



COMMUNITY-
DRIVEN CLIMATE
SOLUTIONS



BEGINNINGS



- Citizen-led initiative started in the fall of 2015
- Launch event in January 2016 to 250 community members
- Community-driven initial list of projects in transportation, building efficiency, renewable energy, zero waste, food systems, and public policy
- ACTT as a catalyst

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE BY 2030

- Science-based, motivating goal
- Resonant with community identity
- Providing as much of the island's energy as possible through locally & responsibly sited and owned renewable energy
- Rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Electrification and efficiency

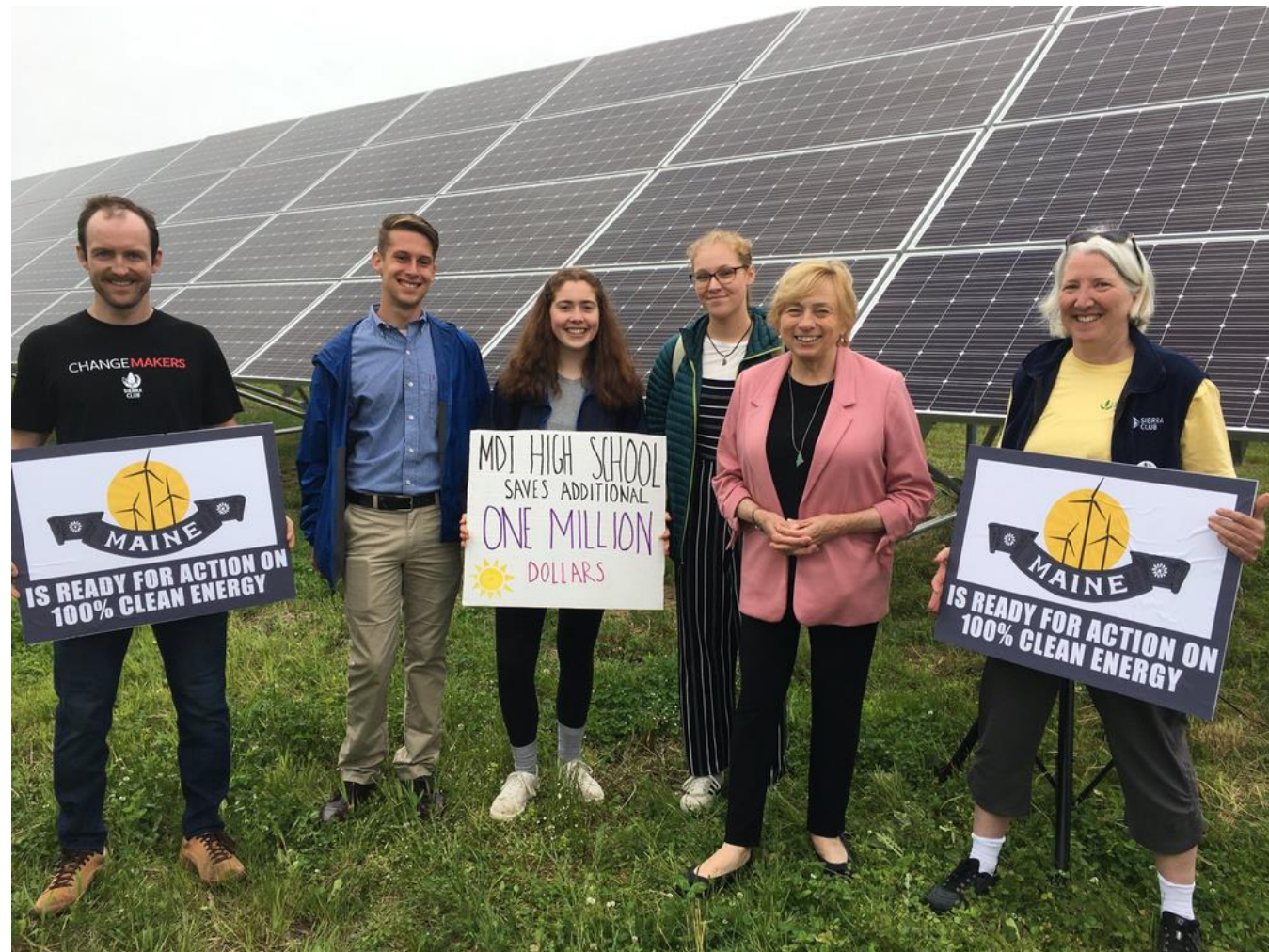


ACTT IMPACTS

- **Seven-fold increase in solar energy generated on MDI** since ACTT began
- **First community-owned solar farm** in then Emera territory
- **First solar array on a capped landfill** in then Emera territory, powering all of Tremont's municipal energy needs
- **First high school in Maine to source all energy needs via school-sited rooftop solar at MDI High School**
- **First electric school bus in Maine** at MDI high school
- Two **Solarize campaigns**, rapidly expanding homeowner rooftop solar on MDI



ACTT IMPACTS



- Two **Weatherize campaigns**, supporting MDI homeowners in increasing efficiency, reducing energy costs, and increasing home comfort
- One **heat pump campaign**
- **Established corridor of electric vehicle charging stations** throughout Downeast Maine and on the Blue Hill Peninsula
- **Met with Janet Mills** during her gubernatorial campaign to **discuss climate action in Maine**

