

CHAPTER 12: MAKING A MOVE WITH DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS

We have now followed the Harmonic Vibrancy Move processes of several individual lives, a small team and a small company. I suspect that many people have experienced or can imagine working toward positive change at those levels of scale and complexity. In contrast, the story I will share in this chapter describes a societal-level change effort, an initiative to bring about a radical shift of energy policy and behavior at the state level, in Vermont, USA. Change at this scale and complexity is something relatively few people are likely to have contemplated, much less experienced firsthand. Yet there are many such initiatives taking place around the world today in communities of all different sizes.¹⁴⁶

These may be called dialogue processes, conflict transformation, public deliberation or many other things. However, they all involve bringing together representatives of all the people who have a significant interest in an important issue—“the stakeholders”—to share their different perspectives and figure out a way to address that issue together. The facilitators of such processes may see their work in terms of building society’s capacity for collaborative problem solving; while the people who organize, support, participate in, or are just aware of these stakeholder processes tend to define them primarily in terms of the particular problems or issues they address. This was certainly true of most of the people who participated in the initiative in Vermont. From an Ecosynomics perspective, however, every problem-solving effort is at heart an effort to move out of the inner circle of scarcity, and the capacity to solve problems collaboratively is part of a larger set of characteristics of groups operating in the outer circle of harmonic vibrancy. In other words, all of these processes are essentially Harmonic Vibrancy Moves.

This is not to say that participants in the Vermont energy initiative or other stakeholder processes thought of what they were doing in Ecosynomics terms, nor that they rigorously followed the four-step process I have presented in this book. They did not. Nevertheless, a basic assumption of all stakeholder processes is that people can agree to act differently and produce different outcomes. Stakeholder processes also, more or less intentionally, engage participants in working with the five relationships and the three levels of perceived reality. We can therefore place them within the Ecosynomics framework and learn a great deal from studying and comparing them in those terms, even though they may be radically different in terms of the issues addressed and the specifics of the processes followed.

At the time I became engaged in supporting the Vermont initiative, in the fall of 2009, the work at THORLO I described in Chapters 10 and 11 was in its early stages. My thinking about the four steps of the Harmonic Vibrancy Move process was still evolving. Scott Spann and I had recently developed and used the O Process in a stakeholder initiative in Guatemala with the humanitarian organization CARE, and I was holding the question of how the O Process and other tools could contribute to a Harmonic Vibrancy Move.¹⁴⁷ Vermont was an important learning laboratory for me.

SEEING A DIFFERENT POSSIBILITY

In 2009 Anne and Arthur Berndt, co-trustees of the Maverick Lloyd Foundation, and Jennifer Berman, the foundation's executive director, asked themselves a question: "can we develop much more systemic responses to our most challenging issues in Vermont?" In Ecosynomics terms, as they pursued this question, they took the first two steps of a Harmonic Vibrancy Move. This was the origin of the Vermont energy initiative.

One of the larger philanthropies in the state, Maverick Lloyd was a leading force in a network of hundreds of not-for-profit organizations working to address social, economic, and environmental challenges. As the result of a myriad of independent initiatives undertaken by these organizations, Vermont led the country – and the world – on many fronts, especially in next-generation responses to energy efficiency and renewable energy. For example, Vermont created the first energy efficiency utility, which makes money by taking watts out of the system through increased efficiency rather than by providing more and more energy to the system like most utilities. Vermont also led the nation in the percentage of its electricity coming from renewable energy sources, in part because of its aggressive regulatory policies. Yet, while these relatively large steps had moved Vermont ahead of the pack, Anne, Arthur and Jennifer felt that much more was possible. To them it seemed that a small state like Vermont, with fewer than 700,000 inhabitants, should be able to undertake a more coordinated, collaborative effort aimed at more aggressive goals for more radical solutions. They saw a gap between the current state of renewable energy and what they believed was possible. What would it take to move the state to the next level?

Holding this question, they searched nationally for groups that had done the kind of large-scale change effort they envisioned for Vermont. The search led to RE-AMP, an initiative that started in 2005 with a multi-stakeholder process, designed and led by Scott Spann, my colleague in work with CARE Guatemala. RE-AMP had produced a regional network involving more than 100 non-profit organizations and foundations across eight states in the upper Midwest. This network was pursuing a variety of projects in the areas of clean energy, coal, energy efficiency, global warming solutions, and transportation, with the ambitious goal of reducing regional global warming pollution by 80 percent by 2050. In short, RE-AMP was the kind of process Maverick Lloyd wanted to see in Vermont.

