A Letter from the Executive Director

The world has changed since Transition US started in January 2009. The key assumptions and “inevitalities” that are at the core of Transition have begun to manifest. As a result, more people are awakening to the need—and the opportunity!—to remake our towns and cities.

The five key assumptions the Transition Movement is built on are:

1. Altered weather (including destructive weather events) and altered economies as a result of Climate Change are now inevitable.
2. Our communities currently lack resilience, which is defined as the ability of any system to hold together and maintain its ability to function in the face of shocks from the outside.
3. Community-level resilience will be absolutely crucial in the coming years.
4. To build community resilience we must take action collectively, and we must act now.
5. By unleashing the collective genius of our communities it is possible to transition our local economies and communities to new ways of living that are resilient, and are ultimately more nourishing, fulfilling, and sustainable.

The transition to resilience that is the purpose of Transition US has a greater and more widely recognized urgency than it had in 2009 when Transition US was formed.

In 2009, the world had not yet experienced the severe acceleration of Arctic ice melt that we had this past summer. In September it was reported that the Arctic ice had shrunk to the smallest extent ever recorded – 3.5 M sq kilometers. That is ½ of what it was 40 years ago and it is expected to all be gone in just 4 more summers.

In 2009, central and eastern parts of the country had not experienced heat waves and droughts like the ones we had this past summer. Triple digit numbers across much of the Midwestern states caused corn prices to rise by 40%. Raging forest fires in Colorado took 3 weeks to extinguish, and a “super derecho”—a long line of thunderstorms—swept from Illinois to the Atlantic Coast, killing at least thirteen people and leaving 3.7 million customers without power.

When Transition US started in January 2009 the US had not yet experienced Hurricane Sandy. Sandy was the largest Atlantic hurricane on record. It devastated coastal areas of New Jersey and New York, doing an estimated $50B in damages and leaving tens of thousands of people homeless.
Adding to these distresses, the International Energy Agency recently stated if the world is to prevent global warming from exceeding 2-degrees Celsius than no more than one-third of the world’s already discovered reserves of fossil fuels can be burned. 2-degrees Celsius is the increase widely recognized by climate scientists as being unlivable. This means we must leave most of the world’s coal, oil and gas in the ground or we will face supercharged heat waves, floods and storms.

If climate predictions are right, this year was just the beginning. Transition US is tackling this head on -- just as government and every one of us must do. Transition US is catalyzing and supporting grassroots citizen action. Transition Initiatives are in 130 communities in 34 states with Initiatives forming in 200 other towns and cities across the nation.

Along this journey we have witnessed ordinary people becoming extraordinary, stepping out, working with others to create positive change. Transition Colorado raised $1.5M to develop and incubate a shift to local food. Transition Sarasota’s gleaning project has yielded 75,000 lbs of food to their local food bank. Transition Whatcom, WA created a successful skills share day with 600 people attending. Transition Joshua Tree, CA learned and is teaching how to garden in the desert. The Transition Initiative in NE Seattle received a $50,000 grant for a tool lending library. Transition Cadillac, MI catalyzed 100 new food gardens and Transition Marbletown, NY opened a free health clinic. And there is so much more!

There has never been a time in history when we have all been called to action in such a manner; where life on earth is in the balance. The future is calling out for all of us to take heroic action. And that is how we see the volunteers in towns across the country—they are heroes working tirelessly to build a better world for us all. Transition US is deeply honored to assist and support these heroes and we are committed to fostering broad participation in resilience-building actions across the country.

Thank you for all that you do!

Carolyn Stayton
Executive Director
Transition US
Financial Overview

To support the work required to transition the United States to resilience, Transition US has assembled a nimble team comprised of: 19 active Transition Trainers ranging in age, geographic location and ethnicity, a modest core staff of 2.25 FTE, and a growing cadre of emerging community leaders who source heartwarming local responses and share those with all of us.

Financial support for Transition US began with an angel donor through the Post Carbon Institute. In 2012 we were fortunate recipients of $109,100 of funding from foundations and corporations and individual support of $28,336. Our 2-day Transition LAUNCH training and sales of the In Transition 2.0 DVD provided additional revenue streams.

In 2012 TUS was a $164,000 organization. In 2013-2015, we will be growing our programs in order to serve the rapidly escalating need. To do that we will be increasing our budget to $250,000. The total revenue for 2012 from all sources was supplemented with additional countless volunteer hours. Of the funds raised and expended, Transition US spends 8% on administration, 12% on strategic planning and fundraising and 80% on direct programming.

Transition Training

Transition LAUNCH is a 2-day, on-site course that is offered across the country. In 2012, Transition US delivered 17 LAUNCH trainings with 3 being in states new to Transition. In over 4 years of operation TUS has delivered 95 LAUNCH trainings in a total of 34 states.

Transition THRIVE is a two-day training for advanced Transition Initiative leaders. THRIVE was piloted in Chicago in July 2012 with 33 participants from all over the country and Canada.

Effective Groups Training is being piloted in one-day modules for the mid-Hudson Valley Transition Initiatives in New York State. Topics include: Running effective groups, communication skills, building a culture of trust and collaboration, moving through conflict, power-sharing, leadership & decision-making, facilitation and performance assessment. Beginning in Spring 2013 Effective Groups Training will be offered nationally.

Train the Trainer is an advanced course designed to add new LAUNCH trainers to key locals across the country. Twelve new trainers representing a spread of geography, age, and ethnicity graduated from this advanced course in July of 2012 building TUS’s regional training infrastructure.
Transition Initiative Support & Cultivating Leadership Program

Transition US (TUS) offered Transition Initiatives (TIs) broad spectrum support in 2012, including: direct mentorship assistance, networking, connecting, and skill-building resources. As part of this program, TUS staff and trainers identified specific resources that would be helpful to meet a Transition Initiative’s particular needs. These resources were offered in the following ways:

**Monthly TeleSalon:** World Café style forum where leaders and beginners in the Transition movement share their ideas and make suggestions to each other in real time. These calls, along with the LAUNCH training, and on-going mentorship (through in-person meetings, phone calls and email correspondence) fostered the emergence of the 22 new Transition Initiatives.

**Virtual, online, long distance training:** Transition US hosted 17 online events in addition to the monthly TeleSalons. Events covered an array of topics including: Starting and Running Local Economy Centers, Faith and Transition, Effective Decision-Making, Shifting to a Core Team and Building a Vibrant Local Economy. Several events featured luminaries from the greater field of community- and resilience-building such as Charles Eisenstein, Starhawk and Vicki Robin. Total online events since October 2009 is 91.

**Website, Blogs, Listserv, and Online Knowledge Hub:** With over 111,000 page-views in 2012, our website continues to be one of our greatest assets, adding value to those seeking easy access to tools and inspiration. The listserv and blogs have proven to be invaluable for substantive, on-the-ground discussions amongst Transition leaders. The dynamic nature of our website ensures that our Knowledge Hub is continually up-to-date. We seek qualified and committed “channel” facilitators (volunteer experts from the field) who add to and moderate the Knowledge Hub content on their channels and answer specific questions submitted by users.

**Monthly Newsletter:** Subscribers to the newsletter expanded to 7,292 in 2012. That is a rise of 1,530 from the previous year. The newsletter is further syndicated by dozens of Transition Initiatives inside and out of the U.S.

**Social Media:** Our social media presence is vital in this day and age, especially Facebook where we have seen consistent growth in our following (5500+ Friends/Followers, up 25% from last year).

**National Awareness Campaign**

TUS celebrated over 4,100 resilience-building actions nationwide during the month of May 2012 through the Transition Home & Garden Challenge national awareness campaign. This was almost 3 times as many actions as in 2011. Numerous Transition Initiatives and partners installed systems or held events to save water, grow food, conserve energy and build community. TUS’s principal partner in this endeavor was the local Sonoma County organization Daily Acts.
Building the Network

In 2012, TUS Increased the number of cities/towns with Transition Initiatives from 108 in 31 states to 130 in 34 states. This was achieved using all of the methods mentioned above as well as:


Strategic Partnerships: TUS built collaborations with ally organizations across the country such as Bioneers, Generation Waking Up, Sustainable Economies Law Center, Daily Acts Organizations, Post Carbon Institute, Happiness Institute, Canadian Center for Community Renewal , Bay Localize and engaged faith leaders in spreading the Transition model and process to their congregations and affiliates.

Looking forward to 2013

Transition US is poised to make a significant impact in the months and years to come. 2012 was an opportunity for us to hone our suite of signature programs and nurture a multitude of relationships. In 2013, our program plan is simultaneously ambitious – because we need to be—and by no means inclusive, because we need to remain adaptable in these rapidly changing times.

In 2013 our focus will be in the following areas:

Expand training offerings to include an on-site Effective Groups Training to cover key skills in small and large group facilitation, convening difficult conversations, hosting large-scale community dialogues, and building effective coalitions. The Effective Groups Training was piloted in 2012 and will be offered widely across the US in 2013, supplemented by one-on-one and small group coaching.

Utilize on-site and on-line components to teach participants the ABC’s of delivering a compelling Transition talk, complete with a continually updated slide deck available for download on the TUS website.

Execute our third national Transition Challenge national awareness campaign centered around hundreds of local initiatives and thousands of citizens, taking action towards saving water, conserving energy, growing food and building community.

Expand capacity-building offerings to include organizational and fundraising assistance to key Transition Initiatives across the nation and augment our webinar and call series to include advanced leadership development and skill-building courses.
Measure indicators of resilience through the new **Diagnostics and Resilience Indicators project** Where Transition Initiatives first assess their own areas of strength and weakness and then administer Resilience Indicator assessment tools compiled by TUS. This latter toolkit will determine both the robustness of various systems (water, food, energy) as well as the readiness of communities to undergo change.

Continue to build upon and further develop our **Building Local Economies** program that started in 2012 with a series of webinars and resources. Transition US will provide the roadmap and economic assessment tools to identify low-carbon business niches and entrepreneurial/investor readiness. We will lead mature Transition Initiatives through the process of administering the tools and the setting up of an entrepreneurs/investor match-up and business incubation hub.

Introduce the **Transition Streets Carbon-Reduction Program** for household clusters in various Transition Communities in several states.

Increase the number of cities with Official Transition Initiatives from 130 in 34 states to 200 in 50 states as part of our **Building the National Network** program. Additionally we will create 5 regional hubs for increased collaboration and resilience between cities and enlist a minimum of 40 Ally Organizations across the country, principally through our national awareness campaign. We will engage faith leaders in spreading the Transition Model and process to their congregations and affiliates. Lastly, with additional funding we will host a North American Transition Conference.

Launch **Youth Leadership Development and Mentorship Program**. In 2013, Transition US will partner with colleges and catalytic youth gatherings to provide youth with access to information, Transition Trainers, and leadership skills development. As a corollary to this work, TUS will introduce a mentorship program that matches student interns with elders and Transition Initiatives across the US.

**We are proud of our proven track record and go forward into 2013 with purpose and passion.**

**Thank you for your support of Transition US.**

**We look forward to working with you in the coming year!**