ACTT IMPACTS

- **Hosted an energy visioning meeting in 2018** that served as **inspiration for the development of the Maine Climate Council and Maine Won't Wait**
- Supported **local high school and college students** in bringing a **declaration of climate emergency** to three of the four island towns
- Wrote a **climate action plan for the town of Mount Desert**
- Supported the town of **Bar Harbor in climate action plan development**
- Facilitated **Bar Harbor, Tremont, and Mount Desert in the enrollment process for the state's new Community Resilience Partnership program** in early 2022 and wrote a **joint grant for the three towns. The towns received the second largest grant in the state**, dedicated to EV charging infrastructure and community outreach & engagement.



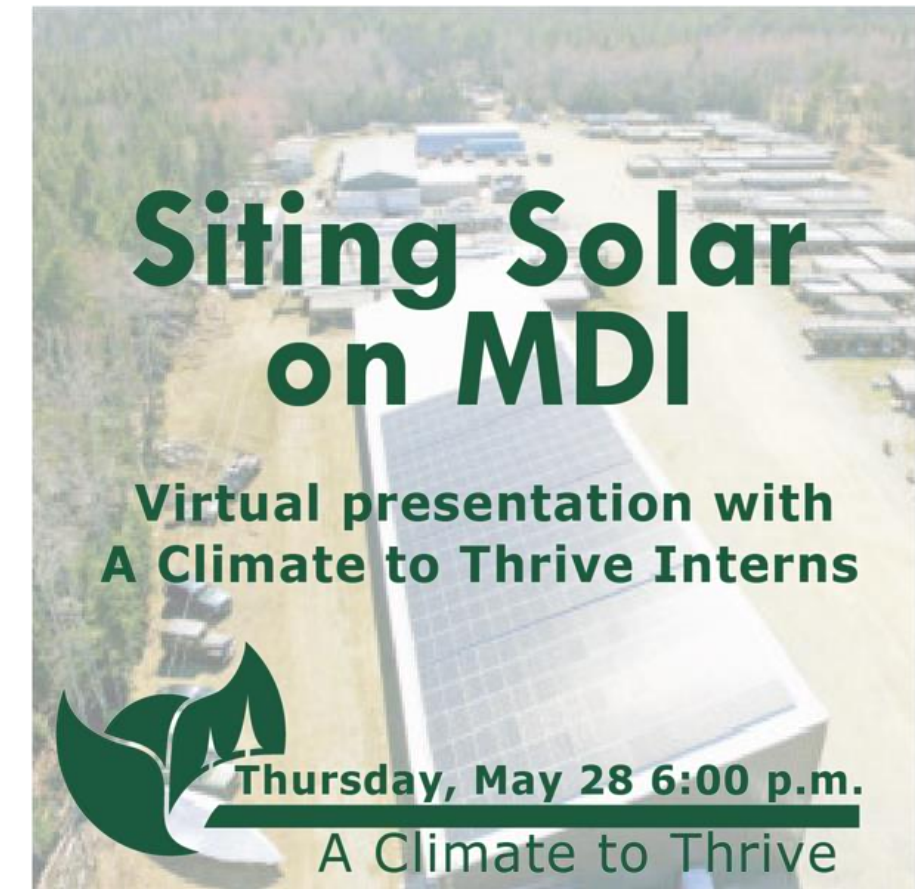
ACTT IMPACTS

- Supported **Bar Harbor in the feasibility and pre-development phase for a town-owned solar array**, a key step in the town's climate action plan
- Built a **thriving, year-round internship program** for high school and college-aged youth
- Hosted **monthly educational series** to build community understanding and engagement
- Launched "**Local Leads the Way**" **monthly meetings for community-driven climate action groups throughout the state**, providing training, networking, resource-sharing, and eliminating duplication of effort (Local Leads the Way was featured in both the Maine Monitor and Energy News Network New England)
- Helped launch a **winter farmers market on MDI**



SOME CURRENT & UPCOMING WORK

- Cooperative solar ownership model research and development
- Comprehensive building solutions program research and development (encompassing weatherization, electrification, and solar with financing model)
- Carbon Reduction Commitment (greenhouse gas emissions commitment and support for local businesses)
- Support for municipal solar arrays through pre-development
- Community Energizing Campaign
- Expanded Internship Program
- Smart grid piloting on MDI, participation in ETIPP
- Local Leads the Way



WHY COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CLIMATE SOLUTIONS?

Solutions designed and implemented with a high degree of community input.

- Better designed to **meet the specific needs** of the community
- More likely to **multi-solve**
- More likely to **prioritize community ownership and equity**
- More likely to **cultivate community participation and empowerment**
- **Sustained** throughout political shifts and existence or lack of state, national, and international assistance
- **Builds a model** for replication in other communities



GETTING STARTED

Create a space for open conversations about climate change, held within the specific context of your community.

