

Climate

Community Trust
Transformation Collaboration Solutions
Values Soft Trends Culture Indicators
Science Inspiration Working Resilience

Convenings

Impacts Stories Understanding Hope
Social Infrastructure
Common Action Behavior
Champions Workshops Authentic
Together Neighbors

Toolkit

Sustained
Eyewitness
Roots
Conversation
Connectedness



CLIMATE
GENERATION
A WILL STEGER LEGACY

Climate Convenings Toolkit

A How-To Guide for Inspiring Local Stories and Community Solutions on Climate Change



Dear Community Leader,

WE HAVE FOUND THAT working on climate change is a continual process, one of learning how to balance the hope of a better future with the grief that comes from the realization of how far things have gone. Typical public engagement presentations are often didactic, focusing on the science and impacts of climate change, while lacking personal relevance and the exciting messages of innovation, technological opportunities and solutions that we all desperately need to hear. At Climate Generation, we felt the need to envision a new way to elevate the issue of climate change, balancing the science with the stories from people who are experiencing it, and communicating the positive message that there are still things we can do.

In December 2015 at the COP21 Paris Climate Talks, we saw the power of the international community coming together around climate change, as nearly 200 countries forged a historic agreement to limit emissions and global temperature rise. But we often overlook what happened leading up to that moment: the countless local victories and city-, state- and business-level commitments to climate action that in combination became a powerful motivator at the global level. The agreement demonstrated the importance of investing in local communities to build climate literacy and public will for solutions. Local communities have the unique opportunity and potential to create an undercurrent of momentum, as well as pathways to change that our national and global leaders cannot easily ignore.

The **Climate Convenings Toolkit** outlines a model and method for hosting public convenings at the local level. It was designed, tested, implemented and evaluated through our 2014-16 Climate Minnesota project, where we hosted 12 public convenings throughout our state, mostly in rural communities. Through these convenings, we saw the power that lies within local communities to catalyze change. For some communities, the convening was a unique opportunity to introduce a public conversation about climate change and bridge understanding. For others it provided a vehicle to deepen community engagement on solutions that were already underway, and reinforce efforts towards greater adaptation and resilience. Regardless of the existing level of community engagement, our staff were enthusiastically greeted at each convening by individuals who expressed an overwhelming gratitude for initiating a needed conversation, along with credible tools and resources to sustain it.

We intended this model to be replicable and scalable, and our hope is that this guide will serve as a template to work from and make your own, with the flexibility to tailor your approach to your audience. We have also found that convenings provide an entry point and foundation upon which conveners can layer other efforts for longer-term capacity building. Happy convening!



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Note: Financial support does not affect or influence the content of our materials or programming.

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Table of Contents

Reframing the Conversation

The Need for a New Model.....	6
Theoretical Framework.....	7

The Art of Convening

Beyond the Science.....	8
Building Trust, Bridging & Bonding.....	8
The Emotional Arc to Action.....	9


Planning and Implementation

The Convening Agenda.....	11
Convening Definitions & “Cast” Roles.....	12
Six Month Timeline	16
Following Up	20
Funding Your Convening.....	21

Appendix

The Climate Minnesota Project.....	22
Story Snippets	23
Ripple Effects.....	24
Templates.....	25

Sources	26
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 *Stories are easier to remember because in many ways, stories are how we remember ... when facts become so widely available and instantly accessible, each one becomes less valuable. What begins to matter more is the ability to place these facts in context and to deliver them with emotional impact.*

- Pink 2005

Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy

Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy empowers individuals and their communities to engage in solutions to climate change.

We are a collaborative, place-based nonprofit with over ten years of experience delivering high-quality education, public engagement and youth leadership programming.

Our work has received recognition twice by The White House's Climate Education and Literacy Initiative.

Each year, Climate Generation reaches 5,000 educators, 3,500 youth and over 1,000 people through public outreach. We are proud to have reached over 75,000 people, 35,000 students and 17,000 educators since 2006.



CLIMATEGENERATION

A WILL STEGER LEGACY

Learn more about Climate Generation at www.climategen.org

Learn more about the Climate Minnesota project at www.climateminnesota.org

Climate Generation is available for consultation and convening planning support.

Contact us at info@climategen.org to learn more.

Reframing the Conversation

The Need for A New Model

CLIMATE CHANGE IS a daunting issue, and understanding the data, trends, impacts and solutions can be overwhelming. To make things more complicated, we are in an era of misinformation about climate change, and unfortunately the issue – and even the science – has become politicized. It is becoming more difficult to decipher credible sources, and to sift through the scores of opinions in the media. The combination of these complexities makes public conversations about climate change relatively scarce: politics is often seen as a controversial topic, and climate change can seem risky to bring up when you don't have “all the facts.” This dynamic is playing out in our local communities, and the result is that the topic of climate change is rarely discussed in meaningful ways.



We are in an era of misinformation about climate change, and unfortunately the issue – and even the science – has become politicized.

We know that in order to build public engagement on the issue and create climate-resilient communities, we need to reframe the story. We need to provide tangible opportunities for



communities to come together to talk about the trends, causes, consequences, and the multitude of solutions that are already underway, without overlooking the personal connection this issue has to our lives. We need people to feel empowered to talk climate change.

