

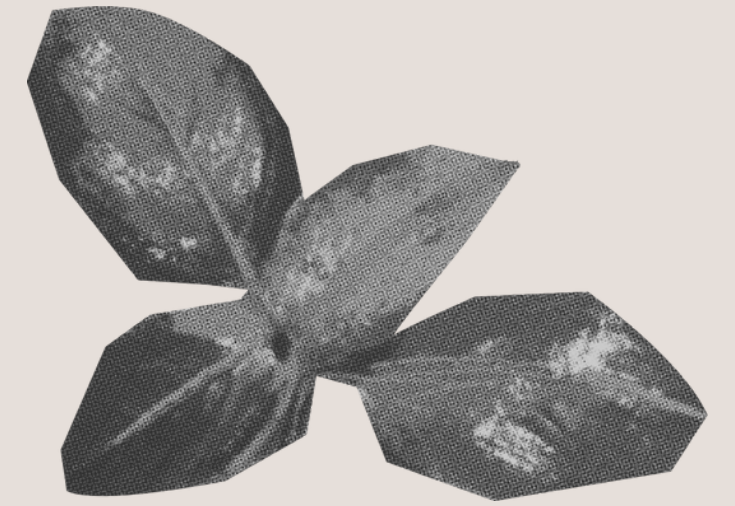
re:power Data X Power Fellowship – April 2024

Grassroots strategies

**A FRAMEWORK FOR MOBILIZING
AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL
RACISM**

Vivienne Maxwell & Wayne Shaw

AGENDA



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About us & environmental racism definition

Methodology & underlying factors

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Environmental experts & case studies

Framework outline & next steps

4





ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Wayne Shaw

Wayne Shaw is a Data Director for the Tennessee Democratic Party and resides in the Nashville, TN, area. He was previously the Young Adults Chairperson for the Mobile, AL, NAACP Branch and was the Deputy Organizing Director for the Alabama Democrats.



Vivienne Maxwell

Vivienne is a data analyst at the Climate Reality Project. Wayne and Vivienne met during re:power's Data Strategy course and got talking about environmental racism during office hours. Through their discussions they were inspired to collaborate on a project that would address environmental racism.






WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM???



Environmental racism is the systemic practice of disproportionately locating polluting industries and other environmental hazards in Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities, as well as low-income and rural communities.

This form of racism perpetuates social and economic inequality by sacrificing the well-being of Black and Brown communities for the purported advancement of society as a whole.

A hand holding a plant seedling, symbolizing growth and care.

BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

AFRICATOWN RESIDENTS AND THEIR ANCESTORS IN MOBILE, AL

Africatown was created by the freed survivors of the last known slave ship that came to America.

Although they were freed after the Emancipation Proclamation, they experienced environmental racism in many ways, such as zoning that left them receiving sanitary advancements last, the installation of industry plants leaving them in what the state describes as a chemical corridor, and the installation of a bridge that tore through the heart of Africatown.

In spite of the ship that carried these freed slaves being recently discovered, Africatown still fights against environment racism to this day.

METHODOLOGY

1 Reviewed primary literature on environmental racism

2 Created a problem statement, identified four underlying factors and one measurable outcome

3 Interviewed twelve environmental experts on their experience fighting environmental racism

4 Created a framework for community-based organizations to mobilize against environmental racism



UNDERLYING CAUSES OF ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Policy & Legislation

Deep ties between fossil fuel companies and political decision-makers, lobbying efforts in particular have stymied efforts to reduce power of fossil fuel companies.

Structural racism

redlining, heightened exposure to lead poisoning, families being displaced by highway and other construction projects, etc.

Income inequality

Low-income inhabitants are trapped in harmful locations that promote negative comorbidities and are more likely to be exposed to lead or develop asthma, cancer and high blood pressure.

Zoning

BIPOC communities are more likely to be located in proximity to harmful sources of pollution due to discriminatory zoning laws and/or the inability to move due to lower incomes.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERTS

Quentin Scott
Federal Policy Director
Chesapeake Climate
Action Network

Frederick Johnson III
Climate & Environmental
Justice Director
The Climate Reality Project

Paul Klein
Co-Chair & climate activist
The Climate Reality Project

Evan Bell
Director of Organizing
Better Future Project

**Lavannya Pulluveetil
Barrera**
Independant Consultant

KeShaun Pearson
Executive Director
Memphis Community
Against Pollution

Melanie Santiago
Deputy Director
Clean Energy Group

Justin J. Pearson
Representative
TN House of
Representatives

Yesenia Rivera
Executive Director
Energy Allies

Jen Andrews
Chief Executive Officier
Shelby Farms Park

Shelley Robbins
Project Director
Clean Energy Group

Shamyra Lavigne
RISE St. James

CASE STUDIES

South Memphis vs Byhalia Pipeline

When a representative in 2020 let it slip that South Memphis was the “Path of Least Resistance” for a pipeline, MCAP formed to rally and successfully stopped its construction

Rise St. James in Cancer Alley, Louisiana

The community of St. James in Louisiana’s CancerAlley has come together to fight hard to make their community a sanctuary, defeating industries in the process from plaguing their communities.

Mountain Valley Pipeline in West Virginia

As Federal Policy Director with Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Quentin Scott helped the community to legally challenge the Mountain Valley Pipeline construction

Peakers Project - Clean Energy Group

Peaker plants are highly polluting power plants typically located around non-white communities. The Clean Energy Group argues for their closure and replacement with cleaner energy facilities

Brayton Point Coal Fight vs Somerset, MA

A community organized a rally against a coal plant in Somerset, Massachusetts and after continual pressure the coal plant was decommissioned in 2017

FRAMEWORK OUTLINE

✓ Backstory on why we chose this project

This was partially inspired by the story of the Africatown residents in Mobile, AL and their struggles being the last slaves colonized in America and dealing with environmental racism and pollution to this day.

✓ Definition of environmental racism

The disproportionate burden of environmental hazards placed on some segments of the population is a prevalent social and health issue in the United States and disproportionately harms BIPOC communities.

✓ History on environmental racism

Environmental racism dates back to slavery. Slave plantations in Louisiana were replaced with industry plants that spew pollutants.

✓ Four factors + possible solutions

Structural racism, income inequality, zoning laws, and policy decisions have sacrificed the health of black and indigenous communities. The only way to combat environmental racism is by addressing all of these factors in a just and equitable way.

✓ Common barriers

Lack of education and awareness, fear of the police, unable to attend community input meetings, legal resolutions that override communities ability to protest...

✓ Community Success Stories + Tool Kit

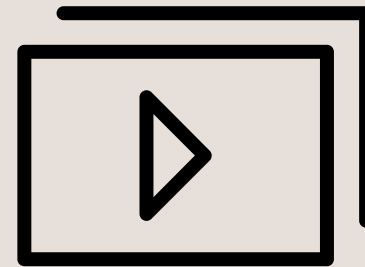
The most common parameter of success is coming together as a community to fight for the right to breathe clean air.

NEXT STEPS



FRAMEWORK

Summarize our findings and finalize the mobilization framework



SUMMARY SLIDES

Create a short slideshow with toplines and main takeaways



COMMUNICATE & REASSESS

Continue to coordinate with community orgs and reassess our framework



THANK YOU

Please email us at
vivienne.marie.maxwell@gmail.com or wayne42691@gmail.com
for additional information and questions

