



WEBINAR SERIES: ADVANCING COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE ACTION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

SESSION TWO: Having the Climate Conversation – Getting the Message out and Inspiring Change



Because the people shouting have a story to tell and I want everyone to hear it.

Right now we have a tremendous amount of listening and learning to do. We must commit to supporting and standing alongside a community that needs to be heard – that must be heard.

We need to continue to take action against racism and educate ourselves so that when the voices of those shouting become tired we can shout for them.

#BlackLivesMatter



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SPEAKER PROFILE

June 2, 2020 | 10 am PT/1 pm ET



Ewa Jackson
Managing Director
ICLEI Canada

Ewa Jackson is a leader in the field of municipal climate adaptation and resilience. Ewa Jackson has worked with municipal governments for over 16 years in the fields of sustainability, public participation, and climate change.

Ewa's particular field of interest is in the area of climate communications, and how effective and targeted communications can be used to move forward with the implementation of adaptive actions. She works with specialists in the field to keep officials at the forefront and responding to the advancements being made. She often speaks publicly on the state of adaptation planning across Canada and internationally.

Ewa lives in Toronto with her family in a small house, with a big dog.



*Having the Climate Conversation:
Getting your message out and inspiring change*

Tuesday, June 2nd, 2020



Learning objective

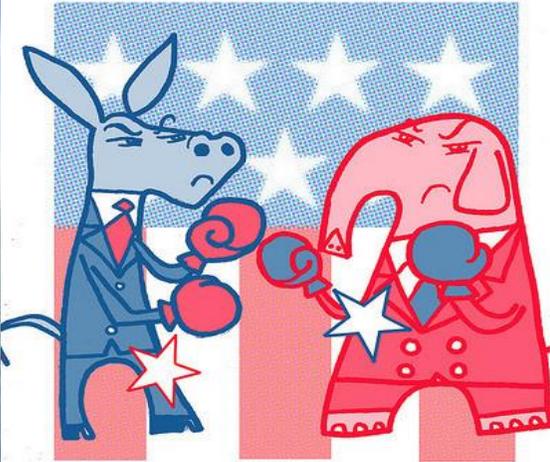
In order to be engaged, it is not enough for people to know about climate change; they also need **to care** about it, **be motivated**, and **able to take action** they believe will be effective.

But how? That's the nut we're here to crack.

What barriers do we face in trying to do this?



Distance



Polarization
Identity



Fatalism
Doom



Denial
Efficacy



Dissonance

Distance

- Seen as a global and distant problem
- Connect issue of global concern with a local picture
- Remember distance doesn't have to be geographic
- Making climate change local and meaningful to individuals can break the distance barrier





Polarization / Identity

- Can be an extremely polarizing and partisan issue
- Climate change threatens their sense of self or identity
- Identity can override knowledge
- Can help turn this around by using validation and invoking local patriotism
- Making actions simple – and in some cases unfelt by individuals



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Fatalism / Doom

- Too much doom tends to have the opposite effect, can lead to three effects:
 - Habituate: People react less and less each time they hear the message.
 - Avoidance: People switch the channel/put down the article when it is too dark.
 - Stereotyping: People tend to pigeon hole the messenger as a “fearmonger”.
- People tend to avoid and deny things that scare them
- To overcome can work to “sell the dream” not the consequences



Denial / Efficacy

- There is often a sense of there is nothing that I as an individual, my city, or my country can do
- Denying climate change as if there is a social contract to not speak about it
- Turn a vicious cycle into a virtuous one:
 - Simple behavior (install a rain barrel)
 - Attitudes (there is a water shortage)
 - Public support (water conservation)
 - Policies (water use restrictions)

THE "CONSENSUS GAP" <



Dissonance

- Conflict between knowledge and action
- Our brains recognize our “bad” behavior but we rationalize why we “have to” do something
 - It was only 50C, I had to take the car
- At the same time, we project dissonance onto others for having the same behaviour
- This can be the hardest barrier to break – must get people to see that there is a better alternative

“The Stone Age didn’t end because there was a lack of stones”





Communicating climate change: Take Aways

You're going to need to know your audience and make sure to **speak their language**.

Climate communication is **not about winning debates**, but building relationships.

People are not motivated by a global, abstract, intellectual issue, but they are **motivated by issues that resonate emotionally and locally**.

But... **remember**... no magic bullets, only some rules of thumb.



Climate Framing – the basics

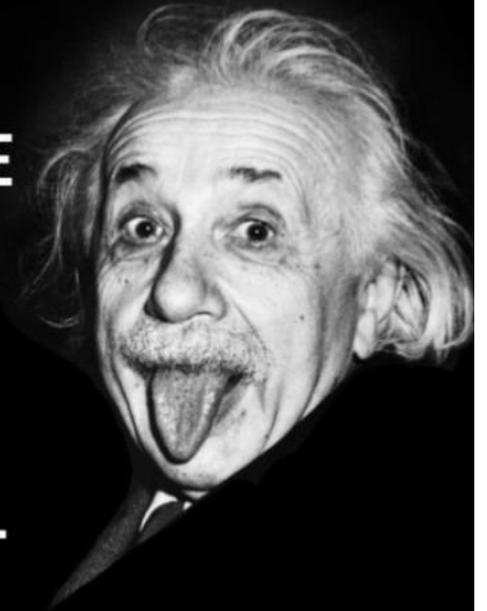
- Understanding your audience's perception of climate change is essential for effective communication.
- Know your audience and make sure you are speaking their language – each audience will interpret images, diagrams, and maps based on their own perspectives.
- Take an issue that may be of concern to your audience and present it as something over which they may have influence.
- Find credible messengers, who speak the language of your audience and share their values (Who is communicating?)