At Climate Generation, we felt the need for a new approach to climate change conversations. Typical forums on climate change in the public often consisted of a podium presentation with a message of “doom and gloom,” and the result was an audience of people who felt depressed and powerless. Research shows that this type of presentation on climate change does not move people in a way that changes attitudes, aptitudes and level of action. There is a pressing need for a different model, one that includes a local approach to building understanding, inspiring emotional relevance, and enhancing investments that create socially-cohesive, resourceful communities.

Over the last 10 years, a wealth of research on climate change communication has emerged, providing insight into methods for effectively engaging the public. Research suggests that “information alone is not enough to change behavior;” “ongoing peer support and specific, measurable action items are important and best introduced at the community level, through public forums;” and that “effective public engagement around climate change is realized through a public actively taking part in learning and action on climate

Effective public engagement around climate change is realized through a public actively taking part in learning and action on climate change. It involves engaging ‘minds, hearts and hands.’

- Wolf and Moser 2011

change... engaging minds, hearts and hands” (Wolf and Moser 2011). But real-life examples of these strategies being implemented and combined into an effective and cohesive model are hard to find. As a result, in 2014 Climate Generation launched a new model for public engagement. We hoped to apply the best practices for public engagement that we had researched, through a project called [Climate Minnesota: Local Stories, Community Solutions](#). Over a two-year period, Climate Generation hosted 12 public convenings, engaging over 1,100 people and 100 organizations across the state of Minnesota; created an online storytelling



collection for personal climate stories; and co-produced a Twin Cities PBS film, Minnesota Stories in a Changing Climate. The project was a combination of the emerging research and our existing approach to engaging the public, through the sharing of personal narratives on climate change.

At the core of Climate Generation's work is the powerful eyewitness account of Will Steger, polar explorer, educator and founder of Climate Generation. During his 50 years of polar exploration, Will has witnessed the disintegration of ice shelves that he has crossed, including Antarctica's Larsen A and B shelves. In 2002, most of the Larsen B ice shelf, an area the size of Rhode Island, collapsed in just three weeks. This ice had taken him months to cross via dogsled. Will has also been recording changes in his own backyard in Ely, MN, and has been able to relate these observations to implications in other parts of the world. Will's story is a tangible and deeply personal call to action; his eyewitness experience has served as a means to engage tens of thousands of people in climate change solutions, and it is was also the impetus for founding Climate Generation.

With Will's impactful storytelling in mind, and the research for effective public engagement as a foundation, we recognized the emergent need for a new model and built the theoretical framework that guides our approach to public convening.

Theoretical Framework

THIS FRAMEWORK WAS developed as the underpinning for the design, planning and implementation of our convenings. It was tested throughout the Climate Minnesota project by an external evaluator, who assessed its effectiveness through convening observations, surveys of participants, and follow-up focus group discussions.

1. Start with the community and what they care about – connect on common values
2. Strive to make the event a mirror of the community
3. Recruit peer groups
4. Focus on local impacts
5. Be solutions-focused
6. Connect through stories
7. Include trusted messengers of community, science and solutions
8. Provide real, tangible solutions
9. Provide multiple opportunities to engage in different ways
10. Follow up

The Art of Convening

Beyond the Science

ANY MEANINGFUL PUBLIC engagement on climate change must include a foundation in the causes of climate change. This includes an understanding of the science behind the issue – encompassing the real-world consequences of the current data and trends as well as the preponderance of evidence that shows it is happening – and the social, economic and political factors that have led to our increased use of fossil fuels. This foundation is necessary for creating a sense of urgency around why solutions to climate change cannot wait, but this should not be the entire focus. The story of climate change has been told primarily at a national level and through a scientific lens, but effective climate change education and behavior change

happens when the issue is made local and relevant, thereby resonating with an audience. While the science is essential, it is local stories that place facts and figures into context. Stories are a powerful way to connect the head and the heart on climate change and can evoke an emotional connection that is essential for motivating a long-lasting commitment to solutions.



In order to find common ground on climate change, we need to strip away the layers that divide us and find our shared values.

Data is the map, whereas storytelling is the journey.

- Thaler 2017

In order to reframe the way we talk about climate change, we need to strip away the layers that divide us and find our shared values, whether it's fishing, farming, faith or future generations. In our warming world, almost everyone recognizes change, even if they don't recognize it as climate change. When balanced with the science, sharing a memory of a beloved place, changes you have experienced, or your feelings about what is at stake can help make climate change more compelling and difficult to dispute. Stories told from the heart have the ability to touch on people's emotional intelligence, value systems, and community relationships, and they can also serve as a catalyst, with the ability to transform both the audience and the storyteller.

Building Trust, Bridging & Bonding

AS CONVENERS, OUR primary responsibility is to understand that the answers for creating climate-resilient communities are held within the people who make up that community – in fact, they are the experts. Knowing your audience must begin with seeking to understand what they care about, and tailoring messages and resources to meet their unique needs. This is especially important if you are leading a convening in a community that is not your own. As “outsiders,” building rapport and trust with local people will ultimately determine the level of engagement you will be able to achieve.

