

OUR COMMON LIVING FUTURE

2022-2024
STRATEGIC PLAN



INTERNATIONAL
LIVING FUTURE
INSTITUTESM

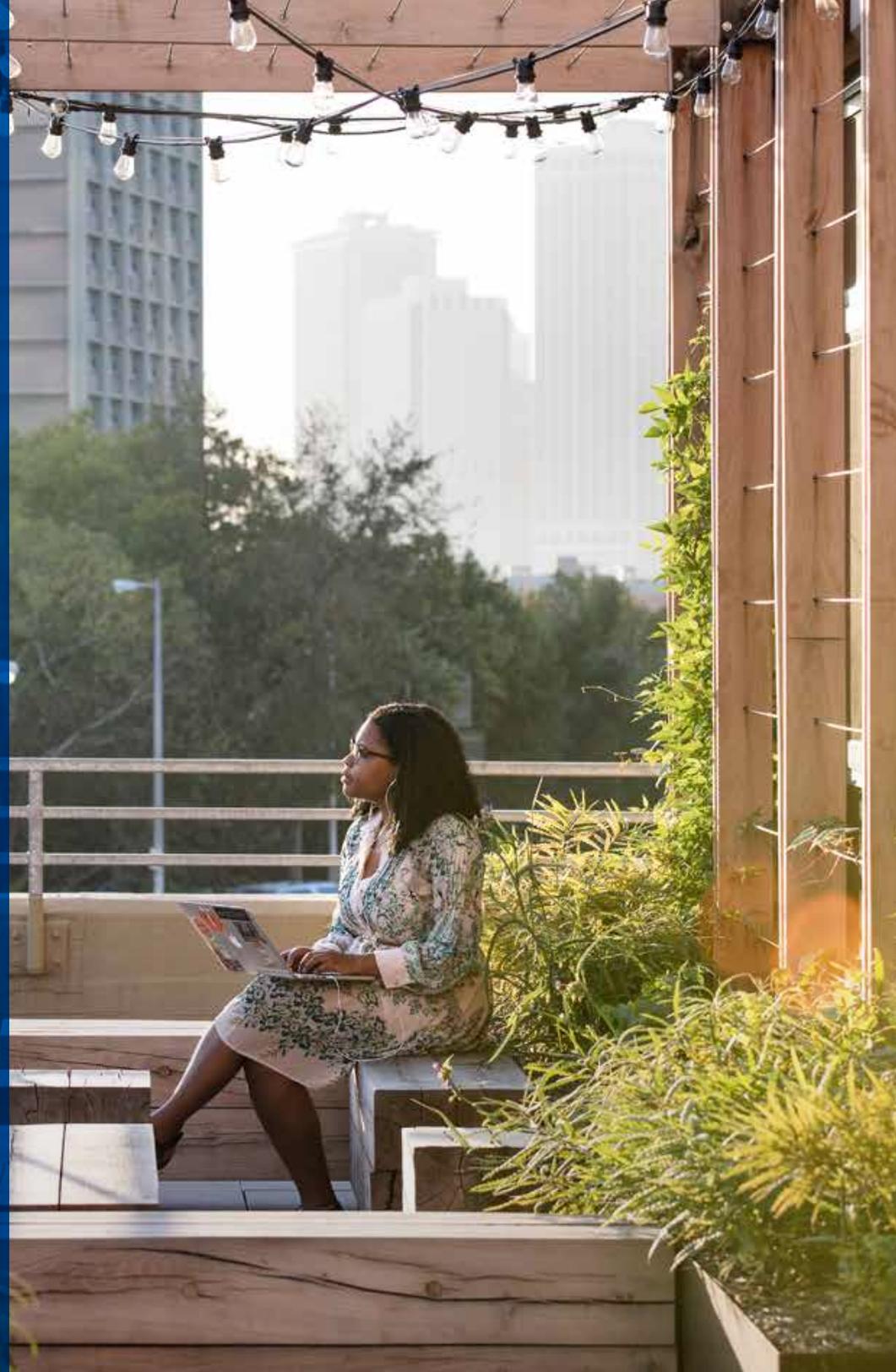


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The Institute acknowledges our headquarters office occupies and benefits from the unceded, ancestral lands of the Coast Salish people and all tribes and bands within the Duwamish, Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations. These communities stewarded this land for generations before it was taken by European colonizers whose ancestors continue to occupy it today.

The staff of ILFI wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the unceded land on which we work and recognise their continuing connection to land, water, culture and community. We also wish to acknowledge indigenous peoples' ongoing resistance to the legacies of settler colonialism.

Cover image: **ETSY HEADQUARTERS, PETAL CERTIFIED - BROOKLYN, NY**
Image by Emily Andrews

This page: **6 PANCRAS SQUARE, ZERO CARBON CERTIFIED - LONDON, UK**
Image courtesy of Tim Soar + Google

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The concept of the ‘future’ can be a deceptively simple idea. It lives in the realm of the imagination.

It can feel like the Jetsons TV show—a static vision of a better world, a few decades from now, where our problems have been fixed and our surroundings are entirely new and different. But over these past two years of the global pandemic, many of us have come to understand that to imagine possible futures is to confront uncertainty. Three years ago, none of us would have imagined that the real estate industry would be upended by a public health crisis of epic proportions. But the future is not up to us to decide and manifest; the world is going to evolve and change, and we must do our best to evolve and change with it. Our collective visions of the future change radically as our present context changes. The “Overton Window” of political possibility widens and narrows. The work of the International Living Future Institute is therefore a dynamic and ongoing project: to listen and consider as the world changes, and to envision, create and push for pathways towards the most ecologically restorative, socially just and culturally rich future we can achieve.

Perhaps the most acute lesson of the pandemic is the enormous difference between individual resilience and collective resilience.

The past two years have shown that although there are pathways to survive the worst catastrophic events available to some, to survive as an individual can be meager, lonely, and hollow. Surviving as a community is the only path forward to a flourishing future where our cultures, our institutions, our cities, and our communities can continue to exist. And so you will see in the pages of this new Strategic Plan a call to action for our community to move beyond executing individual projects, to coalesce and mobilize for public policy reform and a rapid shift in the industry culture.

