The Influence of Individuals in Shaping Market Transformation Programs

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the lack of equity focus in existing Market Transformation (MT) initiatives and proposes strategies to integrate equity considerations for more effective solutions. Through interviews with ten equity-focused practitioners in the MT and broader energy efficiency sector, we explore two key questions: the influence of individual practitioners on MT program design and outcomes, and best practices for addressing biases and blind spots.

Our findings reveal strategies encompassing both individual and systemic changes. Individual strategies include continuous learning, connecting with diverse communities, practicing humility, and engaging in self-reflection. Systemic changes involve building diverse teams, conducting inclusive research and design, fostering a culture that embraces learning from mistakes, and redefining success metrics.

These strategies highlight the pivotal role of individual practitioners and teams in driving transformative change. By adopting equity-focused mindsets and implementing systemic changes, MT initiatives can become more inclusive, effective, and equitable in addressing energy efficiency challenges and advancing climate goals.

Introduction

MT programs and policies aim to achieve sustained change in energy efficiency markets. Energy efficiency in buildings in the United States is not increasing fast enough to meet climate targets. The built environment is responsible for approximately 35% of US emissions. To meet the target of net zero emissions by 2050, the pace of building retrofits must increase 2.5 times above current rates (Alliance to Save Energy n.d.). An energy efficiency strategy that can meet climate safe emissions targets must include everyone (Kantamneni & Haley 2022). However, MT programs have under-served many communities (Amann et al. 2023). This paper highlights the absence of an equity focus in MT programs, and begins to explore strategies to address the equity gap while designing more effective MT solutions. One strategy to bring equity-focused strategies into MT is to support diversity within program teams and equity-focused mindsets in individuals. We interviewed ten equity-focused practitioners in MT and the wider energy efficiency field to answer two questions. First, we examine the influence of the individual practitioner on MT program design and outcomes. What role, if any, do the values, beliefs, and perspectives of MT practitioners play in equitably transforming the energy efficiency market? Second, we explore best practices for how to address biases and develop equity-focused mindsets for MT designers.

Equity Gap

In existing reports, resources, and toolkits focusing on MT, equity is often conspicuously absent (see Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Environment and Conservation 2015; Patrick, Leslie, & Shephard. 2016; Storm 2016; York, Nadel, Subramanian 2022 for examples of research and reports on MT which do not feature the word "equity" even once). There *are* examples of contemporary MT programs which include equity goals, signaling an important shift (CalMTA 2023; NEEA 2024). One report emphasizes the need for an increased focus on equity in MT, explaining that "market transformation programs have disproportionately served white, well-educated, and higher-income household", and that "low and moderate income (LMI), rural, indigenous, Black, Latino/a, renters, and non-English speakers" are underserved (Amann et al., 2023, 1).

Another result of our scan of existing resources is that bias identification, self-reflection, and individual learning are not commonly mentioned strategies for increasing equity in the energy efficiency sector broadly. As one example, the ACEEE's (2023) *Adapting Energy Efficiency Programs to Reach Underserved Residents* toolkit offers several important strategies for equitable customer outreach, but there was no mention of examining practitioner bias or self-reflection as a strategy to improve program equity. However, the toolkit does emphasize the need for a diverse energy efficiency workforce.

To bring in additional perspectives, we broadened our search to examine equity-focused toolkits from beyond the energy efficiency sector. Several resources highlight community engagement and collaboration as an important equity strategy and a way to bring in additional perspectives beyond the program team (Anaissie et al. 2021; City of Saskatoon 2021; Microsoft 2015). One toolkit from the City of Saskatoon (2021, 10) that focuses on equitable projects guides program designers to "look inward" and encourages individuals to ask questions about their own biases, perspectives, and personal understandings of systemic challenges. Another resource, the Liberatory Design Toolkit, aims to "generate self-awareness to liberate designers from habits that perpetuate inequity", and offers several strategies for designers to develop self-awareness, recognize oppression, and expand their understanding of what is possible (Anaissie et al. 2021, 1). These resources offer new strategies for the energy efficiency sector to consider.

The Individual in MT

We will demonstrate that individual practitioners can play a large role in bringing equity into MT using sociological theory. Sociology breaks down social experiences into three categories of analysis: the micro, meso, and macro level. Macro level analysis examines the largest social units such as entire nations and global forces. Meso level analysis is in-between micro and macro analysis, and explores things like national institutions and organizations, ethnic groups, or corporations. Finally, the micro level is the smallest level of analysis and focuses on individuals or small groups (Ballantine and Korgen 2022). Depending on the scale of the program, MT efforts are generally aimed at transformation at the meso and macro level. However, this does not mean that the micro level is absent. We want to highlight the importance of MT practitioners (the micro) in delivering effective MT (the meso and macro).