Through this connection, in the fall of 2009, the foundation found me and my colleagues, Mary Day Mordecai and Ned Hulbert, at Growing Edge Partners.¹⁴⁸ Our task was to support Maverick Lloyd in bringing the diverse, competitive, and sometimes fractious group of stakeholder in Vermont's energy system on board with the vision of stepping up to a new level of collaboration in order to achieve much more dramatic results.¹⁴⁹ One of my chief lessons from the Guatemala initiative, reinforced by my ongoing experience at THORLO, was the necessity of having a strong core group to host others in making this kind of shift within a large stakeholder system. I had learned this lesson in Guatemala by experiencing the problems associated with not having such a group in place. Fortunately, Mary Day and Ned brought lots of experience in the formation of a hosting leadership group that could sustain itself over many years.

HOSTING THE PROCESS

As we began working with Maverick Lloyd, we quickly discovered that the task of forming a leadership group that could sustain an effort to define and realize a long-term, state-wide aspiration required tackling head-on the widely-held assumption within the state that certain individuals and groups of Vermonters would simply never be able to collaborate. We needed to start somewhere, however, and the convening power of Maverick Lloyd within the small circle of large philanthropic organizations in the state made it possible to do so. Initially the foundation assembled a handful of people from other leading foundations to consider what the goal of a possible project could be. This was a group that, if it decided on a change initiative, would be able to raise the funding necessary to underwrite it and, possibly, to convene a larger leadership group to carry it forward.

Over the next couple of years, three key elements would enable this small planning group to succeed in bringing in more leaders and stakeholders, and in moving the project to definitive action steps. The first was the audacity of the goal they defined—making Vermont’s energy sources 100-percent renewable by 2030. The second key success factor was the ability to convene and form a diverse set of people into the leadership and stakeholder groups. Confounding all the assumptions about the impossibility of getting key actors to work together, they were able to include all of the voices that needed to be part of the conversation. The high level of harmonic vibrancy in the quality of leadership that the convening group provided was the third success factor. As the process unfolded, Ned, Mary Day and I witnessed a growing energy and capacity for collaboration, based on a growing alignment among people who started out highly skeptical that they would ever be willing to work together.

Defining the goal

The small planning group convened by Maverick Lloyd reviewed the challenges facing the state. Focusing on the economic wellbeing of Vermonters, they considered which issues were sufficiently large-scale and required a systemic approach for significant change to occur. They decided on energy production and use, focusing on renewable energy.

To get specific about the goal, we used an exercise of looking at the degree of change required and the time horizon for that change. This exercise helped the planning group understand the gap between where they thought the state was headed and where they thought it needed to be. It was in this conversation that the group realized that, despite all of their hard work, a huge outlay of resources, and incremental progress in each of their areas on the advancement of renewable energy, they were not achieving their desired goals. They saw clearly that seriously addressing renewable energy issues in the state would require a fundamental shift across all the efforts in the state. Their current, independent activities would not change Vermont’s energy supply and demand sectors fast enough.

The change-over-time exercise helped clarify this realization, by helping the group specify the degree of change needed and the degree of urgency. The group realized that it wanted to see a complete shift, which had to happen within the next generation in order to realize their goal. This led to the goal of making Vermont’s energy portfolio 100-percent renewable by

2030. Some members of the planning group felt this goal was too audacious, but other members said, “We need to suspend disbelief, choose the boldest goal we can, and explore what it will take to get there.” While there was much conversation about the political liability of such an aggressive goal, the group came to the agreement that it made a bold statement and pointed the initiative in a very specific direction. In this way the goal could serve as a rallying point for change, around which the group could invite others into the process.

Inviting in diversity

Next, the planning group set about building a leadership team that could convene a larger stakeholder process and carry an initiative forward over the period of years that would likely be required for success. The group selected carefully. All of the key energy sectors needed to be part of the mix. This included government agencies dealing with environmental and energy issues; elected government officials at the local, state and federal levels; non-profit organizations working on energy issues in the state; the electric utility industry; groups involved in developing renewable energy; the state’s large employers; and the state university. Somehow the group also had to reflect the full political spectrum. The individuals representing the different sectors had to be prominent enough within their sectors to be able to influence opinion, and if necessary, bring others into the process. Finally, all the participants needed to be able to agree to be part of a multi-year process.