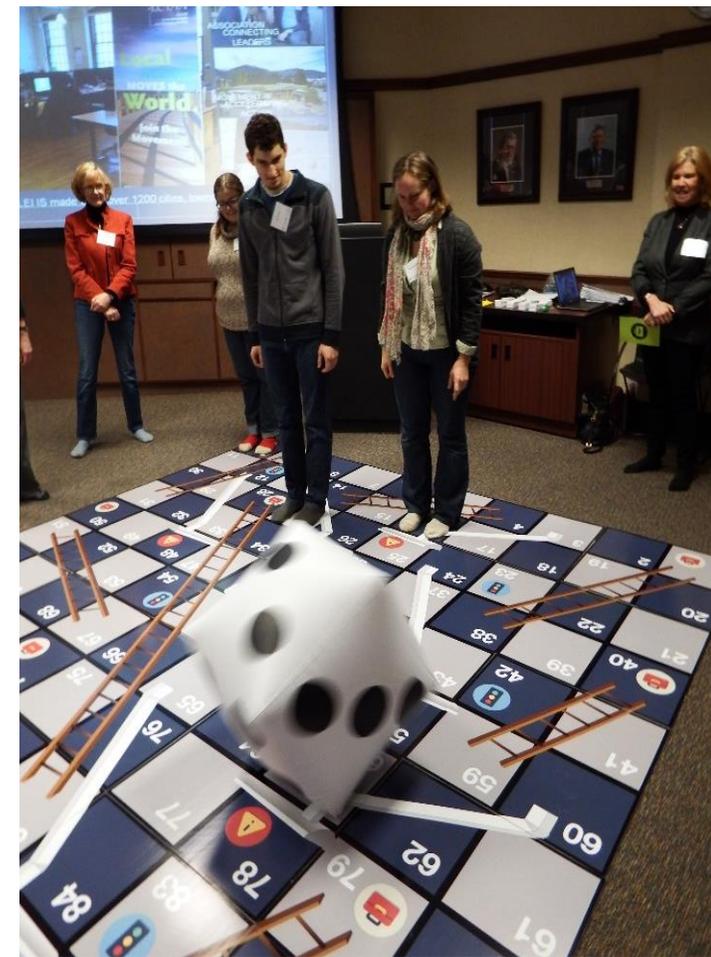
Communicate differently

- Don't assume that the same old thing will yield different results
 - Door hangers and tax bill inserts will only get you so far
- Think about the frames you are applying and which communications methods would be most appropriate
 - If you want to talk people about vehicle electrification consider having an event with test drives of different types of EVs – compact, mid-size and family – so that all types of users could see themselves within the vehicles

**INSANITY: DOING THE
SAME THING OVER
AND OVER AGAIN,
AND EXPECTING
DIFFERENT RESULTS.**



Communicate differently: beyond brochures



Get professional help

- Competition for air time - with many messages flying at one person
- Figure out your communication needs and consider what you can do and what you need support with
- Then invest in getting support from professional communicators



Engage trusted voices

- Find credible messengers, don't be afraid of possibly unconventional allies
 - People with lived or relatable experiences
 - People who share values or language
 - People who can overcome mis-trust or disenchantment



Release of the 3rd US National Climate Assessment



“Weather from the White House”



Meet people where they are – The Art of Change



- Partnership between UNBC & Two Rivers Gallery
- Activism, advocacy, engagement, research
- Co-curated exhibition

4000+ visitors

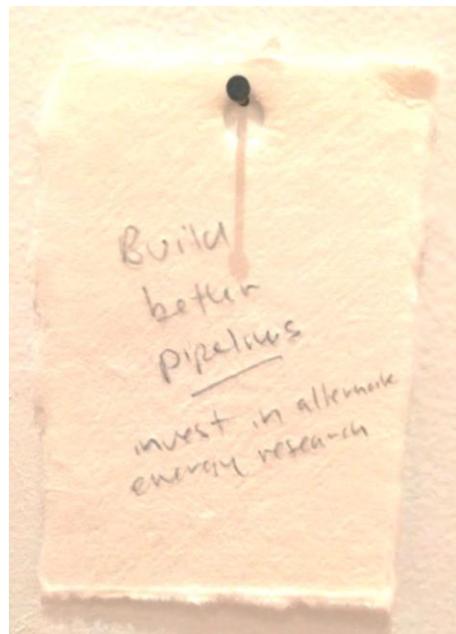
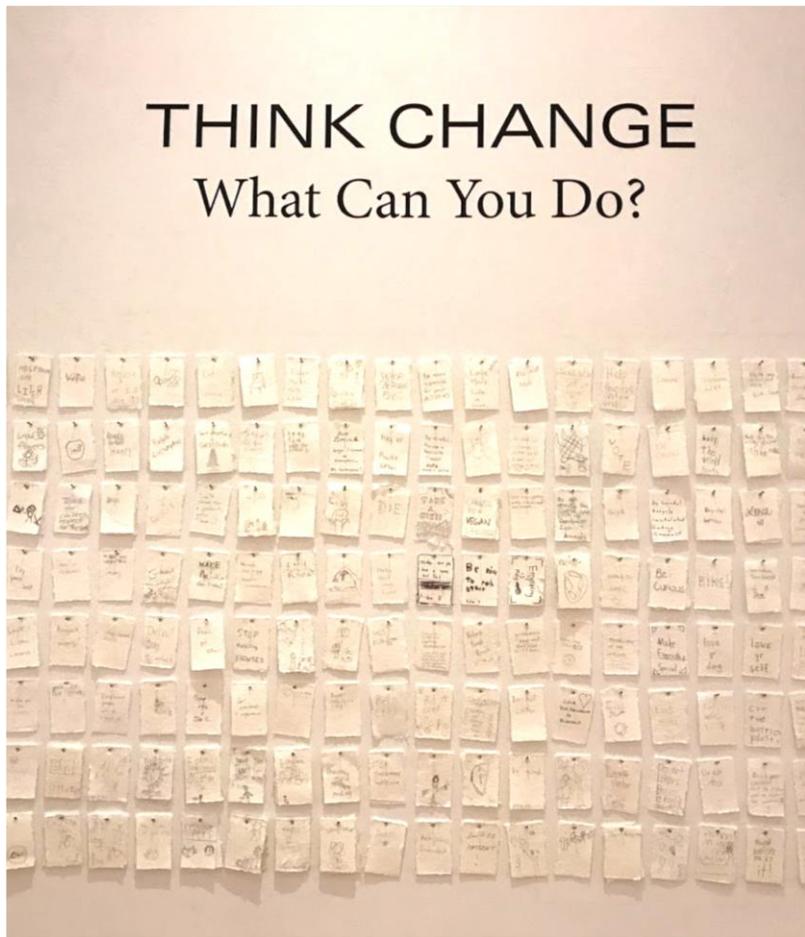
279 nudges