Some Questions We Explored:

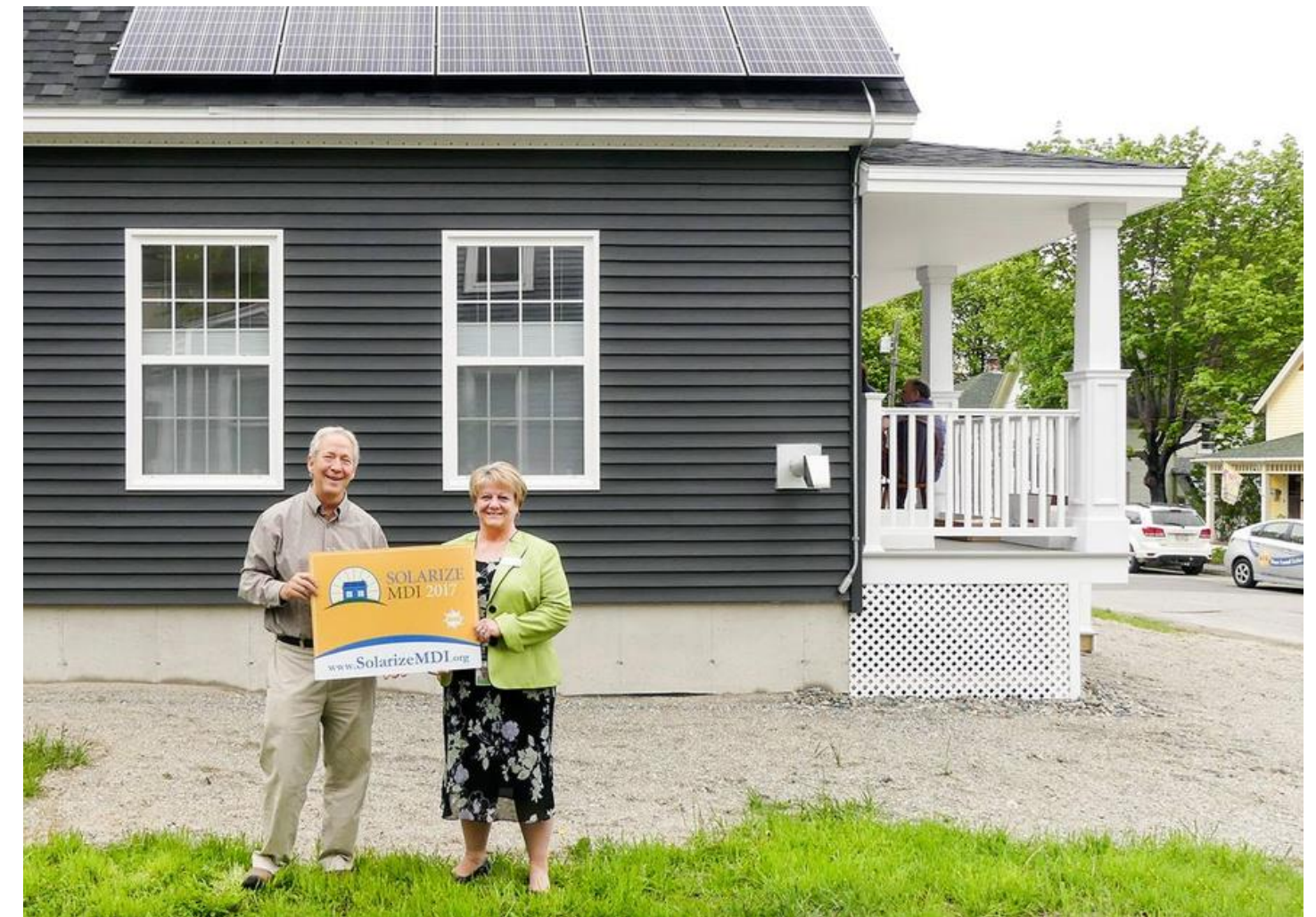
- Starting with a group check-in: why are you here?
- How are folks feeling about climate change?
- What do people think about when they think about climate change?
- When folks think about climate change and the future of this community, what do they hope for?
- What other challenges does this community face and how do those challenges intersect with climate change? What opportunities might exist to multi-solve?
- Who is missing from the conversation? How can we broaden participation?
- What do we want to do next?
- What do we need to know? What other resources do we need to get started?



Have fun! We ate a lot of really good food in those initial meetings (and still do!).

GETTING STARTED

- Identify a compelling goal and narrative
- Map your community - identify formal and informal power structures and influencers
- Build partnerships
- Start with visible, tangible, participatory projects to motivate future engagement



GETTING STARTED

- Build a team
- Identify your relationship with long-term planning
- Check-in with the community