To reconcile the apparent gap between the individual and society, C. Wright Mills (1959) proposed the idea of the sociological imagination. The experiences of individuals shape and are shaped by the larger social context. The sociological imagination allows sociologists to

understand the connection between individuals and the meso or macro levels of human experience. Macro level ideas and institutions are made up of individual experiences, choices, and actions; individuals operating at the micro level are at the same time influenced by societal forces.

The individuals that this paper will focus on are the MT practitioners themselves. Energy efficiency professionals make key decisions about how to design, develop, and implement MT programs. When examining areas where it is possible to intervene in and influence a system, Meadows (1999) identified twelve possible areas for intervention which Abson et al. (2017) grouped into four realms from the shallowest to deepest leverage. The most influential realm is "intent", which includes the underlying "values, goals, and world views of actors that shape the emergent direction to which a system is oriented" (Bryant 2023, 7). This highlights the importance of individual attitudes and perspectives in influencing system change.

Another recent article highlights that individual education can have wider transformative impacts. Cole and Hagen (2023) found that engaging individuals in transformative learning is key to "scaling deep" - addressing fundamental underlying cultural roots and power dynamics in order to create durable and sustaining change (8). Transformative learning is a process which "transforms problematic frames of reference, habits of mind, perspectives, and assumptions that no longer serve a person or situation in order to make them more open, reflective, and able to change" (6) Individual impacts of transformative learning can include developing new mindsets and applying them to future projects, developing allyship practices, and questioning default approaches to how work is framed, scoped, managed, and commissioned (16). In simpler language: the individual perspectives of people designing systems are some of the most influential factors in its design.

While this paper focuses on the role of MT practitioners in enacting effective and equitable solutions, we also recognize the need for wider systemic change and a supporting environment in which individuals can act. For example, Amann et al. (2023) explain that "furthering equity has been a particular challenge for market transformation programs that lack equity as a program objective in their original program theory or logic model" (35). Equitable practices need to be enacted at all levels and embedded within leadership and program goals. However, individual practitioners may not have immediate agency over institutional practices. Individual and team level strategies present immediately actionable tools for addressing equity, bias, and assumptions while advancing more effective MT solutions.

Methodology

During the month of February 2024, we conducted ten in-depth semi-structured online interviews with market transformation and energy efficiency (EE) practitioners in various stages of their careers. We aimed to represent a broad range of identities, including diversity in gender, sexual identity, race, and age. We interviewed MT practitioners, energy efficiency researchers, designers and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practitioners. Our objectives for these interviews were to:

1. Understand if/how the practitioners impact the Market Transformation program outcomes.
2. Understand how MT and EE practitioners try to understand and address their blind spots and biases.

During our interviews, practitioners reflected on how their perspectives and life experiences influenced their program design and outcomes over their careers, as well as their personal approaches to transformative learning. Each interview consisted of seven questions and lasted approximately forty-five to sixty minutes. The interviews were conducted and transcribed by two of the three authors. Following this, one of the authors undertook a thematic analysis to identify common experiences, ideas, and suggestions voiced by the interviewees. To ensure impartiality, we engaged in discussions about our own potential biases and remained conscious of them during the thematic grouping process in a secure and trusted environment.

Positionality

In accordance with the ideas we are presenting, we also feel it is important to make ourselves visible in this paper. Engaging in equitable research practices means that both the researcher and the community are named, rather than just discussing the identity of the interviewees while allowing the researcher to remain unexamined (Muhammad et al., 2015). Sepideh Rezania is a middle-aged woman of color, a mother of two teenagers, and a first-generation immigrant who currently lives on the unsurrendered and unceded territory of the Sylix (Okanagan) people. She has lived in multiple countries. She has a master's degree in Electronics Engineering and has more recently been working in integrating equity and justice into Energy Efficiency and Market Transformation. John Silkey is a middle aged, middle-class raised, graduate educated, white man who has lived both across the US and around the world and has worked in energy efficiency for 15 years. Kirstin Pulles is a young white woman, living and working on the unsurrendered and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. She is relatively new to energy efficiency, having worked in the field since March 2020, and focuses on bringing participatory research practices to energy efficient program design. Kirstin comes from a working-class background, from a family of welders, farriers, and mechanics. Her work goes beyond just energy efficiency, including research, organizing, and policy development in food sovereignty and transportation justice. We will now present the findings from these interviews, followed by recommendations drawn from our secondary research. We hope that readers find these insights useful.