what can you do? (185)

what can they do? (94)

(Meletis, Z. & Groulx, M., UNBC, 2017)

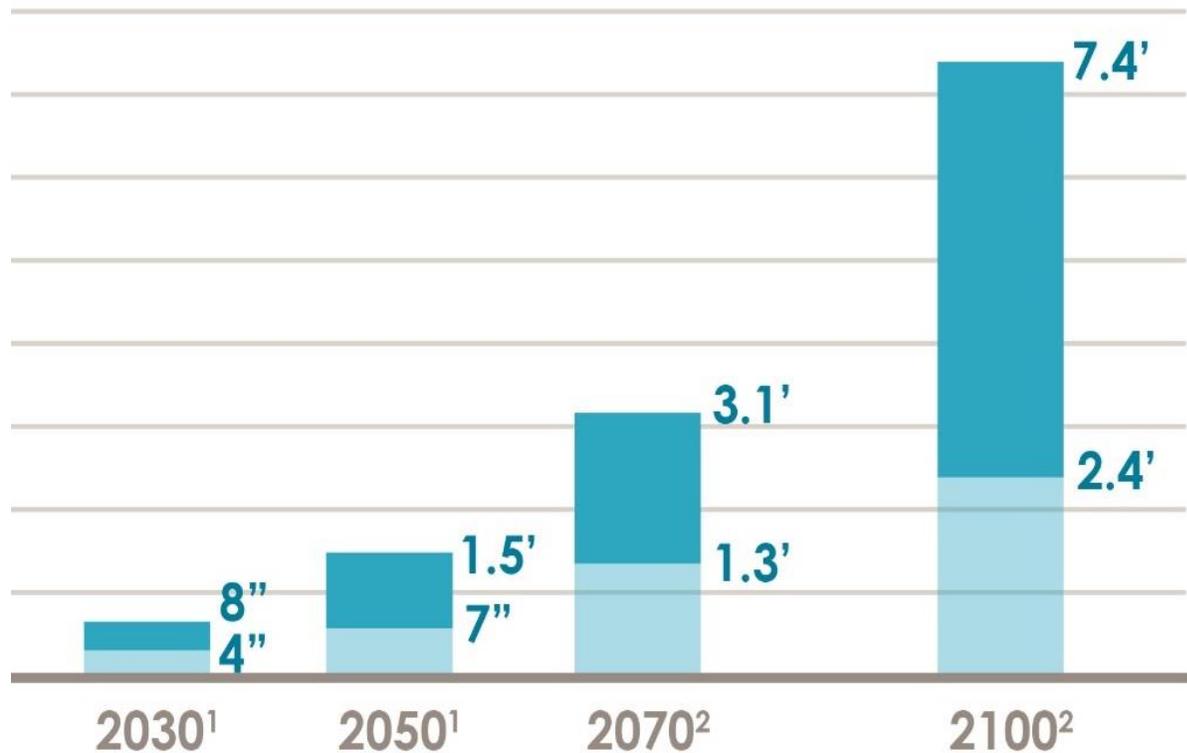
Art as “in-reach”



(Meletis, Z. & Groulx, M., UNBC, 2017)

