INSTITUTE FOR
Sustainable
Communities

2025
Annual Report

Building local capacity for
a changing climate.

The Power of Together

CONTENTS

01 **Our Mission**

02 **A Message from the President**

03 **2025 Impact at a Glance**

03 **How ISC Creates Impact**

04 **United States Programs**

- Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers
- Advancing Building Decarbonization
- Community-Led Green Infrastructure

10 **China Programs**

- Resilient Communities Leadership Accelerator
- Case Studies for Sub-National Climate Transitions
- Sustainable Supply Chain Academy

15 **Board of Directors**

15 **Financials**

OUR MISSION

The Power of Together

For 34 years, the Institute for Sustainable Communities has brought together the people who understand their communities, the experts who know how to solve hard problems, and the partners willing to invest in solutions. Through partnerships with locally-led organizations, we co-create safer environments, healthier lives, and cleaner cities, while improving access to affordable, reliable energy in the most vulnerable communities, contributing to a more secure future for all.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is a consequential moment for climate action.

Communities around the world are already living with the effects of a changing climate. Extreme heat, floods, fires, and severe storms are disrupting lives and local economies. At the same time, the resources available to respond are becoming more uncertain. In the United States, federal climate priorities have shifted dramatically, funding programs have been eliminated or reduced, and many communities are being asked to do more with less.

But if this year has taught us anything, it is that progress does not begin or end with any single policy, program, or institution. It begins with people.

Across the United States and Asia, we saw local leaders, community organizations, businesses, and institutions keep moving forward. What they often lacked was not the will to act, but access to the funding, expertise, and relationships needed to turn that will into results.

Bridging that gap is what the Institute for Sustainable Communities was built to do.

In 2025, we saw the power of this approach again and again. Across the United States, we helped local organizations navigate complicated funding systems and move climate projects forward. In China, we brought companies and suppliers together to solve shared decarbonization challenges, supported local organizations preparing communities for climate impacts, and helped regional leaders consider how the transition to a lower-carbon economy can strengthen rather than leave behind workers and communities.

We also learned something important about the work ahead. The climate challenge is not simply a shortage of good ideas. We already know a great deal about what works. The challenge is ensuring that knowledge, expertise, and resources reach the people who can put them to work, and that what succeeds in one place can spread more quickly to another.

That will require new ways of working. It will require us to learn across sectors, invest in local leadership, and build stronger connections between communities, expertise, and capital. And at a time when many of the systems that once supported this work are becoming less certain, it will require sustained partnership from those who believe that progress is still possible.

There is no question that the road ahead will be difficult. But after 34 years of this work, we also know something else: lasting progress has never depended on perfect conditions.

It happens when people choose to work together.

To our funders, partners, community leaders, and friends: thank you for making that choice with us. Thank you for believing in local leadership, in practical action, and in the possibility of a healthier and more resilient future.

There is much more work to do. And we are ready to do it together.

“There is no question that the road ahead will be difficult. But after 34 years of this work, we also know something else: lasting progress has never depended on perfect conditions. It happens when people choose to work together.”

Rebecca Kaduru
President

2025 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

A year of progress, measured in people and partnerships.

210 **Partners Served**
Collaborating with local organizations, governments, and community leaders to drive change.

893 **Hours of Hands-On Support Provided**
Offering hands-on expertise so communities can cut through barriers and act quickly.

186 **Hours of Shared Learning**
Delivering in-person and virtual programs that grow knowledge and skills for the long term.

HOW ISC CREATES IMPACT

From local priorities to lasting local capacity.