Findings and Discussions

In this section, we will summarize what we heard from our interviewees grouped into four themes:

- **The Impact of Personal Perspectives on Shaping Programs and Results.** Interviewees explain whether they believe that individual practitioners have an impact on program outcomes.
- **The Challenges of Approaching MT with Limited Perspectives.** How unchallenged assumptions, non-diverse perspectives, and one-size-fits-all technological solutions fail to create effective MT programs.
- **Strategies for Individual Practitioners.** We share practices to raise self-awareness and examine our own filters, choices, and beliefs.
- **Strategies for Teams and Processes.** Relational or group practices to help peers and teams increase awareness of their individual and collective filters, choices, and beliefs.

Under the first theme, we explore whether the perspectives of individuals do in fact influence the outcomes of MT and EE programs. In the second theme, we then study how continuing to do MT without examining individual assumptions can lead to undesirable outcomes. Third, we share how individual practitioners are using personal strategies to undertake transformational learning. Finally, we conclude by sharing the strategies that interviewees shared, which may help teams address assumptions and biases in EE and MT work.

The Impact of Personal Perspectives on Shaping Programs and Results

There was unanimous agreement among interviewees that individual perspectives and the overall the diversity of program teams have an impact on program effectiveness:

> "If you don't have that diverse perspective, it's really hard for you to think through how a program design is going to impact those individuals' lives that you don't understand."

> "It's all based on who is designing the thing."

> "We all design from our own range of experience. You solve problems you are aware of and solutions that you can think of."

Unexamined assumptions about community engagement and outreach strategies can lead to ineffective approaches that fail to address the actual needs of wider communities. Our beliefs, preferences, and assumptions influence decisions about program design, participant inclusion, participation methods, and even the inclusion of individuals responsible for day-to-day implementation. If you have never experienced a challenge yourself, it can be hard to conceive of the problem existing, let alone come up with solutions.

Welcoming diverse individual perspectives into program design can also have positive implications. We heard from practitioners who have lived experiences that shape their approach to program design. One explained that "growing up where I did and the racism we faced - I see myself as the customer we're designing for", while another said that "the idea of energy insecurity has stemmed from my personal experience". Individual experiences can also lead practitioners to challenge the status quo. Interviewees who have faced discrimination or felt like outsiders showed a greater willingness to question conventional program design norms. These deeper personal experiences drive practitioners to advocate for more inclusion of non-dominant perspectives into the process.

> "Because of my queerness, I used to get bullied a lot. When I came into the California building energy, I was able to break the rules … My whole existence is breaking the rules."

The perspectives of individuals on the program team clearly impact program design. The next section will explore three examples of how these impacts appear in programs.

The Challenges of Approaching MT with Limited Perspectives

Neglecting to scrutinize the biases and viewpoints of program designers can cause issues. People naturally bring their own life experiences to their work, but if they apply these narrow perspectives to designing programs without seeking other viewpoints, they may make baseless assumptions. Consequently, solutions built on these assumptions might not work well. Moreover, without incorporating diverse perspectives, program design might only cater to certain segments of the community. Lastly, we provide examples of how technological solutions that try to fit everyone's needs can sometimes miss the mark when it comes to specific community requirements.

A. Unchallenged assumptions create flawed solutions. Interviewees provided numerous examples illustrating how assumptions made by program designers or decision makers contributed to ineffective program design. When designers lack direct experience with the challenges faced by the intended beneficiaries and fail to incorporate other perspectives into the design process, these assumptions can persist and undermine the effectiveness of the program. One MT practitioner told us about an instance in where designers assumed a substantial incentive would convince distributors to change their stocking practices. However, this assumption was made without consulting the distributors, so it was never confirmed. Later, the program managers discovered that the primary factor influencing the distributors' decisions was the strong local relationships the branches had with their customers. Branch employees did not want to jeopardize these relationships by not carrying the products that customers were asking for. They explain, ″we did not think carefully of the individual drivers. We have assumptions based on what people at the corporate level told us, but we cannot underestimate customer relationships”. Another MT practitioner shared a story about a time where a proposed MT practice failed to be adopted.

