Broadening engagement at a critical time
Virtual bridges to the COPs

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Agenda

- The challenges
- The virtual bridge concept
- PDX Virtual Bridge to COP25
- Outcomes of the PDX Bridge
- Questions and possibilities
The Challenges

- Climate disruption is a global issue having local consequences
- Dealing with it requires an “all hands, minds, and hearts on deck” approach requiring participation from all segments of global society.
- Physical venues for international meetings are limited.
- Events like the current pandemic presents unique challenges and lessons.
- There exists a large volume of online content produced by the UNFCCC and observer groups that is vastly underutilized.
The virtual bridge concept

Local watch parties that enable local people to be virtual citizen observers by providing them with opportunities to do the following...

- Directly communicate with observers at the COPs and other international events.
- Hear from local climate actors linking the local to the international.
- Communicate their ideas and concerns to UNFCCC staff and negotiators.
- Network with others like themselves.
PDX Virtual Bridge to COP25

Who was involved

- The key organizers - Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, and Lewis and Clark College
- A constellation of local partners
- Two major international efforts providing online content from the COP25 Open COP and #VIRTUALBlueCOP25
PDX Virtual Bridge - Outcomes

- The two public gatherings involved nearly 200 people and nearly two dozen local, national, and international organizations.
- An on-line gateway to bridge and UNFCCC events was put in place.
- The attendees all participated in a Talanoa style dialogue thus contributing to a visioning document produced by GPSEN.

Talanoa Dialogue: Pulse of Portland
Questions and possibilities #1
What did the Bridge to COP25 accomplish?

- A group of local partners was assembled who are interested in moving to the next phase.
- A group of national / internal partners was assembled to provide a liaison between the local and the international.
- Three of the four opportunities listed on the Virtual Bridge Concept slide were realized.
- The fourth opportunity (communicating local concerns to UNFCCC leadership) is still a hurdle.
Questions and possibilities #2
What’s next for the local bridge?

- Expanding the number of participants.
- Expanding the number of local partners and including a more diverse group of organizations.
- Expanding the number of gatherings during a COP to attract a more diverse group of participants.
Questions and possibilities #1

How do we encourage other bridges?

- Identifying and encouraging other communities
- Producing an organizing kit based on the PDX experience.
- Identifying observer groups and UNFCCC staff who can be resource people for communities establishing their own bridges.
Questions?

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