Communicate visually: Boston's SLR story

BOSTON RELATIVE SEA-LEVEL RISE PROJECTIONS

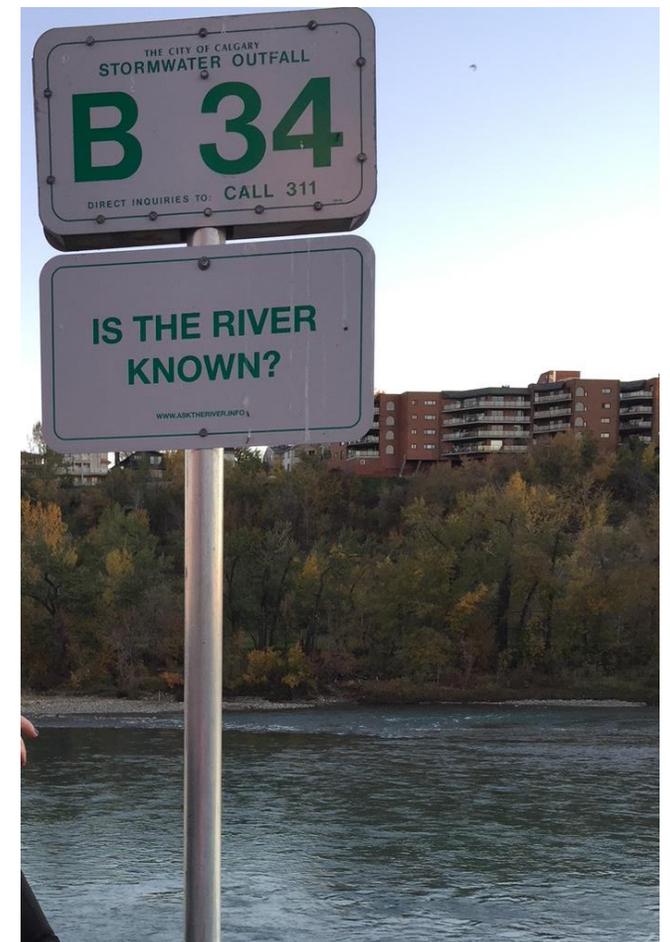
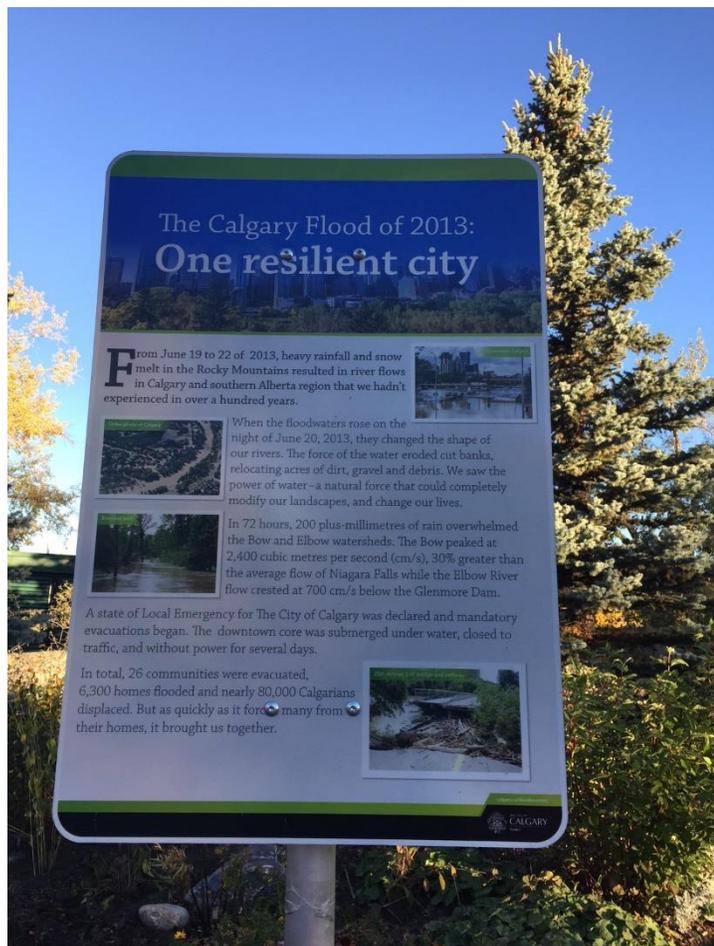


KEVIN GARNETT

Without reducing emissions, at least **3 feet of sea level rise** is likely during the second half of the century.

6.11'