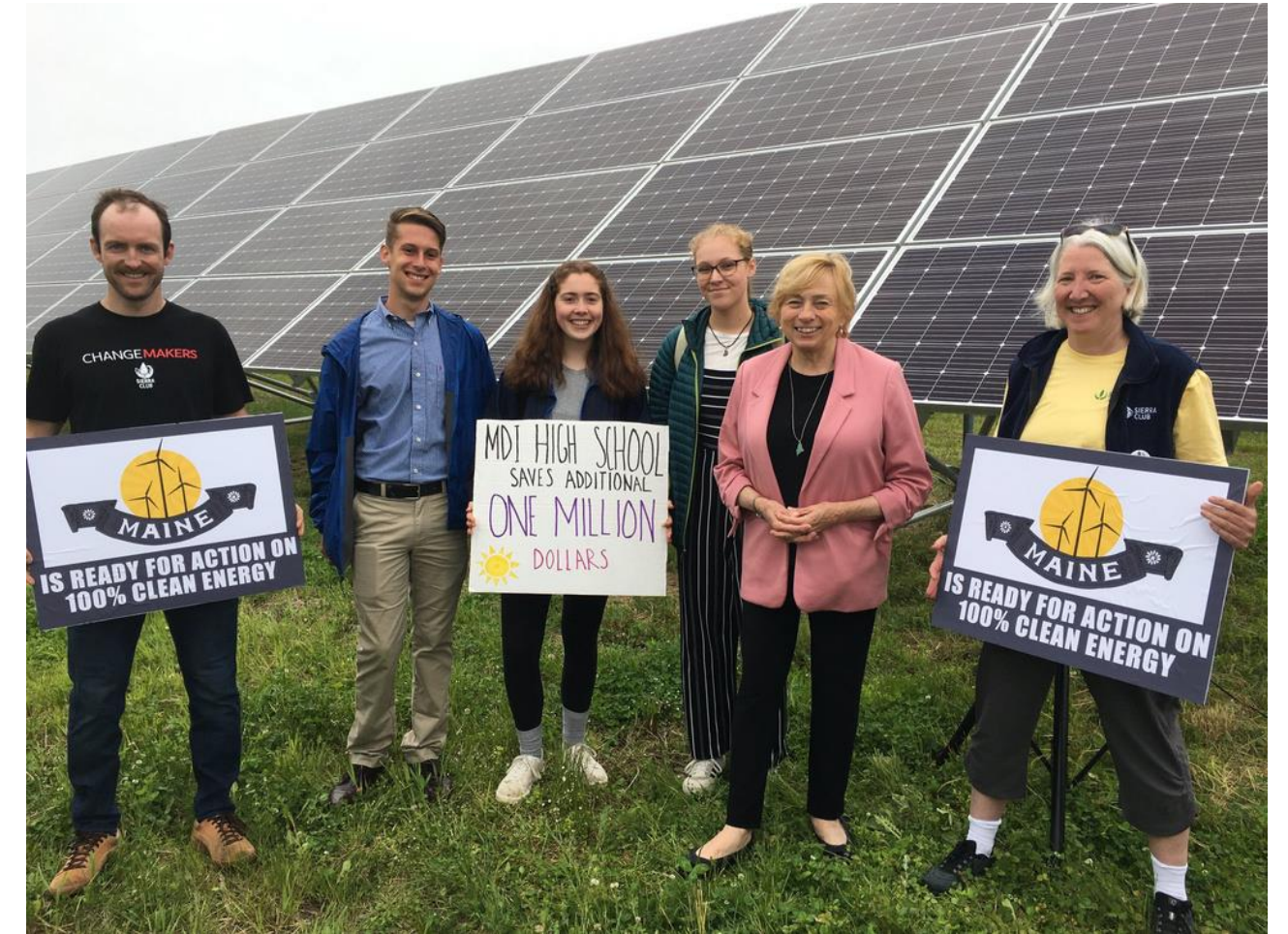


IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS

- Local government
- County leadership
- Local school system
- Youth
- Local organizations, especially those concerned with the future of the community
- Contractors (building performance contractors, solar contractors, heat pump technicians, plumbers, electricians)
- Legal expertise
- Fundraising expertise
- Energy expertise
- Efficiency Maine Trust
- Local utility company
- Public Utility Commission (PUC)
- Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future
- University of Maine
- Any other local colleges (for ACTT, the relationship with the College of the Atlantic has been very impactful)
- **Other community-driven climate solutions initiatives in the state!**

SOME PROJECT EXAMPLES

- Solarize MDI
- Weatherize MDI
- Electrify MDI
- Downeast and Blue Hill Peninsula EV charging projects
- Mount Desert Island High School rooftop solar array
- Bar Harbor community-owned solar array
- Tremont municipal solar array
- Carbon Reduction Commitment for local businesses
- Educational series
- Internship program
- Climate action planning support for the towns
- Service Provider support for the towns in signing up for and applying for funding from the Community Resilience Partnership
- Guide to solar ownership for Homeowners, Businesses, and Nonprofits
- Financial modeling around solar ownership for municipalities
- Electric Bus for MDI High School



CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Finding financing models that increase access to solutions and to community ownership of solutions
- Workforce shortage for needed contractors and technicians
- Responsible, community-driven siting of clean energy
- Interconnection of clean energy to the grid
- Building broader networks across the community

INTERGENERATIONAL CLIMATE WORK

- Finding a collaboration model through which the work is changed by the contributions of young people
- Ensuring youth are provided meaningful avenues for participation, not participation as tokenism
- Compensating young people for their time
- Youth having decision-making power to shape the work