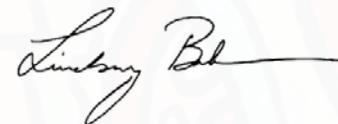
At the moment that I write this letter, momentum for a healthy, sustainable and just building industry is growing rapidly.

The rise in global awareness of climate change has contributed to a surge of corporate commitments and valuation around ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) issues, and this is shifting our industry from every angle. The pandemic has raised awareness about the importance of adequate shelter, air quality and the general stewardship of our built infrastructure. But at the same time, we have seen little meaningful progress in climate change legislation in the US. And the IPCC just released its 2022 Climate Change Mitigation report, to which the UN Secretary General, Antonio Gutierrez conveyed that “Some government and business leaders are saying one thing – but doing another. Simply put, they are lying. And the results will be catastrophic.” So while we have every reason to feel excited about our momentum, we must also stay vigilant and persistent in pushing for the futures we believe in. The scenario of a ‘Living Future’ (which is discussed in our Theory of Change section here) is still a much less likely scenario than the massively catastrophic scenarios we face today.

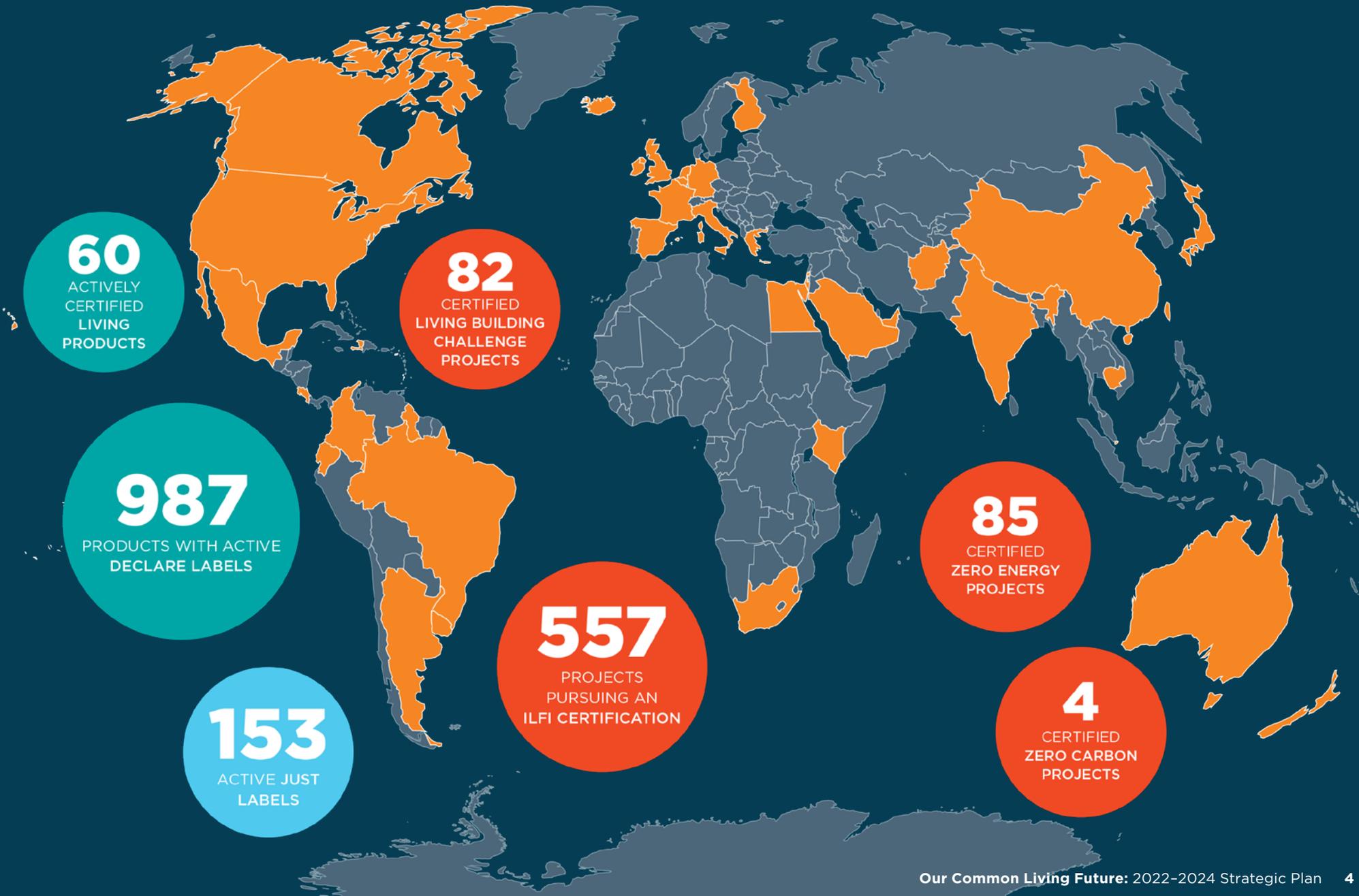
And so, it is fundamentally necessary to have a large and passionate community of advocates showing up to push for this Living Future. We need strength in numbers.

That strength will come from collective action with other organizations fighting for that same future, and from you, our ILFI community, showing up to grow this movement. I look forward to fighting for this future with you, and I hope you will join us.

