



Regeneración

Pájaro Valley Climate Action

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2029



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are proud to share Regeneración's first strategic plan, affirming our commitment to achieving climate and environmental justice and centering community-driven solutions. We deeply appreciate everyone who shared their expertise and perspectives with us during the planning process.

Strategic Planning Team

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Natalie Olivas, former Community Organizer, Regeneración
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Interview & Survey Participants

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Donna Murphy, Retired, UCSC
Ernestina Solorio, Farmworker
Felipe Hernandez, Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors, 4th District
Kirsten Liske, Ecology Action
Natalie Olivas, former Community Organizer, Regeneración
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Additional community members and organizational partners who completed the survey

Regeneración Staff

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Regeneración is a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives,
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THE TIME IS NOW

Climate change is a human-made crisis that affects everyone, but its first and worst effects are on **frontline communities**, people in low income communities of color whose daily lives are directly and negatively impacted "first and worst" by the effects of climate change – e.g., rising temperatures, droughts, wildfires, floods, and other severe weather events. Residents and the workforce in frontline communities are in harm's way, yet have contributed the least to the crisis historically, and have the least resources and power to change their circumstances. **This cannot be accepted as fate or a problem to solve later.**

Climate change is a threat to the current and future health, social, and economic well-being of residents and the agricultural workforce in the Pájaro Valley. At the time of this writing in June 2023, the Pájaro Valley was recently impacted by drought and flooding – most notably, extreme flooding caused by the breach of the Pájaro River levee. The flooding forced approximately 1,700 residents to evacuate and caused severe damage to homes, businesses, and agricultural fields, which is likely to take years to recover from.

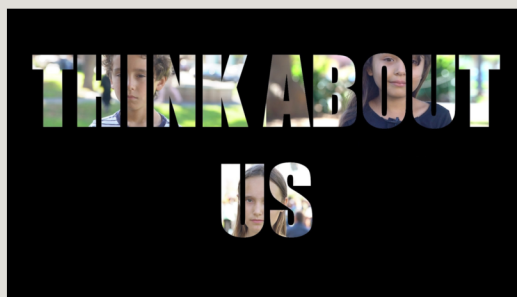
The experience, especially of the people of the town of Pájaro, is a call to action for the wider community and region. The time is now to take collective action to protect people and our natural environment.

We invite you to join Regeneración on this journey.

“We are not responding at the pace that's needed at all levels of society. . .

The less we do, the worse it's going to be, and it's already going to be bad. Even if we do the most we can right now, we're still going to have impacts.

-Strategic Plan Interviewee





OUR STORY

Regeneración – Pájaro Valley Climate Action (Regeneración) was founded in 2016 after a series of conversations with community leaders illuminated the need for a Watsonville-based organization that focuses on **climate justice**, which “recognizes the disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income communities and communities of color around the world, the people and places least responsible for the problem.” [1]

Since its inception, Regeneración has been centered on the needs and interests of the community. The organization’s work grew out of community-based research conducted in 2017-18, and the organization’s founders were a diverse group of community members who were raised in Watsonville and/or living in the Pájaro Valley.

Over the last several years, Regeneración has worked to achieve justice in partnership with many local organizations, including environmental, health, arts, and social service entities. As an example, Regeneración’s Climate of Hope forums have included collaboration with and drawn widespread audiences including people working in agriculture, activists, students, and state-wide agencies across California.

Con diversas voces del Valle del Pájaro y otros lugares

Oradores principales:

- **L. Vance Taylor:**
Director de la Oficina de Acceso y Necesidades Funcionales
Oficina del Gobernador de Servicios de Emergencia
- **Ana Rosa Rizo-Centino:**
Directora Ejecutiva de One Step a La Vez

Panel de Resistencia Climática

Pajaro Valley Arts presenta
Alma Sagrada: Cultivando Ritmos Naturales

Foro en línea con interpretación al español
Transmitido en directo en Facebook
Regístrate: www.regenerationpajarovalley.org

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 regenerationpv



[1] Source: University of California, Center for Climate Justice.
<https://centerclimatejustice.universityofcalifornia.edu/what-is-climate-justice/>

In June 2022, Regeneración was selected to join the Federal Justice40 Accelerator Cohort, which supports climate and environmental justice organizations in building their capacity, partnerships, and readiness to access government funding to implement community-designed solutions. Regeneración received funding and year-long technical assistance, which helped prepare the organization to develop this strategic plan.