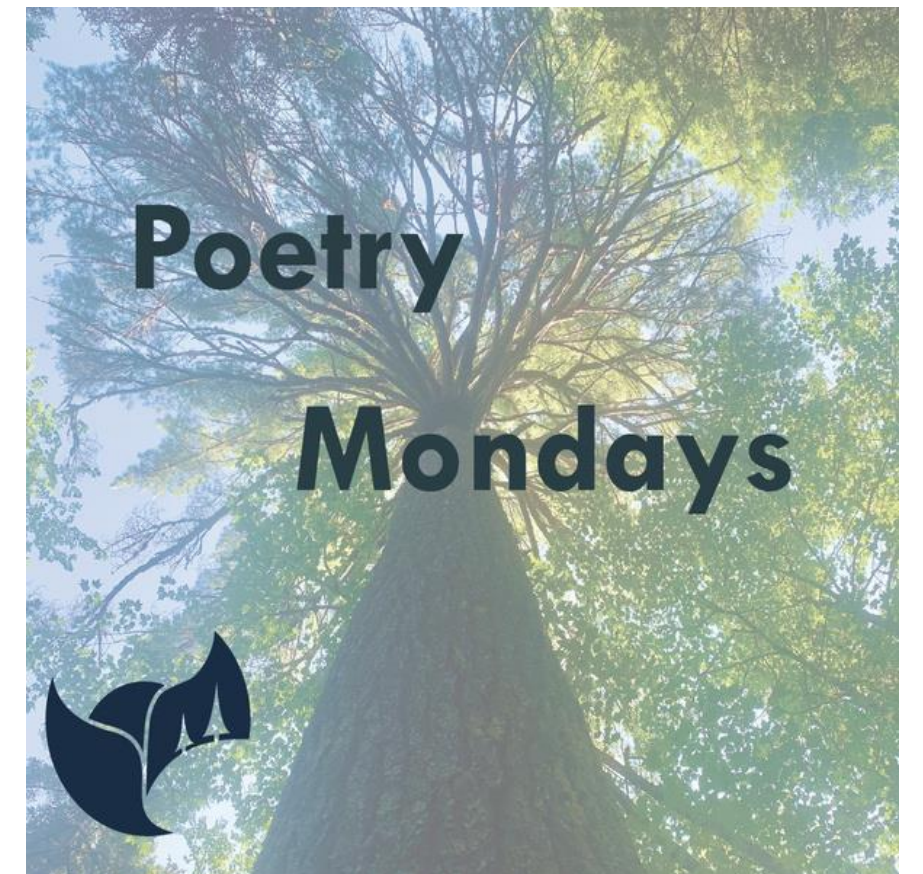
MAKING THE WORK SUSTAINABLE

- Balancing sense of urgency with the need for rest and rejuvenation and being realistic in your pace of work
- Building in space to honor the psychological and emotional aspects of climate work
- Learning to say "no"
- Making the work celebratory, joyful, creative, and collaborative (when more of us hold pieces of the puzzle, it makes the work more sustainable for each of us)

Climate Change and Mental Health A Psychological Toolkit

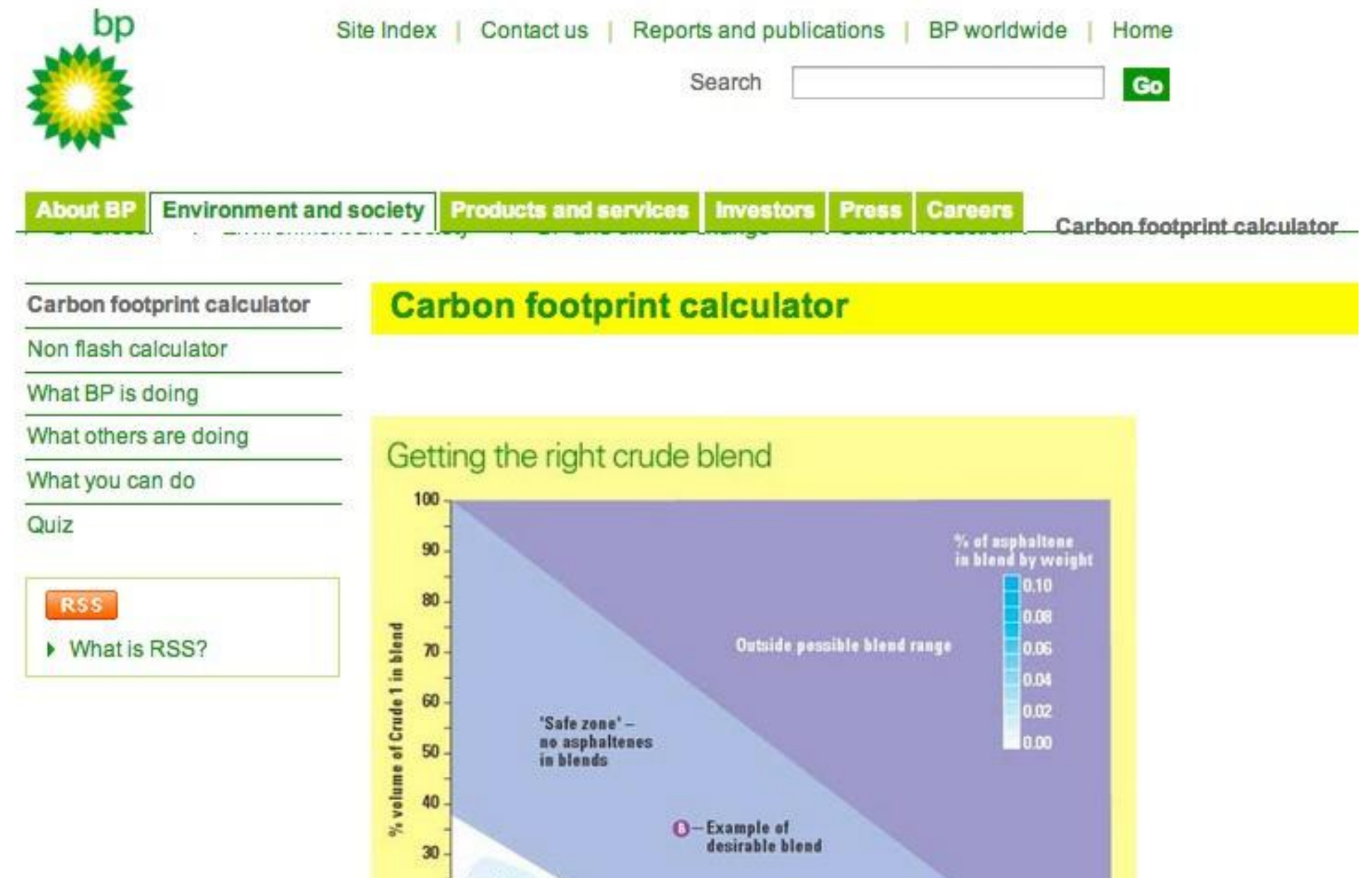
Wednesday, March 2, 6:00 p.m.

