



## Facilitation Guide

# Energy Democracy

## How Can The Principles of Energy Democracy Lead Us to Energy Justice?

This facilitation guide is designed to inform and host meaningful conversations around energy justice. We hope that this workshop can be used as a tool to collectively ground ourselves in community discussions, rooted in economic and social justice, as we dive into the topics of energy generation, its impacts on the earth, and the just possibilities that come with the democratization of energy.

### Materials Needed

- [Gifts from Mother Earth](#) (print)
- [Transformation Sites](#) (print)
- [Principles of Energy Democracy](#) (print)
- Paper
- Markers
- Tape

## Facilitation Steps

### A. Introduction: Who are we? Who's all here? Goals for today [10 min]

### B. Gifts from Mother Earth [20 min]

1. Have participants grab a chair and make a large group circle. Using the printed Gifts from Mother Earth photos, tape down Mother Earth in the middle of the room, surrounded by the natural resources that are converted to energy.
2. Take a moment to ground participants in the space, framing the renewable and nonrenewable natural resources gifted from Mother Earth. Make note of the earth and its surrounding energy generating resources:

## Mother Earth's natural resources

The elements surrounding Mother Earth are the gifts she has generously gifted us. These are Earth's natural resources. Some of these natural resources are renewable (e.g sun, wind), while others are finite and may take millions of years to renew themselves (e.g oil, coal, uranium– AKA Fossil Fuels). Whether they are renewable or nonrenewable, we must still remember to treat them as gifts from nature. It is important to remind and ground ourselves in the fact that nobody owns these resources, but rather, that they are resources gifted to us to sustain our living needs. It is important to be respectful and mindful of our needs and how we use these resources.

We transform the nonrenewable gifts to meet our direct energy related needs, which ultimately results in pollution and other socio-political issues. It is important to believe in the need to shift us from the extractive, U.S. fossil fuel economy and towards a decentralized renewable energy economy that is equitable, sustainable, and resilient.

3. Prepare to begin laying down the printed Transformation Sites alongside the natural resources. Use leading questions to collaboratively place each site:
  - a. What are the sites where natural resources are transformed to energy?  
Lay out the printed photo of each transformation site as participants share; briefly discuss the impacts each site causes to our environment before moving on to the next:
    - a. Refineries
      - i. Refineries consume large amounts of energy and water, produce large quantities of wastewater, release hazardous gasses into the atmosphere, and generate solid waste that is difficult to properly dispose of.
    - b. Oil and Gas Pipelines
      - i. Leaks, emissions, and other damage from pipelines can harm wildlife, poison the ground, and pollute local water supplies.
    - c. Power Plants
      - i. Emit mercury and millions of tons of carbon dioxide - the most significant greenhouse gas and contributor to global climate change.
    - d. Distribution and Transmission Lines
      - i. When power lines and their access roads are placed in undeveloped areas, they can disturb forests, wetlands, and other natural areas.

### C. Community visioning [20 min]

1. While still gathered in a large group circle, encourage participants to engage one another in dreaming up what a safe, sustainable, and just neighborhood looks like to them. Facilitate the conversation using guiding questions:
  - a. What makes an energy source renewable?
  - b. Why is renewable energy considered better for the environment [and ultimately us]?
  - c. Where in your neighborhood could you see more renewable energy sites (e.g in your

yard, at your school, at your community center)?

## Community voice = Energy Democracy

This conversation is the first step in Energy Democracy! When we collectively envision *where* renewable energy sources can occupy space in our communities, we are taking the first step in taking control of energy resources and decision-making from the corporate energy establishment and instead, empowering our very own communities.

### D. The principles of Energy Democracy [25 min]

1. Pass out the [Principles of Energy Democracy](#) chart to each participant. Instruct them to briefly review each principle.
2. Set up ten stations for the Principles of Energy Democracy roundtables. At each station, tape up one of the ten Principles of Energy Democracy.
3. Assign participants to each station in pairs or small groups, noting the principle associated with each station as they are assigned.
4. While at their stations, instruct participants to discuss among one another, sharing their individual thoughts and translations for the principle. Encourage one of the members from each station to take notes, noting similarities and differences in each team member's understanding of the principle. Once each team member has shared, have them work together to produce a collective understanding of their principle (e.g what it means to them in practice, what it means to their communities, their cultures, etc.). Allow ~15 for discussion and collective defining.
5. Give participants a couple of minutes to summarize their definitions for the larger group. Going station by station, have participants share their principle and collective understanding with the large group. Encourage the large group to solicit their comments: if they agree, how they interpret the principle, etc.

### E. Energy Democracy, to us [15 min]

1. Gather participants back to the original large group circle. Pulling from the previous activity and naming the groups various definitions for each principle, work together to collectively define what Energy Democracy means to them and their communities.
2. As participants share, write phrases and keywords on the board. Once the group reaches a consensus, write the definition on the board.

### F. Reflections & Closing [10 min]

1. Wrap-up; what did participants learn? What will they be sharing with community members? What remains unanswered?
2. Thank participants for their time and participation; we hope that they learned something new and are energized to continue conversations like today's.