We formed a list of a dozen candidates whom the planning group members agreed to contact, often in pairs. For the most part, they chose to contact those people with whom they already had some connections or personal experience. At the next planning group meeting, they reported the findings from their interviews with the candidates, and we had the ten members we wanted for the leadership team. All ten members knew each other well, since they were all active leaders at the state level in different aspects of renewable energy in Vermont. They welcomed the chance to pool their efforts towards the shared audacious goal of “100 percent by 2030.”

Many people had told us that it would be difficult or impossible to get the amount of time we wanted on these busy people’s calendars. Yet once they saw who else was to be on the team, they made the time, often telling us something to the effect of, “I wouldn’t miss working with a team of this caliber for anything.” We also found out as the process moved forward that, for many of the ten individuals who eventually joined the leadership team, the goal of 100 percent renewable energy was a positive motivator, an indication that the conveners of this process were serious about achieving great things for Vermont.

Developing hosting capacity

With the official launch of Energy Action Now in 2010, the planning group passed the project on to the leadership team that would be responsible for carrying it through. The leadership team met a few times to build relationships among themselves, build their vision for the project, agree to the project design, and scope out whom to invite into the larger stakeholder conversations. Over the course of these meetings and the ensuing steps of inviting in the other stakeholders, the team came to see itself not so much as leaders but as hosts—the same transition the leadership team at THORLO had made the year before.

The team members realized that, unlike previous Vermont initiatives, they would not be individually leading a like-minded group towards fairly narrow and quite specific objectives. This time they were acting as a team to convene a diverse group of people, representing many conflicting perspectives, in order to pursue an extremely audacious goal. Through this realization, they came to see that they could not tell people what to do or even what they should try to achieve. Rather, they needed to invite people into a very broad exploration of possible pathways towards a shared future they would envision together.

The diversity of participants, each with a specific local perspective, strongly suggested the analogy of hosting a party, a party of very different people invited to figure out together what their future looked and how to get there. When this connection was made, the leadership team realized it was hosting the broader stakeholder group more than leading it.

As the leadership team prepared to assemble a still larger stakeholder group, it did its own review of the goal. What did all the terminology mean? Was it doable? Were they willing to put their names on something like this? They agreed to stick with the 100-percent goal, but to make it tentative, pending conversations with a wider range of stakeholders.

Convening the stakeholder group

The team was determined to be rigorous in its effort to ensure that all the key elements of Vermont's energy system were represented in the conversations on how to achieve the goal. This is a crucial step for any stakeholder process, and there are a variety of approaches to the task of "stakeholder mapping," which involves determining all the relevant actors in a situation, and as much as possible, the relationships among them. My colleagues and I supported the leadership team in taking a system-dynamics approach to this task. Through extensive discussions and a broad-ranging literature review, we helped them create a schematic map of Vermont's energy system (see Figure 38). Through many iterations of working with this map, they identified what perspectives had to be part of the mix and which individuals in the state could best bring those perspectives into the project.

