An Asset-Based Approach to Tribal Community Energy Planning

Rachael Gutierrez, Indian Energy Intern

SAND2016-7745 PE

Image source: sandia.gov, nrel.gov, energy.gov/indianenergy
About Me

Pratt Institute, School of Architecture
M.S. Candidate in City and Regional Planning

BUFFETT INSTITUTE
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
Global Engagement Studies
Institute Scholar (2012), South Africa

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
Boston University
B.A. International Relations,
concentration in Latin America
and International Business

Image source: gateway.pratt.edu, buffett.northwestern.edu, bu.edu, Rachael Gutierrez
Two Approaches to Planning

1. Needs-Based, Top-Down Approach
   Creates a dependent relationship between a historically marginalized community and outside organizations and institutions

2. Asset-Based, Bottom-Up Approach
   Focuses on a community’s inherent gifts and strengths

Image source: Kretzmann and McKnight 13, the noun project Dusan Popovic
Community energy planning is the process of bringing different tribal stakeholders together to plan for their collective energy future.
Why is Community Energy Planning Important?

1. Planning helps build consensus and encourages community-based leadership.
2. Planning helps participants understand how issues and ideas are connected to one another.
3. Planning facilitates better coordination between tribal offices and departments.
4. Planning is an act of sovereignty and may lead to more energy efficient communities.

Image source: the noun project LA Great Streets

The planned FOA will complement the technical assistance Office of Indian Energy offers by providing funding to help tribal communities develop and sustain strategic energy solutions.
Where Are the Obstacles?

Often difficult for tribes

Strategic Energy Planning Process

1. Identify/Convene Stakeholders
2. Form Leadership Team
3. Develop Energy Vision
4. Assess Energy Needs and Resources
5. Develop Specific Goals
6. Prioritize Projects & Programs
7. Identify Financing Options
8. Compile Energy Plan
9. Measurement & Verification (M&V) and Plan Alterations

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Planning Framework

**Human Capital**
- Highly motivated population
- Subject matter expertise
- Access to a strong human capital network

**Financial Capital**
- Robust economy
- Access to financial resources
- Experience in other types of business

**Geographic Capital**
- Located in an area with abundant renewable resources
- Access to populated areas & transmission lines

**Political Capital**
- Strong political ties and/or hold political weight
- Access to political officials, governmental agencies, etc.

Image source: the noun project Erik Kuroow, Vaibh Radhakrishnan, Arthur Shlain, Rflor
Unique Potentials with Each Type of Capital

Human Capital
- May not have to pay outside energy consultants
- Leverage human capital to make better informed decisions
- Project implementation may be more expedient
- Reach out to contacts for support

Financial Capital
- May be able to self-finance a project
- Can afford to hire outside consultants
- Could have financial freedom to expand into related industries (i.e. solar panel company)
- Use financial know-how to leverage incentives and credits

Geographic Capital
- Could be greater energy demand and increased incentives
- Some states have more aggressive RPS requirements
- May have freedom to choose which type of energy best suits the needs of the tribe

Political Capital
- May have support to help guide the tribe through bureaucratic processes
- Tribal officials can meet directly with agency directors via their government-to-government relationship
Let’s Apply the Framework!
Hualapai Tribal Case Study

2012 START Planning Session

- Planning and Economic Development Department, Kevin Davidson - Director
- Update Resource Assessment and Project Feasibility Analysis, Primary Focus on a RE Project to Help Power Grand Canyon West

Hualapai Energy Vision
Towards Safe & Socially Responsible Energy Use & Management in Daily Life for 2022

- All Hualapai have Access to Affordable or Free Transportation
- Sustainable Economic Security
- Protection of Environment through Sustainable Clean Energy

Image/Content source: Hualapai.org, the noun project Erik Kuroow, Vaibhav Radhakrishnan, Knott and Davidson "Hualapai START: Review of activities leading up to, during and after the Strategic Technical Assistance Response Team workshop from October 2012." PowerPoint Presentation, March 2015.
Hualapai Community Capital Analysis

**Human Capital**
- Proactive planning and economic development department
- Access to a strong human capital network
- Good grant writing skills
- Energy subject matter expertise

**Financial Capital**
- Experience in other types of business (Tourism)
- Access to financial resources
- Establishment of a tribal utility
- Grant/USDA loan funding support

**Geographic Capital**
- Located in an area with abundant solar potential
- Possible access to transmission lines and grid infrastructure

**Political Capital**
- Access to agency directors and political officials via the tribe's government-to-government relationship

Image source: the noun project Erik Kuroow, Vaibhav Radhakrishnan, Arthur Shlain, Rflor
Conclusions

1. Possible Creation of FOAs to Bridge the Gap
   - Funding could potentially be introduced to support tribes through these challenging steps

2. Asset-Based Planning Framework
   - ABCD framework could be introduced earlier in the planning process
   - Framework could be made available to tribes who express challenges with developing specific goals (step 5) and prioritizing projects & programs (step 6)
Aishen! Thank you!