

# Part III. **Weathering Together:**

---

## **Resilience as a Vehicle to Reshape and Reimagine Policy, Political Will and the Public**

**BY THE PRAXIS PROJECT**  
THEPRAXISPROJECT.ORG



# I. INTRODUCTION

There's an old adage: "Everyone talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." Activists today are proving it wrong by breaking through millennia of long held beliefs about our powerlessness and helping people connect the dots between human/corporate behavior and climate change. As the public warms up to the notion of climate change resulting from human drivers, there is an opportunity to advance frames of collective responsibility, agency and interconnectedness. These frames can be advanced as part of a sensible approach to building communities able to effectively navigate the challenges ahead.

Resilience as a concept is gaining caché across a wide variety of sectors. Framed effectively, resilience can redefine what it means to be "climate ready" and offer the public a way to understand that readiness requires retrofitting society from the ground up. This briefing paper was originally developed for *Pathways to Resilience* (P2R) — a gathering of advocates involved in exploring the potential for developing and framing policy to advance resilience with equity, democracy and sustainability. An initial draft of this paper focused on some of the key embedded and

emerging contradictory frames that threaten efforts to advance a more holistic approach to the climate crisis integrating economic transformation, equity and human rights as the basis for achieving truly resilient communities.

Following the gathering, additional framing issues as well as policy priorities were added. The first section examines the competing frames and agendas that shape discourse and policymaking in this arena. The second section presents a brief overview of key opinion drivers for moving a resilience agenda. The third section suggests alternative frames as well as identifying important audiences/constituencies for building support for a comprehensive resilience policy. There is still more work to do in the development of clear, resonant messaging to support this work. It is our belief that the best messaging is developed as a collaborative process that engages the wisdom and expertise of advocates/practitioners. This paper and the gathering have helped to lay the foundation for such a process in the hope that representative *groups* of advocates convene to take it up.

## What we mean by framing for change

At the heart of The Praxis Project's analysis guiding this paper are four assumptions that we believe guide the interplay between messaging and effective policy development:

**1. EFFECTIVE FRAMING AND REFRAMING IS A LONG-TERM PROJECT BUILT ON AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS THAT SHAPE THE CURRENT PUBLIC CONVERSATION.**

Framing and reframing requires us to pay attention to what people are already saying and thinking about the issues and values we hope to advance. We also need to understand the process by which meaning and beliefs that trigger support, opposition or apathy are created — a process that is much deeper than news coverage. We make meaning and belief based on our socialization (education, upbringing, faith values, and cultural norms), our individual experiences of what we read, watch and listen to, and a host of other factors. Reframing at scale requires that we engage all of these processes as part of a long-term strategy for embedding

our frames into the fabric of socialization and the making of meaning. This may seem abstract, but it isn't. The Right is engaged in local curricular fights, such as the banning of "ethnic studies" in Arizona, not because they care about the mostly Latino children who took those courses, but because it was important to eliminate the institutionalization of any narrative counter to their dominant pro conquest narrative. As Figure 1 below suggests, socialization matters in creating public opinion. And public opinion is not created overnight.

**2. EFFECTIVE MESSAGING IS DRIVEN BY POLICY AND ORGANIZING GOALS, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.**

An obvious point, but in the face of so many communication initiatives that prescribe what should be said with little connection to our goals and sometimes, even in contradiction to them, it's important to ensure that all communication supports the work at hand. It doesn't help to reach people with "good" messages that undermine our efforts. *Messaging is a vehicle, not the destination.*

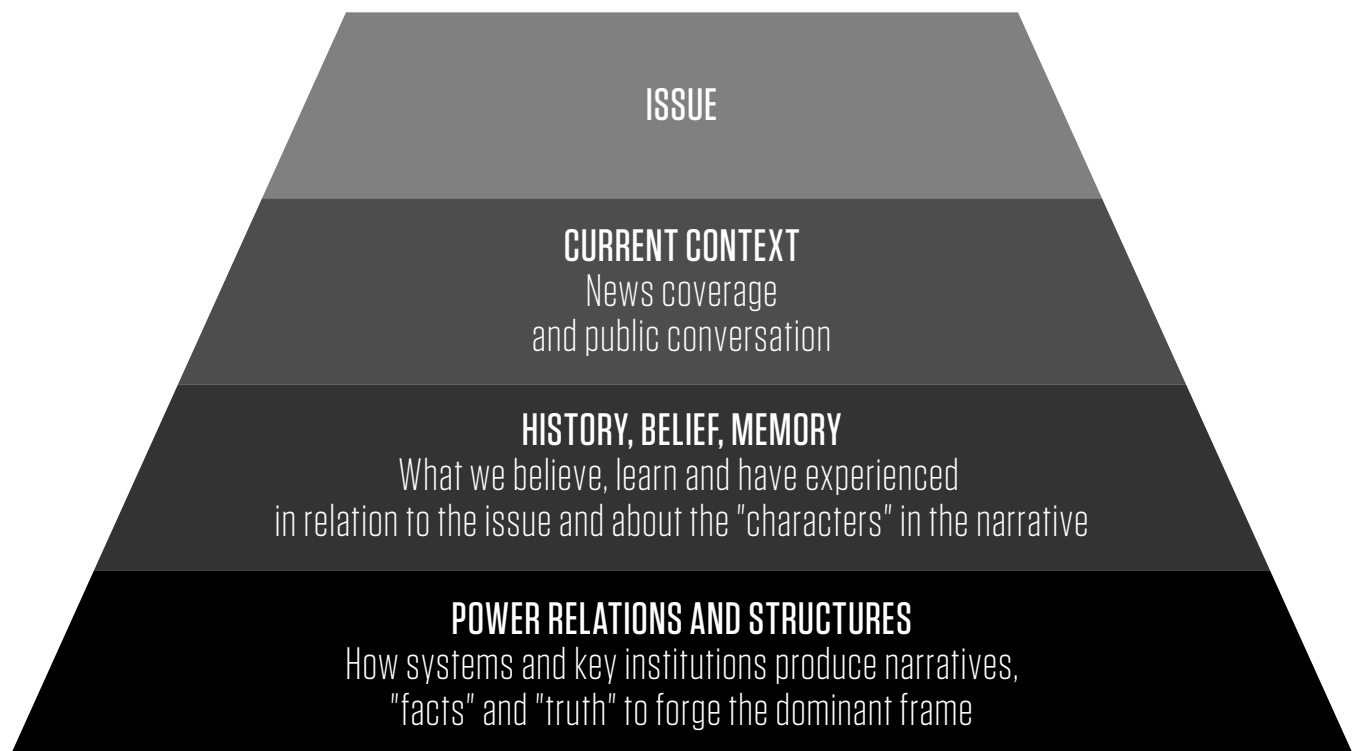


Figure 1. An issue frame is rooted in deep social and historical contexts

**3. THIS IS NOT ABOUT DEBATING THE ISSUES BUT ABOUT BUILDING THE NECESSARY POWER AND POLITICAL WILL TO WIN.**

Our main focus must be to expand our support base and move people from awareness of the problem to a belief that something can be done. This is the heart of communicating for policy change. It's easy to get caught up in debating the opposition because they are vocal. But we lose sight of the fact that on most issues, at least a third of the people agree with us and at least a simple majority either agrees or is not particularly swayed in either direction. When people understand a policy's practicality and impact, they are moved even more. Therefore, the key to moving public discourse is to communicate directly with our audiences about our ideas. This does not mean that we do not counter bad information or simply ignore dominant frames in the conversation. Rather, it means that we focus on opposing ideas only to the degree necessary to advance our own.