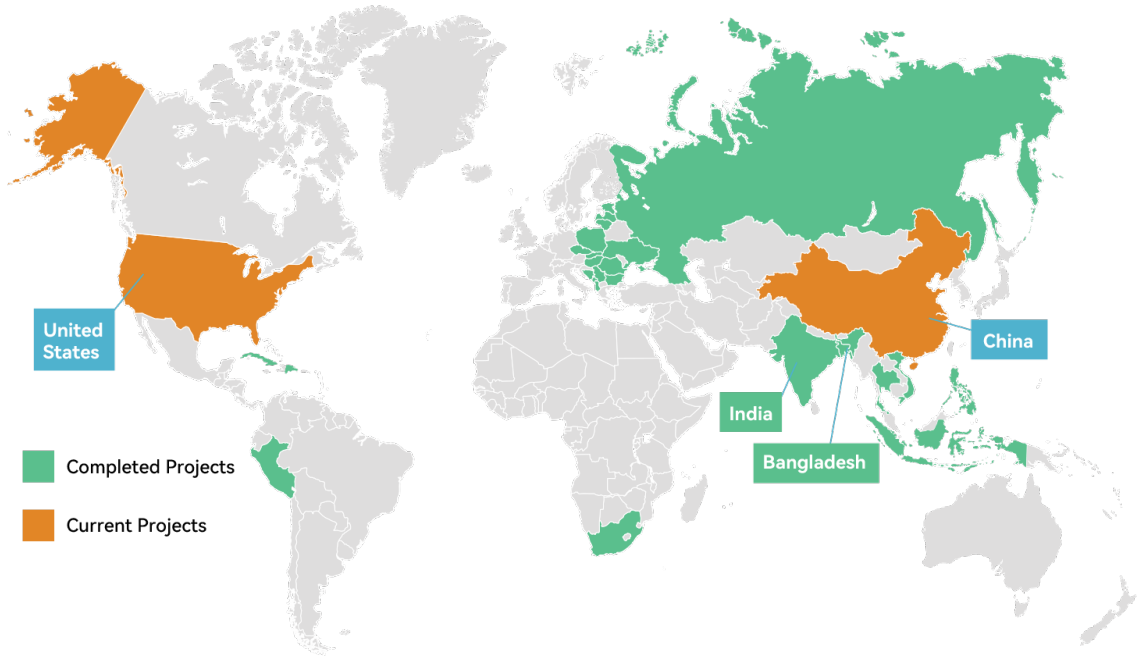
01
Local Priorities
Communities identify the challenges and opportunities that matter most to them.

02
Connections
We align expertise, funding, partners, and shared learning around that priority.

03
Practical Solutions
Ideas become funded projects, healthier buildings, and stronger organizations.

04
Capacity Building
Communities carry the knowledge and relationships forward, long after ISC's involvement ends.

Project Status



UNITED STATES PROGRAMS

Moving community climate solutions from ideas to action.

Communities across the United States have ideas for making their neighborhoods healthier, safer, and better prepared for a changing climate. In 2025, ISC brought people together to solve problems and learn from one another. We provided technical assistance and targeted grants to help overcome implementation barriers. We also connected organizations with funding opportunities and strengthened their ability to lead climate resilience efforts over time.

UNITED STATES · EPA PARTNERSHIP

Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers

Building the infrastructure for community-led climate action.

THE CHALLENGE

Communities are ready to address climate and environmental challenges, but a fragmented landscape of funding, technical assistance providers, and application requirements makes it difficult to turn local priorities into funded projects.

ISC'S APPROACH

Through EPA's Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (TCTAC) initiative, ISC helped build national infrastructure connecting communities with expertise, resources, and funding.

Working alongside national and regional partners, ISC strengthened collaboration across a nationwide network of technical assistance providers, community organizations, funders, and government agencies.

ISC also helped design and launch ejtctac.org, a national platform connecting communities to funding opportunities, technical assistance, and implementation resources.

We convened the first National TCTAC Symposium, developed tools for community-centered partnerships and post-award grant management, trained organizations in grant writing, and created a collaborative knowledge-sharing platform for practitioners across the country.

UNITED STATES · EPA PARTNERSHIP

Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers

Building the infrastructure for community-led climate action.

A national network built for scale.

WHAT CHANGED

In just 18 months, the TCTAC network demonstrated both the scale of community demand and the value of coordinated implementation support. Communities needed trusted pathways to find the right expertise, develop stronger projects, navigate complex funding systems, and move from opportunity to action.

Although federal funding for the program ended before its full vision could be realized, the need it addressed has not disappeared. The experience provided ISC with valuable insight into how coordinated technical assistance, knowledge sharing, and project development infrastructure can help more communities access climate investment.