Cohosted by A Climate to Thrive
& The Center for Ecology Based Economy

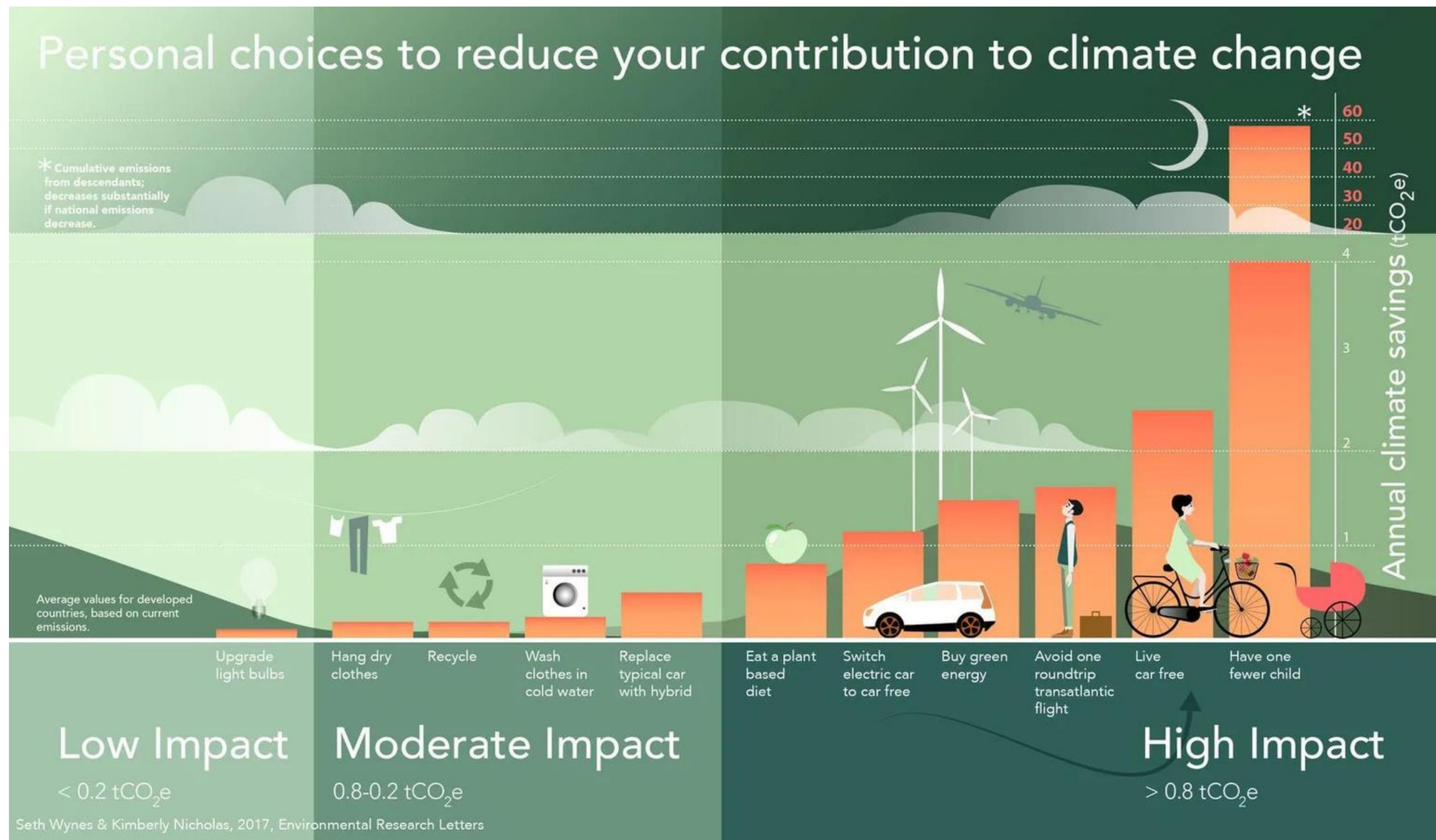


INDIVIDUAL CHOICES VS. SYSTEMIC CHANGE

- Why are we focusing on our individual choices?
- How are we holding that focus?
- What is our individual impact?
- Why systemic change?



TOP "INDIVIDUAL CHOICE" SOLUTIONS



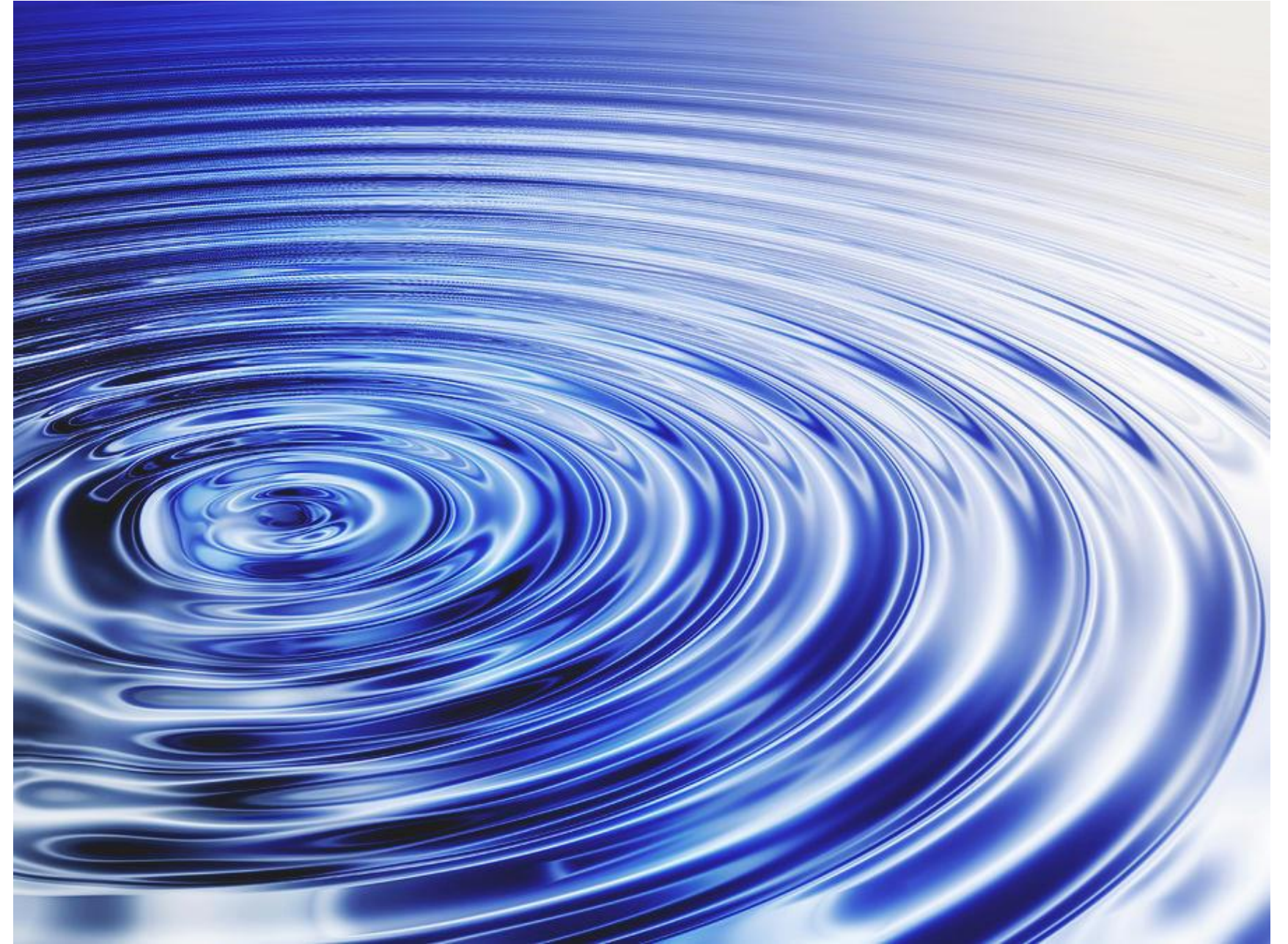
- Family size
- Finances
- Transportation
- Home energy
- Diet
- Food waste
- Refrigerants

ACTT focuses on support via programs for:

- Buildings
- Cars
- Education

ALWAYS THINKING AT LEAST ONE RIPPLE OUT

- How can you leverage impact by moving on ripple out from yourself to impact local systems?
- The importance of conversation - talk about climate change!