**4. CLEAR, SENSIBLE POLICY IDEAS DRIVE DISCOURSE.**

Whether you agree with policy ideas, such as vouchers, budget cuts and raising the minimum wage, or not, they have in common one thing — they are understood by most people. What is deemed sensible is subjective, of course, based on what we value as “good sense.” Therefore, we have to engage the interplay between building shared values and outlining clear actions that actualize those values as policies.

## What is framing?

*Framing is essentially the interaction between how information is packaged and prepared for others to receive it and how it is received and perceived. Imagine a picture hanging on the wall in a frame. In many ways, the artist “framed” the picture for you. What is in the frame—and what is left out—shape what you see when you look upon the work. However, this is not the entirety of how you perceive the picture.*

**Framing = how the story is constructed + how we see it**

*Your interpretation of the information you receive — such as, sound, images and story — is also shaped by “conceptual frames,” which are created as you learn to think about and categorize information over time. These conceptual frames help us understand and make sense of what we see. All stories and images trigger conceptual frames that are mediated by culture, environment, socialization, upbringing and other factors.*

## Framing versus messaging

*A message is not a slogan, although one can use slogans, visuals and other tools to convey a message. The message is the picture to be conveyed — often with a frame. The message frame operates like any traditional picture frame — defining what you see and don't see in the picture. Good messages are **affective** (they touch us emotionally), as well as **effective** (they convey what we need them to). Good messages connect with shared dreams and beliefs and surface the promise and possibilities in our coming together. They also communicate “what can be done” so that those who are normally outside the process understand what they*

*can do to have power inside the process, while decision-makers understand what's possible and what's at stake. For instance, the current campaign to raise the minimum wage is framing its messages to trigger our beliefs about fairness, family and independence to make sure that we understand the practical and positive impact of the policy. The actual message is that it's time to raise the wage (meaning it's overdue) and that we will solve a lot of the problems we all care about if we do. The action is the passing of a federal law. A variety of slogans, charts, chants and other tools are employed to support the message.*

## II. THE CURRENT CONVERSATION RELATED TO RESILIENCE

Most of the explicit conversation on resilience is taking place among “experts” — practitioners in public and private sector contexts and advocates engaged in working to shape and influence these institutional actors. As a result, there is relatively little polling or survey data that explores public perceptions of

this idea (reviewed below). However, there are related markers of belief (as outlined in Figure 2 below) that helps us understand likely areas of support and opposition for comprehensive resilience approaches.

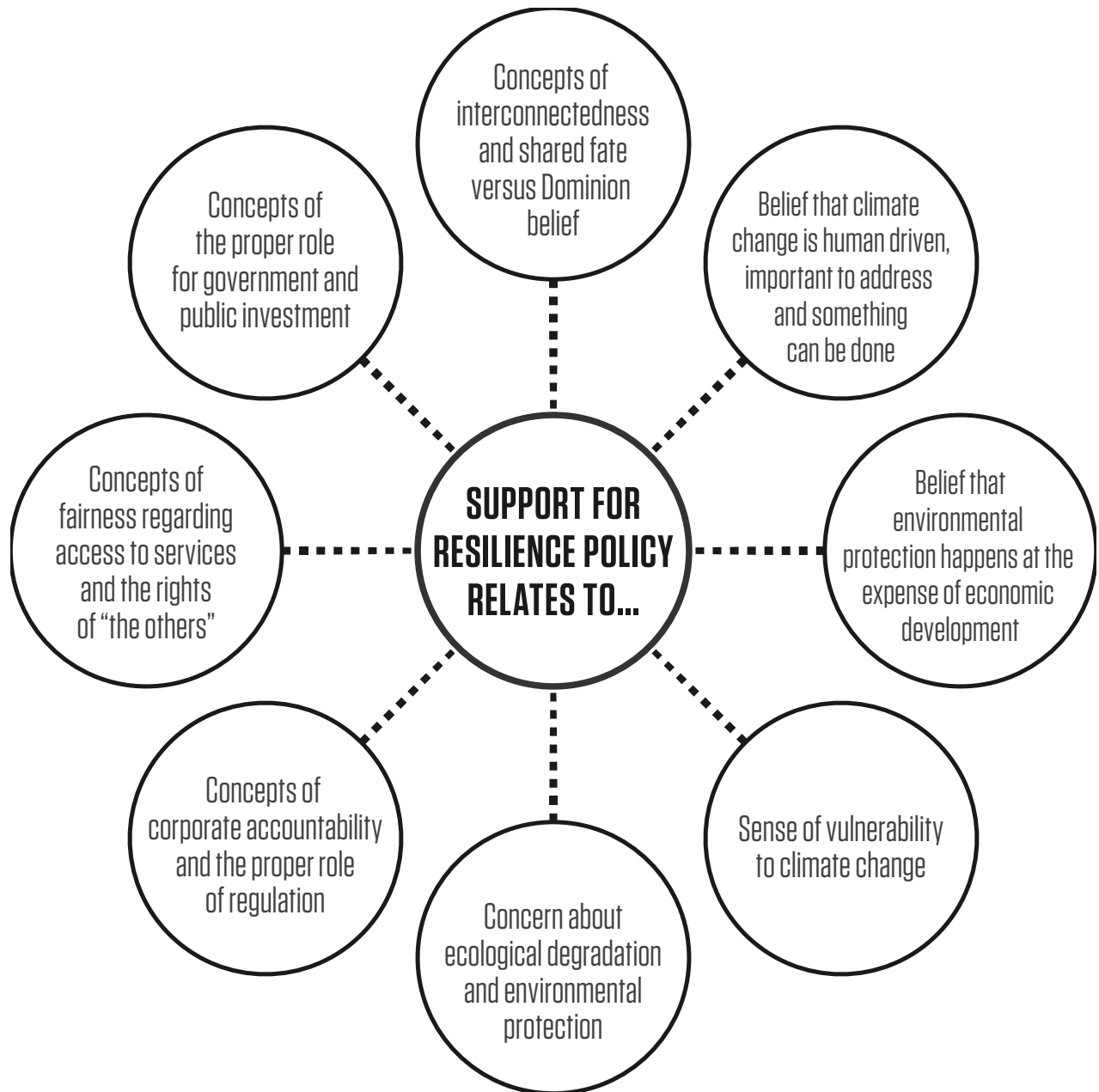


Figure 2. Some Key Conceptual Frames Related to Comprehensive Resilience Policy

### III. EMERGING THEMES FROM POLLING AND SURVEY DATA

The “markers” of belief (shown above) are a critical foundation in the willingness to engage in the bold vision emerging from the interviews conducted in preparation for the February meeting and captured in the P2R Landscape and Framing papers. Clearly, we as a nation are “all over the place” in relation to these values and beliefs. There are gaps in understanding and analysis, as well as divergent perceptions about the practicality of addressing these issues. Moving public opinion will require speaking to and reshaping these conceptual frames as part of a comprehensive communications strategy built on a shared power analysis outlining decision-making points along the range of policies and initiatives required for this transformation. As well as building the base of support needed to move these initiatives. Below are some key themes emerging from a review the most relevant polling data:

**A CONFUSED PUBLIC BUT GROWING PLURALITY OF PRACTITIONERS.** A review of data<sup>1</sup> related to environmental sustainability and some of its key markers — prioritizing environmental protection, understanding climate crisis, perception that something can be done — reveals a public harboring a great deal of misinformation. There’s a disconnect between the metrics of climate change and the public’s understanding of the significance of those numbers. For example, a single degree increase in temperature in daily life seems relatively insignificant when there is little baseline understanding of the ecological impact. On the other hand, available surveys of practitioners in public agencies show that most hold a basic definition of resilience as being more than disaster response, and also have a sense of the concrete strategies necessary to advance their work in this area.<sup>2</sup> However, these practitioners are not thinking in the broad structural frame that emerged from the advocate interviews by Movement Strategy Center — at least not yet. Part of the challenge may be the related perception that work targeting particularly vulnerable communities, especially when race, racism and privilege are front

and center, may be construed as “race conscious” or discriminatory. The growing work around **targeted universalism** and interventions focused on low income communities are an attempt to support agencies in a shift toward more equity focused efforts.

**DEEPLY HELD CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES CAN “INTERRUPT” AND TRUMP RESILIENCE MESSAGES.** Strong religious beliefs among a significant sector of the public in a forthcoming Apocalypse and Rapture (about 1 in 5), as well as a belief in the biblical concept that man has dominion over the earth and its use (more than half), challenge our basic narrative of species interdependence and interconnectedness. Some Christian faith traditions are transitioning doctrinal teaching from notions of dominion to “stewardship” (i.e., with dominion comes great responsibility) as a way to support environmental awareness and action. Dominion beliefs tend to be more strongly held among older people — especially in the south and in Mormon strongholds, such as Utah and Idaho — than among younger people, especially those living in the west and the northeast. Demographic trending seems to indicate a decrease in the influence of the traditional Christian church and organized religion overall. This, along with the growth of New Age, Buddhist and other non-Christian, counter-Dominion religious frames, opens the door for a different conversation on sustainability and resilience in the U.S.<sup>3</sup>

**OPPONENTS DOMINATE MUCH OF THE FRAMING ON RESILIENCE AS DISASTER/CRISIS RESPONSE.** Now that most Republicans believe that climate change is real (although to a lesser degree than Democrats and those further left), there has been less emphasis on trying to dispute its reality, though much energy goes into disputing its threat. The focus now is on thwarting positive environmental action by framing it as bad for the economy or more bluntly, as a job-killer. A Green Jobs frame

---

1 Vasi, I.B. *Public Support for Sustainable Development: A Mile Wide, but How Deep?* Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development, Vol. 8, Issue 1 (2012), Pp. 153-170.

2 Thayer, J. and Morgan, R. *Resilient Against What? How leading U.S. municipalities are understanding and acting on resilience.* Post Carbon Institute, Santa Rosa, CA. 2013.

3 See public opinion polling in this area, including Saad, L. *U.S. Confidence in Organized Religion at Low Point: Catholics’ confidence remains significantly lower than Protestants’.* Gallup, July 2012, Princeton, NJ. In *U.S., 3 in 10 Say They Take the Bible Literally: Plurality view Bible as inspired word of God but say not everything in it should be taken literally.* Gallup, July 2011. Princeton Survey Research Associates International, *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 10 Nation Survey of Renewalists.* Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Washington, DC. 2006.

notwithstanding, the Right's efforts have penetrated public discourse — helped in no small measure by “push” polling that reinforces their frame — to such an extent that there is hardly any conversation on environmental protection not tempered by concerns about job loss. In fact, the Green Jobs frame is mostly “in play” as a nonpartisan policy solution for job creation that is a win-win<sup>4</sup> (i.e., economic and environmental boons), but not yet widely used as a vehicle for helping the public reimagine sustainable economies. Also affecting support for public investment in resilience beyond disaster/crisis response is the Right's strong framing of such investment as handouts, and a strong push to prioritize public investment in measures to protect business. Such framing undermines positive action to address poverty and other social vulnerability by placing market protection above all else. Efforts to increase regulation, develop community-based alternatives, and create models that substantively challenge existing economic doctrine become challenging because they are subjugated by the contradictory narrative about the private sector as the most “deserving” of public resources. Of course, these are challenges, not restrictions.

**THERE IS MUCH SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION—AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT AFFECT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OR JOBS.** A natural extension of the “dominion” framing (“the environment” is here for our service and supply) is the pitting of environmental protection against jobs and way of life. Opponents have effectively exploited the current atmosphere of economic dislocation and anxiety to keep much of the public from supporting major initiatives by convincing them of negative economic impact. Consequently, few understand the underlying factors driving the current crisis and even fewer believe that much can be done about it without disrupting livelihoods. Of course, there are many policy approaches that are not, as opponents call them, “job killers,” and many more that require some fundamental restructuring of the economy as we know it. In some ways, the perception that addressing environmental degradation disrupts business as usual can be leveraged to support our work because many of us agree that “business as usual” is detrimental to the environment. The trick is to expand concerns about the dysfunctional nature of “business as usual” and help people clearly see themselves surviving and thriving in a shared alternative future ahead.

**RESILIENCE IS VIEWED AS A TECHNICAL PROBLEM REQUIRING TECHNICIANS TO FIX IT.** One aspect of the gap in alignment of the working definition and framework for resilience between advocates and some professional practitioners is the sense that it's primarily a challenge to infrastructure and systems rather than a fundamental change project. Gopal Dayaneni of Movement Generation calls this frame “carbon fundamentalism” — i.e. the idea that it's primarily a problem of controlling carbon emissions and little else. Within the “technical fix” frame, *advocates are seen as providers of feedback on projects, at best, or at worst, as invisible or problematic entities to be “managed.”* Unfortunately, much of the funding for this area is not structured to provide clear, affirmative guidelines for methodology beyond technical approaches. In addition, there exists a harsh political environment — anti-immigrant, increasing racial bias, anti-democratic — that tends to discourage public engagement in key, high impact constituencies. Without intentional, formal venues for engagement—especially venues beyond mediated feedback to agencies—the framing of resilience as a technical challenge for “experts” to handle will become increasingly institutionalized. Advocates at the P2R repeatedly raised the importance of prioritizing, organizing and increasing capacity for organizing as a key strategy for moving a comprehensive resilience agenda. Accordingly, it is important to note that organizing and building power and voice among high impact communities will be critical to addressing these framing challenges.