Now, **Regeneración sits at the crossroads of the global climate and justice crises**, with an unprecedented opportunity to effect change. Among those opportunities is the federal infrastructure bill that passed in November 2021, which dedicates historic levels of investment in environmental and climate-related programs, including climate resilience and weatherization, clean energy, charging stations for electric vehicles, and access to clean drinking water.

Many of these programs require community engagement to ensure local climate solutions are grounded in current community priorities, which aligns with Regeneración's purpose, projects, policy priorities, and partnerships.

Regeneración's history of building bridges between public agencies and frontline justice organizations and partnering on climate adaptation and mitigation projects will help ensure equity is centered in regional responses, including equitable distribution of funding.

This places the organization in a prime position to pursue these and other resources as they become available.

Regeneración is a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives and is guided by a volunteer Advisory Board.



OUR PLANNING PROCESS



In early 2023, Regeneración launched a six-month process to develop its first strategic plan. Key planning steps included:

- An analysis of **Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats** (SCOT), based on a review of **background materials** and input provided by past and current advisors, partners, volunteers, and elected officials through six **interviews** and a bilingual **survey**.
- **Strategic planning meetings** with Regeneración’s staff, Advisory Board members, and other committed volunteers.



The SCOT analysis highlighted several themes, which informed the development of the 5-year plan.

<div>Strengths</div> <div>Regeneración's assets, unique qualities</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explicit focus on climate and environmental justice.• Trusted relationships and presence in the community through its outreach, education, and advocacy activities.• Role as a bridge between community voices, policymakers, and other organizations working explicitly on climate and/or justice in the region.</div>	<div>Challenges</div> <div>Regeneración's areas for growth, improvement</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Still a young and small organization, with staff capacity and resource constraints.• Has a broad mission and many activities, which stretches staff capacity and resources, making it difficult to determine the organization's impact.• Has not had a strategic plan with a clear, focused set of priorities.• Has not had a leadership and active volunteer pool that fully represents the demographics of the Pájaro Valley.</div>
<div>Threats</div> <div>External trends: potential barriers</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• The existential threat of climate crisis affects everyone, yet there is a disconnect between the severity of the threat and the current actions taken by government, businesses, community-based organizations, and the general public.• Funding for climate action and climate justice is unpredictable, generally not prioritized by public and private funders.• Advocacy and policy changes may not be supported by everyone or welcomed by people in positions of power. As a grassroots organization working to build relationships, expand its impact, and ensure sustainability, Regeneración will need to be thoughtful and strategic, carefully considering the consequences of its advocacy work in particular.</div>	<div>Opportunities</div> <div>External trends: possibilities</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased focus on and funding for climate and environmental justice.• Many local and regional opportunities to educate, engage, and advocate for/with youth, community leaders, organizations, and collaboratives.• Increased and ongoing need for Regeneración’s role as a bridge between community voices, policymakers, and other organizations working explicitly on climate and/or justice in the region.</div>



When asked what advice they would give to Regeneración while planning for the future, interviewees and survey respondents offered suggestions that fell within these broad themes:

- **Clarify the organization’s mission (purpose), values, and focus.** Everything else flows from that.
- **Recognize and build upon Regeneración’s strength and influence as a bridge** between community members most harmed by environmental racism (past and current), those in positions of power to make changes, and other people/partners working on environmental justice.
- **Strengthen Regeneración’s organizational capacity and infrastructure** to effectively manage current commitments and pursue future opportunities that will increase financial stability and sustainability. This includes creating and implementing a plan for transitioning leadership in the organization to people who better reflect the makeup of the Pájaro Valley community – prioritizing younger Black, Indigenous, Latine, People of Color (BILPOC) people from native Spanish or Indigenous language-speaking backgrounds, consistent with Regeneración’s mission, vision, and values.

“ Make a plan for transitioning leadership in the organization to younger people of color. This can’t be symbolic, tokenistic, or performative. Young folks of color are at the frontlines of the climate crisis, and those closest to a problem understand it and how to move forward in ways others can’t. Maintain/expand the wonderfully inclusive, multi-generational, multi-racial, multi-class membership but prioritize younger people of color leading more.