> "We thought we figured a perfect solution that everyone should want. The reality was that we did not understand what the technicians wanted in their life, and we assumed the trade associations would take it and run with it. We should have understood their persona. We did not spend the time to understand what their barriers are. We thought we had a cool solution, and they should like it."

These examples from respondents highlighted how limited perspectives within program design teams can be barriers to effectively achieving MT goals. When individual program designers make decisions with limited information and fail to incorporate other perspectives, they risk perpetuating flawed solutions. Practitioners need to recognize that their own lived experiences may not encompass the specific needs of all those involved in effective MT solutions. It is even more important to acknowledge that this lack of perspective, when representing the voices of priority communities and individuals who are not given a seat at the table, can further exacerbate inequities caused by energy efficiency programs.

B. Without diverse teams, equity deserving communities’ needs may be overlooked. When practitioners lack the lived experiences of the communities they serve, it can lead to oversimplified program design that does not consider the diverse needs of end users. Having diversity within program design teams is crucial for considering a wide range of perspectives and ensuring inclusivity.

One respondent explained that their program team had attempted to design program outreach strategies for diverse communities. However, they had grouped several distinct cultures – Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese people – into one outreach group. When they undertook further community engagement, they discovered that "there was zero similarity between them when it comes to drivers and motivators and language needed. We had to design paths for implementation for each of them." The respondent recognized that their own limited understanding was not enough to know and understand the communities' needs from the outset.

Another interviewee explained that their team had brainstormed solutions for low-income individuals in inadequate housing before consulting the community. They explained that "in designing I was thinking about finding ways to meet the needs of mold remediation, holes closed, working HVAC, fridges that closed, etc. and connecting landlord to those types of resources because a lot of time they don't know". However, these solutions were not actually effective for lower income households, because "what we found out was most people just wanted to be let out of their lease". Solutions had to be verified with the actual beneficiaries, beyond just the program team's assumptions.

The absence of diverse lived experiences within program design teams can result in overly simplistic approaches that overlook the varied needs of the communities that programs intend to serve. Embracing diversity within these teams is paramount for integrating a multitude of perspectives and fostering inclusivity in program development. By extending the perspectives within their teams to include individuals who bring a variety of lived experiences, they can better understand and address the specific needs of diverse populations and to think outside the box and beyond traditional energy efficiency solutions, considering broader social, economic, and cultural contexts.

C. Technological solutions only work if you understand how people interact with them. Our interviews revealed that focusing too much on technical solutions without considering the bigger picture and the diverse experiences of different stakeholders can lead to missed opportunities and ineffective outcomes. Different groups interact with technology in different ways, influenced by their economic, religious, socio-economic, social, and cultural backgrounds. These factors need to be considered right from the start, during product research, specifications, and program planning.

One practitioner shared their experience trying to implement color-coded meters and sending letters comparing household energy bills to neighbors' bills to encourage energy savings by influencing behavior through messaging. They found that most low-income households were already being as efficient as they could be because they couldn't afford to waste energy.

> "I came to learn over years of studying how to influence behavior and understand that rich people are the ones that have the ability to turn things off because they have things and they waste, and low-income households don't have much stuff and they're not very wasteful. But I didn't know that until I spent years studying it."

Other strategies could be much more effective at achieving energy savings and behavior change for lower-income households, but researchers first need to recognize the needs of diverse communities and abandon one-size-fits-all approaches.

Another practitioner assumed that showcasing the technical benefits of more efficient water heaters would drive market transformation. However, they realized that getting the top

three manufacturers on board was crucial for market change:

> "With water heaters, we thought if people see the technical benefits, it will help with transforming the market. My bias was that that was enough…The actual reality was, if you don't get the top three manufacturers on board, then the market will not shift. We had to figure out a way to get the top three to get excited or be challenged to do it."

In a final example, a program designer assumed that lower income households would not be interested in or able to spend additional funds on renewables. This interviewee found that "even people with low income were willing to pay more based on being on the bad end of technologies that pollute". Their research found that frontline communities may actually be early adopters.

Whether it is supporting low-income communities with energy efficiency, or encouraging manufacturers to adopt new equipment, technology is not always used and received how practitioners expect. Practices which can encourage practitioner learning and bring in additional perspectives can help with developing strategies to ensure the right technological solutions are chosen for each context.

