

Rendez-Vous

Special Edition
May 2002

Public Engagement in Atlantic Canada: Educating Each Other About Global Climate Change

Over the past two years, the Atlantic Council for International Cooperation (ACIC), with the assistance of eight provincial coordinators in the four Atlantic Provinces, training and mentoring from the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), and funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has organized over 45 public deliberations throughout Atlantic Canada on the topic of climate change.

Public deliberation is an emerging method of dealing with high-priority social issues. Instead of pitting one point of view against the other and trying to decide on the "right one" as the debate model tends to do, deliberation seeks to get people to explore different approaches, test ideas, and consider grey areas. People from a variety of backgrounds are coming together, not to find a solution, but to try to find shared values and some common ground. This community voice can then be taken to decision makers. An organizer of public deliberations has described the process as a way to exercise our citizenship, and past participants have described the experience as being empowering.

A typical deliberation lasts three hours and brings together a group of 10 to 15 people. Discussions occur with the assistance of a trained moderator who helps the participants go through different angles that could be taken toward the problem of climate change. These approaches are outlined in participant guides that present the pros and cons of each approach in a balanced way. For the climate change deliberations, the health of people and the environment, economic stability, freedom

of choice and lifestyle are three choices presented in the guide to stimulate discussion. Questionnaires were answered at the beginning and at the end of the deliberations to determine participants' ideas on how policy should be developed on the topic of climate change.

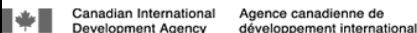
Since the project's inception in September 2000, over 500 people have attended deliberations in all corners of Atlantic Canada, and over 100 community leaders have been trained in the art of facilitation. People who attended the deliberations had the opportunity to learn about the climate change issue in a non-confrontational setting where their values and input was considered equal to everyone else's and was considered important. In a society that uses the debate model regularly, this was no small feat.



Taking the analysis of the questionnaires from the first year of deliberations, ACIC hosted a two-day climate change conference, entitled Global Climate, Community Resilience, and Responses from Atlantic Canada. This conference, on March 16 and 17, 2001, hosted in Memramcook Institute, Saint-Joseph, NB, was attended by over 40 participants, representing: NGOs from environment, international development, and health sectors; industry; universities; and national and municipal governments. The outcome of this conference was a strong position paper, calling on the ***“Eastern Seaboard Premiers and Governors to support a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions region-wide below the 1990 level by the year 2030, and to implement the policies and programs necessary to achieve this target.”*** Over

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13 specific recommendations were included in the position paper, which was presented to the Eastern Canadian Premiers and New England Governors Workshop on Climate Change, held at the end of March 2001.

In September 2001, ACIC decided to continue running its climate change deliberations for another year with the continued financial support of CIDA. This past year, ACIC included two new aspects of the deliberations. The first was a booklet of information on international projects (case studies) of four Atlantic Canadian organizations dealing with mitigation, education, or prevention of climate change impacts. The second activity was a Pledge Form, which participants had the option of filling out. The Pledge Form had a list of actions that could be taken to decrease personal carbon dioxide emissions. The Pledge Form was accompanied by information on each of the actions to assist the participant in completing the pledged actions. Pledge Forms were compiled and entered into a database. In May 2002, participants who filled out the Pledge Forms will be contacted and reminded about their pledged activity.

After compiling and analysing both qualitative and quantitative results from participants' questionnaires, it was found that the results between the two years of deliberations were very similar. Participants agreed that change must occur quickly to mitigate the effects of climate change and to decrease the rate of climate change. Changes must occur on all levels, from individuals to the international community. These changes will only occur through a combination of regulation, development of incentives, and personal choice. (Only 21% of participants agreed "We should let people make their own choices about reducing greenhouse gas emissions *EVEN IF this means climate change continues as before.*")

On a personal level, participants agreed that we need to change our levels of consumption, making concerted efforts to decrease our personal carbon dioxide emissions. Participants indicated through the questionnaires that they are willing to pay more for fossil fuels, and are willing to pay more for alternative technology that emits fewer greenhouse gas emissions. (74% of participants agreed that "A carbon tax should be placed on fossil fuels to decrease consumption *EVEN IF this means products will cost more and we won't be able to drive as much*" and 74% of participants agreed "We should use alternative technologies to heat and electrify our homes *EVEN IF it costs more and we are unsure what the risks may be.*")

Nationally, participants agreed we need to make stronger political commitments on decreasing our greenhouse gas emissions; going beyond the 5% of the Kyoto Protocol. (93% of participants agreed that "We need to cut our greenhouse gas emissions by more than the 5% our federal government promised in 1997".) The Canadian government should assume more of an international leadership role.

