



DRIVING TRANSFORMATION

Behavior, Energy & Climate Change (BECC) / November 12-15, 2023 / Sacramento, CA

Co-Convened by

Stanford

Environmental and Energy
Policy Analysis Center

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California Institute
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THE **BANATAO**
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ACEEE ::

Empowered: A Case Study on Energy Equity Storytelling

November 13, 2023

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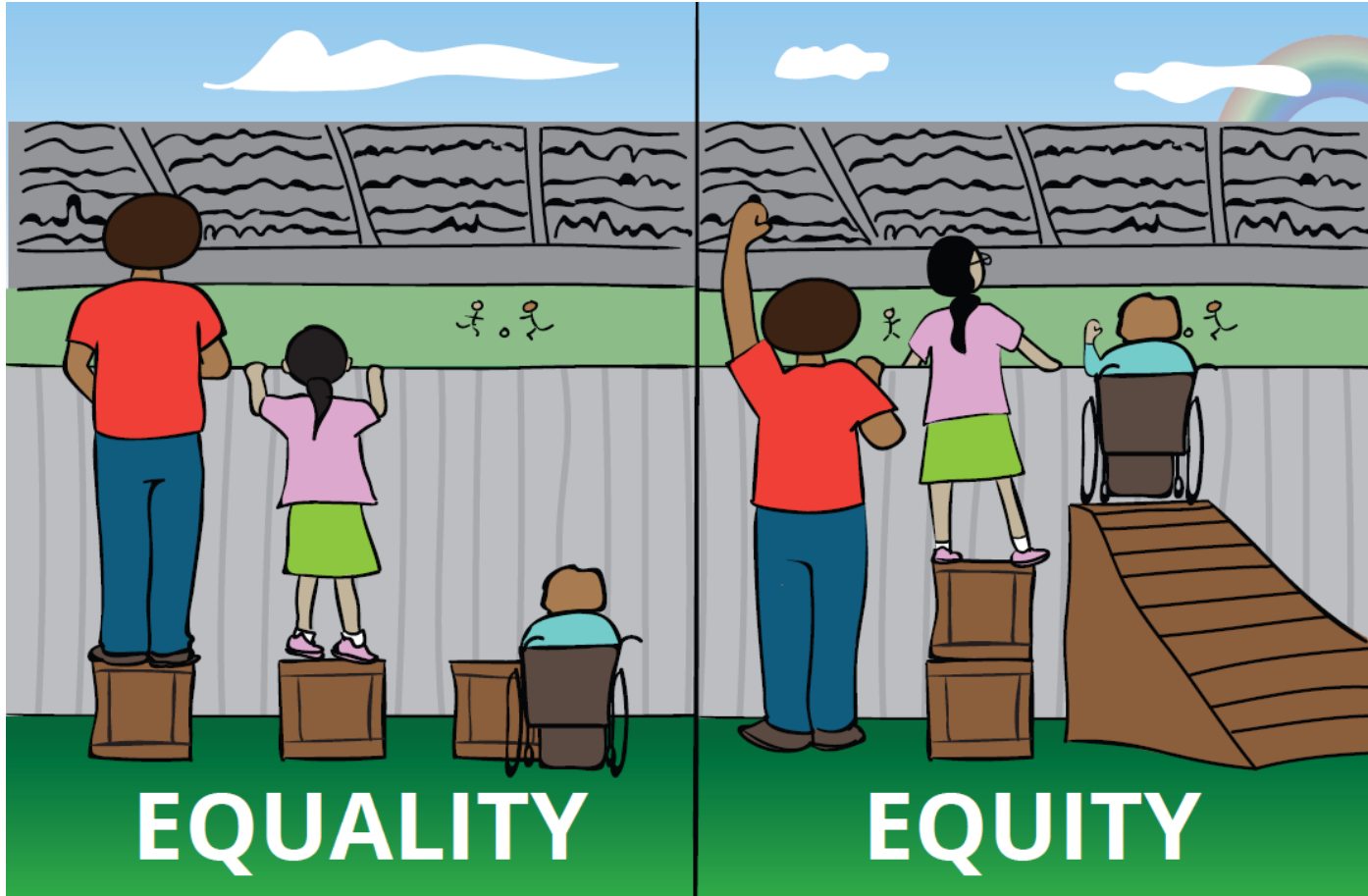
Convened by:

Presentation Agenda

1. Definition of Equity.
2. Introduction to the Website.
3. Definition of Energy Insecurity.
4. Introduction to Elevate and the Partnership.
5. Project Creation.
6. Meet Ruth Wells.
7. Project Dissemination.
8. Discussion Questions.



What is equity?



Equity:
Fairness or
justice in how
people are
treated.