Community resilience around climate change has mostly been discussed from a planning and infrastructural perspective. But in addition to “physical infrastructure,” significant investments in “soft infrastructure” must also be made, meaning the social strength of our communities. Social cohesion and connectedness are essential for communities to respond and thrive in the midst of climate change. We found that, not surprisingly, the communities where people know each other’s names and are working together to build relationships are also the communities that help each other in the midst of extreme climate disasters such as hurricanes, heat waves, and flood events, which are becoming more frequent and intense. Studies show that there is a direct correlation between communities that are socially cohesive and higher rates of survival in these sorts of extreme events (Aldrich and Meyer 2014). These are the communities that have lower mortality rates, and lower violence and crime following a traumatic event. They are also the communities that work together to rebuild their lives. A key outcome of convening should be to leave the participants feeling more connected to their neighbors and hopeful about their collective ability as a community to address climate change. That type of social capital is critical for building the community cohesion necessary for true climate resilience in preparation for and in the wake of increasing impacts.



Social cohesion and connectedness are essential for communities to respond and thrive in the midst of climate change.

The Emotional Arc to Action

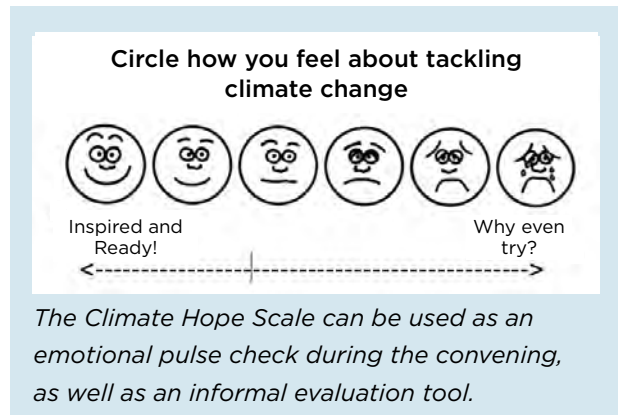
PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS ON climate change often overlook the necessity to frame and address the emotional arc that often occurs in tandem with the progression from climate change education to action. As people learn about the problem, its scale, and impacts already happening, there can be a powerful tendency towards despair. The traumas that are associated with climate change impacts can have an enormous affect on our psycho-social-spiritual well-being, and sometimes exert an even greater effect than physical impacts. Addressing climate change is a long-haul process, and more than ever we need to find collective spaces to hold grief, process the range of emotions, and find the tools and support needed to gear up and re-energize.

**Pain not
transformed is
pain transferred.**
- Franciscan Friar Rohr

At Climate Generation, we felt it was important to provide space for this emotional process in our model for public convening, as a catalyst for individual and collective transformation to occur. In addition, we felt it was crucial to acknowledge fear and loss before moving into messages of hope and the exciting opportunities for solutions.

Creating intentional questions to ask the audience during the convening that mimic the emotional arc from despair to possibility is helpful for eliciting introspective reflection and conversation with peers. It can also provide an opportunity for the public expression of commonalities, such as shared sense of place, culture, roots and values, creating relevance and connection.

Sample prompts include: “What do you value most about your community?,” “In light of what you have now learned, how does that impact what you value most about your community?,” and “After hearing stories from your neighbors, how do you feel about tackling climate change?” We found that these types of questions are important for people to feel and identify the range of emotions around climate change, and create the space to begin processing these emotions – a necessary step for inspiring a deeper connection to the issue, as well as the resolve needed for sustained action.



Asking prompting questions like, “what do you value most about your community?” help to generate a relevance and connection.

Planning and Implementation

THE PROCESS OF planning and implementation begins well in advance of the convening itself. Organizing a convening should be viewed as more than simply coordinating and hosting an event, but also as an opportunity to foster climate literacy, self-transformation, and social capacity during the planning process itself. The sample agenda below is 3.5 hours in length, and gives an idea of the sequence, but also the collaborative nature that it elicits through the numerous roles that local community members can fill, which we are calling the “cast.”



The Resource Fair helped to create a sense of “community” with a focus on practical climate change solutions.

1. Sample Convening Agenda

Registration, Resource Fair, and Refreshments (45 minutes)

10-15 local organizations table at the Resource Fair and help create a sense of “community” with a focus on practical climate change solutions

Convening Introduction (approx. 25 minutes)

Opening Remarks - Trusted Community Leader opens the convening and shares why climate change is important to the community (5-10 minutes)

Welcome from Host(s) - Acknowledgements, Framing the convening (5 minutes)

Connecting with Neighbors Question - Host(s): “What do you value most about your community?” (5 minutes)

Solutions Workshop Commercial Break - Each of the five Workshop facilitators introduces themselves and gives a plug for their workshop that will be held later on (5 minutes)

Transition - Host(s): Introduce Climate Literacy Presenter (2 minutes)

Climate Literacy & Local Impacts (approx. 35 minutes)

Climate Literacy Presentation - Climatologist, Meteorologist or other Climate Scientist shares locally relevant data and trends that illustrate how our climate is changing, the causes and consequences (25-30 minutes)