**LACK OF EMPATHY FOR THE “OTHERS” OFTEN CAUGHT IN “THE STORM.”** There is a connection between the perception of a problem's impact and the perception of its urgency as a policy priority. The Pew Charitable Trust's annual poll on policy priorities shows that climate change has been at or near the bottom of the list since its debut 12 years ago. The reasons for the disconnect are complex and connected to beliefs about agency, dominion and personal sense of vulnerability as well as empathy for those who are the obvious victims of climate crisis. People of color, especially in the global south, have become the most persistent image of disaster — be it the typhoons in the Philippines, the tsunamis off the Indian Ocean, or the famine in sub-Saharan Africa, images of disaster embodied by people of color are deeply etched in our minds. While geographic distance can create emotional distance from the issue, lack of racial

---

4 Quiroz-Martinez, Julie. *Beyond Green Jobs*. The Public Eye Magazine, Fall 2010, Vol. 25, No. 3. <http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v25n3/beyond-green-jobs.html>

empathy or empathy for “the other” is also a significant part of the challenge.

Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath provide a compelling domestic case in point. The inhumane treatment of people of color — mostly Black — by authorities, agencies and the media ran the gamut of biased, negative media portrayals: from the use of the term “refugee” to describe displaced local residents to the racially coded ways, in which the national leadership (including President Bush and his mother Barbara Bush) trivialized the devastation. Although Hurricane Sandy triggered the revival of some of the same frames, a combination of ongoing advocacy on the ground since Katrina and an active “ethnic” media helped to mitigate the negative portrayals to some degree. However, support, empathy and access to services in the aftermath of Sandy are still highly racialized as opponents persist in using the dominant narratives that exploit socialized racial bias to undermine support for publicly funded services for low-income people. They push even harder against explicit efforts to advance equitable access to services.

As Dr. Cecilia Martinez of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy observed at the P2R gathering, Native communities have been operating from a resilience framework for many years in response to centuries of devastation of which climate crisis is only a part. One of the many lingering effects of this history is the normalization of people of color and low income communities in crisis. The story of devastation is often observed and reframed in ways that obscure oppression—especially in its structural and institutional forms. This sense of crisis, dislocation and deprivation as a fixed, inevitable norm for many communities not only desensitizes others to the unfair impact of climate crisis, it undermines

support for focused policy interventions.

### **CALL IT RESILIENCE, SUSTAINABILITY, OR SOMETHING ELSE?**

Resilience is a term that can capture the broad array of systems and synapses needed to survive and thrive during times of dynamic change. To some, resilience has negative connotations — a frame defined by adaptation to crises<sup>5</sup> rather than the important work required to create sustainable societies that can reverse the climate crisis. They argue that resilience is anthropocentric, placing humans, not the entire planet at the center of the ecological narrative. They also question the need for introducing a relatively new term like *resilience*, when significant investment has already been made in getting the public to grasp *sustainability*. Others, however, feel that *resilience* illustrates the human factors — what we need to be and what we need to achieve — most succinctly for a planet dramatically reshaped by climate crisis (Earth 2.0). The word has positive triggers related to survival as triumph — successfully weathering life as it comes, transcending difficulty and other embedded (including heroic) frames — even though it is not imbued with a particularly structural frame.<sup>6</sup>

There is yet another argument, discussed in Movement Generation’s paper, *The Politics of Home*, that says neither resilience nor sustainability accurately capture what we are trying to convey. Indeed, “sustainable” and “development” are mutually exclusive terms for those who believe that you cannot continue to develop in the conventional way if you erode the ecological system. As Movement Generation has argued elsewhere, “If you say, ‘sustainable development,’ you are assuming that development can be sustained.”<sup>7</sup> You are also assuming that industrial development, continued growth and better redistribution of

5 See, for example, Alexander, D.E. on this adaptation focus: “One aspect of cultural ecology is the need for human societies to adapt to environmental extremes. In this respect, a definition of resilience based on Rankine’s articulation for the mechanics of materials... but used by analogy to express the robustness and adaptation capacity of social networks is one of the most promising developments for disaster risk reduction. Klein et al. (2003, p. 43) went so far as to argue that maintaining and enhancing adaptive capacity should be the overall goal of resilience. However, rather than adaptation being a property of resilience, Klein, et.al., saw resilience as part of the capacity to adapt that every society needs during these times of high hazard and climate change... The definitional problem is a product of the difficulties experienced in making resilience operational, i.e. designing strategies to achieve it in diverse, and often dynamic, circumstances.” *Resilience and disaster risk reduction: an etymological journey*. Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, University College London. Copernicus Publications on behalf of the European Geosciences Union, London, UK. April 2013. <http://www.nat-hazards-earth-syst-sci-discuss.net/1/1257/2013/nhessd-1-1257-2013.pdf>

6 Law, A. and Mooney, G. offer this critique of social capital in the context of resilience: “Social capital, we argue, constructs a new political and social conformism with the aim of demobilising working-class organisations and activity. It encourages a fatalistic and conformist notion of social capital by confining voluntarism to safe, de-politicised channels. Hence part of its attraction for New Labour and the New Democrats has been its conservative emphasis on the norms of social integration while neglecting the basis of social disintegration in neo-liberal capitalism. In contrast, we describe a politically active sense of voluntarism, ‘recalcitrant voluntarism’, based on resistance to neo-liberal imperatives.” *The maladies of social capital II: resisting neo-liberal conformism*. Critique, 34(3), 253-268. 2006.



that growth are the only ways to address poverty and economic inequity.

As resilience is used increasingly by policymakers to describe the adaptation of infrastructure in response to crisis, the window of opportunity in which to advance resilience in a broader frame keeps shrinking. Additionally, opponents' consistent use of deeply embedded frames around race and worthiness, economic anxiety, "free" markets, and the right to use the natural world as we see fit challenge our efforts to advance the broader resilience frame.

Moving a comprehensive agenda for a holistic and just approach to resilience will require creating a sense of a shared fate with those "others" most affected by climate crisis, as well as a shared belief in the underlying values that drive the policies we seek. Helping people make the connections through greater racial empathy, a more nuanced analysis of the economy and how it works,

and a clearer understanding of the crisis and what can be done about it are all at the heart of our efforts to build political will. In a time when much of what is considered "public" is under intense attack and fear, violence and marginalization of communities of color are widespread, the resilience framework provides an opportunity for the nation to reimagine governance, the purpose of public works, and earth stewardship, and expand the definition of "We" as we evolve our understanding of interconnectedness.