MAPPING YOUR MOST IMPACTFUL CONTRIBUTION

ELEMENTS OF FINDING YOUR PIECE

Build Basic Climate Literacy

Develop your understanding of basic climate science, where we are at, where we need to go, and, especially, what solutions are most impactful.

Understanding Your Influence

Map your spheres of influence and connection with others; we are most effective when we are working in collaboration. Know where you have influence and find your team.

Understanding Yourself

Hone in on your skills, what you bring to the table, why you are motivated to act, what you love to do, and how your experiences make your contribution unique.

Finding the Intersection

Identify where your skills and interest and your influence and connections overlap with the most impactful and necessary climate actions of this moment.

MAPPING YOUR MOST IMPACTFUL CONTRIBUTION

FINDING THE INTERSECTION

Within what is needed and most impactful, what do you find most compelling? Remember, you can only take up a piece of the puzzle, but when you work with others, your piece and impact expand!

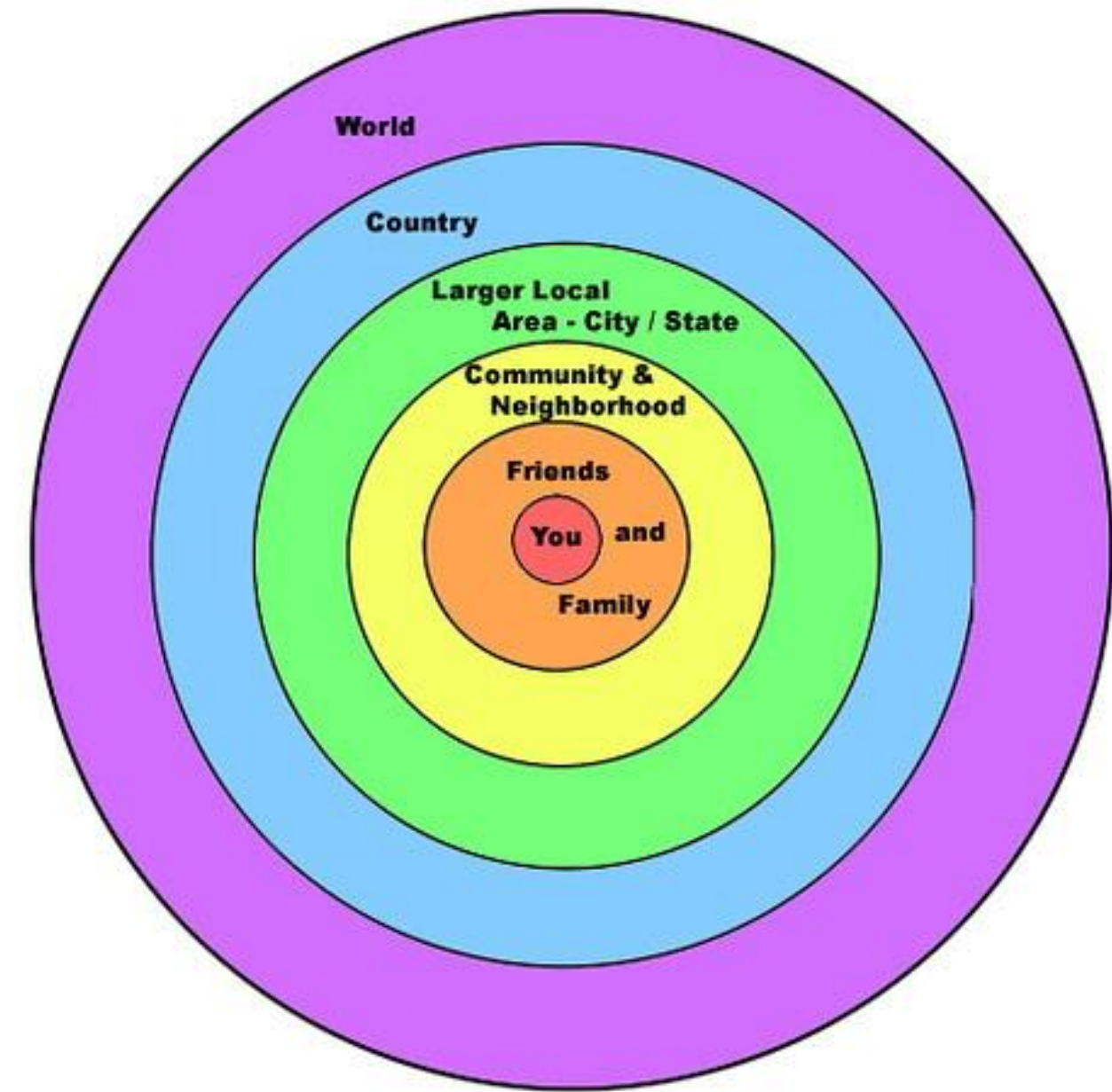
Where do you have influence?

What do you like to do and what challenges do you find interesting?

What skills do you bring and how does your experience build unique understanding/perspective?



Spheres of Influence and Understanding



Venn Diagram of Climate Action by Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson - ayanaelizabeth.com/climatevenn

FINDING PEACE WITH BEING A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE



We are strongest as a community.