Community Reflection Question - Host(s): “How does what you have learned impact what you value about your community?” (5 minutes)

Climate Storytelling (approx. 35 minutes)

Transition - Host(s): Tone-set climate stories and introduces Storytelling Panelists (5 minutes)

Storytelling Panel - 3 Community Members share stories of their personal experience with climate change impacts and/or engagement in solutions (15-20 minutes, 5 minutes for each storyteller)

Motivation Question - Host(s): “After hearing from your neighbors regarding their climate stories, how do you feel about tackling climate change?” (2 minutes)

Transition - Host(s): “Now it’s your turn!” Introduction for each Solutions Workshop, questions for facilitators (8 minutes)



The Storytelling Panel features the stories of three community members and their personal reflections on how climate change is impacting what they value.

Solutions Workshops (approx. 40 minutes)

Group Closing - Host(s): Collective wrap up before breaking into Solutions Workshops, and invitation to Dessert Reception (3 minutes)

Transition - Participants select a Workshop and move into breakout spaces (5-10 minutes)

Solutions Workshops - Through five concurrent Solutions Workshops, participants learn about and commit to a tangible, place-based solution, such as energy conservation, waste reduction, or water management (30 minutes)

Dessert Reception (approx. 30 minutes)

Celebration of community, opportunity for social networking, and collaborative conversations

2. Convening Definitions & “Cast” Roles



Involving community members in all aspects of the convening helps to create an authentic conversation, from the community to the community.

The convening agenda was designed to feature local people and elevate their voices on climate change, translating into numerous roles for community members, or what we are referring to as the “convening cast.” Roles vary from opening welcome speaker, to storytelling panelists, resource fair participants, volunteers and solutions workshop facilitators. Integrating community members in all aspects of the convening helps to create an authentic conversation, from the community to the community, but it was also purposefully designed to encourage social cohesion and collaboration as well as to support the development of local climate champions.

Convening Host(s)

To build rapport and trust with local people and truly “convene” the community, listening to and learning from community members should be a primary goal for convening hosts. It is important to acknowledge ourselves as guests in the community, and lead with humility and compassion as well as a focus on finding the commonalities we as “conveners” have with the community. This approach should be incorporated into one-on-one planning conversations with locals, community recruitment efforts, and the convening itself. The role of the host is to “convene” the community by inviting all stakeholders to the conversation, as well as to inspire and facilitate collaborations. Rather than providing content, the focus is to provide context and tone setting during the transitions from each segment of the agenda.

Trusted Community Leader (1 person)

A locally recognized and trusted member of the community, such as the mayor or other community leader, delivers the opening remarks for the convening. This person should be viewed by the general public as credible, welcoming and non-controversial. The role of the Trusted Community Leader is to welcome the community, acknowledge any elected officials, and speak to why climate change is important to the community. The opening remarks conclude with the introduction of the Convening Host(s), who then transition into additional acknowledgements and provide the framing for the convening.



Featured resources are aimed to build community, as well as spread awareness of solutions to climate change.

Resource Fair Participants (10-15 organizations)

A Resource Fair kicks off the convening, scheduled 45 minutes prior to the convening. Resource Fair tables feature local organizations, businesses and agency resources that are aimed to build community, as well as spread awareness of solutions to climate change. Each table should include a statement from the organization about how their work is connected to climate change. After the Resource Fair, representatives from those organizations should join the audience for the convening, and leave their tabling materials up through the Dessert Reception.



Any meaningful public engagement on climate change must include a foundation in the causes, and the consequences.

Climate Science Presenter (1 trusted messenger on climate change)

The role of the climate science presenter is to provide the audience with a foundation in the science, causes of climate change, and the consequences of local trends. This person should be viewed as a credible and politically neutral source of information, with a background in climatology, meteorology or other relevant science expertise. The climate science presenter should speak to the following:

- Science of climate change
- Local indicators/evidence of climate change- regional climatology such as temperature and precipitation trends, ice out dates, etc
- Causes of climate change (mainly that human activity is a primary driver)
- Repercussions/Impacts seen in or close to that community

Storytelling Panel (3 community members)

The Storytelling Panel features the stories of three community members and their personal reflections on how climate change is impacting what they value, and/or climate change solutions they are pursuing. The role of the Storytelling Panel is to provide an essential link between the science and the solutions, prompting peers to reflect on their own climate stories and inspiring engagement in solutions. Each storyteller shares their story for 5 minutes; a Powerpoint with visuals is encouraged to accompany each story. Leading up to the training, provide individualized story coaching for each storyteller to help prompt reflection, story development, and a clear link to climate change. The story development process encourages deeper thinking on how climate change is personally relevant, and often sparks a self-transformation among storytellers, who begin to think of themselves as proactive agents of change.