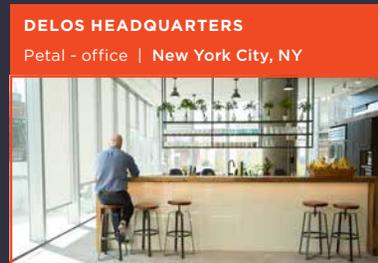
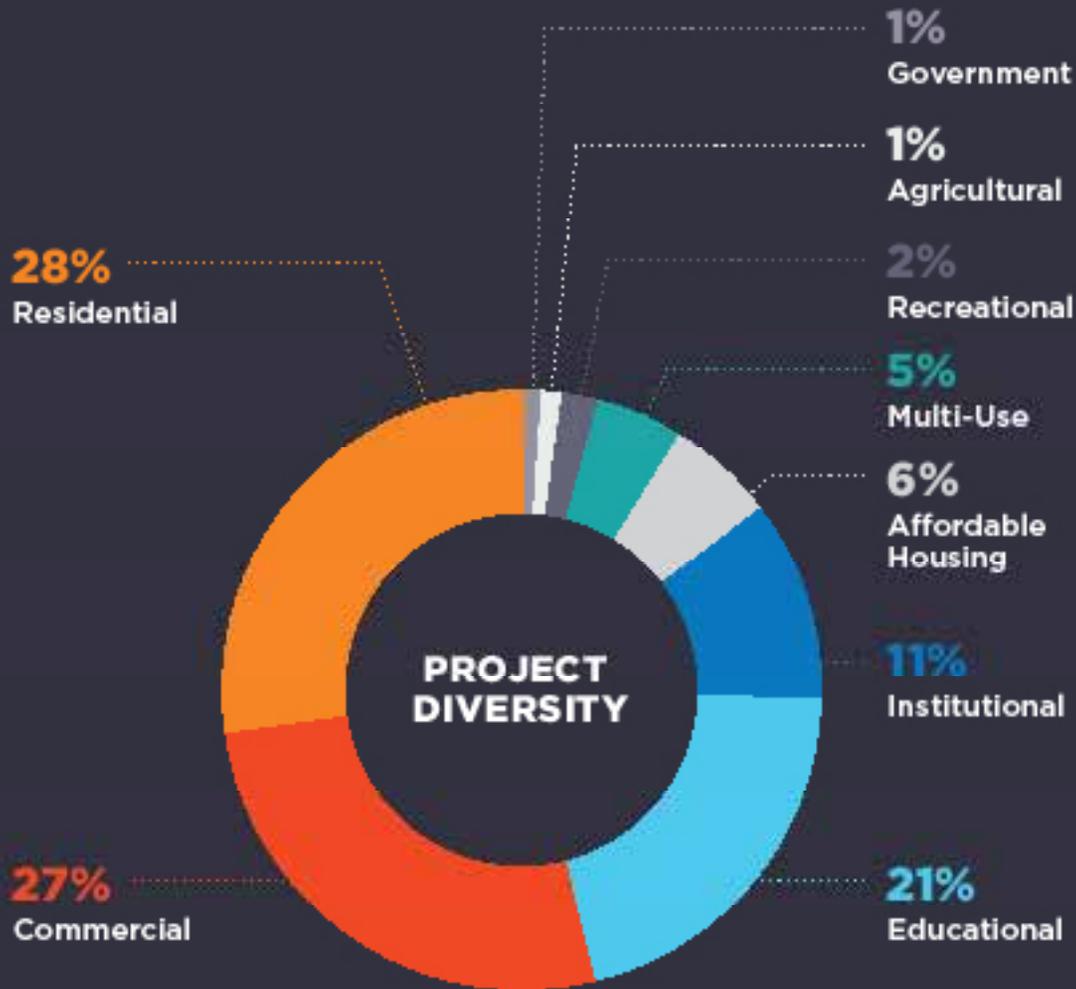
LINDSAY BAKER
CEO



Current Projects



Project Diversity



Photos (from top to bottom, left to right) Courtesy of: Casa SN, Paul Bardagjy, Imagen Subliminal, Te Kura Whare Project Team, University of Wollongong, Calgary Zoo, Dave Chance, Silver Oak Napa Valley Winery, Jeff Durkin Breadtruck Films.

01

A Living Future for All: Our Theory of Change

This section was written in 2022 to be a centering and defining long-term document for the organization beyond the next three years, and draws from previous Institute guiding documents.

Our beautiful planet is capable of supporting vast diverse ecosystems, allowing human communities to thrive, and we are capable as a species of living in balance with ecosystems and in balance with each other. At the International Living Future Institute, we envision a future where our planet and humanity are thriving, and we work towards that future every day.

**We refer to this as the ‘Living Future’:
our vision is a society that is socially just,
culturally rich, and ecologically restorative.**

A critical element of the Living Future is the built environment, and that is where we focus our present work: the shelter we create for humanity, the cities and landscapes that allow us to thrive.

Today, the built environment is one of the main contributors to our existential threats. Buildings are responsible for 40% of global carbon emissions due to the energy required to construct and operate them (in fact they are responsible for much more carbon emissions when we account for the manufacturing of building materials). Buildings are also a major contributor to economic health- homes are a major factor in household economic stability all over the world, and in maintaining household and community resilience in times of crisis. And they don't just impact our economic health, they also have a massive impact on our bodily health as well. The labor of building and maintaining our built world represents an enormous workforce. And throughout the life of a building, many people engage with it, from architects and engineers to end users and neighbors in the community. We must learn how to build and maintain buildings that are healthy and resilient, that create and sustain great jobs, that are ecologically regenerative, and are the infrastructure and inspiration for our future.

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01. A Living Future for All: Our Theory of Change

At ILFI, we believe that the building industry can transform far faster and more radically than many assume. By aiming for the truly ‘good’ building, rather than aiming for incremental improvements, we can make progress much faster and in more transformational ways.

We are here to envision a Living Future and show that it works better in practice and policy.

We created the Living Building Challenge as a framework to help make the path to truly regenerative buildings clear and measurable, and to help the building industry develop a collective vision for the end goals of industry transformation. The Challenge is not just a certification system for buildings: it is first and foremost a creative act of imagining the future: a statement of philosophy. Secondly, it is an advocacy tool to help push public and private policy. And third, it is a certification system that allows us to use specific buildings as beacons for change, data points for skeptics, inspirational stories for young people, and test beds for innovation. And critically, Living Buildings and Products change our conceptions of what is possible and ideal: they change the ‘standard of care’. We have a community of certified buildings around the world today, doing this work. Our Theory of Change is NOT about changing the industry one certified Living Building or Product at a time- we do not measure our ultimate progress by considering how many buildings or products have gone through our certification program. These projects have changed regulations, opened minds, and shifted expectations about what is possible. The same goes for our Living Product Challenge program. Other certification programs have theories of change that emphasize the infrastructural nature of their programs, similar to codes, and we see those as complementary efforts. We seek to facilitate the creation of Living Buildings and Products and facilitate the world changing initiatives that they inspire and enable.