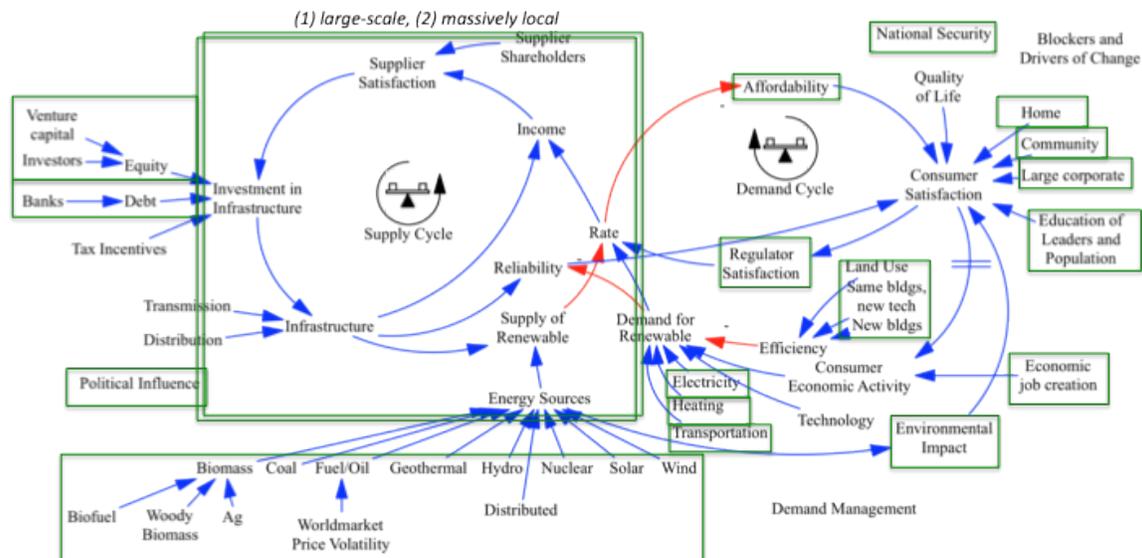


Figure 38: Systems Process for Selecting Perspectives to Include

Next, the team decided that each of its members would take personal responsibility for recruiting specific individuals into the stakeholder group. In the end, they surprised everyone, even themselves, with the diversity and comprehensiveness of the perspectives they were able to bring into the process—from conservative to progressive, small town to city, small to large business, civil society, government, bank and investment financing, local to national politics, electricity, heating, transportation, energy efficiency, and for and against renewable energy solutions. Many people whom we were told would not participate, because of old conflicts, rivalries or strong cultural differences, did in fact participate. In the later stages of the project, when new participants came in, more than one of them expressed amazement at joining people they never expected to see in a room together, much less collaborating on a change initiative. How did this happen?

What was clear to my colleagues and me as we observed this process was the importance of the hosting provided by the leadership team. The leadership team dedicated much effort and time to being clear, transparent, and open minded in working with the different stakeholders. They succeeded in creating a trusting environment in which very diverse and seemingly conflicting perspectives could be shared and integrated. This included inviting stakeholders who were long-term adversaries into the process and telling them how important it was to get their perspective into the group’s understanding. This emphasis on the value of diversity helped shift the focus from warring perspectives to the richness and validity of different perspectives.

Many of the participants in the stakeholder group told us that it was the sincerity of the invitation that had brought them to the process, and the quality of leadership throughout a series of gatherings that kept them engaged and committed. It was also significant that the leadership team was open to redefinition of the goal by the larger stakeholder group. In this way, they established the principle of honoring all perspectives and set the stage for the emergence of strong alignment. When the full stakeholder group did its own analysis, it

adjusted the goal to from 100-percent to 80-percent renewable energy by 2030. This was still audacious enough to make it clear the project would stretch the state's capacity to work collaboratively to address large, systemic issues and something everyone could fully embrace.

This is what leadership looks like at a high level of harmonic vibrancy. When sincerely hosted, people experience more of their own selves coming out, they experience more respect and support from and towards others, they experience a clearer contribution to the group, they experience the creativity in everyone, and they experience the grounding of inspiring possibilities. In Ecosynomics terms, they experience high levels of all five primary relationships and effectiveness at all three levels of perceived reality. They are functioning in the outer circle of the three circles of harmonic vibrancy.

The next phase of Energy Action Now would take the stakeholders through a collaborative inquiry into the details of the energy future they desired for Vermont, build on this early achievement, and move the group through all the steps of the O Process (Figure 2).

SEEING POSSIBILITY TOGETHER

The shock people expressed at the diversity of the stakeholder group that assembled in September 2010 highlighted the challenge of getting the stakeholders to work together. The existing assumptions and agreements that sustained Vermont's small-scale, competitive-cooperative approach to addressing important issues facing the state would have to change. For this to happen, the process participants would have to start perceiving each other and talking to each other in new ways.

Seeing the system and each other

As process facilitators, Mary Day, Ned and I supported this shift with a step that is common in stakeholder processes. Before the first stakeholder meeting, we conducted individual interviews with each of the twenty-four people who would be participating. The purpose of this exercise was to be able, when the group comes together for the first time, to reflect back to them a view of the whole that honored each person's perspective and uncovered areas of agreement that typically remained hidden behind the obvious disagreements. Providing this kind of feedback to a group is not unlike the hosting activity of "speaking the harmonic" that I described in Chapter 9. The mapping exercise also set the group up for embarking on the O Process, starting with a picture of the state of current reality.