1,893
Technical assistance requests supported

82+
Partner organizations contributing to the network

$373M
Secured for local projects

187
Organizations trained through the Writing for Green grant writing program

$1.2B
In funding pursued by communities

445
Practitioners connected through the national platform

43,500+
Visits to the national platform

13
Regional technical assistance centers supported nationwide

Advancing Building Decarbonization

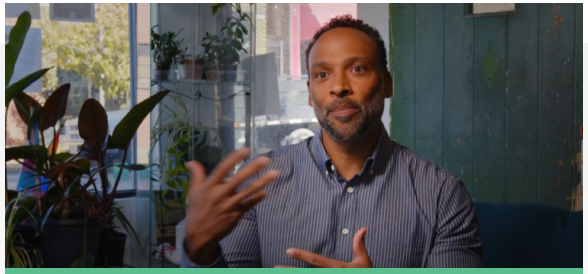
Making building decarbonization practical for community organizations.

THE CHALLENGE

Community-serving organizations often operate in aging, energy-inefficient buildings that drive up operating costs and strain limited budgets. Yet funding for building decarbonization rarely reaches these organizations, leaving them unable to make critical energy upgrades that would reduce costs and improve their facilities.

ISC'S APPROACH

Through the Advancing Building Decarbonization initiative, funded by CBRE, ISC worked with community organizations in Oakland, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and St. Louis, Missouri to demonstrate how building decarbonization can deliver practical benefits for the people who use these spaces every day.



Hear the stories from our partners in **An Exploration of Narrative Change**.

The initiative combined technical expertise, demonstration funding, energy audits, leadership development, and community storytelling. Local Leadership Alliances created trusted spaces where community organizations could learn from one another, collaborate with technical experts, and shape projects around local priorities.

> ***The buildings we are living in are like lungs. As affordable housing providers, it's not enough to make sure people have a roof over their heads. We need to make sure we are using energy efficiently; there are no leaks or mold, and heat isn't escaping.***
>
> **Constance Siu**
> Executive Director
> North Newstead Association

Advancing Building Decarbonization

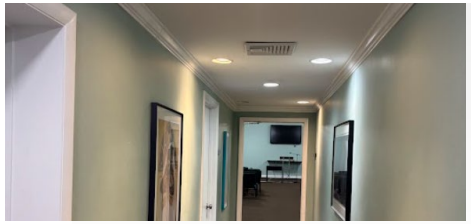
Making building decarbonization practical for community organizations.

WHAT CHANGED

In Oakland, Philadelphia, and St. Louis, ISC combined technical expertise, demonstration funding, energy audits, and leadership development. Local Leadership Alliances created trusted spaces where community organizations could learn from one another and shape projects around local priorities. Participants reported greater confidence leading climate initiatives, improved access to technical knowledge, and stronger local partnerships. The project helped communities tell a broader story about decarbonization: in St. Louis, partners created a documentary; in Philadelphia, partners developed a comic book connecting decarbonization with justice and pride; and in Oakland, youth created public art exploring climate change, displacement, and resilience.

Oakland

First Congregational Church began replacing fossil-fuel heating with electric heat pumps and on-demand water heating.



Philadelphia

Sweet Union Baptist Church installed high-efficiency lighting and heat pumps expected to cut annual utility costs by more than $2,000.

St. Louis

Wellston Loop Community Development Corporation improved insulation and roof safety at its transitional housing facility, creating healthier living conditions.

$185,500
Invested across three cities

$111,000
For demonstration projects

$22,500
In community narrative projects

$15,000
Invested in energy audits

22
Stakeholders engaged

7
Alliance convenings

UNITED STATES · GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION

Community-Led Green Infrastructure

Strengthening Local Capacity to Access Climate Funding

THE CHALLENGE

Organizations across Southeast Louisiana understand their flood and extreme-weather risks, but developing competitive funding applications requires specialized knowledge many smaller organizations can't maintain in-house.

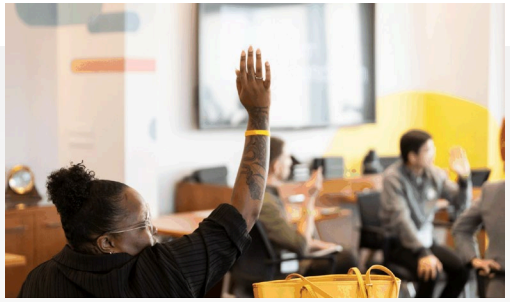
WHAT CHANGED

Participants identified individualized coaching and practical workshops as particularly valuable. By combining technical expertise with accessible, relationship-based support, ISC helped organizations strengthen immediate funding applications while building capabilities they can use well beyond the life of the program.