Strategies for Individual Practitioners

After understanding that individual practitioners do impact program design, and seeing what the outcomes can be if practitioner perspectives are left unexamined, we now turn to sharing individual strategies that interviewees have undertaken to address their own biases and engage in personal development. The responses varied a lot, from encouraging self-awareness, to taking courses, working with a support group of colleagues, and even practicing mindfulness meditation. This section will explore how individual practitioners can expand their perspectives, while the next section will focus on changing practices within teams.

A. Seek training and learning opportunities. One practitioner mentioned that when they go to conferences, they make sure to attend sessions focused on community, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and hear different perspectives in the industry. Another interviewee explained that they make sure they participate in diversity training with their new team members, noting that "Every time I go through these [trainings], I get something new out of it". Seeking training and educational opportunities is one strategy which interviewees highlighted for developing equitable perspectives.

B. Connect with diverse communities. Another practitioner pointed out that while it's important to get training on diversity and understand your own biases, it's equally important to interact with the people for whom you're designing. They share that ″we can do lots of training, but until individuals start engaging with diversity and thinking about it in their work, we'll always miss the mark." Another interviewee shared a similar strategy, noting that "giving people time to volunteer in communities other than their own is an opportunity to experience and apply what they are learning in trainings".

C. Practice humility. Recognizing that this journey requires humility and grace, one practitioner shared that "even though I have done some personal work and have my own experiences, I still fall short. And I'm okay with acknowledging that.″ Self-reflection and transformative learning

are ongoing processes, and many interviewees shared that they need to continue working to acknowledge mistakes and welcome new ideas.

D. Engage in self-reflection. Some practitioners stressed how important self-reflection is to their success in making their programs more effective and reaching more people. They explained that challenging their own perspectives, assumptions, and biases is crucial for improving programs. Using structured self-reflection methods like meditation, guided prompts, and journaling helps them think more deeply about themselves and become more self-aware. This helps them handle their emotions and reactions better, deal with tough situations effectively, and stay motivated in their work.

Strategies for Teams and Processes

Finally, we talked to the participants to learn about their strategies for figuring out the assumptions and biases in their work within the context of their project teams. While the previous section focused on strategies individual practitioners were pursuing for their own personal development, this section explores systems and process changes. We found four examples of effective practices.

A. Building diverse teams. Making sure there are different kinds of people on the teams that design programs and hiring people from diverse backgrounds were seen as important for creating effective outcomes. One participant said they want their team to include perspectives other than the dominant culture, so they hire people from BIPOC or LGBTQ+ communities. Another practitioner explained:

> "Everyone brings bias - so we try to stack teams that bring a variety of biases including bias against the system. As an example, we have a gap in understanding programs and Indigenous populations. So, we need to get those groups in, represented, and paid for their time."

One way to expand the perspectives on your program team is by hiring people with diverse identities.

B. Conducting inclusive research and design. Many people said it's important to involve the people who will use their products or services in the research process to understand what they really need. While everyone agreed it's necessary to talk to a broad range of people, there wasn't a universal method to do so. One MT practitioner mentioned that understanding and characterizing the market, its structure, key players, and what motivates them, followed by creating a logic model based on that understanding, helps overcome biases and assumptions in their approach. As one interviewee explained, “community expertise is just as important and valuable as technical expertise, if not more so. I do see an increase in these folks getting paid for their time and expertise”. Incorporating diverse perspectives throughout the research and design process can highlight missing perspectives and lead to more effective and inclusive strategies.

C. Develop a culture that welcomes learning from mistakes. Several participants talked about how important it is to learn from their failures and challenges

> “If we are not failing we are not taking enough risks.”
>
> “Being able to be challenged and have to think about how things apply is really important in this industry. Sometimes things work out and sometimes they don't and that's okay”.
>
> “We had a team from different organizations. The experience of stumbling on something and coming at it with a sense of humility and curiosity was what I was told allowed for things to happen as a leader! We created a space for a journey of curiosity and asking questions and trying something and being willing to fail."
>
> “I try to use formal training and bring in outside facilitators that can help us have convos on levels where biases are inherently there and create a safe space for people to be honest and vulnerable.”

Encouraging reflection and comfortable spaces allows people to learn together. Changing internal cultures to allow for reflection and humility may also open teams up to new ideas, innovative solutions, and ongoing learning.