HOW WE MEASURE INDUSTRY PROGRESS

How will we know that we are succeeding in our goals? Measuring the environmental, health and social impacts of industries is a well-known challenge: it is a diligent practice of quantifying, defining and arbitrating measures and metrics that often have not existed before. The field of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) measurement is rapidly evolving; sometimes the building industry leads other industries in our measures, sometimes we follow. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 are a helpful framework in this realm: we ultimately look to these global goals as the best indicators of the ultimate impact of our work (see [here](#) for a discussion of the connections between the SDGs and the Living Building Challenge). Using this framework, the building industry must make a meaningful contribution to the following SDG metrics:

- **Climate Resilience:** All people live in households with access to basic services with resilience to climate-related extreme events [*SDG 1: No Poverty*]
- **Urban Agriculture:** Increasing space in urban environments for agriculture and healthy food access, while keeping prime farmland for agriculture [*SDG 2: Zero Hunger*]
- **Healthy Buildings:** Reduction of negative health effects and deaths from buildings-related causes (chemical contamination, air pollution, poor ventilation, etc) and increasing the positive health effects of buildings including biophilic design [*SDG 3: Health & Well-Being*]
- **Clean & Accessible Water:** Access to clean water and sanitation, reduce water waste and contamination, avoid destruction of water-based ecosystems [*SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation*]
- **Clean Energy:** Reduction of energy intensity of buildings and significantly increased access to on-site clean energy [*SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy*]

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01. A Living Future for All: Our Theory of Change

- **Safe and Fair Labor:** No forced labor, dangerous working conditions and unfair compensation throughout the building industry from materials manufacturing, construction, operations and other professions [*SDG 8: Decent Work*]
- **Sustainable Economies:** All people have access to adequate, safe and affordable housing. Also, buildings are built with more local labor and materials [*SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities*]
- **Sustainable Consumption:** Massive increase in responsible chemical management and waste management [*SDG 12: Sustainable Consumption & Production*]
- **Ecosystem Health:** Fully sustainable harvesting and extraction and production practices for building materials that preserve and support global ecosystems [*SDG 15: Life on Land*]

Together, these goals represent the concept we describe as ‘Regenerative’: when we refer to Regenerative Buildings, we mean buildings that regenerate the health and resilience of ecosystems, economies, cultures and people. We use that term rather than ‘Sustainable Buildings’ for two reasons: first, because we are aiming for positive impact, not just a lack of negative impact. Second, because the term ‘sustainable’ is more typically understood to refer to just the environmental impacts of an industry, not the economic and social ones. As an organization, the Institute pushes for Regenerative Buildings through holistic multi-attribute work that focuses on ‘trim tab’¹ tactics for industry change:

- Building and growing our community of practitioners and advocates through educational offerings (including online and in-person education offerings and our book publishing work), events and convening, and a membership community.
- Facilitating transparency and accountability through labeling programs for products (our Declare label) and firms (our Just label).
- The Living Building Challenge and related certifications (our Core, Zero Energy and Zero Carbon building certifications) and the Living Product Challenge, described above.
- Thought leadership, policy development, and research to provide feedback loops, build knowledge and increase accessibility of regenerative practices.

¹ Often cited by the futurist R. Buckminster Fuller as a metaphor of leadership and empowerment, a trim tab is, in essence, a small lever acting upon a large lever to create change out of proportion to its size.

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01. A Living Future for All: Our Theory of Change

HOW WE MEASURE OUR IMPACT: LIVING BUILDINGS FOR ALL

We are beginning in 2022 to use specific metrics to evaluate our impact over time. The primary ones are:

- Number of jurisdictions and companies using our resources and standards to set higher policy goals for building performance in design, construction and operations. We will also track the number of buildings and square feet this corresponds to, to the best of our ability.
- Number of people impacted by our work, especially people who have been disproportionately harmed by injustice and destruction historically. This is hard to measure and thus will require proxy measures, but it is critical to ensure that we focus our impacts beyond the wealthy few.
- Number of buildings, products, firms and individuals engaged in our programs and reachable through our marketing channels.

These metrics are not perfect nor inclusive of all the change we want to see in the world. But simultaneously, we believe in holding ourselves accountable for progress and staying focused. We look forward to iterating and improving our metrics and the ways we track them as we grow.

OUR WORK EVOLVES OVER TIME

This work is constantly evolving due to evolving technologies and innovations and the changing nature of our society. While we maintain our foundational vision and role in the movement, we evolve and change our tactics and strategy continuously. Through strategic planning, we intentionally adjust our work in three ways over time:

- **Maintaining our Foundation:** We refine the vision and definition of regenerative buildings and products as practice grows and gains complexity.
- **Widening our Circle:** We adjust and expand our target audiences to support equitable and rapid transformation.
- **Catalyzing Exponential Impact:** We create and invest in different timely levers for exponential change.

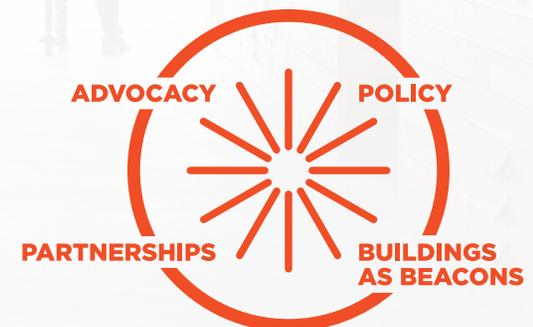
STRENGTHEN OUR FOUNDATION



WIDEN OUR CIRCLE



CATALYZE EXPONENTIAL IMPACT



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01. Our Impacts

When humanity is contributing to the thriving of life on our planet, when we are able to shelter society in a wholly resilient, healthy and regenerative way, and when we do this within the structure of a just society, perhaps our work will be done. But there is always a future to consider and envision, and we are committed to facilitating intentional transformation towards a Living Future for all, as long as that work is needed.



02

Our Evolving Focus & Strategies

At ILFI, we believe that the world is always changing, that the building industry is always changing, and that as a result, our work must always change, grow and emerge to address the needs of the world.² In these times of deep societal change, we are shifting **how we do our work** to ensure that we are growing stronger where we need to, and that we are putting resources where they are most needed and useful. These three areas of emphasis were informed by an external stakeholder process along with internal strategy work in the fall of 2021.

