

Host a Community Conversation

Introduction:

Start meaningful conversations about climate mitigation and adaptation in your community by hosting a Community Conversation! Rather than focusing on a specific community, this workshop allows small groups of community members, youth, clubs, and organizations to look at climate change through a hypothetical town and then relate it to their own backyard. If you want to make this specific to your community, you can easily do so by finding a map of your town. Many of these can be found online through the town/city planner.

Activity 1: Communication, Engagement, and Sense of Place (personal connection)

1. Hand out a small piece of paper to each person. Have them think of a place that is special to them. This place can be anywhere, inside, outside, local, or away. Give people a couple of minutes to describe their place or draw it on their paper (the description can be a drawing, bullet points, written explanation, etc.).
2. Have participants pair up with a person they do not know and designate Person A and Person B.
3. Person A has 1 minute to describe their place to Person B when the timer starts. They are to talk for the whole minute but will have to stop when we tell them to stop. Person B may NOT TALK. They can nod but cannot add anything else to the conversation.
4. Now, Person B has 30 seconds to tell Person A what they heard them say about their place.
5. Reverse roles and repeat steps 1-4. This time Person B is talking for 1 minute. They cannot reference Person A's place in their description.
6. Debrief with the participants. What did you notice? Was it hard to listen and not add your thoughts while the other person was talking? How did it feel to describe your special place the whole time without interruptions? Discuss the following:
 - Listening: People have a desire to connect with others. However, we often interrupt someone speaking with us to agree with them about what they are saying, but in doing so, we end up taking over the conversation. When discussing issues close to our hearts, like seeing environmental changes in our communities and special places, it is important to actively listen to each other. Only add your voice when someone has completed their thought. By remembering how it felt to be heard and truly listened to, we can create meaningful dialogue about tough topics.
 - Places: When everyone is thinking about a special place, it unites them in that commonality. Though everyone has a different special place, they find a common ground that allows more understanding to enter the discussion and answer questions.
 - Relating your place to climate change: How would it feel if your special place was at risk? Is your special place at risk due to climate change?

Activity 2: Participatory Mapping (local connection)

1. Introduce Participatory Mapping, stressing that if done well, this activity will foster collaboration and community buy-in.
2. Introduce the made-up town of "Bradburyville" (This will be a fake town with multiple features that many towns would be dealing with: main streets, ocean, lake, rivers, forested areas, parks bridges, public works locations, etc.) This town will simulate issues that many towns will face due to climate change. [Access the Bradburyville map here](#), or create your own!
3. (If this is a long workshop) People should be given cards with identities of who they will be in this activity. They could be the local land trust, the town manager, a local business owner, waterfront property owner, etc. Include a description of what their concerns are from their role's specific viewpoint.
4. Using the map of Bradburyville, identify important places in order to start a conversation to engage all voices!
E.g. Bradburyville is an oceanfront community facing the pressures of sea-level rise. Using sea-level rise predictions, discuss the decisions the town will have to make on what services and places are at the highest risk and priority.

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Activity 3: En-ROADS Climate Simulation Tool (global view)

1. Introduce the global MIT simulation. This simulation has people adjust various things to combat climate change (ex: emissions, reforestation, alternative energy, nuclear energy, etc.) to try and as a group get the projected 7°C increase (if we do nothing) down to 2°C or below. Discover global solutions to climate change and what you individually and collectively as a community can accomplish to do your part.
2. Conclude with effective ways to combat Climate Change. → Buckshot approach vs. Silver Bullet!

[Access TCI En-Roads Toolkit HERE.](#)

Conclusions: (bring the global back to personal and local empowerment)

1. Bring this information back to the community level. What can our communities be doing that will have the largest impact, and how will that affect our needs in Bradburyville.
2. What community stakeholders can be integral to help create resilient lands and towns. This applies to businesses, town managers, schools, non-profits, land trusts, and whatever other groups are being presented to!

