspectives

What was most inspiring to you about the "beacons of hope and justice" shared on the panel?

Be brave to be a disrupter when I feel my orgs are working for community without community.

accountability

Focus on break out of the existing power

breathing room, ok to go slow to do right

Hearing glimmers of hope from all around the table.

Working with formerly incarcerated people to protect those in jail from climate impacts

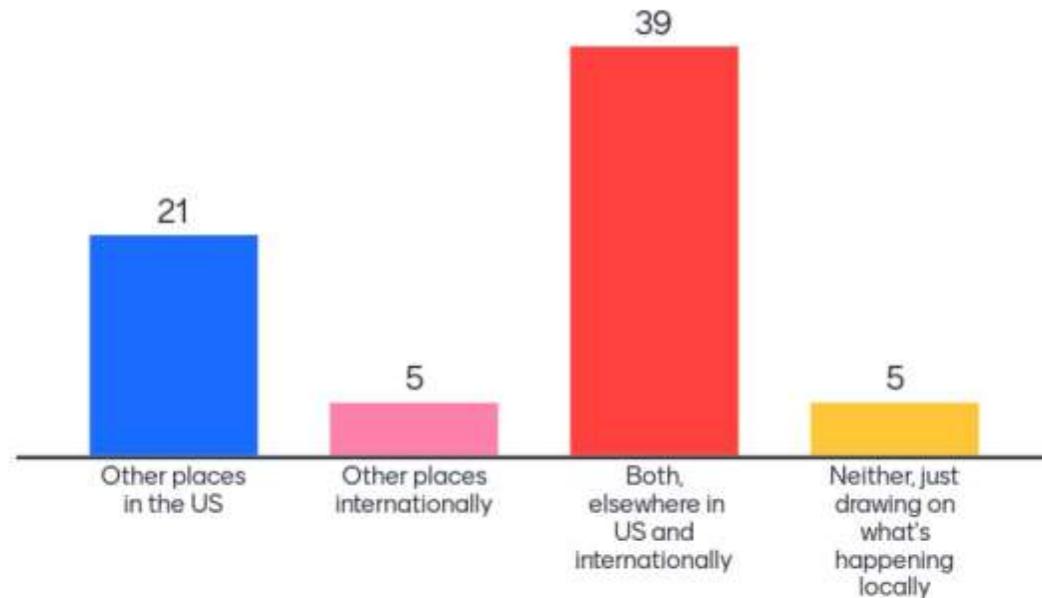
KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS SESSION:

How would you now define "transformative" adaptation? What **MUST** happen for it to be transformative?

124 responses



Where do you most look for innovative adaptation ideas?



Thank you for all you do!



Resources

- [Key Rising To the Challenge, Together Illustrations pdf](#)
- [Rising to the Challenge Together Diagrams - individual jpgs](#)
- [Capacities Needed for Transformation](#)