



Summary meeting minutes

Boston June 6, 2024 National Expert Hui (Workshop)

Subtask 1 Phase 2 HTR Task

Hui Objectives

- **Elevate Indigenous voices** in the conversation about how to better engage often hidden and/or marginalised communities.
- Highlight, discuss, and learn from **unintended consequences** of well-intentioned efforts to engage priority audiences.
- Co-create a **shared goal** for Phase 2 of the HTR Task.

Key Insights

- The importance of **engaging with Indigenous communities** in our participating countries (Aotearoa New Zealand, Sweden, the U.S.) cannot be overstated.
- To effectively engage, it is crucial to focus on **building trust**, supporting **education and literacy** (especially related to sustainable energy use, healthy and affordable housing, and achieving a just energy system transition), bringing community members to the **decision-making table**, building and empowering Indigenous **capacity and voices** including in the energy sector, and adopting **metrics of success** with the community, rather than imposing top-down KPIs.
- The best relationships are made when utilities **show up in person**, can demonstrate **how they think they can help**, and what this will look like (including how willing they are in **co-creating interventions** and support based on communities' needs). Showing up **early on and consistently**, as well as **following through** (such as being available after installation of equipment and appliances to help with maintenance or any ongoing use issues that may arise), are crucial in building trust and lasting relationships.
- **Internal education is key**. We must acknowledge and learn about past (often negative) interactions and strive for improvement—this means learning about

what it means to live in remote locations, about different Indigenous cultures, and about their specific needs and experiences, and ensuring that this **translates back into our corporate Eurocentric culture**. It is important to allow time for staff to build this knowledge about specific communities as well - this is best done by **building up Indigenous capacity** inside policy and industry organisations.

- It is also crucial to bring **more education about the energy system** into these communities. This could include incorporating (preferably Indigenous) energy academics that revolve around STEM education for middle schoolers and high schoolers, as well as educating the contractors doing the work in those communities. It is important to **train community members**—and provide lasting jobs —so that they can be the ones teaching and delivering these solutions to one another, in their own world view, and in ways that are meaningful to them.
- Along these same lines, **bringing Indigenous community members to the table** and involving them during all steps of these processes is a significant best practice towards better engagement. It is important to **increase representation** of Indigenous community members at all levels including development, regulatory bodies, research, and energy companies.
- Involvement in **programme design** is key as well—programmes that are tailored specifically to Indigenous communities and are run **by community members for community members** are most effective. Aotearoa New Zealand saw success with Māori family members running energy efficiency workshops that were developed by Māori: *“When it’s your own whānau [family] teaching you, there’s something really powerful about that.”*
- Having an Indigenous person as the **Indigenous Communities Liaison** at the programme administrator level is very important. **Every tribe, band, iwi and First Nation is different**, so we need to have someone on the ground who can meet with the tribal leaders in person and make these connections, and grow internal and community capacity.
- **Capacity building** is key, especially regarding access to **federal funding**. A lot of the tribes do not have the personnel to start this process, the know-how to write a grant, or the capital to put up the funding to begin to get a grant. Utilities could provide guidance by helping to **navigate obstacles and burdensome bureaucracy**, breaking funding processes down into steps to illustrate what is available, for whom, and how to apply. We need to stop forcing communities to fill out lengthy forms and become better at creating **one-stop shops**.
- **Community benefit agreements** could be tapped into more. Community benefits are currently one of the metrics that Hawai’i Energy uses; they sign agreements mutually and compensate for outreach efforts they are involved with.
- It is important to listen to what the **most appropriate metrics of success** are from the people you are trying to serve. Building these connections can be time consuming—it will likely take some back and forth following the first outreach effort. We need to shift our perspective to see that being invited back and having opportunities for continuous relationship-building is already a big success.

Next Steps

- We must **define what a just, equitable and fair transition** actually looks like through the lens of those priority voices that need to be heard.
- Indigenous representatives from the four tribes indicated an interest in **continuing to convene (and grow) this group** quarterly. The HTR Task will support this in any way they see fit.
- Many of the insights shared by Indigenous community representatives are also **transferable** to other underserved, marginalised and hidden communities and energy users. The HTR Task will continue to reach out, engage and empower those hidden voices.

Shared Task Goal

To be finalised with Hui and Task participants.

To identify, listen to, elevate, and empower priority voices, so as to be guided by their experiences, insights, and needs, to achieve a truly just energy system transition for all. The just transition should build energy sovereignty, influence and resilience in those priority communities.*

** Priority voices and communities are those who are currently hidden, missed, underserved or intentionally underinvested in by decision-makers. Examples are marginalised / forgotten (e.g., the disabled, remote Indigenous), stigmatised / ostracised (e.g., refugees, ethnic minorities, welfare recipients), and/or illegalised / criminalised (e.g., the homeless, people suffering from substance abuse) groups, but also hidden groups in the commercial sector (e.g., home-based microbusinesses), the “squeezed middle” (with mid-high incomes but no assets), and those households with total high energy consumption where only a single bill payer is known (e.g., student flatters, overcrowded households). These examples are not exhaustive.*