ISC'S APPROACH

In partnership with the Greater New Orleans Foundation, ISC provided technical assistance and capacity-building support to organizations advancing nature-based climate resilience solutions across Southeast Louisiana. Through practical workshops and individualized coaching, ISC helped organizations strengthen grant proposals, improve project planning, and navigate funding opportunities, they can apply to future resilience efforts.

Participants consistently reported stronger knowledge and confidence after receiving training and coaching:



100% Reported increased knowledge

85% Confident applying new skills

78
Organizations supported

240+
Hours of technical assistance

5
In-Person Sessions

4
Virtual Trainings

40+
Hours of 1-on-1 coaching delivered

75%
Of participants of local and minority-led organizations

CHINA PROGRAMS

Advancing climate solutions that work for people and the planet.

China's transition to a low-carbon economy presents both an enormous opportunity and a complex implementation challenge. In 2025, ISC worked across sectors to connect climate action with economic resilience and community well-being, focusing on strengthening community resilience to climate impacts, supporting pathways for low-carbon transition, and accelerating collaborative decarbonization across supply chains. ISC brought together local organizations, government, businesses, researchers, and technical experts to develop and implement approaches grounded in local realities.

CHINA

Resilient Communities Leadership Accelerator

Expanding women's leadership in frontline community organizations.

THE CHALLENGE

Community-based organizations are often closest to the people experiencing climate impacts, yet have limited access to the resources, networks, and technical support needed to scale resilience solutions.

ISC'S APPROACH

The Resilient Communities Leadership Accelerator (RCLA) strengthens climate resilience by supporting community-based organizations, expanding women's participation and leadership, and creating opportunities for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and climate adaptation.

In 2025, ISC conducted nationwide outreach to organizations working across climate, public health, rural development, women's empowerment, and community resilience.

Through a rigorous selection and due diligence process, ISC identified 16 promising organizations and established relationships with practitioners across multiple provinces.

The process also generated valuable insights into the challenges, priorities, and opportunities facing frontline organizations and created a pipeline of partners for future community-led resilience initiatives.

WHAT CHANGED

The initiative built a stronger network of community organizations positioned to lead locally relevant climate adaptation efforts and gave ISC deeper insight into the support these organizations need to expand their impact.

The work also laid the groundwork for future investment in locally led resilience solutions and strengthened connections among organizations that can learn from and support one another.

60+
Organizations assessed

36
Participants convened

16
Proposals shortlisted

CHINA · ENERGY FOUNDATION CHINA

Case Studies for Sub-National Climate Transitions

Turning climate transition goals into economic strategies.

THE CHALLENGE

The shift to a low-carbon economy will impact regions unequally. Coal-producing provinces must diversify their economies while supporting workers, and manufacturing centers face pressure to decarbonize supply chains without losing competitiveness.

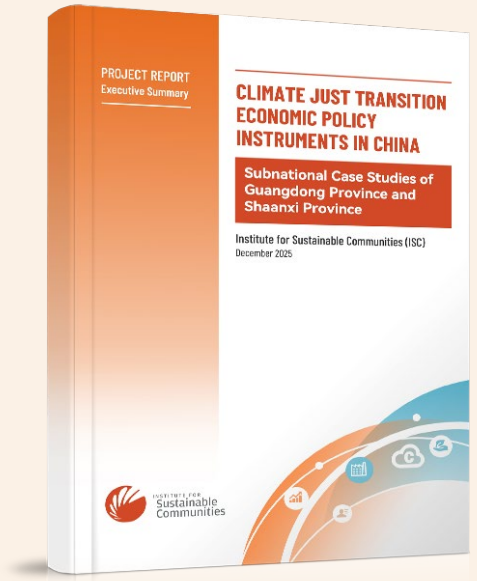
ISC'S APPROACH

With support from Energy Foundation China, ISC launched a policy research initiative examining how provincial governments can design climate transition policies and financing mechanisms that support workers, industries, and communities while reducing emissions.

