

ENVIRONMENT &
SOCIETY SERIES

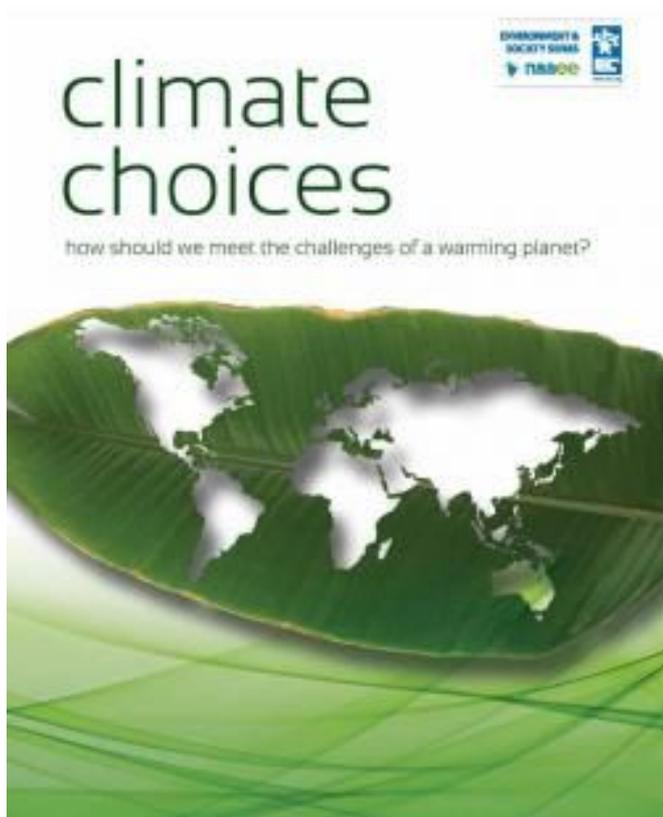


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Engaging People in Civic Discussions about Climate Change

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FORUMS



Welcome!

- Frank Niepold, NOAA
- Michele Archie, Harbinger Consulting Group
- Bora Simmons, NAAEE

Environmental Issues Forums

EIF provides tools, training, and support for engaging adults and students in meaningful, productive discussions about sticky issues that affect the environment and communities.

Partners

- North American Association for Environmental Education
- National Issues Forums Institute
- Kettering Foundation
- A nationwide network of Centers for Public Life
- The Harbinger Consulting Group
- Local forum sponsors, facilitators, and participants

What we'll cover today

What do we mean by deliberation?

How are forums structured?

Climate Choices

What's next for EIF?

Questions

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What do we mean by deliberation?



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “DELIBERATION”?

The process of carefully weighing options against the things we hold valuable in order to make decisions.

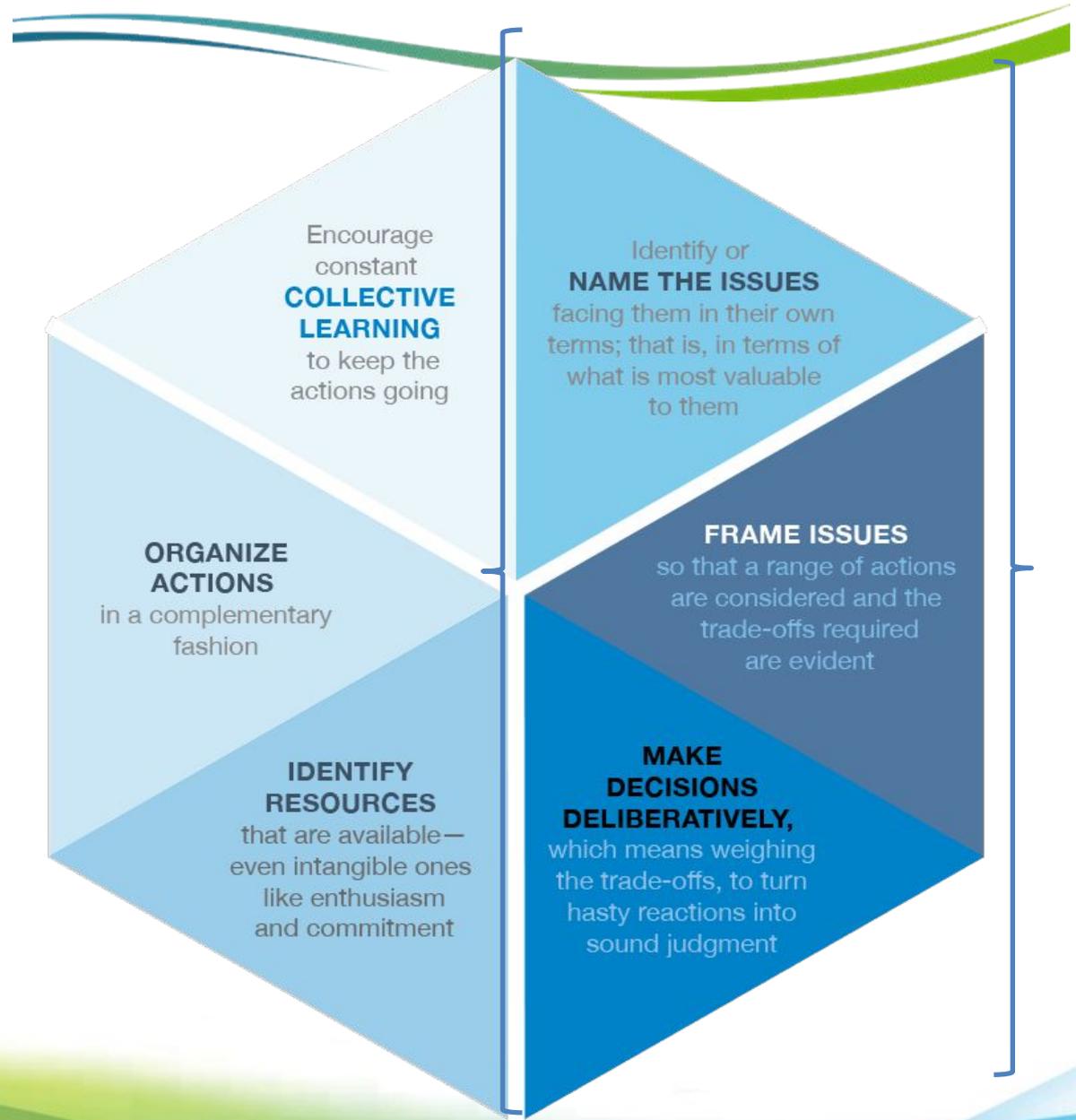
- ❖ NOT a debate or simply a discussion
- ❖ Considers advantages AND trade-offs for each option
- ❖ Asks people to recognize that every action will have a downside, and to consider which trade-offs they are willing to accept
- ❖ Explores what people hold valuable (“what SHOULD we do about this?” and not just “what’s the solution to this problem?”)