– Strategic Planning Survey Respondent ”

OUR STRATEGIC ROADMAP

Drawing on the themes from the SCOT analysis, Regeneración developed a high-level strategic “roadmap” – including new vision, mission, and values statements – to guide the organization over the next five years.



Vision

A safe, vibrant, climate resilient Pájaro Valley, where every person is healthy, thriving, and living in harmony with the natural world.

Mission

Achieve **climate justice** through **community-driven solutions**

Values

- **Community Voice** – We value and honor the history of the original inhabitants and stewards of the land in the Pájaro Valley. We listen to and center frontline, community voices, especially of those most impacted by the harms of climate change, including Black, Indigenous, Latine and people of color, people with low incomes, and those who are marginalized based on language, disabilities, immigration status, or other characteristics. We recognize them as having the solutions for the Pájaro Valley.
- **Collaboration and Partnership** – We build relationships based on shared values, shared power, trust, respect, and a collective commitment to climate justice.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – We commit to listening to, representing, and including the diverse voices, perspectives, values, and skills of Pájaro Valley community members throughout our work.
- **Equity** – We work to eliminate systemic and structural barriers, such as environmental racism and institutionalized sexism so that all residents have good health and economic well-being.
- **Justice and Liberation** – We strive to achieve human rights and freedom from all oppression, with the ultimate goal being justice and liberation for everyone.
- **Joy and Love** – We approach our work to end the climate crisis with joy and love, knowing it offers the opportunity to focus our time and energy on personal and community health and connections, and on achieving justice, eliminating toxins, and reducing inequities.

OUR STRATEGIC ROADMAP

We use multiple **strategies** to advance **community-driven** solutions that are created, led, and owned by community members. [2]

- **Community voice:** We center past and present local wisdom and the needs of community members who are most harmed by climate change due to structural and institutional racism, discovering and elevating the stories of how climate change is impacting the Pájaro Valley community.
- **Bridge-building:** We build on our strength and influence as a bridge between community members most harmed by environmental racism (past and current), those in positions of power to make changes, and other people and partners working on environmental justice.
- **Community engagement, outreach, and education:** We collect and share data, local stories, and other information on climate change and environmental justice. We support community members to take action to adapt to and halt the damaging effects of a changing climate.
- **Leadership development:** We grow new young environmental justice champions by providing them a platform and amplifying their voices, actions, and leadership, and expand leadership in underrepresented communities to inform local strategies and decisions required to respond and adapt to climate change.
- **Collaborative partnerships:** We build relationships with and a shared sense of urgency in community leaders, grassroots groups, non-profit agencies, researchers, and public agencies to collectively work on climate justice.
- **Policy advocacy:** We inform and engage policymakers to take action on climate change and environmental justice. We inform and engage researchers to focus on the local impacts of climate change and engage with the community in a respectful and collaborative manner. We advocate for just climate solutions that have been created by and for community members who are most impacted by the harms of climate change.
- **Organizational sustainability:** We ensure that the organization has the necessary funds and resources to carry out our mission and demonstrate our impact.



[2] Definition of community-driven adapted from:
The Bridgespan Group. Community-Driven Change.
<https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/community-driven-change>

OUR BIG, UNIFYING GOAL

Over the next five years, Regeneración will prioritize its resources and efforts to achieve this overarching strategic goal:

Co-create, promote, and ensure implementation of community-driven, just climate solutions in local agricultural communities, serving as a beacon for other communities across the state.

We will work toward this goal by focusing on achieving key milestones within 1, 3, and 5 years in these priority areas, each of which is described further in the following pages:

1. Community Leaders & Advocates
2. Organizational Partners
3. Programs
4. Organizational Infrastructure
5. Funding
6. Staffing

Specific activities, roles, timelines, and evaluation metrics for the milestones in each priority area may be modified or defined further in annual work plans so that they reflect any changes in organizational resources and social, political, and economic conditions.

In addition, as Regeneración continues its current activities and considers whether to pursue new opportunities, the Advisory Board and staff will continuously assess its existing commitments, capacity, and resources and decide whether Regeneración should take on one or more of these roles.