Communicate publicly: wayfinding

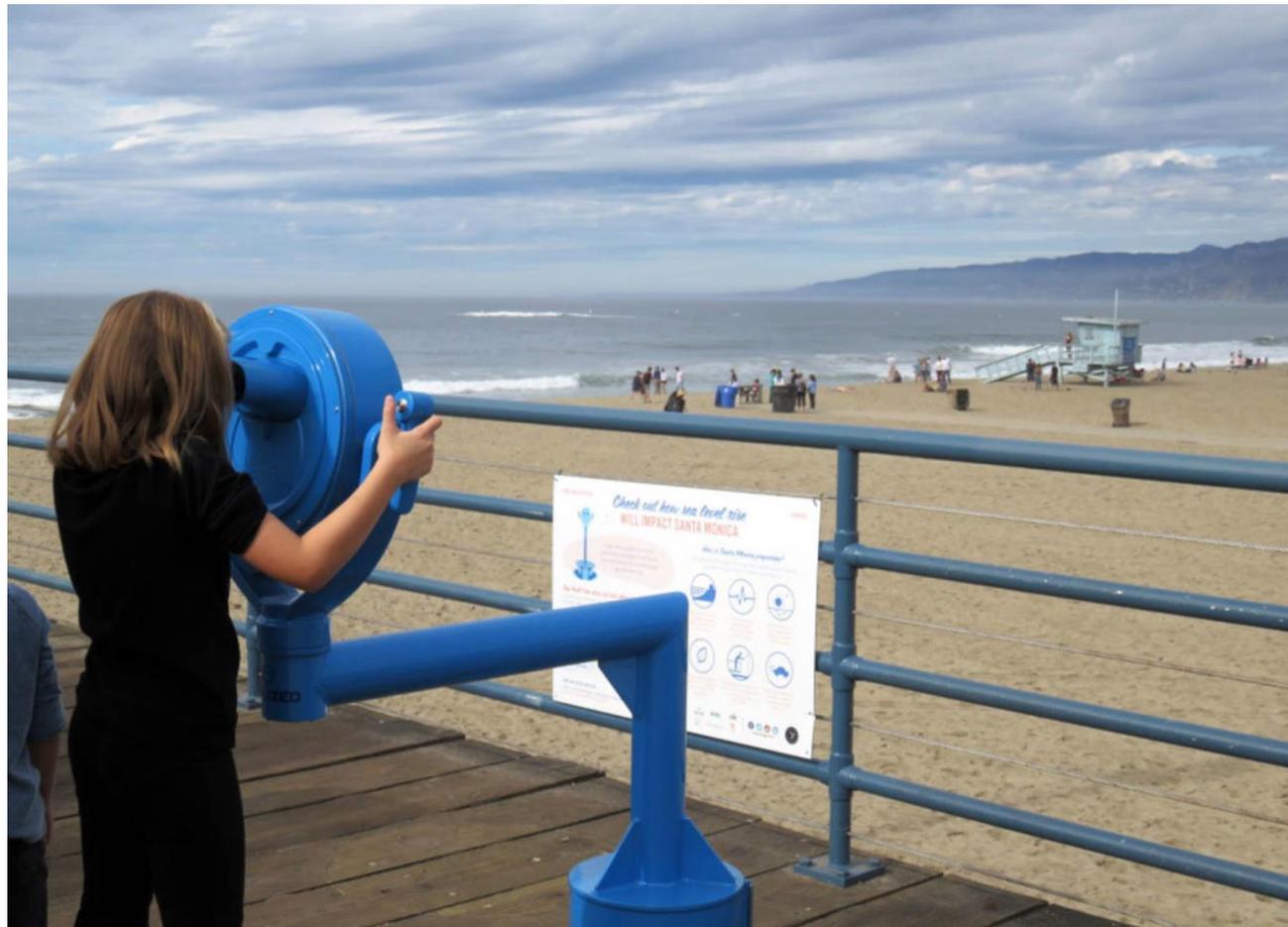


We-Act Environmental Justice: Harlem Heat Project

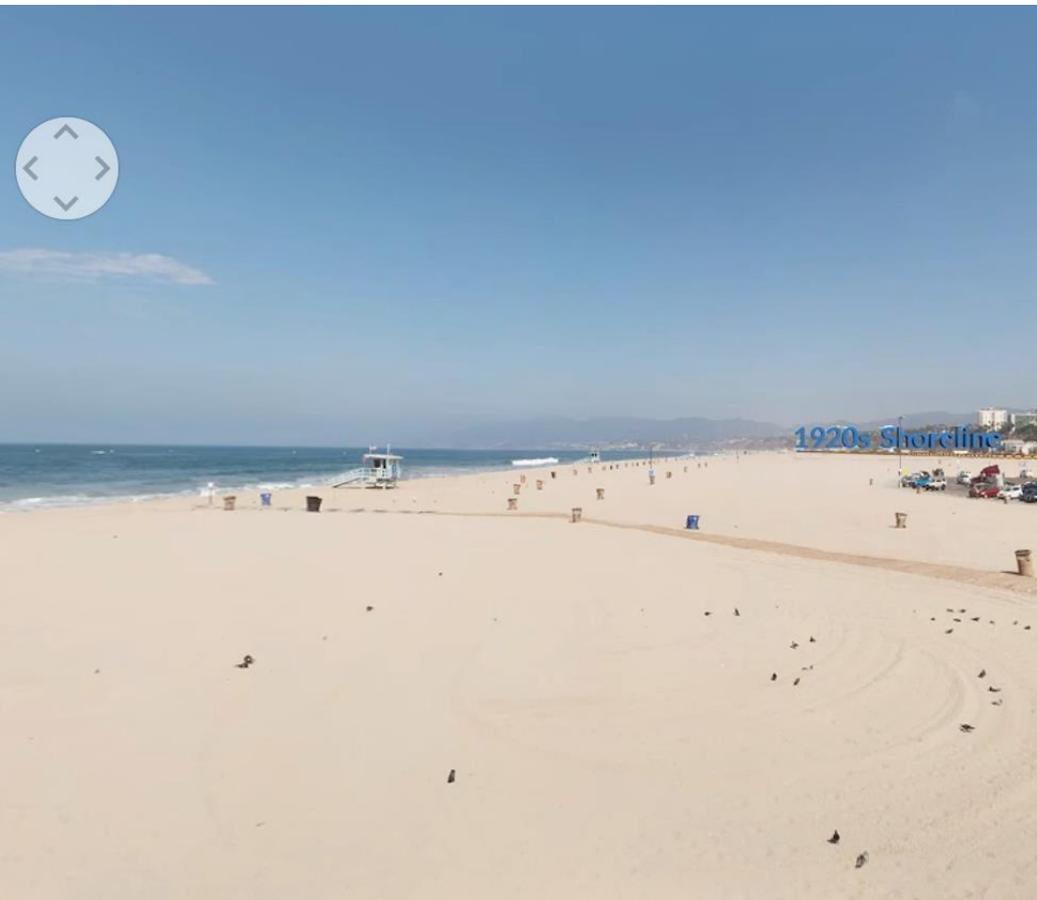


- 12+ We-Act members monitored heat in apartments with/without AC
- Community stories shared on WNYC
- Felt experience – turned data into a sound score