In this case, we again took a system-dynamics approach. Our interviews focused on how the stakeholders perceived Vermonters' fundamental values, and the impact of energy on Vermonters as individuals, towns, and businesses. We also explored how the stakeholders thought about the environment, energy sources, regulation, and the funding of renewable energy projects, as well as how Vermonters were engaging with and learning about energy issues. Based on these interviews, we created a systems map of each stakeholder's perspective on Vermont's energy system; then we validated all of the maps with follow-up interviews with each stakeholder. Next we created a single map that integrated all of the

perspectives, organized around five strategic considerations—goals, resources, actions, structure and people. Though not identified as such, the four Ecosynomic lenses were thus incorporated into this system map.¹⁵⁰

The integrated map of Vermont’s energy system was big, complex, and at first glance, quite impenetrable. Yet in the hands of the leadership team, it became a means of hosting the stakeholders through the O Process. To prepare for the first plenary session of the stakeholder group, the team examined this map of perspectives in depth. Then each member of the leadership team took responsibility for presenting one or more of the individual maps to the large group. The team made these assignments with the intention of creating some surprises for the stakeholder group. They made sure that each map’s presenter was someone whom most in the group would see as unlikely to understand that stakeholder’s perspective. As a map was presented, the “owner” of that perspective was invited to critique or expand upon the system captured in the map and the presentation of his or her perspective. This exercise was another way in which the leadership team set a clear example of open-minded inquiry and invited others to follow suit.

This format allowed everyone to hear what each stakeholder actually had to say about energy issues, rather than what they *thought* each other would say. We heard many times in this process, “I did not know that you and I cared about achieving the same goal, and I did not know what you were doing to contribute to that goal.” It was through this mutual inquiry that people first began to see that they held similar values and a common aspiration for their state. They also recognized that each had a unique contribution to make toward achieving that aspiration. Once they agreed on the goal of 80 percent renewable energy by 2030, this understanding was critical for seeing the whole system and what could be done to shift it—in effect, for seeing what different agreements might be possible.

Moving to the top of the O

In processes such as this, there is often a discernable breakthrough moment, when the group makes a perceptible shift to a shared sense that something different is possible. For the Energy Action Now stakeholders this shift occurred midway through the second 3-day meeting. The stakeholders had broken into small groups by energy sector (i.e., electricity, heating, transportation, efficiency) to consider the feasibility of the 80-percent-by-2030 goal. As the groups reported their conclusions in a plenary session, one after another stated they could easily see how to reach the goal in their own sector, but could not see how other sectors could do so. The surprise and excitement in the room were palpable. Suddenly the stakeholders saw possibilities together that they had not seen before from their individual perspectives. They had moved to the top of the O in the O Process (see Figure 39).

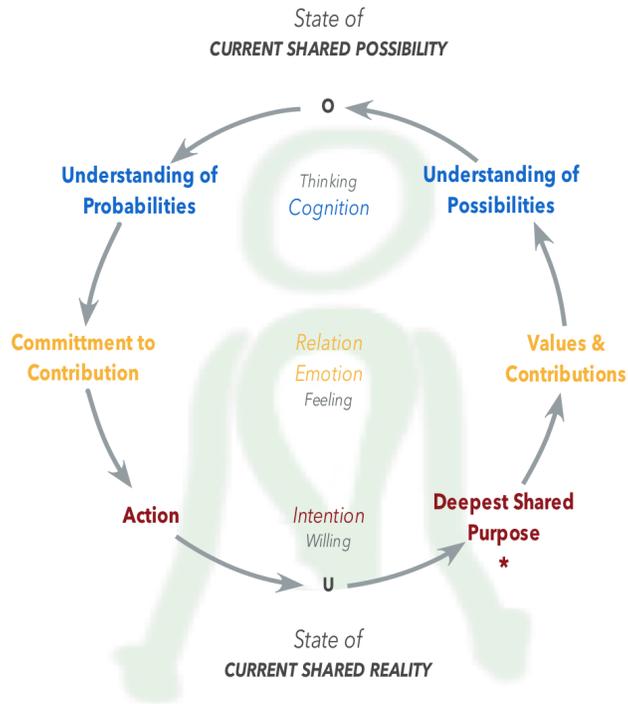


Figure 39: O Process

From the first step of each stakeholder sharing his or her individual current reality, they had opened up to seeing all the separate realities and recognized a great deal of shared purpose underlying their separate perspectives and activities. With the guidance of the leadership team, they had become much more familiar with what other stakeholders brought to the system. This greater mutual awareness had opened their view to the possibilities in their own parts of the system and prepared the ground for the “ah-ha” moment of recognizing the much greater possibility existing in the system as a whole.