D. Changing how we measure success. Usually, success is measured by things like market share/penetration, sales data, and product/service availability (York, Nadel, & Subramanian 2022). However, some interviewees think we need to focus more on how MT programs actually help communities. They want to see if people's lives are genuinely getting better, not just if they're using less energy. Success metrics could focus on things like reduced financial burdens, better health outcomes, new job opportunities, and overall better quality of life, especially for those who are struggling the most.

> "Is there more joy? Do people have the mental, physical and emotional space to go beyond thinking about only what's necessary and what is critical?"
>
> “I want to see how a program will take the burden away from individuals.”
>
> “Success is when advocacy groups/interveners acknowledge you're making progress and thank you instead of saying you're not doing enough.”

Rather than focusing on the goals of program designers, practitioners could measure success through what is important to the intended beneficiaries. This may challenge our assumptions about what is most effective at achieving program goals.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings from our research shed light on the pivotal role individual practitioners play in shaping effective and equitable market transformation programs. By examining personal perspectives, team biases, and inclusive practices, we uncover critical insights into program design and implementation that can lead to more equitable outcomes. Here is the summary of our findings:

1. Personal Perspectives Matter: Practitioners' unique backgrounds and experiences significantly influence program design, participant inclusion, and implementation strategies. Recognizing and addressing these influences is crucial for meeting the diverse needs of all communities.

2. Challenges with Limited Perspectives: Programs designed without a broad range of perspectives often result in oversimplified solutions that fail to meet the needs of underrepresented communities. Focusing solely on technical solutions or traditional approaches can lead to ineffective outcomes.

3. Importance of Inclusive Practices: Embracing diversity within program design teams is essential for fostering inclusivity and developing effective solutions. Including a variety of lived experiences within teams helps address the specific needs of diverse populations and ensures program designs are more comprehensive and impactful.

Informed by our research participants, we have curated recommendations categorized under two main areas: individual practitioners and systems and process changes.

Strategies For Individual Practitioners:

- Seek Training and Learning Opportunities: Engage in courses and workshops that focus on identifying unconscious biases and understanding blind spots.
- Connect with Diverse Communities: Use tools like network diversity scorecards to assess and improve connections with people from different backgrounds.
- Practice Humility: Regularly challenge assumptions and invite different perspectives.
- Engage in Self-Reflection: Develop mindfulness and journaling practices to enhance self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

Strategies For System and Process Changes:

- Build Diverse Teams: Implement blind hiring practices and recruit from a variety of communities to broaden the range of perspectives.
- Connect Meaningfully with your Target Audience: Develop research and design plans that seek and incorporate community input.
- Develop a Culture that Welcomes Learning from Mistakes: Encourage reflective practices and openly use failures as learning opportunities.
- Change How Success is Measured: Shift focus from traditional metrics to assessing the broader impact on community well-being and quality of life.

Based on our secondary research, we offer the following additional recommendations:

- Learn Inclusive Facilitation Techniques: Train in designing and leading inclusive gatherings to ensure all voices are heard (Codding 2024).
- Include Steps to Uncover and Check Assumptions in Design Processes: Regularly question assumptions and consider alternative viewpoints (Anaissie et al. 2021).

- Build Methods to Catch Self-Biases into Processes: Develop tailored guides specific to your organization's needs, outlining step-by-step procedures for integrating methods to identify and address self-biases. These methods should be incorporated into various MT processes such as research, logic model development, intervention strategy formation, and pilot design, program implementation, and evaluation. Resources like the Liberatory Design Toolkit can provide frameworks for generating self-awareness and recognizing patterns of exclusion in design practices (Anaissie et al. 2021).
- Formalize Participatory Engagement in MT: Establish formalized processes for community engagement that goes beyond talking and includes impacted communities in *designing* market transformation initiatives. This can involve participatory research methods, holding and incorporating feedback form stakeholder advisory groups, and iterative community consultations. Engaging communities in the design and implementation phases can enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of MT programs. Examples of participatory design strategies can be found in the Microsoft (2021) INCLUSIVE toolkit.

We recognize that every organization is distinct and at various stages of integrating equity into their practices. Therefore, we believe that the strategies discussed can be tailored to meet the specific needs of your organization. In some instances, the approach might require education first, while other organizations might be ready for foundational change. Additionally, we acknowledge that we are opening a new conversation, and as a research team, are only at the beginning of our learning journey. There is much more room for dialogue and improvement as we strive to incorporate more self-reflection and community engagement into MT design processes. It is crucial to continue researching and exchanging best practices to foster a more equitable and sustainable energy future.

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