Communicate publicly: viewfinding



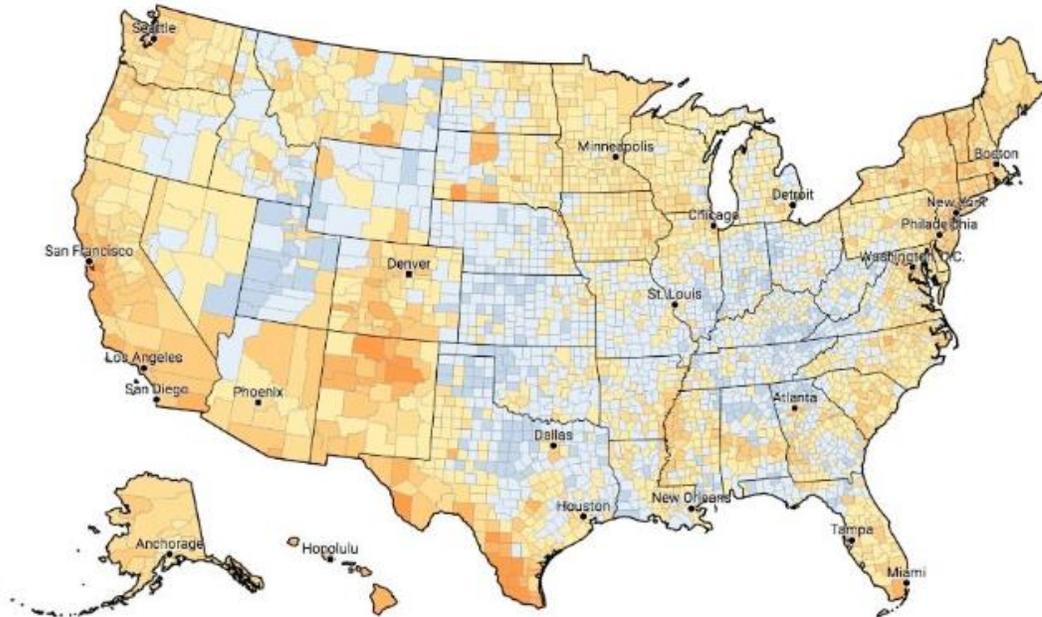
Communicate publicly: viewfinding



Communicate solutions: not just impacts

4. Climate change is bad

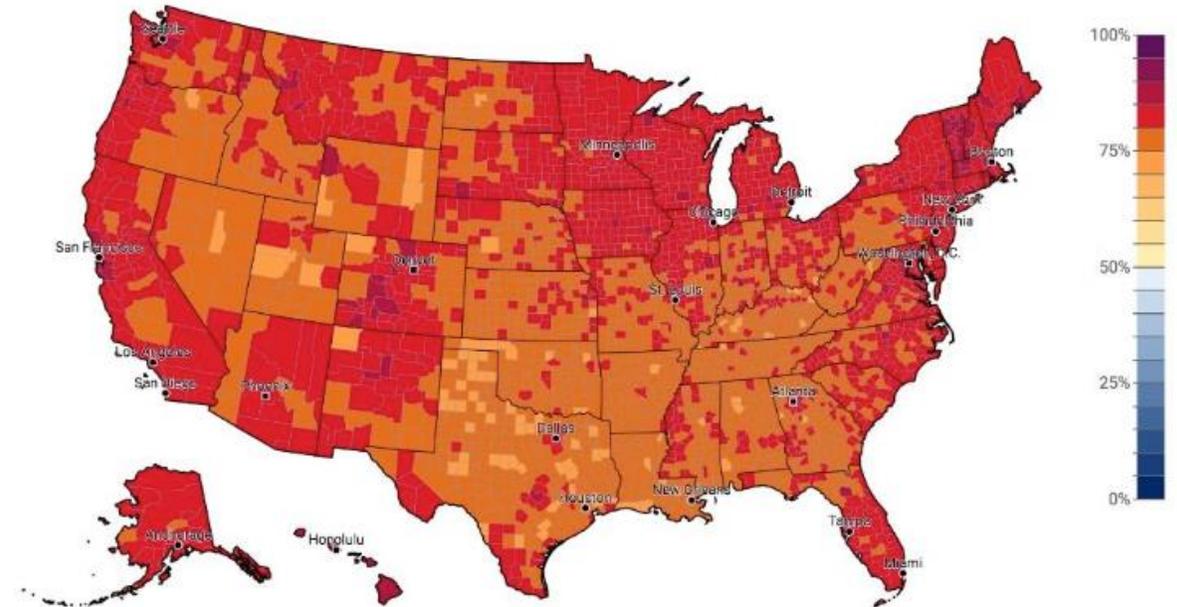
(How worried are you about global warming?)