Empowered

A storytelling website

STORIES FOR ENERGY EQUITY

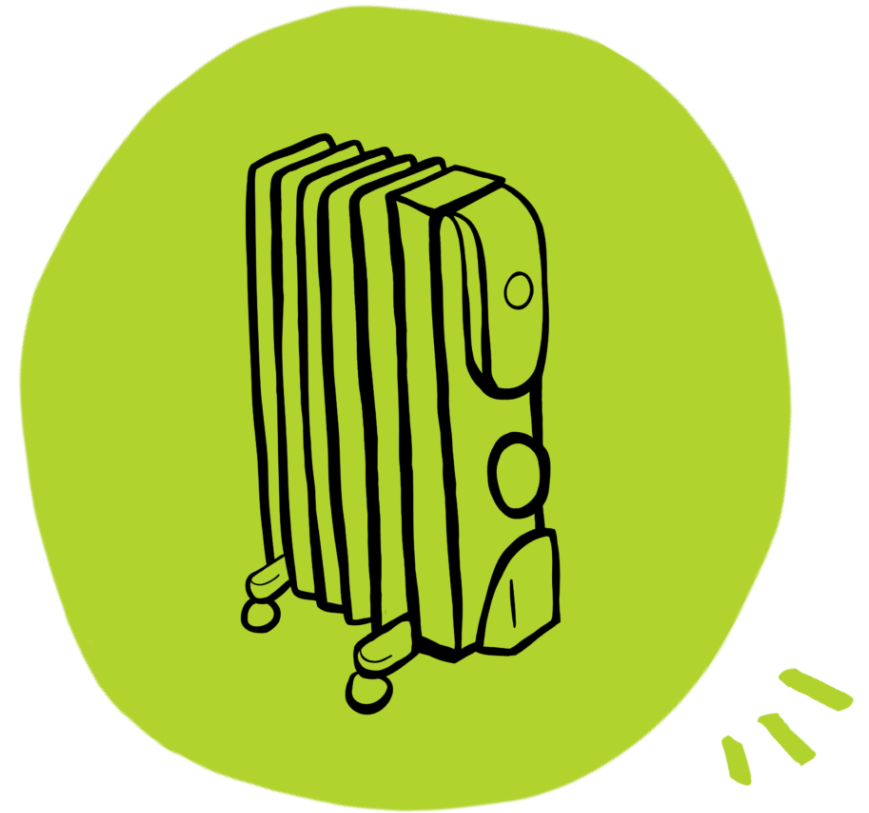
Millions of Americans struggle every year to meet their basic energy needs. Nearly 25 million families (or 20% of all U.S. households) have to make painful choices between buying food and medications or paying their utility bills. When faced with these challenges, many people empower themselves to find creative strategies to cope.

These are their stories.



Energy Insecurity

- Defined as the inability to meet basic household energy needs.
- Affects over 33 million households or 27% of all homes in the U.S.
- Means much more than paying or not paying bills - speaks to how people live their lives.
- Disparities in energy insecurity:
 - 41% of renters vs. 20% of homeowners
 - 52% of Black households vs. 20% white



Meet Elevate

- We are a mission-driven nonprofit organization that seeks to create a world in which everyone has clean and affordable heat, cooling, power, and water in their homes and communities – no matter who they are or where they live.



ELEVATE

Equity through
climate action



The Partnership

- Elevate partnered with local Chicago artist/activist Tonika Lewis Johnson and Team.
- Tonika is known for the "Folded Map Project," as well as "Inequity For Sale."
- Tonika brought on a creative team: web designer, animator, illustrator, and sound engineer.