6 Democratic Practices

Essential
building blocks
of democratic
community life



Where does EIF fit?



SOME POSSIBLE FORUM OUTCOMES

Deeper grasp
of the issue
and its
tensions

Insight into
different
points of view
and less
polarization

Guidance for
decision-
makers

Which
tradeoffs your
group is
willing to
accept—or
not

Starting point
for citizen
action

How are forums structured?

HOW ARE DELIBERATIVE FORUMS STRUCTURED?

WHO — Anyone can organize a forum: community leaders, neighborhood activists, educators, youth groups, librarians, book clubs, concerned citizens...and you!

WHAT — Formats vary: single forums, series of small study circles, sustained community dialogues, classroom use, and more. Large groups often start and wrap up together, but divide into smaller forums of 8-12 participants for most of the deliberation.

WHERE — Neutral and comfortable places like libraries, meeting halls, churches, community centers, schools, homes.

WHEN — Forums typically last about two hours.

HOW — Use available supporting materials. Try to invite a diverse group of participants, but deliberation can happen even among people you think would agree fully with each other.

WHAT MATERIALS CAN I USE?

- ❖ Issue guides and issue advisories
- ❖ Moderator guide
- ❖ Video discussion starter
- ❖ Participant and moderator questionnaire

- ❖ Find the materials you need at: naaee.org/eif & nifi.org

WHO ARE THE KEY PLAYERS?



A CONVENER

Brings people together to talk



A MODERATOR

Helps participants weigh choices together



PARTICIPANTS

The real drivers of deliberative forums



A RECORDER

Records themes, concerns, and questions

WHAT DOES A MODERATOR DO?

Encourage an
exchange of
views

Press
participants to
focus on
tradeoffs

Stay neutral

Bring in points-
of-view that may
be missing

Keep
conversation
respectful and
on-task

WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS DO IN A DELIBERATIVE FORUM?

**Look at
different
ways of
thinking
about a
problem**

**Exchange
views with
others**

**Weigh
benefits and
trade-offs of
different
approaches**

**Listen and
reconsider in
a safe
environment**

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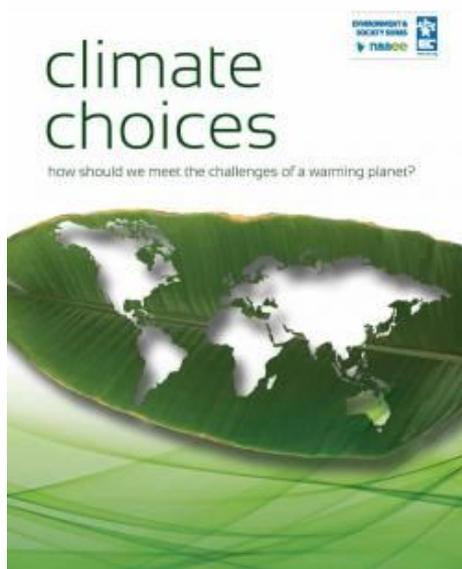
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CLIMATE CHOICES

THE CLIMATE CHOICES ISSUE FRAMEWORK

A structure for a deliberative dialogue that describes the problem and three or four approaches to resolving it *in public terms*.