Continued on page 6

New Brunswick Climate Change Deliberations



Throughout the month of January and February, residents of New Brunswick participated in deliberative dialogues on climate change. The deliberations, organized by the Fredericton YMCA in collaboration with ACIC, took place in urban and rural settings, in both French and English.

The discussions gave New Brunswick residents from a variety of backgrounds an opportunity to discuss their concerns about the issue of global warming. A common theme throughout the deliberations was the necessity to take action on the issue before it becomes worse. After all, "even if we are wrong about climate change," as one participant remarked, "we can only benefit from taking action!" Many participants were enthusiastic about this change, all the while aware that personal lifestyle adjustments will be necessary. There was a general recognition that the convenience of a wasteful lifestyle does not justify the risks to the environment or to our health. "Either we pay now or we pay later." Almost all participants understood that the longer we wait to make positive changes, the more severe the environmental consequences will be.

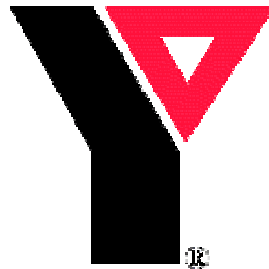
Another concern raised was the common tendency to label people "consumers". While consumption is part of our nature, participants resented being *referred to* as consumers. They indicated that such a label prevents us from reflecting on the other aspects of our lives and thereby limits the scope of our

actions against climate change. We are trained to think only of taking action as consumers, and not in our other functions as human beings. So, for example, in addition to changing our patterns of energy consumption, we can also educate ourselves about the effects of climate change on other species and

challenge our political leaders by lobbying for policy adaptations and increased regulations. Many participants agreed that regulations, such as carbon taxation and restrictions on emissions from large industries and public energy corporations, are vital to the preservation of the environment. It was also noted that, comparatively speaking, New Brunswick has a fairly poor recycling program. Some suggested that we model our recycling program after programs in other provinces.

While arduous efforts were made to recruit participants for the Moncton deliberation, this session was not as successful as the others. Feedback pointed out that people in Moncton are dealing with several issues needing more immediate attention, such as the current crisis over water privatization with which Moncton residents are presently preoccupied. It was suggested that Monctonians are seeking more active ways to deal with local issues rather than gathering for a dialogue on the global situation at this point in time.

Pleased with the deliberations, many of the participants were enthusiastic to take further action against



11

(Continued on Page 6)

Concern to Action!

Nova Scotia Public Deliberations

Today's youth really care

Youth expressed their concern for climate change by moderating workshops in Halifax, Antigonish and Sackville. Six university students were part of a group of 12 moderators that were trained as part of an Atlantic Council for International Co-operation project. Sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the purpose of the project was expressed in several goals, some of which include: building citizen's knowledge of partnerships between Canadians and their South-

partners to mitigate or decrease the effects of climate change, engaging a cross-section of Canadians in the Atlantic, to understand how climate change is a global concern and creating a momentum of sensitized participants who will adopt at least one new pattern of decreased greenhouse gas emissions. Especially important was to create a forum to provide input from citizens to decision-makers on at least one policy issue.

More than 40 moderators were trained in all four Atlantic provinces and Brenda MacKinnon, managing director of Rising Tide Co-operative Ltd. which organized the Nova Scotia training, says she was encouraged by the number of youth who wanted to be involved. "I think that the 20-30 age group are really concerned about what is happening locally and internationally and understand how it will impact on their future. They bring such energy and enthusiasm to the table."

Michael Warren who moderated dialogues in the Halifax area, echoed comments heard throughout the dialogues. "Overwhelmingly, the consensus was that better public education efforts are necessary for people to grasp the importance of this issue... Participants articulated a strong faith in the ability of



fellow citizens to adapt in the face of encroaching crisis," if they are given the information they need to make decisions.

The Nova Scotia moderators offered three-hour deliberation dialogues in five locations. The results of these deliberations will form part of a report, which will be prepared by the Atlantic Council for International Co-operation and made available to government leaders and

policy makers. ACIC is a coalition of non-governmental organizations and was contracted by CIDA to carry out the education process here in Atlantic Canada. In total more than 20 deliberations were held and more than 250 participants had the opportunity to contribute their ideas. For more information on climate change see www.climatechange.gc.ca To contact the ACIC, visit www.acic-caci.org or e-mail info@acic-caci.org



ISLANDERS ENGAGE WITH THE ISSUE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Prince Edward Island Public Deliberations



Over sixty Islanders participated in five Climate Change Workshops that were held across PEI in February, 2002.