As ecology professor and author Alf Hornborg observes, "... the currently burgeoning discussions on 'socio-ecological resilience'<sup>8</sup> tend to mask the power relations, contradictions of interest, and inequalities that to a large extent determine how humans utilise the surface of the Earth. On the other hand... [there is the] potential of resilience theory to radically confront such power structures by identifying some of the basic assumptions of economics as the very source of vulnerability, mismanagement, and crises."<sup>9</sup>

---

7 Movement Generation. *Politics of Home*. 2011.

8 Berkes, Fikret and Folke, Carl, eds. *Linking Social and Ecological Systems: Management Practices and Social Mechanisms for Building Resilience*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1998; Levin, Simon A., et al., *Resilience in Natural and Socio-Economic Systems*. Environment and Development Economics 3, no. 2, 222–35, 1998; Peterson, Garry D., *Political Ecology and Ecological Resilience: An Integration of Human and Ecological Dynamics*. Ecological Economics 35, no. 3, 323–36, 2000; Gunderson, Lance H. and Holling, Crawford S., eds. *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*. Island Press, Washington, DC, 2002; Berkes, Fikret, Colding, Johan and Folke, Carl, eds. *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: Building Resilience for Complexity and Change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., 2003; Folke, Carl, *Resilience: The Emergence of a Perspective for Social-Ecological Systems Analyses*. Global Environmental Change 16, no. 3, 253–67, 2006.

9 Hornborg, Alf. *Revelations of resilience: From the ideological disarmament of disaster to the revolutionary implications of (p)anarchy*. Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses, 2013.

# IV. REFRAMING FOR A NEW BIG PICTURE

If we agree that underlying our project is a fundamental reframing of how most Americans make sense of the environment, the economy and each other, then we must accept that this is not a short term project. However, there are other short-, intermediate- and long-term framing projects that we can undertake right now to move us forward. One way to imagine this process is to think of it as building a bridge. You need to know the two points you want to connect before you can begin. In our case, the two points are: moving from the current context (HERE) to creating the transformation we seek (THERE) by building the necessary infrastructure and changing current conditions.

The work of bridging these two points requires attention to the gaps in knowledge and belief and the value differences that hold us in the current context. We need to pay attention to the assets and resources available right now that will help us get further faster. *“Figure 3. Identifying Key Framing/Re-Framing Activities”* (below) shows how this process of inquiry works to develop framing and re-framing strategy. We usually populate the answers in the first and third columns before we return to the middle column to “build the bridge” from “here” to “there.”

Addressing the Current Context	Bridging Toward Our Goals	Building Infrastructure and Making the Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the current conversations and “state of belief” on climate change and related issues among our key constituencies?</li> <li>• How are the terms that define our frame being defined in the public conversation? What are the prospects for our definition(s) to take hold?</li> <li>• Who are the actors shaping the current conversation and what is their credibility? What are the opportunities for amplifying our voices?</li> <li>• Is there a sense that we can solve these issues? What solutions are being offered currently?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should our constituencies and other key “members of the public” understand and agree on in order to support this agenda?</li> <li>• What “evidence” — statistics, data trends, success stories — do we need to develop and disseminate to build credibility for our framework?</li> <li>• What are the fundamental, competing beliefs that must be deconstructed and/or reconstructed to create more “social space” for supportive beliefs?</li> <li>• What are the opportunities for providing a glimpse into the future with our (better) policy ideas?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will the public “state of belief” and conversations look and sound like when we succeed?</li> <li>• What are the key concepts and terminologies that can help drive the transformation in this era? How and in what contexts will they be defined?</li> <li>• Who are the experts whose input will be considered critical to informed decision-making?</li> <li>• What will be considered best practice and good policy?</li> </ul>

Figure 3. Identifying Key Framing/Re-Framing Activities

“Figure 4. Key Framing/Re-Framing Activities for Advancing a Resilience Framework” (below) explores some of the key framing activities that need to be carried out to specifically advance a resilience framework. It is important to note that this is not a linear process. We must test and develop a comprehensive strategic communications approach that incorporates all of these elements over time as they overlap, inform and shape each other.

<b>Addressing the Current Context</b>	<b>Bridging Toward Our Goals</b>	<b>Building Infrastructure and Making the Change</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use polling, surveys and focus group research to identify beliefs and understanding among key segments of the public.</li> <li>• Be more visible in defining the term for the broader public.</li> <li>• Promote the public good by advancing themes of “governing together/ better together” that counter individualistic anti-government frames.</li> <li>• Build on beloved community themes to increase sense of a shared stake in collaboration for a sustainable/resilient/fair/compassionate nation.</li> <li>• Define opposition policies as lose-lose propositions; delegitimize credibility of spokespersons from corporations that profit from the status quo; increase credibility of “green” voices.</li> <li>• Unmask opponents’ misleading tactics, including fake science, fake “victims” of protective policies, “AstroTurf” lobby groups, and corporate authored sermons to wrap propaganda in religious terms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand resources that translate the scientific evidence into metrics and stories that are more easily understood.</li> <li>• Provide practical, sensible solutions to help the public see how we make a difference beyond individual change.</li> <li>• Talk about models for economics, governance, collaboration, and ecological practice that work (i.e., health in all policies, cooperation economy, etc.)</li> <li>• Tell stories that help reinforce our connectedness as human beings across race, class and nation status.</li> <li>• Develop a compelling story about the future that goes beyond mitigation and adaptation<sup>10</sup>.</li> <li>• Counter the “Dominion” frame with a “good stewards” frame, aware of our interconnectedness with all life and our responsibility to the planet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build public support for corporate regulation and accountability, and incentives for triple bottom line investments.</li> <li>• Build public understanding and support for good stewardship and human rights frameworks as foundational principles for policy and practice.</li> <li>• Build support for revenue generation mechanisms, such as affirmative tax reform, land valuation and green credits.</li> <li>• Shift official language, definitions, operating policies, and recommended best practices to align with our framework.</li> <li>• Ensure that this framework and underlying values are integrated in key curricula, including K-12, human rights education, professional training, and key disciplines, such as, planning.</li> <li>• Advance narrative and cultural framing that supports legal and policy infrastructure built around asserting “human rights “the rights of nature” in environmental legal and policy efforts.</li> </ul>

Figure 4. Key Framing/Re-Framing Activities for Advancing a Resilience Framework

10 Shared by Miya Yoshitani of the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN).

# V. LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE META MESSAGES

These framing activities taken together can form a potent basis for the development of supportive meta messaging—overarching themes that provide a communications and storytelling framework at the movement or mass level. Such high level messaging is best developed collaboratively, where “on the ground” expertise of advocates and other key stakeholders can inform its focus and content.