² This approach was informed by our consultant, Maggie Chumbley, the book [Emergent Strategy](#) by adrienne maree brown, the [Liberating Structures](#) framework, and builds on the strategies of our Founder, Jason F. McLennan.

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02. Our Evolving Focus & Strategies

2.1 EVOLVING OUR ECOSYSTEM OF STRATEGIES

In a thriving and mature ecosystem, different organisms serve different functions to allow the whole to thrive and grow. At this point in the Institute's evolution, we are a small but pivotal ecosystem with a few critical 'organisms'- in this case, tactics to transform the market. We have successfully created a set of tactics: our **'Challenges'** that set an aspirational bar for regenerative buildings and products, our **certification and labeling** programs, our **educational** and **event** offerings, our **book publishing** program and our **membership** community. In order to grow into a mature and deeply impactful ecosystem, we need to introduce and encourage new tactics and ensure that we are balancing the energy we put into each so that all are thriving and growing to their full potential.

OUR ECOSYSTEM AS TOLD THROUGH MANGROVE FORESTS



WHERE WE'VE BEEN



WHERE WE ARE



WHERE WE'RE HEADING

cont. >>

02. Our Evolving Focus & Strategies

Our new 'Lifecycle of Impact' describes the various tactics we must engage in to transform the industry. Built in part as a 'ladder of engagement' model, we are intentionally investing in each of these areas to ensure that we broaden and deepen our impact and community. This set of tactics was built through learning about and reflecting on other organizations and movements that seek to change a system (such as civil rights movements).³ We believe that this complex industry cannot be transformed through one silver bullet tactic, but rather with an ecosystem of tactics working in concert with each other. These tactics are not ours exclusively; we are also considering where the Institute must collaborate with other organizations to develop this strong ecosystem and movement, and that is discussed in section 5 in more detail.

Historically, the Institute has been a leader in **envisioning**, **celebrating** and **convening**, through our Challenges, certifications and our well-loved conference, Living Future. In our next chapter, we will be continuing these tactics while growing our community through increased attention to **recruiting, education, policy and advocacy** work. We are uniquely positioned as a progressive organization with a dedicated membership community to organize and mobilize a thriving community of advocates to help pass public policy, so we see that as a critical tactic for us to engage in. We will build these programs alongside our certification tools and programs, which are critical infrastructure for our mission and the industry, important case studies for policy, and thriving programs that have a huge impact on our industry. Our aim for ourselves by 2024 is to be an organization with diverse programs across this Lifecycle of Impact, feeding off of each other, engaging a broader, larger and more diverse audience.

³ This work was done through the heavy influence of the non-profit [Momentum Community](#) and its webinars, as well as the book *This is an Uprising* by Mark and Paul Engler.

OUR LIFECYCLE OF IMPACT



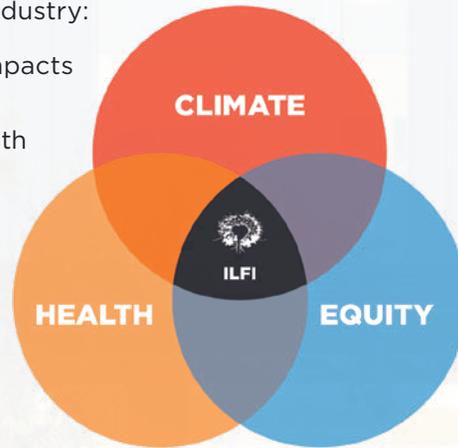
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02. Our Evolving Focus & Strategies

2.2 EVOLVING OUR IMPACT AREA EMPHASIS

At the Institute, we have always considered three intersecting impact areas of the building industry:

- 1. CLIMATE:** Environmental impacts including climate change, ecosystem and species health
- 2. HEALTH:** Health impacts including impacts of materials as well as design and operations
- 3. JUSTICE:** Social impacts including human rights, racial and gender equity



It can be a challenge to maintain a balance of these priorities. We are often encouraged to place one impact above others in importance (often for us, this is climate and carbon). We are confident that these impact areas are deeply intersectional and need to be addressed holistically and equally. However, we have historically focused more on the climate and health impact areas, and will work in the next three years to increase our knowledge and resources in the social impact realm.

Without addressing social justice, we cannot effectively address climate and health justice.

As a part of that balancing work, we are seeking to work more deeply with organizations and people who are committed to social justice issues in the building industry. We will also focus more of our efforts to promote regenerative and resilient buildings in sectors that have a higher impact on the lives of underserved communities and communities of color. This effort is described in more detail in the Critical Buildings Program section below.

2.3 EVOLVING OUR ROLES AND PLACE IN A MOVEMENT

Single organizations alone do not shift society- movements of coordinated organizations and individuals are necessary to do that work at the scale and detail required. At the same time, movements are difficult to organize, organizations can compete and disagree, and it can be easier to operate autonomously than in concert with others.

In our new era, we will be devoting more resources to collaboration and movement-building efforts. We consider ourselves to be a part of a movement that fights for climate, health and justice in the built environment, and we refer to this movement as the **regenerative buildings movement**. We are committed to building and diversifying this movement. This means that we are inviting more collaboration on our programs and work, which we are doing through the creation of new Technical Advisory Groups and other similar engagement opportunities. We are also seeking to align more with other organizations with similar goals for transforming the built environment.

A critical part of alignment and collaboration is defining your role in relation to others. This new Strategic Plan is an effort to increase internal and external clarity around the goals and tactics we are committed to. Internally, we have also begun the well-established internal ritual of quarterly and annual Objectives and Key Results to measure our progress, promote collaboration and foster transparency and accountability across the organization. These practices build humility, a sense of a collective whole, and respect for what each individual brings to the table. At every scale of the work, we must create collaborative communities that provide a new model of how we work together to solve the massive challenges we face as a society. In our next three years, we will be evolving more mechanisms to build a stronger movement through collaboration.

03

Our Focused Plan For Growth

We are at a critical inflection point as an organization and as an industry. How we carefully spend our time in the coming years will have profound effects, and so we have given deep consideration of our priorities.