Solutions Workshop Facilitators (5 Solutions Workshop Leaders)

Each of the five concurrent Solutions Workshops is lead by a facilitator who has expertise in a local solution. These workshops offer a tangible, actionable item that participants can engage in to address climate change. In some cases, the Solutions Workshop facilitator may also be able to provide on-going support for this solution. Workshops are meant to foster a two-way, collaborative conversation and tangible next steps for convening attendees. See the Solutions Workshop Facilitator Guide template for details on workshop format. Workshops also provide opportunities for neighbors to meet each other, collaborate and support each other in next steps. Solutions topics are tailored to the community, ranging in types of impacts and solutions relevant to the region; from farming to energy, water management, community resilience, innovation, consumer choices, and health. Participants are asked to self address a blank postcard that will be mailed to them 1 month after the convening, to serve as a reminder of their commitment to local solutions.



Nonprofits, colleges and schools in the area are great places to recruit volunteers.

Volunteers (10-15 people)

Nonprofits, colleges and schools in the area are great places to recruit volunteers for the convening. Volunteers can be tasked with setting up the space for the Resource Fair and convening, including laying out note cards and pencils for convening attendees, and helping to facilitate the transitions from Resource Fair to convening, and then to Solutions Workshops.

Convening “Cast” Call

One week prior to the convening, the entire convening cast – speakers, storytelling panelists, and solutions workshop presenters – should connect via a 30 minute conference call, facilitated by the Convening Host(s). The purpose of this conference call is a “dress rehearsal” to prepare participants for the convening. This ensures that all speakers and panelists have a mutual understanding of the flow and tone of the event. It is also an opportunity to connect as a group and ask questions.

3. Six Month Timeline

In the months leading up to the convening there are many opportunities for one-on-one relationship building, as well as community-level collaborations and partnerships. The day of the event becomes an opportunity for local champions to shine as climate leaders in front of their neighbors, decision makers and peers.

Six Months Out

Climate Science Presentation

- Set tentative convening date and time
- Identify and invite climatologist, meteorologist or other science speaker to provide climate literacy presentation. As much as possible, this person should be viewed in the public as credible, neutral and bipartisan (see Climatologist letter)
- Identify and invite a local trusted messenger (public official, mayor or community leader) to open the convening with welcome remarks (see Trusted Messenger letter)
- Select venue. This should be viewed as a neutral, welcoming space for all in the community. The venue should also have a main space for the convening, and 4-5 breakout rooms/spaces for the Solutions Workshops to be held. Priority should be given to “green” venues who incorporate sustainable practices such as; waste management - reduction and diversion, energy conservation, renewables, green building, sustainable sourcing of food and beverage, reusable tableware and linen napkins. If the venue does not offer recycling and organics composting efforts should be made to connect with a local resource who can help to make the convening a zero waste event

Community Research and Mapping

- Identify local impacts, political ideology, cultural identity, demographics, and shared community values based on internet research, person-to-person interviews or other information-gathering mechanisms

Building Social Capacity - Identifying Champions

- Identify potential partners or other influentials (individuals, community groups, organizations, and/or agencies) within the community and schedule a phone call to share information about the convening, and to learn from them about their community, local culture, shared values, impacts, solutions and ideas about potential storytellers. Ideally, these local partners can facilitate an introduction to other relevant stakeholders. This would also be an opportunity to gauge their interest in participating as a partner or in one of the convening roles (opening welcome remarks, resource fair and/or solutions workshop facilitator)
- Research communities that are typically overlooked – often low income, communities of color. Make every effort to partner with a boundary organization that has connections and relationships with these communities, and invite them to collaborate, participate or present at the convening. Prepare for any language translation services that may be needed at the convening, or other services that would make the convening accessible for all to participate (such as child care)

Five Months Out

Building Social Capacity - Selection of Storytelling Panelists

- Identify 4-5 potential community storytellers and hold initial inquiry phone calls. The purpose of the inquiry call is to share information on the convening, frame the importance of climate storytelling (see Storytelling Worksheet), gauge their interest in participating as a storyteller, and to ask them what their story might be about. It is important to know that most people don't know what their story is initially (that often requires some reflection), and that coaching to help draw out these reflections is offered in preparation for this role. Let them know that you'll work together to find and develop their story, should they be selected as one of the panelists
- Confirm 3 storytellers who will share their stories on the Storytelling Panel. Stories should speak to the range of climate impacts and perspectives that represent that community. A possible range in perspectives could include a youth, a person from a low income community of color, and a person who represents the economic driver in that community, ie. farmer, tourism business owner, fisherman, cross country skier, etc... It is also important to feature stories that highlight a range of the emotions, such as loss, empowerment, or hope

Four Months Out

Building Social Capacity - Local Solutions Resources

- Identify 10 -15 local community groups, organizations, agencies who might offer a potential climate change solution at the convening. Each Resource Fair participant will be asked to provide their logo for recognition at the convening, and to create a statement on why they care about climate change. This information will be compiled onto a master powerpoint to be displayed during the resource fair
- Invite local resources to table at the Resource Fair, before the convening begins, and/or to facilitate one of the five concurrent Solutions Workshops (each 30 minutes in length) that will be offered during the Convening. Solutions Workshops should be tailored to represent a range of the local resources, impacts, and shared values of the community

Story Coaching (to occur over the next 2 months)