In Ecosynomics terms, the group had moved into a state of high harmonic vibrancy. From this position they could clearly see the limitations of the mid-level harmonic vibrancy agreements that had governed their prior efforts. They realized that they could come together with agreements at a higher level of harmonic vibrancy to achieve the more audacious energy goal they had defined, taking into account the state’s renewable energy resources, how they could organize collaboratively, and the value Vermonters would experience from their success.

In the next step, the full group of hosts and stakeholders worked with the integrated form of the individual systems maps. They explored how the individual perspectives were interconnected, and how they influenced each other and the overall behavior of the system. It became clearer how they would each need to shift, in harmony with the others, to achieve the shift they envisioned for the whole system.

MOVING FROM POSSIBILITY TO ACTION—THE GROUNDED POTENTIAL PATH

The move from possibilities to probabilities occurred in two steps. First, the stakeholder group worked through multiple iterations of analyzing and validating the integrated map of the energy system. Through this process, it identified a set of core system dynamics. Everyone agreed that these dynamics had to shift in order to move Vermont's energy system from its current, highly reliable and cost effective but "low renewable" portfolio of energy sources to a future, highly reliable, cost effective and "high renewable" portfolio. In Ecosynomics terms, having settled on a shared aspiration at the level of possibility-light, the stakeholders had begun to see what needed to happen at the development-motion level in order to produce outcomes at the things-matter level.

The group continued to work collaboratively with the integrated system map to identify the appropriate measures of overall health in Vermont's energy system. Next they agreed on which forces in the system most contributed to its health, and the points at which they could activate those forces to move the system in a positive direction. Based on this collective analysis, the stakeholder group converged on four leverage points for shifting the whole system. These were capital mobilization, technological innovation, regulatory and permitting policies, and public engagement.

Once it had clearly defined each of the four leverage-point areas, the stakeholder group took the second step, which was to launch four new stakeholder processes to develop initiatives in each area. It identified experts and key stakeholders in each area and created four teams to invite and convene the new stakeholder groups. Each team included hosting leaders, stakeholders, and experts in each leverage point area. When the expanded leverage-point teams came together in the spring of 2011, the hosting leaders shared the story of the project; how the original stakeholder group had moved through the first half of the O Process and the possibilities they had seen together. The hosting leaders then invited all the new participants into the exploration of how to convert these possibilities into probabilities and then move to action—the second half of the O Process.

In separate meetings conducted near Burlington, Vermont, the four leverage-point teams identified specific projects that could leverage Vermont's strengths and resources to achieve its audacious goal. This shifted the idea of a possibility, such as mobilizing capital or mobilizing public opinion, into a reality these experts and stakeholders could see as probable. Everyone worked to ensure that the recommendations from the teams were in alignment. Finally, the four leverage-point teams came together to share their recommendations and work out a unified action plan for the whole project.

Shifts in assumptions and agreements

Behind this seemingly straightforward process, there occurred many shifts in perspective and agreements; between individuals, between organizations, and across the state. The participants in the process saw, often for the first time, that they shared deep Vermont values. For example, two of the stakeholders who often went head-to-head in the state house saw that they shared the same "ends," they just disagreed on the "means." These ends

were so important, and the means not so different, that they could agree to disagree—a shift for both of them.

Taking on the audacious goal of 80-percent renewable energy, across all four sectors, by 2030, was a galvanizing shift towards an aspiration they all had held yet none had believed possible. What was galvanized was a shift in agreements from working independently to working collaboratively toward that goal.

Many of the participants described the experience of that shift as moving from feeling responsible only for what they could directly impact, to feeling responsible collaboratively for all of the impacts across the state. As one participant described his shift, “I’m no longer just responsible for my results within the heating sector, rather for everything that influences our ultimate outcomes of sustainable sovereignty in deciding our energy future.” Others talked about realizing that all four energy sources—electricity, heating, transportation, and efficiency—would be critical in achieving the goal, not just the one their own work addressed directly.