Cognitive linguist George Lakoff describes three levels of messaging:

- **LEVEL 1** is the expression of broad, overarching values, such as fairness or responsibility — the core values that motivate us to change the world.
- **LEVEL 2** is the issue we work on, such as, housing, the environment, schools, or health.
- **LEVEL 3** is about the nitty-gritty of those issues, including the policy detail or strategy for achieving change.

Messaging about climate crisis and resilience, with few exceptions, tends to hover around Level 3, the most detailed level of expression. This makes connecting with the broad public difficult since it is at Level 1 that the greatest number of people connect in the deepest way. According to Lakoff, people’s support for (or rejection of) an issue is determined by whether they can identify and connect with the Level 1 values. Values are motivators, and messages should reinforce and activate values.

Developing meta messages to advance a comprehensive resilience framework requires identifying the broad values that span across our Level 2 and Level 3 issues. The key to a meta message is not to have every advocate in the panoply of our work utter the same words. Rather, it is to have every advocate voice the same broad underlying Level 1 values in the context of all our messages. Additionally, meta messages should emphasize interconnection — how issues and values fit together in a landscape or context — rather than individual issue “portraits” or campaigns. Meta messaging requires time for planning and building a shared analysis that connects the dots between issues and campaigns. Although the P2R gathering did not allow for such extensive preparatory work, there were message themes (noted in “*Figure 5. Initial Message Themes for Communicating Resilience at All Levels*” on the following page) that surfaced as part of the discussion.

Potential Message Themes	Level 1 (Values)	Level 2 (Issues)	Level 3 (Policy)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>This is an urgent crisis that requires all hands on deck.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Facing the facts.</i></li> <li>Courage, maturity, reason.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The future depends on how we face this challenge together (setting aside bias). The issue is too important for industry-dominated business as usual (money and politics, corporate speech).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy goals and recommendations for expanded governance, alternatives, new regulatory and policy structure.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We are doing our part for the planet.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>This is about X community taking charge of our future.</i></li> <li>Local pride, caring for our neighbors, being part of the solution not the problem, being good stewards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are all changing, giving and doing to confront this challenge. We are creating opportunities for learning and action retraining.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy goals and recommendations for establishment of local incentives and equity in access and engagement; reframing of fines and new fees as “doing your part.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We have the know-how to get this done.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ingenuity, initiative, community organizing, listening to those who have “weathered the storms,” good science, and “just doing it.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All over the world, we are succeeding when we listen and work together. We can build a world for our grand children and their grandchildren; we can take success to scale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating about successful programs, policies, collaborations and pilots.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Working together, we can make a difference.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing the work, taking responsibility, also rolling up our sleeves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We all have an important role to play including government and advocates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating about successful collaborations and targeted briefings on policy options.</li> </ul>

Figure 5. Initial Message Themes for Communicating Resilience at All Levels

## VI. BUILDING PUBLIC SUPPORT FROM THE BASE UP

Getting from here to there is largely dependent upon effectively engaging a compelling base of support. As participants stressed throughout our time together at P2R, effective organizing will be critical to our efforts. But it can be easy to get caught up in communicating with our opposition while ignoring the work of base-building. Of course, debate has its place, especially given the dominance of many opposing frames. However, there are still plenty of constituencies to organize and engage which, taken together, can grow into an impressive majority for resilience.

Within these broad categories, there are a number of niche demographics — Hip Hop Greens, Unitarian Universalists and vegetarians are three examples — that need to be “teased” out and the strategy further developed to take a nuanced approach to connect to their values and needs. We must also look at capacity building strategies to help forge a sense of community and connection to a larger movement among these diverse segments. Some activities in this area are suggested below in “Figure 6. Key Constituencies”.