The participants were in strong agreement that climate change is a global problem, and that citizens, as well as governments at all levels, must act immediately to address its impact.

The PEI workshops were part of a regional project, **Public Engagement in Atlantic Canada: Educating Each Other About Global Climate Change**, which organized 20 Climate Change sessions in the four Atlantic provinces. The project was sponsored by the Atlantic Council for International Cooperation (ACIC) with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Cooper Institute was the the PEI coordinator, and worked with five local organizations, who agreed to each host one workshop. The Host organizations included the North Rustico Port Authority, PEI Environmental Network, Charlottetown and Area Development Corporation (CADC), Parks Canada and the Evangeline community.

The workshops used a deliberative dialogue process which is a value-based approach to discussing important issues and wrestling with tough choices. It brings together a group of 10 - 15 people who have different perspectives on an issue, and enables them to work through choices about basic directions for their communities and their country. The process of

deliberative dialogue enables the participants to talk together in a non-confrontational way, and to find common ground so that they can move forward to look for solutions.

The participants in the PEI workshops consisted of a diverse group of people which included: fishers, farmers, municipal planners, teachers, public policy makers, private developers, small business people, ecologists, church people, community activists, tradespeople, and environmentalists. The discussion was enriched by the diversity of perspectives which made it a challenge to find common ground. Based on this common ground, the participants identified some actions that will address immediate impacts as well as get at the root causes of global warming.

The dialogue in the workshops reiterated the fact that climate change, eco-destruction and eco-protection is a global issue that affects everyone. It requires global solutions and any actions we take, or don't take, are interdependent. People are more familiar with the impacts of climate change at the local level. However, there is an increasing awareness that developing countries are equally impacted, and industrialized countries such as Canada have more resources, and thus more responsibility in addressing climate change.

The discussions confirmed that there is a shared value among most Islanders of the importance of leaving a healthy environment

as a legacy to their children. It was evident that people agree that there is a degree of urgency to the issue of climate change. In terms of action, most participants agreed that solutions must be multi-faceted. People felt that voluntary measures are important as they underlie the strongly held value of individual freedom. However, on this issue, the majority felt that legislation is also needed. The most effective approach is a balance of education, incentives and legislation.

Participants were asked to identify both individual and collective actions to address climate change. The collective action can be summarized under education, lobbying public officials, supporting local actions to support the environment. There was a strong feeling that Canadians must acknowledge the destructive aspects of our consumer lifestyle. There is a need for comprehensive education programs which provide citizens with clear information about the effects of lifestyle choices on climate change. We must develop effective models of collective and individual leadership. Governments must show vision and leadership in developing strategies.

Cooper Institute coordinators are convinced that these workshops were successful in raising the visibility of the climate change issue in the PEI community. It engaged a number of constituencies, and provided an opportunity to develop a collective wisdom on this issue which promotes action both at the individual and the community level.



Public Engagement in Atlantic Canada: Educating Each Other About Global Climate Change

(continued from page 2)

"Because we are the major polluters, the responsibility for global pollution and greenhouse gas emissions lies with us to set examples for the rest of the world."

-Quote from a participant

Other ways all levels of government can assist with decreasing our greenhouse gas emissions is through increasing education efforts, development of incentives for industry and individuals to decrease their emissions, through increased funding for research and development of alternative, "greener" technology, and through regulations that decrease industry's allowable greenhouse gas emissions.

These recommendations will be sent to all Members of Parliament, MLAs and MHAs in Atlantic Canada, to all media outlets, and will be presented, at a half hour presentation, at **Getting to Kyoto and Beyond - We Can Get There from Here: A Forum on Climate Action in the Maritimes**, sponsored by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick and the Canadian Climate Action Network, on May 6, 2002, in Saint John, NB.

This project has been a wonderful example of what partnerships can accomplish. Thank you to everyone who worked on this project, giving his or her time and energy to building its success!

New Brunswick Climate Change Deliberations

(Continued from page 3)

climate change in a number of different ways. Several pledged to make personal lifestyle alterations such as driving less, changing to a vegetarian diet (or reducing meat consumption), and conserving energy through changes in temperature, reduction in use of large appliances such as dryers, and decreasing water usage in the household. People also indicated interest in voicing their concerns to politicians, communicating with big business owners regarding environmental standards, striving to purchase local and/or organic products, exploring alternative energy sources (e.g. windmills) and encouraging and prompting advancements in education. In fact, the need to educate the public on climate change was very important for most of the participants in the deliberations.



