

Clear vision. RMI's Innovation Center, a "living lab" on how to design, construct and occupy an ultra-efficient commercial structure—is Jon Creyts' home base as he helps guide the nonprofit toward its goal of "transforming the global energy system to secure a clean, prosperous, zero-carbon future for all."



[LEFT] Family man. Despite regular travel and demanding hours, Creyts (shown here with his wife, Alicia) still makes family a priority—and vice versa. "My family knows that I have a mission," he says. "And they know that I like to work because I'm passionate about where we're going."



and knocking on the door of a 1.5-degree Celsius temperature increase," Creyts says. "There is no silver bullet solution, so we need to think in systems. We're in a moment when we have to hold two realities—we've never been in a worse situation in terms of climate change, but we've never seen such progress relative to climate solutions."

Creyts is encouraged by the exponential growth in technologies like solar, battery storage, EVs, heat pumps and hydrogen. Some of the projects that Creyts is most excited about include:

- Two- and three-wheel vehicle electrification throughout emerging markets.
- Rapidly scaling solutions to create thermally comfortable, low-carbon buildings.
- Global approaches to accelerate decar-

bonization pathways in heavy industry.

- Use of big data and AI to differentiate products on the basis of climate impact.
- New techniques for developing the talent required for low- and middle-income communities and countries to benefit equitably in the transition.

Economics is now the main driver for the adoption of innovative climate technology, and the numbers are penciling out, Creyts insists. "Countries and companies are moving faster than ever before, which is leading to exponential progress," he says. "The electrification of buildings and transportation and the decarbonization of heavy industry is happening at scale—it's becoming commoditized and affordable."

But the thing that excites Creyts most is the fact that clean energy has never been

better positioned to solve our climate challenge. At the same time that we are hitting negative tipping points in nature, we are hitting positive ones in markets, he says.

"Renewables are now the cheapest form of new energy for about 85 percent of the people on the planet, including the 3.6 billion people who don't have access to reliable, affordable energy today," Creyts says. "This is amazing. We can solve climate and energy poverty together, making a much better world in the process. And we can do this more cheaply than trashing the planet."

Of course, a specific key here is getting the financing assembled to build this better world. Creyts is especially excited about some of RMI's work in catalytic capital, focused on providing the acupuncture needed for public and private capital to flow



Power sharing. Jon Creyts (center) has been involved with numerous RMI clean energy transition collaborations, such as one for development of a solar minigrid in Abuja, Nigeria, which has helped keep electricity available and affordable for residents.

more easily. "Once we get markets more engaged, the pace of change will only accelerate," he notes.

APPLIED HOPE

Beyond market transformation, Creyts is immersed in developing the next generation of leaders to ensure an equitable transition. "I want to provide future leaders with a sense of hope," he says. "Not just passive, blind hope, but active, muscular hope that

highlights how we can build a better world together, now."

He is a firm believer in applied hope. "It's not enough to be passively hopeful about an outcome," Creyts says. "We have to will the world that we hope for into existence."

His advice: be impatient and collaborative. "We need to move faster than we are, and we can," he advises. "There is no reason to be incremental and slow in our thinking or acting." **CB**

SUPERHERO STATS

SOME OF JON CREYTS' CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE:

- A doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley for research focused on creating a circular industrial economy, using thermodynamics to evaluate the material and energy efficiency of processes in the design of closed loop systems.
- Foundation council member and chair of the board of [Energy Web](#).
- Member of the board of the [Mission Possible Partnership](#).
- Member of the distinguished advisory group for the [Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market](#).
- Trustee for the [Jeremy and Hannelore Grantham Environmental Trust](#).
- Commissioner for the [Energy Transitions Commission](#).
- Member of the [World Economic Forum Global Future Council on the Future of Responsible Resource Use](#).