ELEVATE



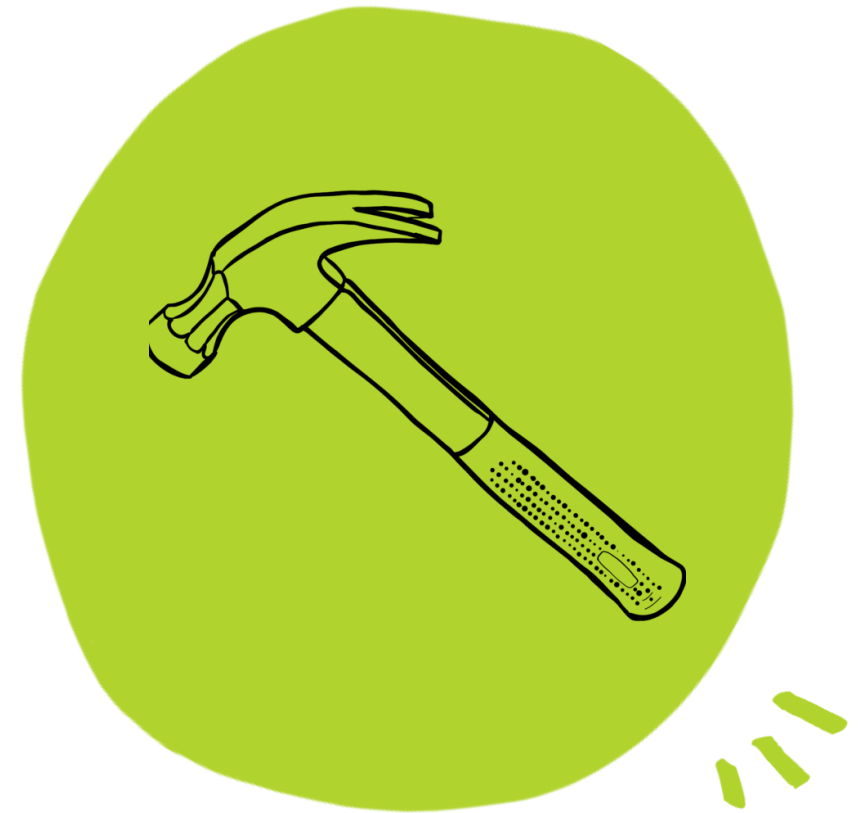
FOLDED MAP[™]
PROJECT

**INEQUITY
FOR SALE**



Project Creation

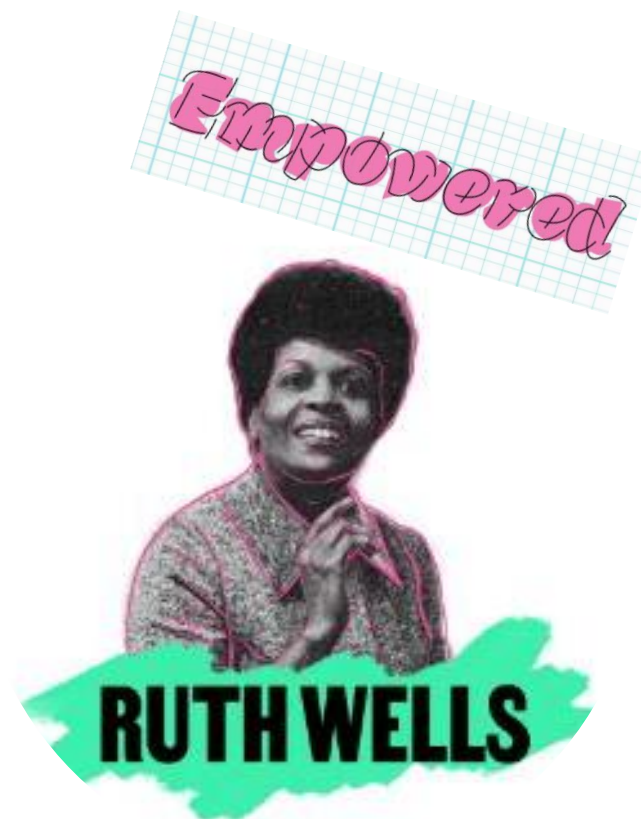
- 6 total interviews with recorded audio.
- Use of historical audio recording from the Newberry Library.
- Topics covered:
 - Various Chicago neighborhoods and housing types.
 - External assistance programs (i.e. LIHEAP, PIPP, etc.).
 - Importance of weatherization for reducing bills.
 - Impacts of extreme heat.



AND WHILE **UTILITY BILL** AND
ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
EXIST, FINDING THE **RIGHT PROGRAM**
CAN OFTEN BE A **CHALLENGE** IN ITSELF.

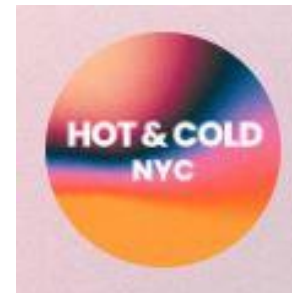
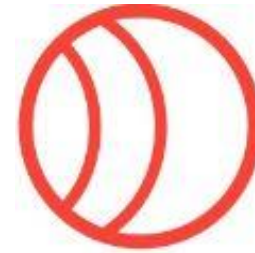
Meet Ruth Wells

- Leader in the Contract Buyers League land sale contract homeowner in the early 1960s.
- Her story showcases the impacts of discriminatory housing practices such as redlining.
- Examples such as hers make the case for *targeted investments*.



Project Dissemination

- Featured on the Hot & Cold NYC campaign site (Dr. Diana Hernandez).
- Presented at the Communications Network (ComNet) annual conference this year.
- Highlighted in an Elevate-hosted a webinar titled “Powering Homes, Empowering Lives” to discuss importance of research and art/activism.



Powering Homes, Empowering Lives: A Dialogue on Energy and Housing Security

Learn how grassroots art and activism drive change and foster resilient communities, as well as how future research can guide solutions and the need for targeted investments.

Wednesday, September 13

2-3 pm CT On Zoom

Featuring Tonika Lewis Johnson, Dr. Diana Hernandez, and Kyra D. Woods.



Discussion Questions

- How can the lived experiences featured in a project like *Empowered* act as input to more equitable programs and policy design?
- What other applications are there for data-meets-storytelling projects like *Empowered*?
- How do we ensure that if projects like *Empowered* are replicated, that we are being ethical in our collection of stories (data)?

