EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The climate clock — that is, the window of opportunity for reducing greenhouse gas emissions so as to avert the most catastrophic effects of climate change — is ticking. As climate change gathers momentum — and climate-related impacts grow in severity and frequency — communities must be resilient to survive and thrive. But much depends on how *resilience* is defined, and on the paths taken to achieve it. To effectively build resilience, frontline communities — including low-income communities and communities of color that are most vulnerable to climate impacts — must be at the center of policy and practice. Only then will we achieve resilience for all.

The current, mainstream definition of *climate resilience* focuses narrowly on preparedness in the face of crisis and disaster, and on the ability of communities to "bounce back" from climate and other shocks. Too often, that narrow definition fails to fully recognize the distinctive needs of low-income and people-of-color populations.

Here, we offer an alternative to that mainstream view. This anthology grew from the Pathways to Resilience (P2R) Initiative, launched in late 2013 by the Movement Strategy Center (MSC), in partnership with The Kresge Foundation, the Emerald Cities Collaborative and the Praxis Project. Through interviews, research, and convening — which we call the P2R Dialogues — this effort produced a vision of climate resilience, grounded in the realities of low-income communities and communities of color, and pragmatic pathways to achieve it.

Redefining resilience

Our vision of climate resilience is not about "bouncing back." Instead, it is about bouncing forward to eradicate the inequities and unsustainable resource use at the heart of climate crisis. The P2R Initiative agenda addresses the root causes of climate change while advancing the social and economic transformation of communities. And it calls for *deep democracy* — a transformative approach that puts frontline communities at the center.

The P2R Dialogues included a range of definitions of climate resilience that share these core elements:

Climate Change Mitigation + Adaptation + Deep Democracy = Resilience

Climate resilience requires a holistic view of the challenges we face, and it calls for solutions at the intersection of people, the environment, and the economy. A people-centered approach to resilience encompasses the following elements:

1. **HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY**

    - Advance equity and social justice
    - Reflect human rights principles
    - Address historical injustices

2. **ECONOMY**

    - Move beyond fossil fuels
    - Build local economic infrastructure
    - Redefine "the good life"

3. **ECOLOGY**

    - Reimagine our collective identity and our relationship with the natural world
    - Recognize the rights of nature in balance with human rights

Getting there: Approaches and pathways

The P2R Dialogues identified two general approaches and six strategic pathways that communities can use to advance climate resilience. The two general approaches, which operate in parallel and sometimes oppositional ways, are:

- Transform existing systems; and
- Build new climate resilience civic and economic infrastructure.

The six strategic pathways are areas where concentrated effort can advance climate resilience:

1 Build Power, Expand Democracy, Increase Community Voice and Transform Place. Increase communities' capacity for self-governance, and promote democratic decision making. In many cities, community-led interventions are already transforming public planning processes. By connecting and aligning these efforts, it is possible to leverage change at a larger scale.

2 Craft a Narrative Strategy that Moves the Message and Builds the Climate Resilience Constituency. Develop a narrative strategy that goes beyond crafting "communications messages," to address the frames underlying widely held concepts of nature, climate, and the economy. It is also important to assess which frames are catalytic in unifying the social-change community, and which will move decision makers and the public to action.

3 Create a New Economy for the New Climate Reality. Meaningful action on climate change requires a transition from an extractive economy to a regenerative one that focuses on renewable resources and sustainable practices. That transition includes localizing economies, building economic alternatives, and connecting climate resilience to economic justice.

4 Advance the Climate Resilience Legal and Policy Agenda. Governments can incentivize economic activity that creates climate resilience while discouraging activity that contributes to environmental breakdown. It is essential to analyze the impacts of policy on climate mitigation and adaptation, as well as the level of democratic participation involved in the creation of such policy. Communities must also develop — and share — new models of decision making that draw upon the hard-won wisdom and creativity of frontline groups.

5 Strengthen Regionalism and Bioregional Identity. By reorganizing culture, identity, power, and governance to reflect bioregional or natural-system boundaries (e.g., watersheds) and regional or cross-jurisdictional boundaries, communities can enhance resilience and build systems that balance community, ecology, and economy.

6 Align and Expand Movement Infrastructure Building. To implement the strategies outlined above, we must align and expand movement infrastructure by: investing in the base; nurturing and accelerating trans-local work; bridging movement divides and engaging key allies; and aligning more of philanthropy with the effective strategy emerging from the field.

Building the field to move the agenda

The vulnerabilities caused by climate change call for a remaking of core systems — such as energy, food, and water — that shape the lives and economies of communities. To spur that transformation, it is important to:

- **Support leadership in low-income communities and communities of color** most directly impacted by the climate crisis, and place their solutions and voices at the forefront of comprehensive climate-resilience policies and strategies.

- **Develop networks** to build the connective tissue through which solutions, innovations, and momentum can travel.

These include *cross-cutting networks* that advance local communities in dialogue and exchange around common problems and solutions (local to local), as well as *networks of expertise* that connect those in *systems management* (e.g., planning) with those in *systems change processes* (e.g., community organizing).

- **Build core strengths and capacities within the social change community** in key areas, including resilience policy, legal strategy, research, and climate science. Key to this will be the *intermediary technical and backbone functions* that can use data and analysis to identify high-priority policy levers and decision-making venues.

Conclusion

Today, we must confront the new climate reality without desperation but with maximum speed and efficiency. We must use our sense of urgency to seek bold changes and to address the root causes of the climate crisis — and we must do so at a meaningful scale, without sacrificing broad democratic engagement.

This anthology captures a diverse range of voices and perspectives on how to do so:

- **Part I: Pathways to Resilience**, by the Movement Strategy Center, offers a comprehensive synthesis of the P2R Dialogues.

- **Part II: Redefining Resilience: Principles, Practices and Pathways**, by Movement Generation, redefines resilience from an ecological-justice perspective — rooted in the governing principles of ecology while recognizing the integral role of human communities in healthy ecosystems.

- **Part III: Weathering Together: Resilience as a Vehicle to Reshape Policy and Political Will**, by the Praxis Project, examines the competing frames and agendas that shape current discourse and policy making on resilience, and suggests alternative frames and constituencies with which to shape more comprehensive policy.

- **Part IV: California's New Majority Confronts Climate Crisis**, by B. Jesse Clarke of Reimagine!: RP&E, explores case studies from California, where frontline communities are using their growing political power to defeat harmful legislation and implement alternatives that are both socially just and climate resilient.

It is our hope that the ideas and perspectives presented here will spark a broader conversation about how to create a just, resilient future. ■