All participants agreed that accomplishing such an audacious goal would require systemic coordination across all four energy sectors and all four leverage points. The capacity for this kind of coordination did not exist in Vermont. Indeed, it could not exist under the old agreements by which change happened only through thousands of independent efforts. The stakeholders’ committing to develop that capacity was a major shift. Towards the end of the process, it seemed that a new Vermont value became palpable in the group, expressed as “together we can and we must.” While everyone held a deep appreciation of how this initiative built on all that had been accomplished before—innovative legislation and regulation, creative business innovation, an engaged civil society sector of non-profit organizations, and a committed citizenry—they also felt ready to move away from the previous mindset of “I will do what I can on my own.”

CONCLUSION

Energy Action Now concluded its work in June 2011, just as the governor of Vermont began the process of a new multi-year energy plan for Vermont, to replace the previous plan from 1998. Many of the stakeholders who had participated in our process were invited to help with this design. As they tell the story, they showed up to the governor’s process with the recommendations from the four leverage-point teams, and were able to influence the state’s new energy plan in a significant way. The Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan was vetted in many public hearings and accepted in the late fall of 2011, after which the state created a system-wide coordinating body to support initiatives in the four leverage-point areas.¹⁵¹

From an Ecosynomics perspective, this stakeholder initiative sought to move Vermont from a medium level of harmonic vibrancy to a higher level, at which Vermonters could claim economic sovereignty over their own reliable, economic, low-environmental-impact energy future. Most people involved in the two-year project were clear that a move to a higher level

of harmonic vibrancy was a move to a new game, and that this required playing the game by new rules, or new agreements. Moreover, all of the steps of the Harmonic Vibrancy Move process were part of this initiative, although I was not thinking of them in those terms at the time.

Identifying the gap took place at several key stages: at the outset, within the Maverick Lloyd Foundation; within the first convening group; and again, within the whole stakeholder group. In each instance, this activity provided clarity and inspiration in regard to the purpose of the initiative. Exploring the experience of others was also an important aspect of the process. This includes both Maverick Lloyd's initial search for models of large-scale collaborative processes, and the inclusion in the leverage-point teams of experts who could contribute knowledge of what was going on outside Vermont. All of the stakeholders' work with the system map was a deep dive into the third step of assessing their own experience, and this paved the way for the fourth step of defining and enacting a move, which was the convening and work of the leverage-point teams.

Most important perhaps, as the leadership team hosted the stakeholders through the O Process, they had a direct experience of the outer circle of harmonic vibrancy, working at all levels of perceived reality with all five relationships. As they moved around the O, the participants each saw their own unique contributions—past, current, and future—to a higher purpose. This gave them a positive experience of the relationship to self. By respectfully sharing each other's individual system map, they experienced supporting and being supported by other individuals, quite a different experience of the relationship to other from what they had been used to. Through their work with the integrated map, the stakeholders could each see how their individual perspectives came together and influenced each other within the larger system. From this integrated perspective, they could appreciate the value of each unique contribution to the whole, an experience of the relationship to the group that was far more powerful and positive than what they had experienced before. Moving along the grounded potential path and seeing how possibility could move through development to concrete outcomes provided a strong experience of the relationship to nature. Finally, throughout this process, the hosting of the leadership team created an environment of abundant creativity, flowing from everyone in the group—a vibrant experience of the relationship to spirit.

My own experience with this stakeholder process helped me see how these steps fit together and contributed to a positive outcome in Vermont. In this sense, it helped me specify the Harmonic Vibrancy Move process as I have presented it in this book. More important, seeing the process work effectively at this scale confirmed for me the broad applicability of the principles of Ecosynomics. The processes that engage diverse stakeholders to work collaboratively on common issues represent an important phenomenon. They seem to show there is a pathway for moving society to higher levels of harmonic vibrancy. I believe societal change processes can be better understood—and perhaps become more successful—when placed in the Ecosynomics framework of agreements. I see the fact that there are so many stakeholder processes going on in such a wide range of situations as a sign, like the co-operative movement and the complimentary currencies I discussed in Chapter 7, that people are already finding pathways to abundance and harmonic vibrancy. This makes me optimistic that our ability to shift agreements is growing.