As described in our Theory of Change, we will always grow in three ways:

- **Maintaining our Foundation**
- **Widening our Circle**
- **Catalyzing Exponential Impact**

The following section describes our plan for focused growth in 2022-2024, split into these three areas. This section is a reflection of our prioritization work, which is ongoing and constantly evolving. There are many other areas of opportunity for us to grow, but these are the areas we have determined to be most impactful, the most achievable, and the best fit for us as an organization.

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03. Our Focused Plan For Growth

3.1 MAINTAINING OUR FOUNDATION: THE ONGOING WORK OF DEFINING A VISION AND PATH FOR OUR INDUSTRY

As momentum for regenerative buildings increases, the definition of our goals and metrics are gaining complexity, changing as innovations emerge, and generally requiring constant vigilance to ensure that we are measuring the important things, setting the right targets, and supporting the best practices available in the industry today.

We must continue refining and revising the definition of sustainability and regeneration in the building industry and providing clear, measurable and genuine targets for organizations and jurisdictions to follow.

In particular, this definition work is needed in **four key technical areas** that have been rapidly evolving in the past two years: Zero Carbon Buildings, Regenerative Product Procurement, Social Justice and Diversity in the Building Industry, and Biophilic Design.

3.1.1 Accelerate Zero Carbon Buildings

In the face of the constantly evolving market for carbon offsets, new technologies to help buildings attain goals of being 'zero carbon' and a host of new organizations and players interested in this work, the Institute must continue our leadership in maintaining an eye on fair carbon accounting and honest, impactful policies for our Zero Carbon standard and certification. ILFI is an established leader in the field of zero carbon buildings, with over 250 buildings registered and over 80 buildings certified through our Zero Energy and Zero Carbon programs, as well as through our convening and education work including the Net Positive and Zero Carbon Conferences.

We intend to engage in this work in a few different ways in the coming years. First, we are launching a Technical Advisory Group in 2022 devoted to Energy and Carbon issues in our standards. Second, we are intending to align our Zero Energy and Zero Carbon programs with the requirements of the Living Building Challenge to provide clarity of goals and tactics towards regenerative buildings. Third, we are planning a reassessment of current carbon markets and offset strategies being employed in the building industry to determine potential changes needed to our standards and definitions of Zero Energy and Zero Carbon. Last, we are innovating alongside leading organizations like Google, Microsoft, Salesforce and others to align and implement our Zero Carbon Certification across their global portfolios, impacting over 20 million square feet and counting.

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03. Our Focused Plan For Growth

3.1.2 Accelerate Regenerative Product Procurement

Over the past 20 years, robust transparency programs and markets have been developed to encourage building materials to be made in ways that are safe, healthy, ecologically sound and that sustain safe, good jobs. ILFI was a major instigator of this movement and we continue to lead through our Red List, Living Product Challenge and Declare label program. But despite more products on the market and growing awareness around materials, we are a long way from the finish line.

The Institute will grow our leadership stance in this realm in a few ways. We are convening expert groups to update our Red List and the requirements around it in our certification and labeling systems, especially with an eye towards coordination with similarly motivated certifications and labels. We are planning updates to include more social impact areas in evaluating products. And we will help educate and convene industry stakeholders to set ambitious targets and frameworks for industry transformation, to align on a collective vision, and to disseminate research in this complex field. Finally, we will advocate for policy change in the building materials arena, especially around local US policies surrounding embodied carbon in building materials and healthy building materials, which are active areas of policy work in the US today.

3.1.3 Accelerate a Diverse and Socially Just Building Industry

Since we launched the Just program in 2014, over 250 firms have gotten a Just label and engaged with us around issues of social justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the workplace, unionization and other critical justice issues for the building industry. In the coming three years, we intend to transform this community of firms into a growing community of practice to push for DEI progress in the building industry. We intend to do this along with partner organizations that are contributing to this mission.

First, we are launching a Technical Advisory Group in 2022 devoted to evolving the Just label and supporting organizational equity

issues throughout our standards. We will envision improvements to the Just label with partner organizations that focus on DEI in the workplace, as well as organizations working on social justice issues in the built environment. Second, we will convene Just-labeled businesses and others to form a new community of practice and improvement around DEI issues in the building industry. In that group, we will form peer education opportunities, and produce research around furthering the work in our industry. And finally, we will advocate for industry-wide changes to practice to encourage diversity, equity and inclusion progress.

3.1.4 Accelerate Access to the Benefits of Biophilic Spaces

Design for human-nature reconciliation and its associated health and wellness benefits have been a central tenet of the Living Building Challenge since its inception. In 2017, ILFI accelerated its efforts towards this goal with the formation of a Biophilic Design Initiative, including an Advisory Group composed of industry experts. ILFI has since shaped a community of practice through a suite of successful awareness building activities, including a newsletter with over 6000 subscribers, education and events, resources, and an annual design award, with global interest in biophilic design increasing in parallel.

In order to increase access to the benefits of biophilic design in the next three years, we will improve the technical rigor of the Living Building requirements for biophilic design by forming a Technical Advisory Group. This group will advise both the requirements as well as guidance for project teams to advance biophilic design through both design and construction. Additionally, we will further scale and equip the community of practitioners doing biophilic design. Notably, this includes launching and maintaining two key educational resources, a freely accessible Biophilic Design Toolkit as well as a first of its kind Foundations of Biophilic Design Certificate. Finally, the Stephen R. Kellert Biophilic Design Award will continue to showcase examples and celebrate achievements in biophilic design.

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03. Our Focused Plan For Growth

3.2 WIDENING OUR CIRCLE

In our years as an organization, we have built a community of practitioners and advocates for truly regenerative built environments. And while that community has been incredibly impactful, it is ultimately our mission to facilitate a Living Future for all- for all people, all ecosystems and all buildings on our planet. In order to advance that mission, we must widen our circle through intentional growth strategies. We see this as a practice of listening, partnering with and ultimately supporting new audiences to tailor our tactics and tools to fit them.

Historically, our audience has been focused in a few areas:

- Geographically in the Pacific Northwest where we were formed.
- Primarily architects with engineers and those focused on design and construction of new buildings.
- Many Living Buildings are privately owned by people with strong values-driven leadership (i.e. environmental learning centers, owner-occupied workplaces and single family homes).

We have expanded our programs over time to better support specific audiences, including through our relationships with our international affiliates, Living Future Europe and Living Future Institute Australia, through our Affordable Housing Program, and more.