WHAT CHANGED

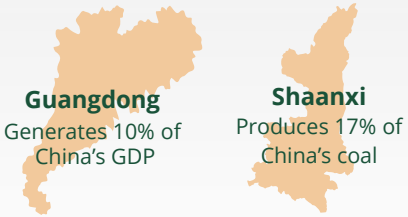
The project helped move the conversation from broad transition goals toward practical policy and financing mechanisms. By combining international lessons with local economic realities, ISC developed actionable recommendations for economic diversification, workforce transition, climate resilience, and long-term low-carbon investment.

The proposed provincial Climate Transition Funds provide a potential pathway for mobilizing significant capital behind those priorities and contribute to China's growing national conversation about how decarbonization can advance economic and social development together.



Read the **project report** on our website

The initiative focused on two strategically important provinces:



3 Multi-stakeholder workshops

2 Provincial Climate Transition Risks Assessments

2 Provincial Climate Transition Funds designed

$5 BILLION

Potential capital mobilization over the next five to ten years through two proposed provincial Climate Transition Funds.

CHINA

Sustainable Supply Chain Academy

A Collaborative Approach to Decarbonizing the Supply Chain

THE CHALLENGE

For many companies, some of the most difficult emissions to address sit outside their own operations. Reducing supply chain emissions requires brands and suppliers to solve technical, financial, and operational challenges together.

Traditional top-down compliance approaches can identify targets, but they do not always create the collaboration needed to implement solutions across complex supply chains.

ISC'S APPROACH

ISC drew on models from outside the climate sector to find new approaches to sharing expertise at scale. Drawing inspiration from the Project ECHO methodology, originally developed to spread specialized knowledge through collaborative learning networks, ISC adapted the model to test a new approach to climate knowledge exchange.

The Sustainable Supply Chain Academy brought multinational companies, suppliers, sustainability professionals, and industry partners together in a collaborative learning platform where participants shared practical implementation experience, learned from peers and experts, and co-developed solutions to real decarbonization challenges.

Inaugural cohort

33 industrial managers from **27** companies including Bayer, Mercedes-Benz, Sony, Dow, and SAIC, with partnerships from Shanghai Jiao Tong University and CN100.

CHINA

Sustainable Supply Chain Academy

A Collaborative Approach to Decarbonizing the Supply Chain

WHAT CHANGED

The Academy built a knowledge-sharing network across organizations, allowing participants to learn from one another and apply proven approaches within their own operations. The program demonstrated the value of collaborative learning as a tool for accelerating supply chain climate action. Participants gained practical strategies they could apply within their organizations while building relationships with peers confronting similar implementation challenges.

The inaugural cohort laid the foundation for continued regional collaboration, peer learning, and future investment in supply chain decarbonization.

> ***Everyone is not competing with each other, but truly and openly exchanging ideas. I feel like I have gained 10 years of experience.***

Wang Haisong, Ph.D.
Director of Dual Carbon Business Products
Shanghai Electric Digital Technology

90%
Found the co-creation model valuable

33
Industrial managers participated

85%
Reported improved emissions reduction planning

27
Companies represented

ORGANIZATION

Board of Directors

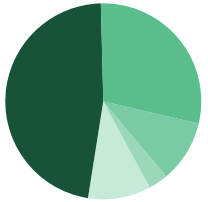
- Taryn Akiyama
- Dr. Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux
- Candice Eggerss
- Shivani Ganguly
  Treasurer
- George Hamilton
- Adin Miller
- Pradeep Nair
- Dr. Susan Pepin
  Secretary
- Dr. J. Marshall Shepherd
- Eugene Sutton
  Vice Chair
- Nathaniel Smith
- Derek Walker
  Board Chair

ISC's strength has always been its ability to bring people, knowledge, and resources together and turn them into action. In a changing climate landscape, that ability matters more than ever.