- **Lead:** take a visible and active leadership role to ensure there is action and accountability, consistent with Regeneración's values and priorities.
- **Join:** be an active partner and participant in an initiative or effort led by another entity.
- **Support:** offer one-time or short-term assistance for an effort or initiative that is led by another entity and aligns with Regeneración's mission. This could include letters of support, public testimony, or other actions, based on the organization's capacity.
- **Monitor:** stay informed on key issues, the people involved, and whether or when action will be needed, but Regeneración doesn't need to be "in action" on the issue all the time.

“ Stay flexible - we are seeing the first wave of weather changes from climate change. Be on the lookout for opportunities, needs, and gaps. Stay focused on community and equity for those who will bear disproportionate impacts.

- Strategic Planning Interviewee

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Priority 1: Community Leaders & Advocates



Desired Result

A diverse and active group of community advocates and advisors (farmworkers, students, teachers, business owners, etc) that support, guide, and help Regeneración achieve its goals.

Milestones & Activities

1 Year (achieve by January 1, 2025)	3 Years (achieve by January 1, 2027)	5 Years (achieve by January 1, 2029)
Recruit, engage, and support 20 dedicated volunteers (students, farmworkers, retirees, professionals from various fields) annually	Recruit, engage, and support 25 dedicated volunteers (students, farmworkers, retirees, professionals from various fields) annually	Recruit, engage, and support 30 dedicated volunteers (students, farmworkers, retirees, professionals from various fields) annually
Secure volunteer financial expertise (Advisory Board or finance/fund development committee)	Develop annual schedule and protocol for all advisory meetings and listening sessions held by Regeneración and/or the Climate Justice Collaborative	Volunteers guide and help implement Regeneración’s work through one or more of these roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisory Board• Fundraising support• Event volunteers• Farmworker listening sessions• Student listening sessions• Program volunteers• Media and marketing team
Hold listening sessions for farmworkers and students as part of Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) planning process		
Consult 3 other organizations about how community advocates and advisors support, guide, and help them achieve their mission		

Priority 2: Organizational Partnerships



Desired Result

Regeneración has expanded its capacity to fulfill its mission through formal partnerships and collaboration with other local and regional community-based organizations, initiatives, researchers, government agencies, and funders.

Milestones & Activities

1 Year (achieve by January 1, 2025)	3 Years (achieve by January 1, 2027)	5 Years (achieve by January 1, 2029)
Decide what Regeneración will Lead, Join, Support, or Monitor for the next 2 years	Map out partnership ecosystem	Key contacts and relationships are defined and formalized for all program areas
Develop one-to-one meeting plan (identify agencies and individuals to meet with, develop questions for exploring partnerships – e.g., identify shared goals, current initiatives, future plans, tracking systems)	Revisit what Regeneración aims to Lead, Join, Support, or Monitor for the next 3 years	
	Continue to build relationships, utilizing one-to-one meeting plan	
Continue Climate and Equity convenings while seeking funding for the Climate Justice Collaborative	Monterey Bay Climate Justice Collaborative is operational, with Regeneración as coordinator	<p>Funding opportunities are identified on an ongoing basis in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Climate Resilience Planning & Implementation • Organizing & Disaster Preparation and Response • Arts & Culture • Education & Youth Organizing • Policy & Advocacy <p>The Climate Justice Collaborative is driving community-led climate justice solutions throughout Monterey Bay</p>

Priority 3: Programs

Desired Result

Regeneración's programs are fully established and operational, with clear paths to sustainability.

Milestones & Activities

1 Year (achieve by January 1, 2025)	3 Years (achieve by January 1, 2027)	5 Years (achieve by January 1, 2029)
Equitable Climate Resilience Planning & Implementation Program: Transformative Climate Communities planning process is underway	Education & Youth Organizing Program: Program is operating	<p>All programs are operating in these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Climate Resilience Planning & Implementation • Organizing & Disaster Preparation and Response • Arts & Culture • Education & Youth Organizing • Policy & Advocacy <p>Explore possibility of expanding programs to neighboring communities (e.g., Salinas, 101 corridor cities)</p>
Organizing & Disaster Preparation & Response Program: Partner with post-disaster researchers	Policy & Advocacy Program: Goals are developed for local, state, and national advocacy	
Arts & Culture Program: Partner with Friends of State Parks and other organizations; media outreach to share stories	Maintain all other programs; Grow as resources allow	
<p>Education & Youth Organizing Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit 4-10 classrooms to build relationships for developing program • Explore student-conducted Community Needs Assessment concept as an after-school program, Watsonville High School Environment Academy, high school club, or Career Technical Education class focus 		

Priority 4: Organizational Infrastructure



Desired Result

Regeneración has the organizational infrastructure and capacity needed to foster continued growth and ensure sustainability.