- Each storyteller will be coached to prepare a fully crafted personal narrative on climate change. This story will be approximately one written page in length, or equivalent to 5 minutes when verbally shared. Each story will take approximately 5-8 hours to craft, and incorporates the following process to be scheduled over the next 2 months:
- 30 minute Story Brainstorm - via phone call or Google hangout. The purpose is to ask prompting questions (see storytelling worksheet) that draw out formative experiences, memories of a beloved place, pivotal moments, and clinching realizations about climate change, emphasizing descriptive detail and the 5 senses: taste, touch, sight, sound, smell. As the storyteller is sharing, take notes in a Google doc, to share with them, as a launching point for drafting the story. The story brainstorm is meant to elicit reflections, but not all of them need to be incorporated into the story. It might also serve as an entry point for deeper thinking and reflection to occur. Talk through individual writing, and schedule the next phone call or hangout (preferably not more than two weeks out so story reflections stay fresh)

- Individual Reflection and Writing - Using the shared “story brainstorm” google doc, as a launching point or rough outline, the storyteller will start drafting their story. The draft will then be shared before the next call for feedback
- 30 minute Emergent Themes - Via phone call and shared Google doc, both the storyteller and the coach will work together to draw out emerging story themes, and emotions. This is also an opportunity to craft connecting sentences, support the story with science to add credibility, and to draft a conclusion if needed
- Individual Writing - The storyteller will have time to write on their own, to create the final draft of the story. Once ready, the storyteller will reach out to the coach for final feedback
- Finalizing - Once the story is completed it should be approximately 300-500 words in length, and 5 minutes long when verbally shared. To create a visual impact for the story, we encouraged each storyteller to choose 3-5 photos to accompany the story, which we scroll through during the convening as they are reading

Three Months Out

Evaluation and Marketing

- Create the evaluation pre-survey that will be emailed to RSVPs and distributed at the convening
- Create online event registration, including pre-survey. Share registration link in emails, on social media, and via local partners who agree to help spread the word
- Design and print marketing collateral, include website for event registration (see Climate Minnesota flyer and postcard examples)
- Mail marketing materials to all of the key local partners for distribution in the community

Building Social Capacity

- Continue Story Coaching Process with each of the 3 Storytellers
- Confirm 5 Solutions Workshops, write short descriptions for each, and work with the facilitator to share purpose and vision for each Workshop (see Solutions Workshop Facilitator Guide)
- Continue to correspond with Climatologist, and Welcome speaker to clarify vision and expectations for their roles

Two Months Out

Logistics

- Refreshments - Coordinate catering with a food vendor for appetizers and beverages pre-convening, and desserts post-convening. Vendors that offer local, clearly labeled organic, vegetarian and vegan options should be a priority. If the venue does not offer reusable ware ask if the food vendor will supply compostable ware. Inquire if the food vendor is willing to donate any unused perishable/non-perishable items to local organizations

Marketing

- Design the print agenda (see Climate Minnesota Agenda example)

Story Coaching

- Work with Storytelling Panelists to finalize climate stories, and gather photos for PowerPoint. Ask for story title and correct spelling of names for the print agenda as well as for local press inquiries

One Month Out

Building Social Capacity

- Email scheduling poll to set a 30 minute “Convening Cast” Call to be held the week before the Convening (see “Convening Cast” Call Agenda)
- Coordinate 5-10 local volunteers to fill roles for Day of the Convening (see Volunteer Roles: greeter, registration, check in table, set up, tear down, speaker greeter, general assistance)

Two Weeks Out

Logistics

- Collect powerpoint presentations from “cast,” including climatologist slides and storytelling panelist photo slides

Marketing

- Create Media Advisory and Press Release to send to local media (see sample templates)

One Week Out

Logistics

Printing needs should be processed by a local, green certified printer, using post-consumer-waste content when possible

- Finalize and print agenda
- Print emotion “pulse check” cards
- Order and prepare any supplies needed (see Day of checklist)
- Make signs for Solutions Workshops, as a way to direct people to workshops the day of the Convening
- Finalize resource fair PowerPoint (see template scrolling slides with resource fair logos and their climate statements)
- Finalize Master PowerPoint (see template - thank you to sponsors and partners, “pulse check” emotion prompts, transition slides to introduce welcome speaker, climatologist, storytellers and solutions workshop facilitators)
- Print or buy blank postcards for solutions workshop participants to self-address

Building Social Capacity

- Host 30 minute “Convening Cast” Conference Call (see “Convening Cast” Call Agenda)

Marketing

- Email advisory to local press, and follow up with a phone call asking if they will attend

Two Days Before

Logistics

- Finalize catering order
- Pack supplies (see packing list)

Building Social Capacity

- Allow time for last minute phone conversations with partners, cast members, or press