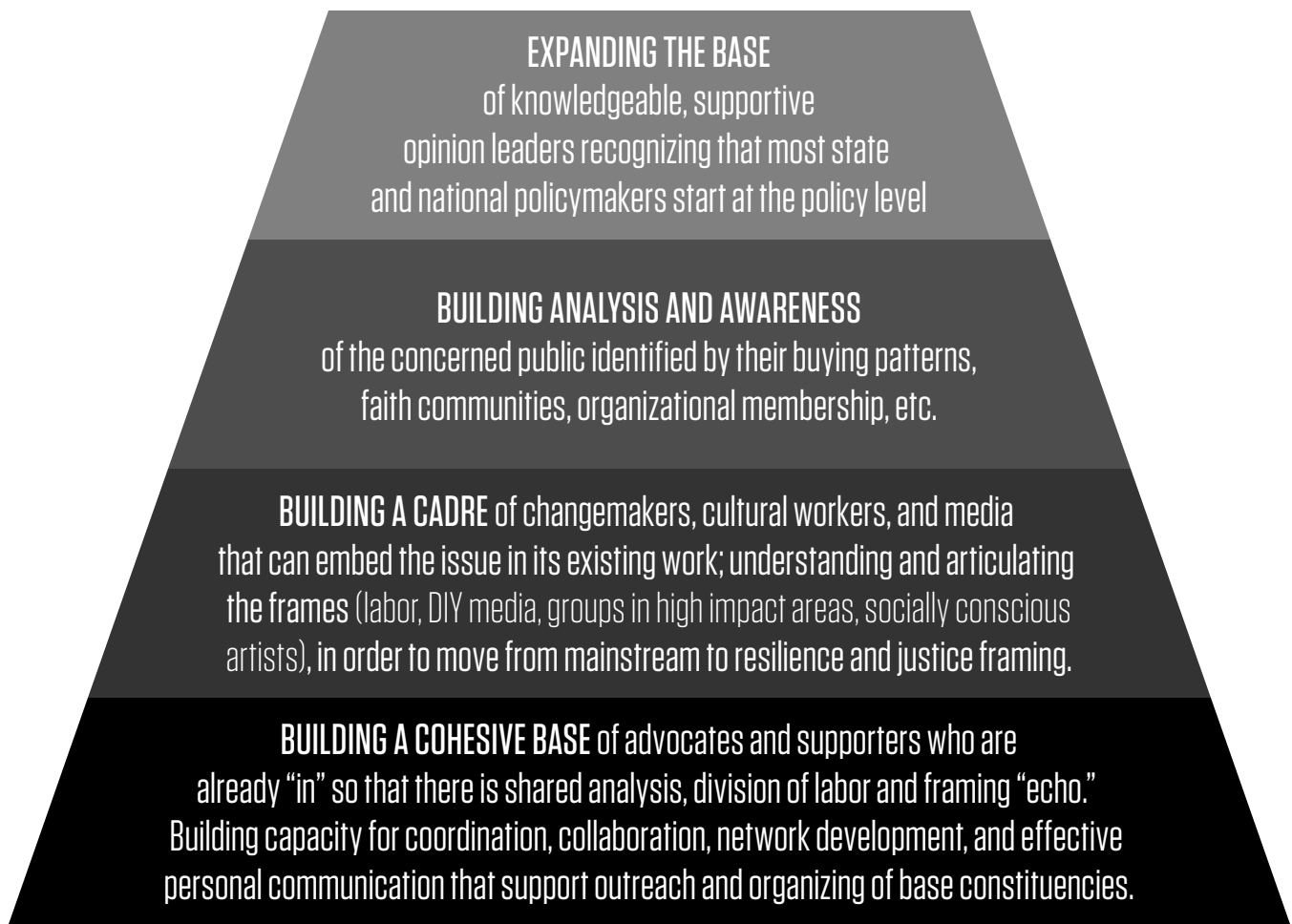


Figure 6. Key Constituencies

# VII. BUILDING A MOVEMENT THAT MATTERS

Given the enormous tasks ahead, it's clear that big changes are required — in the world and within our own organizations and fields of work. Creating the capacity for movement-building at this scale will require *institutionalizing* the capacity to learn from and connect with one another. Specifically, this means paying attention to the revenue base, human development and public awareness, as well as retrofitting our institutions to create a supportive cultural and political infrastructure that continues to evolve and replicate itself over the long term. In other words, we must develop strategies that weave together our work in order to change the *culture and conditions*.

“Figure 7. Key Areas for Work to Advance Comprehensive Resilience Framework” (below) outlines key areas of work along these lines as one way to help us think about the range of activities required. It is represented as a Venn diagram because these processes overlap and reinforce each other. “Figure 8. Key Activities to Build Field Capacity” (page 49), examines specific activities that support field building to help sustain this work over time.