<http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/>

5. There are smart ways to fix global warming

(Fund more research into renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power)



<http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/>



Consider a variety of communication methods:

- Advertisements (tv, radio, movies)
- Apps and other digital activities
- Art installations
- Brochures and handouts
- Celebrity endorsers
- Community events and networking
- Contests and other incentives
- Curriculum and programming
- Design, mascots, iconography
- Editorials and opinion columns
- Government documents and publications
- Infographics
- Lunch'n'Leans
- Mapping (formal and community based)
- Marketing products and swag
- Newsletters
- Open houses
- Press releases
- Public art
- Signage and wayfinding
- Small-scale pilots and demonstrations
- Social media blitzes
- Tours and demonstrations
- Videos
- Website updates and microsites
- Youth or neighbourhood ambassadors

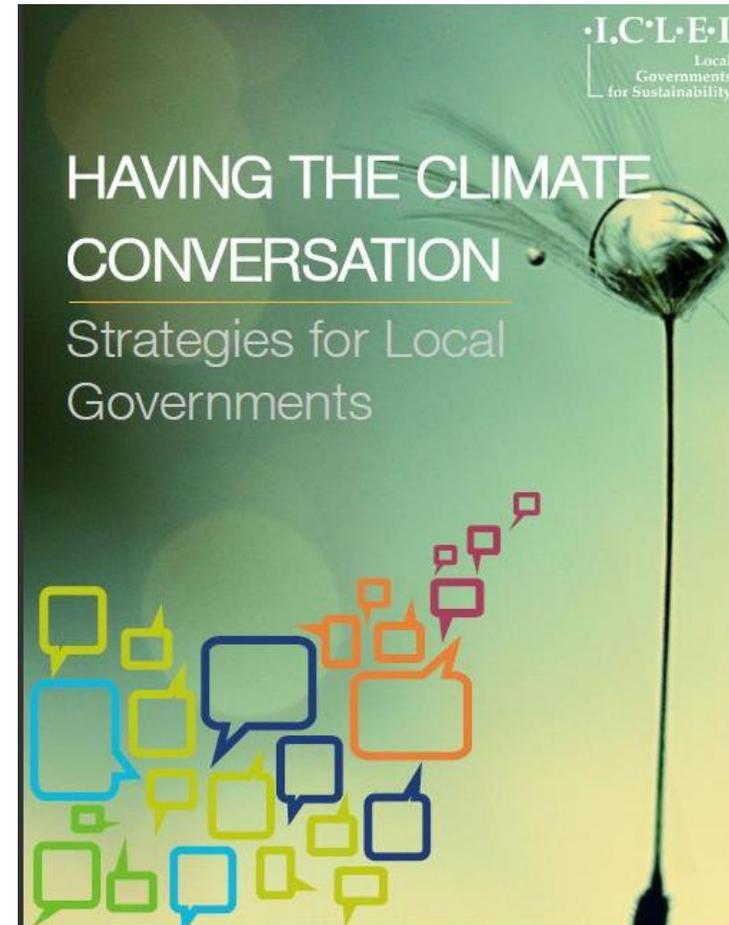


Five rules of thumb for communicating climate change

- #1: Know your audience so that you can target your messages to them
- #2: Be aware of how peoples' values shape their beliefs on climate change and frame your message accordingly
- #3: Engage trusted voices to help with your communications and outreach efforts
- #4: Emphasize the power and practicality of local climate solutions, especially community preparedness
- #5: Address climate science in simple, compelling ways, and stress the certainties of what we know and what we can do

Having the Climate Conversation

- Designed to help communicate climate change
- Focuses on answering the Why? Who? What? When? and How? questions
- Though it has no “magic bullet” solutions, it offers strategies to best inform and engage communities
- <http://www.icleicanada.org/resources>



Having the Climate Conversation

- Case studies throughout to illustrate best practices
- Spotlights on what communities have done in the field of climate communications
- Take home messages summarize the key findings of each chapter

Social Media
The ways in which people communicate and source information has evolved considerably in the past decade. More and more people gather information, read the news, do business and interact online through social media and other forms of digital communication. Although social media has emerged as a powerful tool across the globe, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution for all communities.

Business and Industry
Communicating with the business community provides a unique opportunity to engage and create partnerships with local stakeholders. Businesses and local industries play significant roles in the community and can greatly influence awareness levels, political will, and the overall preparedness of the municipality. By responding to climate change risks and opportunities, businesses can also:

- Avoid costs, manage liabilities and build resilience by addressing climate risks throughout operation and value chains.
- Expand market share and create wealth in the community by developing and disseminating new products and services that help people adapt.
- Access new opportunities to collaborate with the public sector.
- Build a positive corporate reputation and exercise good corporate citizenship.²¹

According to a recent report, 86 percent of businesses described responding to climate risks or investing in adaptation as a business opportunity.²² The report goes on to show that 83 percent of respondents felt that climate change impacts pose a risk to their product chains and ability to deliver services to their customers.²³ Businesses that are first to address risks and develop innovative strategies to adapt and prepare for a changing climate can gain a competitive edge moving forward. In fact, the competitive nature of businesses can be used to build support for your efforts by creating challenges and friendly competitors between businesses. Recognition is a great way to foster support within the business community; campaigns structured to provide recognition, awards, or positive press to businesses that participate are generally quite successful. Consider creating a business awards program that allows prepared businesses – businesses that have taken steps to become more resilient to climate impacts – to display emblems in store windows demonstrating their compliance with the award program.

Communication efforts focused on the business community should emphasize and give examples of businesses saving money or avoiding high future costs (damage to property, insurance premiums, etc.). Remember to highlight that businesses can enhance their corporate image by creating or re-inventing themselves as highly adaptive and prepared organizations that can continue to provide their services in the longer term. This kind of positive marketing can be a very powerful tool.

For communities with a small business base, opportunities exist for more targeted communication, outreach and engagement. For municipalities with a larger commercial or industrial base, it may be advantageous to work with a local Chamber of Commerce or the trade press to achieve widespread dissemination of a particular message.

Successful mediums to engage the private sector can include: one-on-one consultations, exhibitions or conferences, talks with well-known speakers, messaging in local newspapers, high-profile challenges (such as those issued by the Mayor) and press events.