Derek Walker
Board Chair

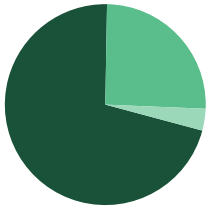
Financials

Fiscal Year 2025



Funding Sources

47%	Government	$3,444,046
29%	Foundations and Corporations	$2,123,390
10%	Funds Received Prior to and Used in FY	$748,166
3%	Individuals	$235,896
11%	Other Revenue	$760,234
	Total Revenue	**$7,311,732**



Expenses

71%	Programs	$5,199,280
25%	Administration	$1,855,655
4%	Fundraising	$256,797
	Total Expenses	**$7,311,732**

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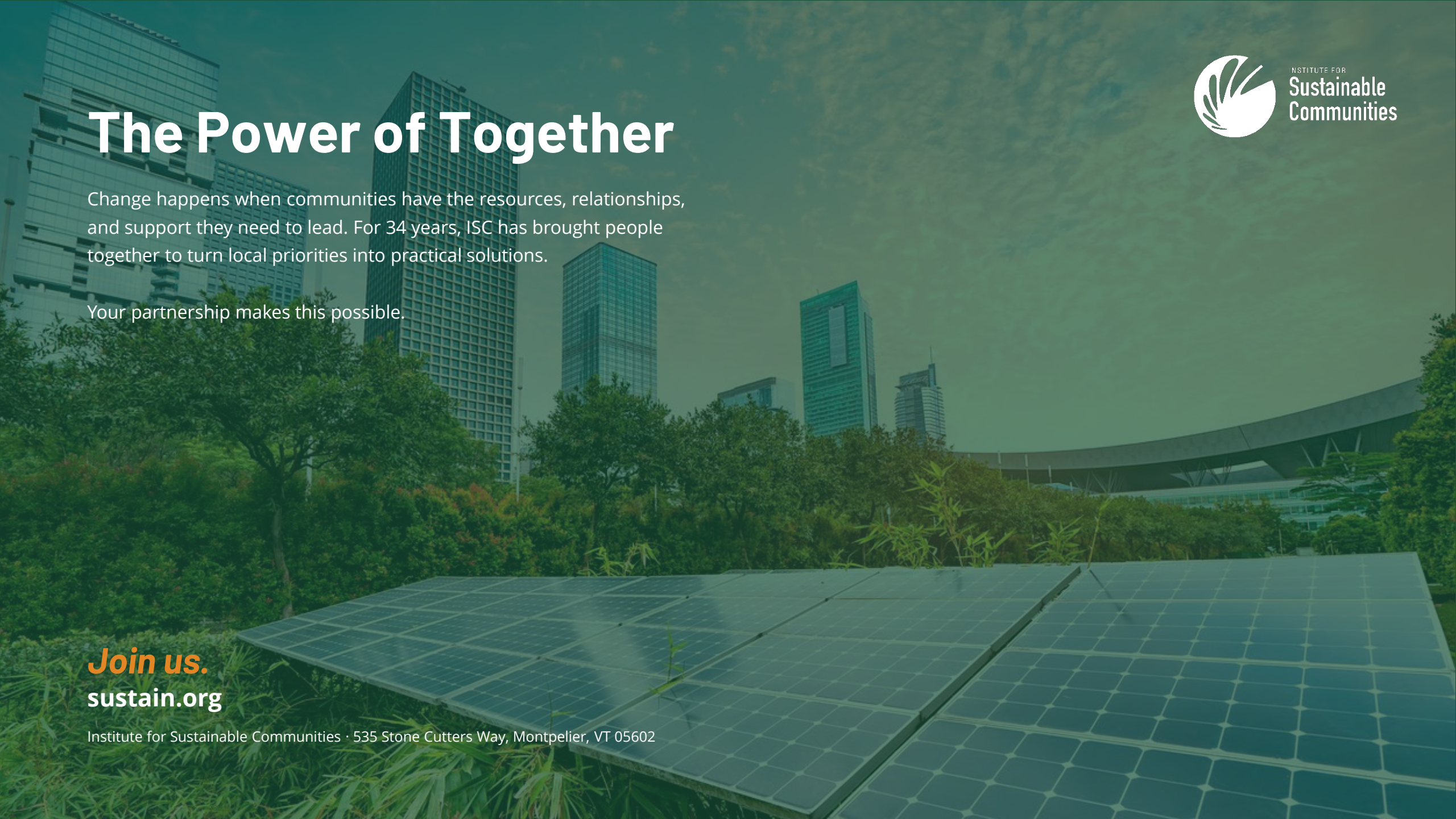

The Power of Together

Change happens when communities have the resources, relationships, and support they need to lead. For 34 years, ISC has brought people together to turn local priorities into practical solutions.

Your partnership makes this possible.

Join us.

sustain.org

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