Notably, widening our circle requires intention and resources, and so we are choosing our new audiences and building types carefully. For the next three years, we will focus on the North American real estate and building industry. We will continue to embrace the members of our community and projects around the world, as well as our affiliate organizations, but we will be intentionally growing in these areas:

- To include building owners and developers, especially those focused on existing buildings.
- To grow our community by engaging with higher education institutions to train and empower the next generation of regenerative practitioners.
- To better support building types that are community-focused, publicly operated, and/or supporting low-income and underserved communities, through our new Critical Buildings Program (see 3.2.3).

3.2.1 Expanding Partnerships with Building Owners

ILFI has had limited engagement from building owners, occupiers, operators or investors to date, and yet these stakeholders represent a key audience for our organizational and movement growth, and are the ultimate investors in ILFI's certifications.

Behind every certified Living Building is an owner or investor who has chosen to align their investment with ILFI's philosophies.

From universities, to corporate real estate teams, to REITs, a primary strategy for us to increase engagement with them will be through new tools, approaches, and dedicated support for their work.

In 2019, we began a focused effort to partner directly with building owners via **volume and portfolio certification**, and we have begun a similar effort to explore **core and shell certification**. We will continue to invest in these efforts through a new dedicated **Special Projects team**, which will be positioned to work directly with organizations to implement and operationalize ILFI's philosophies and certifications in new ways, helping us reach a new scale of impact, and simultaneously widening our circle to include more building owners in our community.

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03. Our Focused Plan For Growth

3.2.2 Empowering and Training the Next Generation

ILFI's educational programs, events, and networks have provided thousands of AEDC professionals and hundreds of students around the world with continuing education, inspiration, and connection. Over the next three years, ILFI will carefully craft education, event, and networking opportunities intentionally focused on higher education students and institutions that reflect underrepresented groups in the AEDC professions. These opportunities will include making Living Future membership, LFA, Ecotone books and other ILFI resources more affordable and accessible to students, and forming and supporting the beginnings of a network of student-led ILFI Chapters at colleges and universities that provide connection, mentorship, leadership, training, and advocacy support to the next generation of our regenerative design community.

Achieving truly regenerative design requires the inclusion of diverse perspectives that are empowered and equipped to meet and overcome professional challenges in an evolving industry and rapidly changing world. Close collaboration with higher education institutions, companies, and industry organizations with a shared or similar goal to empower and train the next generation will help ILFI to understand where to lead, where to follow, and where to support existing and new efforts.

3.2.3 The Critical Buildings Program

Over the past 10 years, ILFI has built a successful program model in our Affordable Housing Program. We have worked with 47 affordable housing developers to help provide more than 8,000 residents with 2,484 living spaces that are healthy, affordable, resilient and regenerative. But while housing is a critical piece of the fabric of a community, it is not the only one.

Inspired by the success of this program and its intersectional approach to issues of social justice, resilience, health and environmental impact, the Institute will be creating the **Critical Buildings Program**. This program will support owners, operators,

developers and design teams in the areas of **housing, public schools (including higher education), community centers, places of worship, and other buildings that support the critical functions of communities**. These facilities, which are often publicly funded and open to all, have disproportionate impacts (economically, socially, health-related and otherwise) on all of our lives, but especially marginalized communities, communities of color and communities that are bearing the heaviest burden of environmental degradation in our world today. In particular, they are potential centers for community resilience during crisis events, thus making them a critical building type to support regenerative building practices. Our aim is to build accessible pathways to regenerative buildings for these sectors, using the successful program model we have built for Affordable Housing. This will include pilot projects, peer exchange and community building, education and events, resources and information sharing, policy and advocacy, and subsidized fees.

3.3 CATALYZING EXPONENTIAL IMPACT

At every phase of our growth, the Institute will have opportunities to initiate or grow unique projects and programs that are particularly timely levers for exponential change. In some years, policy and regulatory change might be more feasible than other years, or some years may bring unique innovations or potential partners to the table. The following section describes the specific levers for exponential growth that we will pursue in our next era. We see an enormous opportunity and need for policy and advocacy growth in the next few years as more local and state governments make Climate Action Plans, as well as a surge of commitment to local community action (which is very synergistic with local advocacy work). Therefore, we will focus in the next three years on building new programs to grow policy knowledge and tools towards regenerative buildings, to build advocacy networks around our key issues, and to build ways to strengthen networks in local communities.

cont. >>

03. Our Focused Plan For Growth

3.3.1 Engaging in Policy Change

As described above, in order to achieve a Living Future for all, we must change the laws that impact how buildings are built and how they are maintained and operated. In addition to building a powerful community of voices to get policies passed, the Institute will also be leaning in to imagine and create model policy language that can be used by jurisdictions to require and promote progress towards regenerative buildings. Building on our past work with our Policy Toolkit, our groundbreaking water policy work in 2006-2012, and the Seattle Living Building Pilot Program, we will look to create new policy resources to support regenerative buildings for existing buildings (through Building Performance Standards and similar policy realms) and new buildings (through engaging with stretch codes, model code language and other policy levers for new buildings). Again, we look forward to doing this work in partnership with other organizations.

3.3.2 Growing a New Powerful Community of Advocates

In order to achieve a Living Future for all, we must change the laws that impact how buildings are built and how they are maintained and operated. We need a strong community of advocates who are ready and willing to show up to the public policy process and voice support for stronger policies around buildings, whether through codes, building performance standards, or other policy mechanisms. In the next few years, we will be building up a network of people who are ready and willing to do advocacy work. We will be building off of our existing membership program to support this new function, but will also be partnering with organizations with similar goals to truly mobilize and equip this community with the tools and resources to successfully run advocacy campaigns.

3.3.3 Living Buildings as Beacons for Local Change

Meaningful change often must happen at the local community level. And yet as an international organization, we work to be relevant and useful to communities around the world. We are often approached to engage in specific local community struggles, and so for the next three years, we will manage that tension by building a replicable local toolkit for change, which we are calling the Living Building Beacon Project. Our logo, the dandelion, is a metaphor for how a single organism can spread an idea far and wide, seeding growth exponentially, and this program will be designed to embody that spirit. That toolkit will include Advocacy and Policy tools, a new approach to our Living Future Network model, and other tools and resources. We intend to pilot this approach in selected communities in the US for this first 'beta' round of Living Building Beacon Communities, based on where we are able to obtain funding. We intend to work with local partners to create these new programs and resources.