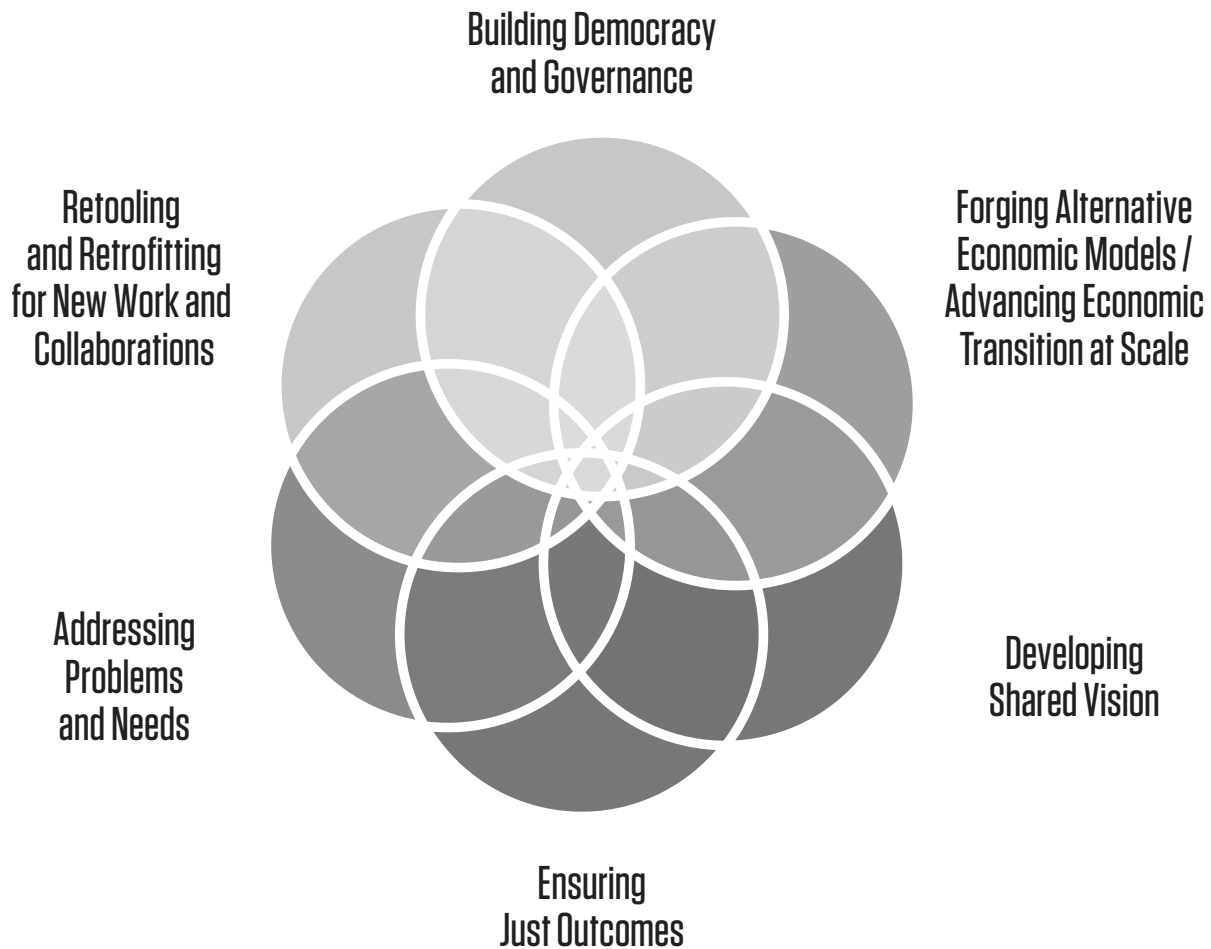


Figure 7. Key Areas for Work to Advance Comprehensive Resilience Framework

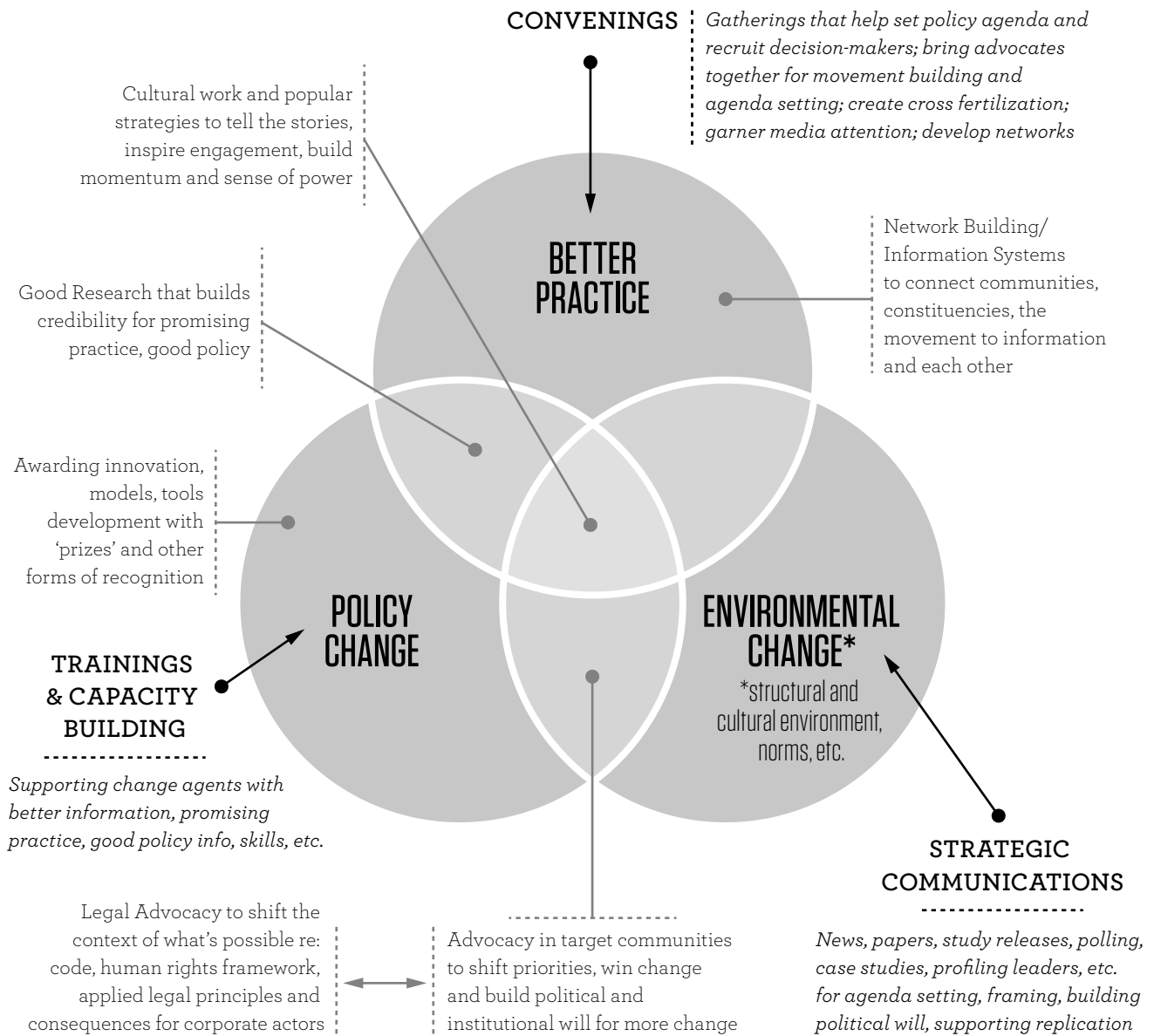


Figure 8. Key Activities to Build Field Capacity



# VIII. POTENTIAL POLICY HANDLES: WHAT WE CAN DO

As outlined above, having clear, actionable policies will be critical to effective messaging and moving our agenda. The following policy initiatives are summary examples of the kind of models and infrastructure required to advance the resilience framework at scale, integrating many of the ideas generated at P2R. It will be important to further develop these and other policy ideas into actual model legislation and program plans in order to facilitate implementation and replication — especially at the local level.

- **MAKING OUR MONEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE:** Pursue tax and revenue strategies that decrease profitability for harmful practices and provide incentives for constructive and/or reparative ones. At the agency level, create federal incentives for state and local comprehensive resilience initiatives and develop transparent, accountable mechanisms for ensuring that public research and development dollars support resilience efforts.
- **CREATING A CULTURE OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS:** Making cultural shifts of this magnitude require supportive policies that help prepare us to embrace those shifts and institutionalize the new norms we seek. Our schools, faith institutions, media, and other key centers for creating meaning in our lives must be significantly reshaped to promulgate a shared understanding of ourselves as members of a global family. Work in this area should include: establishing resilience values in school curricula to engage students from an early age; getting key institutions to integrate resilience principles in their canon and practice; and ensuring that there are active pathways to independent media infrastructures to effectively tell our stories.
- **INCORPORATING HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY IN ALL POLICIES:** Through expanded work on institutionalized curricula, education and training, we must engage in targeted efforts to develop a broad public understanding of human rights and equity principles, especially among practitioner communities deeply engaged in resilience-related work. There are important opportunities to actualize many of these ideas at the local level, such as the local health departments that are adopting frameworks for health and health equity in all policies. There are also other opportunities to work with multiple local agencies as they engage in disaster and/or resilience planning.
- **MAKING BETTER USE OF WHAT WE HAVE:** Advance equity in metro and regional land use; engage in innovative approaches, such as farmland compacts; make creative use of litigation; address planning barriers to sustainable development; and institute policies, which incentivize uses that drive adaptation and mitigation goals.
- **DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC MODELS:** At multiple points and in multiple forms, ranging from co-ops to local currencies, community-held utilities and cooperative insurance structures, a better economy is within our reach. Drive local planning that can support the shift to more sustainable economies, thus removing the disincentives for those formations while ensuring strong accountability measures.
- **CREATING A NEW EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR A NEW ECONOMY:** Retrofit systems of education and training to meet the changing needs; bolster and restructure underutilized education resources, such as community colleges and extension programs; and support local, regional and national learning communities among existing formations (for example, National League of Cities, local elected officials of color, American Planning Association) to build capacity for undertaking structural approaches to resilience.
- **WORKING TOGETHER TO BE UP TO THE TASK:** Develop formal, institutionalized venues — i.e., participatory budgeting, neighborhood councils, and increased authority for existing resident advisory groups — in order to provide greater access to decision-making and create “windows” into what’s possible through direct experience of shared governing.

## IX. DISCUSSION

This briefing paper is a relatively brief summary of a range of communications and policy ideas, each of which could fill a book on its own. Hence, this paper is not designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of all the policy approaches or communications efforts required for a project of this magnitude rather, it's a vehicle for further discussion and input.

As stated earlier, creating a more detailed and substantive policy and communications strategy will require a strong power analysis, a clear delineation of policy priorities, and consensus on the power/organizing strategy that can help us build and maintain the agency needed to tackle this challenge. More research and testing must be done in order to develop a comprehensive communications strategy to advance the actual policy priorities that emerge from this work. It is also critical that the messaging should be generated from a participatory process that places advocate knowledge and experience at its center to help ensure its relevance to the work “on the ground.”

At present there are some serious gaps in the research and methodology — i.e. polling, surveys, policy development — which, if addressed, will offer critical insights into this work, especially with regard to equity impact, the role of race and class bias, and historic patterns of marginalization. We will need to look closely at these gaps and together, generate relevant questions that will help us move this work forward.

As discussed at the P2R, resilience is a complicated and contested concept. It can offer a home for deeply rooted frameworks like environmental justice and human rights to thrive, or it can be a conceptual gentrifier that appropriates these ideas while displacing the work and needs of communities that should be at the center of these efforts. The P2R gathering gave us hope that working together, we can ensure that resilience will be defined in powerful and inclusive new ways. But we understand that it is a long term project and look forward to more conversations ahead. ■