- 1: Sharply reduce carbon emissions
- 2: Prepare and protect our communities
- 3: Accelerate innovation

Sharply Reduce Carbon Emissions

We need to take aggressive action right away to reduce our energy consumption and other climate-changing behaviors, or we risk catastrophic effects that we cannot handle.

The tradeoff for this kind of security could be limits to our personal choices and freedom, as well as unfairness, as some people, communities, and businesses will be affected by the required changes more than others.

Prepare and Protect Our Communities

We should focus on protecting and preparing communities and businesses for the most likely effects of climate change like flooding, drought, fire, health problems, and social unrest.

The tradeoff for protecting the vulnerable could be accepting greater damage from climate change, and asking some people and communities to make bigger changes and sacrifices than others.

Accelerate Innovation

We must invest in rapid innovation to develop new, cleaner fuel sources, new ways to influence Earth's climate, and even new societal arrangements.

The tradeoff for this self-reliance could be failing to make progress quickly enough to avert the worst climate change impacts, and the risk of causing other environmental problems and economic disruptions while we solve this one.

Examples of What Could Be Done

Upgrade storm-water systems, levees, and emergency water-supply systems, and build roads and transit above flood levels.

Provide care, treatment, and assistance in the face of prolonged heat stress, hunger, homelessness, and other issues.

Use zoning, building codes, relocation, and insurance rules to keep people from living and building in vulnerable areas.

Make communities more self-sufficient by building independent power grids and creating strong local agricultural production.

Offer farmers subsidies and technical support for switching to crops and farming methods that can withstand climate changes.

Some Trade-Offs to Consider

This will change the landscape in many communities and does not guarantee adequate protection.

Local organizations might not be sufficient for caring for people impacted by climate-related events.

This would infringe on property rights and impose larger economic burdens on some property owners.

Local self-sufficiency may not be possible everywhere, including where winters make it difficult to produce enough food.

Subsidies to farmers could be seen as unfair by other industries affected by climate change.

REFLECTIONS AT THE END OF A FORUM

Individual reflections

Group reflections

Next-step reflections

COLLECTING INFORMATION AND FURTHERING REFLECTION

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRES

- Help participants reflect on how they are thinking about the issue after the forum.
- Provide insights for local forum reports.
- Underpins research and reporting that the National Issues Forums Institute or the North American Association for Environmental Education does on this issue to officeholders, members of the media, and others, including those who took part in the forums.

MODERATOR RESPONSE FORMS

- Help forum moderators reflect on forums and outcomes.
- Provide insights that add to participant questionnaires, and help EIF partners fine-tune our materials and training.

Download surveys at nifi.org or answer online at nifi.org/questionnaires

SOME POSSIBLE FORUM OUTCOMES

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What's next?

WHAT'S NEXT FOR EIF?

Environment and Society Series issue guide and supporting material available on:

- ❖ **Climate change**
- ❖ **Energy (summer 2016)**
- ❖ **Water (fall 2016)**

**Teacher's Modules for Climate Choices
Moderator Training at the NAAEE Conference
Online/on demand moderator training**

www.naaee.org/eif

Common Ground for Action (CGA)

- Online forums run on any browser
- 6-8 participants
- Same basic setup, goals and outcomes as in-person forums, with visuals that show how your group's views are evolving
- Learn more at: NIFI.org/en/common-ground-action
- Join a regular Climate Choices CGA forum (dates to be announced) or host your own
- EIF will provide periodic training for CGA moderators

White House Climate Action Plan

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) is releasing a new, free issue guide, *Climate Choices*, which enables students to explore the advantages and disadvantages of multiple options for addressing climate impacts. Developed in cooperation with the Kettering Foundation and with input from NOAA, *Climate Choices* guides students through analyses of the costs and consequences of different climate solutions. NAAEE is working to have the guide adopted by at least 100 classrooms across the country by the end of this year, and is creating an online forum for teachers so that they can share lessons learned.

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/WHSF_fact_sheet_41316_0.pdf

FOR MORE INFORMATION

North American Association for Environmental Education naaee.org/eif

Issue guides and supporting materials • training and networking • online discussion groups on environmental education topics, conservation and behavior change, and sustainable communities

National Issues Forums nifi.org

Issue guides and supporting materials • Common Ground for Action online deliberation • background about deliberation • a listing of planned forum events • a network of people and organizations engaged in deliberative democracy

Kettering Foundation kettering.org

Research about deliberation and other democratic practices

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Thank You!