Day Of

Climate Science Presenter

- Print online registration list for check in table
- Print paper registrations to have available at convening for walk ins
- Final run through of convening checklist
- Arrive at venue 1.5 hours prior to Resource Fair start time, to set up; including posting directional signs on venue doors, placing golf pencils and question cards on each participant seat, set up the welcome table and a paper registration area for walk-ins, set up tables for Resource Fair, arrange for delivery and set up for refreshments, verify locations for Solutions Workshop breakout spaces, test technical equipment for sound and powerpoint
- 30 minutes prior to Resource Fair start time, providers to arrive to set up, and appear open as participant arrive
- 30 minutes before convening start time, all speakers should meet at staging/podium area. Trusted Community Leader, Climate Literacy Presenter, and Storytelling Panelists will meet with support person(s) who will assist with any technical difficulties for powerpoint presentations/visuals and with time tracking prompts during the convening. Solutions Workshop Facilitators will meet with support person(s) who will assist with any last minute details, to give instructions on the location of their specific breakout
- Convening participants will be encouraged to take a seat 5 minutes before the welcome remarks are given by the Trusted Community Leader
- The convening will begin with the welcome remarks from the Trusted Community Leader. At this time the Resource Fair will officially end, however providers are encouraged to join the audience and leave tabling materials up for the entire Convening and Dessert Reception

4. Following up

Convenings provide an initial step for a longer term, layered approach to education, engagement and capacity building. Relationships with local community members have been established over the months leading up to the convening, and there is a significant opportunity for continued partnership around future efforts.

Two Days After

- Create and send a thank you email, including post-survey, to convening participants

One Week After

- Thank you email to all “Convening Cast” members and partners; invite feedback and testimonials
- Consider coordinating a post-convening conference call to debrief with cast and partners

One Month After

- Send self-addressed postcards to attendees of solutions workshops

Longer Term

- Host a webinar as a continued effort to build climate literacy and place-based knowledge around a specific impact or solution
- Partner with community champions to host future events, to build upon the convening and support your relationships with local networks, such as: local stakeholder meetings, legislators education, citizen engagement events, community climate storytelling events, seed grants for community solutions
- Write a blog or article about the convening, to share insights and lessons learned

5. Funding Your Convening

Funding for your convening can come from a variety of sources, including grant funding, corporate sponsors, local community organizations and in-kind support. You might consider drafting a customizable letter detailing your project, goals and outcomes along with your specific funding request, and including sponsor benefits (publicity, co-hosting, opening remarks).

Appendix

The Climate Minnesota Project

IN 2014, CLIMATE GENERATION launched Climate Minnesota: Local Stories, Community Solutions, a two-year project that engaged over 1,100 Minnesotans and 100 organizations in climate change education and solutions. Climate Minnesota responded to the urgent need to increase climate literacy and promote sustainable behavior change among Minnesotans by sharing the knowledge of local experts and the stories of individuals impacted by climate change. The project was built on the power of media for sharing stories and the importance of personal connections to reach a broader, more diverse audience.

Major funding for the Climate Minnesota project was provided by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the McKnight Foundation.

To view a recap of convenings by community, we invite you to visit www.climateminnesota.org

Project Goals

- Increase climate literacy of Minnesotans of all ages, economic levels and backgrounds statewide
- Highlight and share knowledge of local climate science and solutions
- Build community capacity and resilience through climate change engagement
- Positive behavior change related to climate change mitigation and adaptation

Evaluative Impact

Through our evaluation, we learned:

- Participants showed an increase in their confidence to talk about climate change impacts and solutions
- The majority of participants said they met at least 2 people at the convening that they could connect with if they needed advice about how to deal with climate change
- Nearly 90% of participants took action on climate after the convening

Results also showed that participants who participated in one of our 12 convenings left the event remembering it in a positive light, feeling hopeful, energized, and connected.

Thank you to Molly Phipps Consulting for support in the evaluation design and implementation.

Media Coverage

The project resulted in 26 television and print media stories about the convenings. Media stories surrounding Climate Minnesota have consistently used our “frame” – talking about climate change as a local and personally relevant issue. These timely stories generated additional excitement in communities, and elevated the local implications and voices of neighbors even further. “The things that we value...the things that we count on, are being affected...and they are not likely to ease anytime soon,” climatologist Mark Seeley told the Bede Ballroom audience. – Crookston Times, April 2015

Climate Story Snippets

A unique aspect of Climate Minnesota was the use of climate storytelling as a vehicle to bridge the science and the solutions by sharing stories of community members and their experiences or reflections on climate change.

We heard eyewitness accounts from residents, farmers, tribal members, teachers, business owners, faith leaders, and youth that helped to create peer influence and a sense of normalcy in conversations on climate change. Below are a few snippets to give you a sense of what was shared at convenings. To view our entire climate storytelling collection, you can visit www.climatestories.org.

I am 17 years old. What I love about living in Minnesota is the winters. One of my favorite winter memories is of my little sister and I rushing outside to play after every time it snowed. We loved the smoothness of the snow just after it had fallen, whether it is soft and fluffy, or a sparkling frozen crust the could almost support our weight if we tread lightly. I am hopeful, but also concerned, for the future. Winters are warming today and do not often have the same level of snowfall as in past years, and it melts too quickly. It is scary to realize how the environment and communities are going to be impacted by climate change, and in ways that we can't even predict.