We believe each Living Building can become a force of exponential growth and transform a place. These buildings act as educational tools and illustrations that a different way of building is possible. They have the power to instigate change in building policies; influence the culture of building designers and manufacturers; serve as data points for skeptics; and inspire people to join the regenerative building movement. This program will help ensure that exponential impact is realized anywhere a Living Building is planted.

04

Statement of Solidarity and Alignment

“The Institute is just one organization amongst a community of similarly minded organizations, and we recognize that it is not always our place to lead. In the next three years, we will seek to support other institutions and align our work to grow a spirit of collective action amongst organizations working to transform the building industry.” - LINDSAY BAKER

In the next three years, we are committed to collaborating with other leading organizations that certify, label and define aspects of the built environment to bring about improved alignment among documentation methodologies. While we will maintain our own vision and values about the future of the built environment, we believe that industry transformation will be achieved fastest if technical definitions and certification logistics are better aligned and simplified.

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04. Statement of Solidarity and Alignment

We are especially grateful for the organizations that we have collaborated with in recent years, including the NAACP, USGBC, New Buildings Institute, the Healthy Building Network, Enterprise Community Partners, Housing Partnership Network, NEWHAB, Energy Efficiency for All, NRDC, BlueGreen Alliance, Green Science Policy Institute, Health Product Declaration Collaborative, Passive House Institute US and Passive House North America, Green Building Council of Australia, the Canadian Green Building Council, and the Emirates Green Building Council. We appreciate the aligned work they are doing, and aspire to lift up their work through the work we do. We are also looking forward to building new relationships with organizations in the coming years through our work. In particular, we are excited to see a few areas of activity growing in our ecosystem, and we look forward to finding opportunities to contribute to these efforts:

- **Facilitating The Just Transition Through Building Industry Workforce Development.** Clean economy jobs present an unprecedented opportunity to create economic justice, assist fossil fuel workers in career transitions, and create good, family-sustaining long-term jobs. The building sector represents 75% of the clean economy jobs, so we are a huge part of this transformation.
- **Fighting Displacement and Barriers to Real Estate Ownership.** As a part of our vision for a more socially just future in the buildings sector, we are interested in furthering efforts to create alternative forms of real estate ownership and other economic innovations that build stability through real estate, especially for underserved communities and communities of color.
- **Supply Chain Equity and Human Rights.** As a community of manufacturers, designers, and contractors, we are just beginning efforts to track and manage the global scope of human impacts from the buildings and real estate industries. ILFI supports social equity and human rights protections through our certifications, labels and other programs.

Primarily, we intend to support these efforts through our platforms of education, convening and events. We will also support the efforts of others to expand awareness and knowledge of these issues within our community, and we will look to partner with leading organizations to inform our own work.

05

Operational Excellence

“As a voice pushing for organizational excellence in our industry (through our Just label), we must uphold the highest standards for ourselves in regards to our operational practices. We must be a leader and an example for others, ensuring that our organization is financially sound, inclusive and respectful, and embodying the wisdom and leadership that an organization in our position must be.” - LINDSAY BAKER

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05. Operational Excellence

Financial Sustainability and Diverse Funding Streams

The Institute is fortunate to have significant diverse sources of funding that we must continue to cultivate through a variety of means. Our earned revenue areas of certification and labeling, education, events, membership and our publishing arm, Ecotone, are steadily growing in revenue as the industry gains commitment towards environmental and social impact, but also operate on thin margins so that we can maintain affordability for these critically impactful programs. We are committed to meet that demand through thoughtful support and ever-improving internal infrastructure. But in addition to our earned revenue, we are committed to diversifying our revenue streams significantly in the coming years by focusing on the following areas:

- Increase charitable donations through the launch of our Visionaries Society and through seasonal giving campaigns.
- Devote significant new resources towards research, policy work and other work that can be supported by philanthropic organizations seeking to have a positive impact on society.

Employee Experience: Career Paths, Inclusion and Culture

The Institute is dedicated to making progress around organizational equity and social impact through our programs, in particular through our Just program. The past two years have presented unique stresses to the Institute in maintaining a great culture in our work community and in embodying our values to be a great place to work. We are now a hybrid (but primarily remote) team, and one that has seen a number of leadership changes in a short period of time. We are now embarking on a healing and intentional journey to be a great place to work, and to recruit and retain great people.

Specifically, we are committed to the following goals:

- Steward internal HR initiatives including a transparent and fair compensation structure with clear paths to advancement for people at all levels of the organization.
- Launch a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy in 2022.
- Invest in new rituals, programs and tools to be a thriving remote workplace and significantly improve employee wellness.
- Continue our new processes of Objectives and Key Results, 1-on-1s and transparent quarterly financial reviews to facilitate communication and a culture of clear expectations and trust.
- Maintain and improve our performance with respect to our own organizational Just label.

Sustainable Organizational Leadership

While we believe that leadership is embodied by everyone in the organization, we acknowledge the unique responsibilities of the Board and executive leadership in ensuring the financial and cultural health of the organization. As such, in the coming years, we are committed to the following goals:

- Proactively setting a succession plan for the CEO and other key leadership roles.
- Actively recruiting for and maintaining a visionary, diverse, inclusive and well-connected Board of Directors that is able to contribute to the organization's mission and vision in a variety of ways.

Gratitude

The Institute depends on a large community of passionate and committed advocates and practitioners, many of whom have played a role in the strategic discussions that informed this document.

We thank those who gave some of their time in the Fall of 2021 and Spring of 2022 to that process. Thanks also to the staff members who contributed to the report, for your intention and creativity in setting the course for our new era. Finally, thanks to our current and past Board members and our Advisory Board members for their contributions to this process.

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And thank you to all of the generous individuals who have donated in support of our mission.

“Science fiction is simply a way to practice the future together. I suspect that is what many of you are up to, practicing futures together, practicing justice together, living into new stories. It is our right and responsibility to create a new world.”

adrienne maree brown,
Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds