Rural Climate Dialogues: Community Deliberation to Build Local Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation

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Why does rural engagement on climate change matter?

- Lack of awareness of local climate change impacts and fewer resources to plan effectively for change
- Skepticism manifests as inaction/opposition
- Policy and funding bias favors urban and suburban areas
Deliberative Public Engagement

- Engagement as conversation

- Why Deliberation?
  - Educates on complex issues
  - Incorporates local values and knowledge
  - Provides greater legitimacy
Rural Climate Dialogues

- Building diverse community coalitions
- Public deliberation (Citizens’ Jury) to coordinate community action
- Sustained community organizing to support implementation of actions and projects identified through deliberation
The RCD Process
Pre-Jury Organizing

- Identify pertinent community issues
- Tap into existing local networks
- Align deliberation and organizing efforts with existing local movements/actions/efforts
Citizen’s Jury Deliberation

A diverse group of a community

- Study and gain understanding of complex issues
- Deliberate respectfully in a manner than transcends typical partisan debate
- Produce well-considered recommendations based on solid information.
We pool thousands of individuals from the community before creating a randomly selected, demographically stratified group of 18. This deliberative panel serves as a microcosm of the larger community. Participants are compensated to overcome barriers to participation and ensure diversity.
We provide the group with unbiased background information and expert presenters to inform their deliberative inquiry.
We facilitate productive, creative deliberation over 3 days to give the group time to understand the issues and generate quality recommendations.
The group develops recommendations to address climate change and extreme weather through dialogue, deliberation, and voting.

We can make our community vibrant in the face of climate change and extreme weather by...
Key Components of a Citizens Jury

1. Microcosm of the community
2. Democratic conversations
3. Quality information
4. Productive deliberation
5. Minimized bias
6. Sufficient time to understand issues
Post–Jury Organizing

- Coordinate action steps with jury participants and others identified in pre-jury organizing
- Share results with community and policymakers
- Find and coordinate resources to support implementation of jury recommendations
Outcomes
Individual Outcomes
Participants were highly satisfied

How Satisfied Were You With....?

1. the fairness of the process
2. the information presented

Would You Participate Again?

1. Morris
2. Itasca
3. Winona
Deliberation strengthened beliefs in climate change

How likely is it that your community will experience...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Pre-Deliberation</th>
<th>Post-Deliberation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>increased severe weather</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>major shifts in climate patterns</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deliberation increased commitment to individual action

Effect on Beliefs about Individual Action

- I can take action
- I should take action

Pre-Deliberation | Post-Deliberation
We can take action
We should take action

Effects on Beliefs about Community Action

... and community action
Community Outcomes
Organizing and Community Outcomes

➤ Using dialogue results to expanding/aligning local networks
  o Results provide coordination device
  o Dialogue gives democratic legitimacy
  o Participants provide core of potential activists

➤ Contextual factors
  o Type of recommendations: individual vs. community
  o Local institutional capacity
Organizing and Community Outcomes

➢ Morris
   - Community-focused recommendations and high institutional capacity
   - Investigating new stormwater management
   - Technical assistance agreement with Saerbeck, Germany

➢ Itasca
   - Individual-focused recommendations and lower institutional capacity
   - Exploring “green” stormwater infrastructure
   - High school rain garden project
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