Milestones & Activities

1 Year (achieve by January 1, 2025)	3 Years (achieve by January 1, 2027)	5 Years (achieve by January 1, 2029)
Communication strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize new email newsletter system Explore text system options 	Incorporate open dialogue with and comments from farmworker and student constituents into program development	Programs are developed based on ongoing, open dialogue with and comments from farmworker and student constituents
Advisory Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define policies, roles, and sub-committees Implement Advisory Board nomination and recruitment process 	Recruit and onboard 4-5 new Advisory Board members	Advisory Board has 8-10 active members with clear roles, terms, committees, and separate constituent advisory groups
Staff and Organizational Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish system for training new staff in policies and procedures 	Continue to clarify internal roles and develop staff leadership Maximize use of available systems and procedures from Community Initiatives (e.g., Bloomerang, Intaact, Limelight, etc.) Expand use of available systems and procedures as staff expands	Organizational policies and procedures are developed, clear, and accessible to all staff, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable pay structure Continuous improvement and evaluation of workplace culture Office and meeting space accommodates organization's needs Organizational history and knowledge are documented and shared

Priority 5: Funding



Desired Result

Increased amount, diversity, and sustainability of Regeneración's revenue.

Milestones & Activities

1 Year (achieve by January 1, 2025)	3 Years (achieve by January 1, 2027)	5 Years (achieve by January 1, 2029)
Annual budget is at least \$500,000 retained revenue	Annual budget is at least \$800,000 retained revenue	Annual budget is at least \$1 million retained revenue and will support all programs
Identify resources and internal infrastructure needed for Regeneración to partner on applications for large implementation grants	Partner on applications for large implementation projects (e.g., Transformative Climate Communities)	Regeneración is the community coordination partner on large implementation projects
Secure seed funding for the Monterey Bay Climate Justice Collaborative	Secure 3-year funding for the Monterey Bay Climate Justice Collaborative	Ongoing funding for the Monterey Bay Climate Justice Collaborative is secured and sustainable
Regeneración has a funding plan in place that will support a leadership transition over the next 5 years — e.g., Executive leadership reflects our frontline community population and speaks (at minimum) English and Spanish fluently	Secure funding to implement Executive Leadership Transition plan	Executive Leadership Transition is completed

Priority 6: Staffing

Desired Result

A robust, effective, competitively compensated team of program and administrative staff that are reflective of the community.

Milestones & Activities

1 Year (achieve by January 1, 2025)	3 Years (achieve by January 1, 2027)	5 Years (achieve by January 1, 2029)
Hire part-time fund development staff	Hire program staff as funding is secured	Regeneración has sufficient fund development, program, and administrative staff that are skilled, well-paid, and reflective of the community
Develop job descriptions for additional program and administrative positions; Hire as funding is secured	Hire Operations Manager and/or other support/administrative staff as funding is secured	
Plan Executive Leadership transition, as defined in the funding plan (developed for Priority 5: Funding)	Implement Executive Leadership Transition plan	Executive leadership reflects our Frontline community population and speaks (at minimum) English and Spanish fluently



PHOTO CREDITS

Regeneración wishes to acknowledge and thank the following people for sharing their photographs that help tell the story of our community, partners, and staff in action.

Page	Photographer
1	Nancy Faulstich (top left), Luis Mendoza, Superior Media (top right), Samantha Cruz (bottom)
3	Eugenia Renteria
4	Jennifer Robinson (top), Gianluca Tessicini (flyer)
5	Unknown (left), Luis Mendoza, Superior Media (right)
7	Unknown
8	Nancy Faulstich (left), Luis Mendoza, Superior Media (middle, right)
9	Luis Mendoza, Superior Media
16	Andi Susantio