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CASE STUDY: LIVESMART BC
Governments in general, from small municipalities to the federal government, collect a tremendous amount of data. With the now ubiquity of the Internet and the ability to store and distribute information cheaply and easily, many governments are moving to what is termed an “e-democracy” mode of information access, where instead of having to ask for particular data, a member of the public can search for it themselves as more of it gets uploaded to a central location.²⁴ Called “open data,” information can then be as easily accessed as it is collected.²⁵ In 2010, the Province of British Columbia was the first to make open data available to the public. This was a significant step in making government data more accessible and understandable to the general public.²⁶

In total, 15 apps were submitted for entry into the competition, including a mobile phone application that maps the City of Vancouver’s bike routes, an educational application for students called MultiTappers, Carbon Choices (designed to help middle- and high school students become more aware of the amount of CO2 equivalent pollution produced by daily activities such as bathing, commuting and eating), and a web application (called iSustainability) that uses BC water management projects and daily climate data to answer the question “should I water my lawn today?”

TAKE HOME MESSAGES
→ Create simple and concise messages.
→ Framing is just one part of a good strategy.
→ Avoid using fearful tones and content.
→ Speak to people’s values and make it real.
→ Use accessible language.
→ Build relationships and create dialogue with the audience.
→ Show results, celebrate success and reinforce accomplishments.

AVOID THE SHOULD CLAIMS, FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE INSTEAD
It can be tempting to tell your audience what they should care about, or what they should do. However, this is often ineffective. In addressing an audience, try to avoid mixing facts and values as this tends to give your audience an excuse not to listen. In many ways, communication is a battle for attention and with this in mind you want to speak directly to your audience’s aspirations and beliefs, without using morally laden “should” claims.²⁷ When communicating, instead of pointing to deficits or negatives, start from a place of strength and present to your audience what they do well and how this can be leveraged to do better in other areas as opposed to telling them what they are not good at.

Concrete examples of the ways in which specific communities are adapting to climate change in a proactive and positive way can motivate people in your community to do the same.ICLEI Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) produce an annual Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Measures Report that compiles, categorizes and highlights the many measures PCP municipalities are taking to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. It serves as a document that municipalities everywhere can look to for inspiration by showing what can be done to reduce emissions.

Consider engaging your audience on notions of emerging technologies or long-term business and employment opportunities. Channel the discussion on adaptation around the things that are being done, both locally and elsewhere, as opposed to the things that should be done. Framing climate change in terms of solutions can make the message more accessible, enhance perceptions of self-efficacy, generate support for further action, and can help motivate people and organizations to learn more or take action.

SUSTAINING COMMUNICATION
Communication is not a one-time checkbox; rather it is an iterative process that must be structured and maintained.²⁸ Effective communication requires a consistent and comprehensive set of messages. It is a multi-directional process that often involves many different roles and actors. To ensure the sustainability of your communication efforts, there should be ongoing assessment of your approach to determine whether or not it is successfully communicating the right message to the right audience.

Follow up. Consider testing different strategies and making adjustments based on these findings. There is always room to integrate lessons and improve your approach. If a frame did not work, try another one. Find what works best and celebrate successes by connecting actions to outcomes in a positive way.²⁹

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Strategies for Local Governments 147



Thank you!

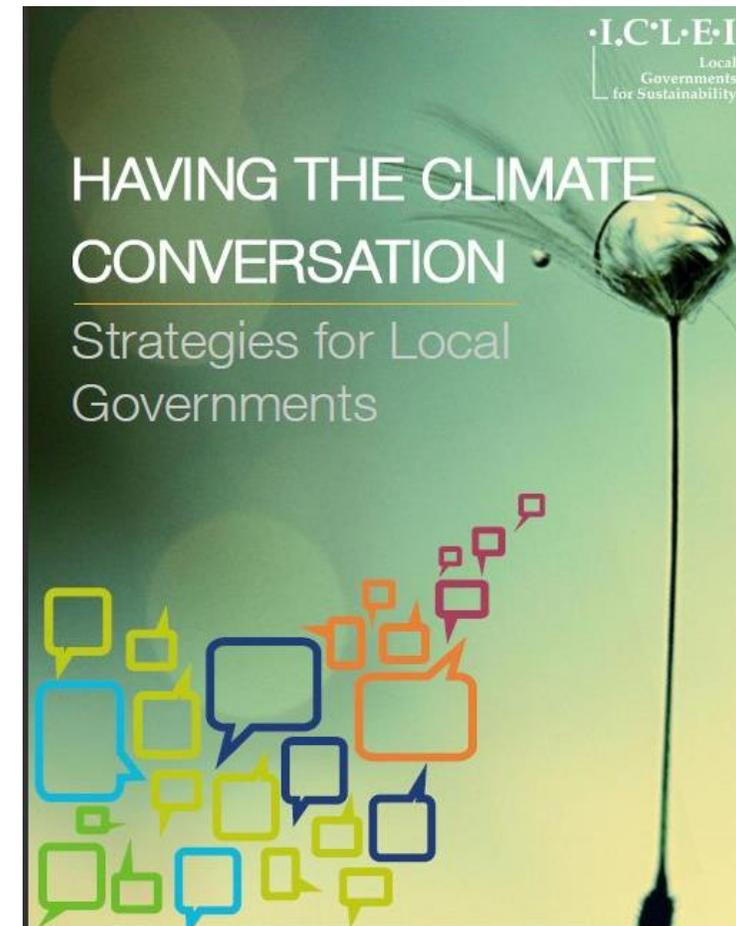
Reach out to share your examples
of great climate communications!

Ewa Jackson

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