- Emma, 11th Grade student, Burnsville, MN

My first time fishing was at Grandpa Lee's cabin... I remember one time catching a Northern that at the time seemed as big as I was...I can't be sure if Grandpa Lee was concerned with climate change when he recorded freezing and thawing dates. As a child, climate change wasn't on my radar...now, I have seen extreme weather undoubtedly caused by climate change, and as a result the Crookston community has rallied together.

- Olivia, College Student, Crookston, MN

People who grow up on the Iron Range have iron filings in their blood, it is said, which eventually draws them back home. This saying refers to the dominant economic history which gives the Iron Range its name. First there was logging, then came mining, first iron, then taconite, more recently the troubled prospect of copper and nickel. Call it an economy of extraction, where work depends on what can be removed from the ground and shipped elsewhere, most of the profits included. Those who use that phrase, "iron filings in the blood," know, however, that the magnetism that brings people back to the Range is not metallurgical, but relational and ecological. Through thick and thin, Iron Rangers are fiercely loyal to their neighbors and their kin. They are perennially resourceful. And they love the land and water. This piece of earth is inescapably home...

- Kristin, ELCA Pastor, Iron Range, MN

It's easy to feel powerless in a world of 7 billion people to change its dangerous climate trajectory. If I could speak on a huge intercom to the whole world, I would say, Do not be made still by the idea that you can't make a difference. Things are not solid. Reality is not immovable. We as humans are very easily influenced, and when our perspectives change, so does the world.

- Anna, Ninth grade student, Burnsville, MN

Today, cross country skiing doesn't happen for me without significant planning, considerable travel, and a lot of luck. And that is likely how it will be for a very long time, due primarily to the changing climate. In my job in the State Energy Office, I work to persuade people to participate in energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy options...The paybacks...are tangible and real: lower utility bills, environmental improvements, saving tax dollars, job growth in certain sectors. But for me, an additional goal is to try to stabilize our climate enough so that my grandchildren won't need to talk about something they used to value—but no longer experience because of climate change.

- Terry, State Energy Office, Twin Cities Metro

The Duluth that I want to live in is one that understands the urgency of this issue, and that are working together as a community is essential for creating a better world, as my parents had envisioned...What I love most about Duluth is the resiliency of its people and I believe this goes further than rebuilding our lives after the 100 year storms finally pass. I have complete faith in our community to create a future that is worthy of our children's dreams - and I believe that starts with the responsibility of our decision makers.

- Ann, Grandmother, Duluth, MN

Ripple Effects


As a follow up to Climate Minnesota, we have stayed in touch with several communities to provide support, resources and to learn about how local partners are continuing efforts to lead on climate change solutions. The following are two examples of ripple effects from Climate Minnesota Convenings.

City of Rochester - 100% Renewables by 2031

At the October 2015 Climate Minnesota: Rochester Convening, Mayor Brede announced a proclamation for the city to be powered with 100% renewable energy by the year 2031. One year later, Mayor Brede shared with us that, while initial pushback he received after the ambitious announcement was significant, later he realized that the proclamation became much more powerful than he could have anticipated. Since 2015, the proclamation has become a frame of reference as Rochester invests in a major city infrastructure overhaul around the prestigious Mayo Clinic expansion called Destination Medical Center, and has led to several partnership and initiatives on clean energy since then. Brede shared, "It was like when JFK announced that we would be the first nation to put a man on the moon. There were many critics, but then people scrambled to figure out if we really could do it - and we did! It was a public statement that mobilized us."

2016 Legislative Conversations

To build on the climate change education provided, local solutions presented and to leverage the vast partnerships cultivated through Climate Minnesota, we revisited 4 of the Convening communities: Duluth, South Metro, Rochester and Mankato to host legislative conversations with local decision makers. Held at a local breakfast venue, each conversation began with background on the issue of climate change, including impacts and solutions specific to that community, highlighting the level of public engagement that took place at the recent Climate Minnesota Convening held in that community. Utilizing the power of climate stories to bridge understanding and create personal relevance, 2-3 constituents shared their stories and



eyewitness accounts at the breakfast to demonstrate how people are actually seeing and feeling climate change locally. We found these conversations to be insightful, rich and important for bridging bipartisan understanding in local communities.

During this open conversation, decision makers shared various opportunities and barriers to addressing climate change. Senator Senjem, a Republican shared that while he believes there isn't a shared understanding on the causes of climate change, we must be willing to agree that it is important to conserve our precious resources, come together and envision a clean energy future. Senator Senjem also welcomed any information we could provide him on the science of climate change, so that he could increase his understanding.

Templates

The following sample materials, included as a separate PDF, are meant to provide support for planning and implementing your convening. Rather than a prescription, these templates are meant to be used as a frame of reference, with the adaptability to tailor messages and resources to meet the unique needs of your audience.

Templates can be downloaded at: www.climategen.org/toolkit by filling out the request form.

- Visioning Worksheet
- Sample Convening Agenda
- Convening Agenda Template
- Venue Checklist
- Resource Fair/Registration Checklist
- Cast Invitation/Confirmation Templates
- Climate Storytelling Worksheet
- Solutions Workshop Facilitator Guide
- Convening Cast Call Agenda
- Sample Print Marketing
- Print Collateral
- Sample Media Outreach
- Sample Evaluation Questions

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