In general, participants were well-educated about the issue at hand. In fact, there seemed to be a certain homogeneity among the participants: all were aware, informed and concerned about climate change. The collaborative approach of seeking to find meaning in differing values through the deliberative format was appreciated by those in attendance. However, they rep-

resented only a small range of viewpoints on the issue. One participant noted, "It would be nice to have these on a more regular basis to have a larger educational impact." The moderators throughout the province reiterated that thought and were enthusiastic about moderating again in the future.

Climate Change Learning in Newfoundland : A Democratic Process in Participation, Decision Making and Communication



Climate change is a complex subject which has no borders and as it gathers momentum it is affecting countries around the world as well as our local communities. The massive increase greenhouse gas emissions over the last decade from mainly burning of fossil fuels have caused the earth's temperature to rise causing dramatic change to ecosystems, flora and fauna, physical attributes of communities and nations, and economic development. Often in Newfoundland it is heard that this really has nothing to do with us. Yet we have had increased flooding, the largest snowfall in Canadian history of more than 20 feet last year, decrease in our fish population, and serious headland erosion. Climate change does play a part in the future development of our communities and our world.

Newfoundland and Labrador is a big province geographically. It is a difficult province to do face to face community education because many people live on the coast line or in communities that are concentrated in larger towns or cities on the east or west coasts. Climate change is an issue in Newfoundland and Labrador. ACIC with the help of it's Newfoundland member and partner, Extension Community Development Co-operative over the last two years embarked upon a participative awareness campaign to involve citizens to discuss their choices to do something about changing climatic conditions. In 2001, 15 people received moderator training so to facilitate a series of 6 deliberative forums on climate change on the east coast of Newfoundland. In 2002, 9 moderators were trained to facilitate 6 forums on the west coast of the province. They were held in February and early March with citizens to explore and deliberate on issues and choices concerning climate change.



A process of deliberative dialogue was used to enable citizens to discuss issues with their neighbors and to study areas of common ground for action and change. Deliberation provides a healthy environment for discussion which involves judicious debate, critical listening and earnest decision making. Participants are equal in the process whether they are a paper plant manager, a fisher or an unemployed worker. There are no power or resource differences that shape peoples chances to contribute to the deliberation. There is no promise at the end of a deliberation that a reasoned argument will lead to a consensus. Whatever decisions people make about what they can do themselves or with others are their own and they are democratic ones.

Why do climate change deliberations on the west coast of Newfoundland? First , there have been many resource based development issues on the west coast which could contribute to climate change. Clear cutting for the paper industry, on shore oil development, erosion of the coast line and temperature changes in the water, fish depletion, dry summer season for farmers, etc. Second, there was a need and interest for community education on the climate change issue on the west coast. Third, there were a group of young community studies students willing to be trained as moderators. Fourth, we also had many development and environmental groups interested in helping to make the deliberations possible. Fifth, we hadn't done any work on the west coast before.

10 community studies students, ages ranging from 19 to 30+, from the College Of the North Atlantic (CONA), Stephenville volunteered for the training. Nine completed the 12 hours of training. The moderators learned about deliberative dialogue, how to

Climate Change Learning in Newfoundland : A Democratic Process in Participation, Decision Making and Communication

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facilitate a report on a session and actually role played various parts of a deliberation. They learned and experienced that a deliberative dialogue process is inclusive and people who could be affected by the decisions of a policy or development, ought to have full and equal decision making power within it. Also that members of a deliberative group will discuss issues and arrive at decisions agreeable to the group so that they can commit themselves on working to find solutions. The key is that group members have to internalize democratic values and respect group decisions that are both reached democratically and consistent with democratic principles. The moderators through the process also learned that the deliberative process is about developing relationships about how they can work with each other. It is about acknowledging individuality, affirming competence, recognizing mutuality and offering positive communication. With relationships they learned that power resides in both individuals and groups. Individuals have the power to accomplish things by themselves , but sometimes an individual's power is inconsequential unless combined with the power of others. The power of many can change things.

It is essential to the success of any community driven learning process that partners come from the community. Their commitment brings ownership to the issue and fosters a "hanging in there" with the process to see action and get the job done. This happened in all the climate change forums on the west coast of Newfoundland. There were 5 original forums and one extra following the completion of the scheduled five. The 6 forums took place in Stephenville (3), Piccadilly, St. Georges and Corner Brook. The partners were Cheryl Hayden, Long Range Community Economic Development Board, Vanessa Glasgow, Port Au Port Development Association, John Basha, Stephenville High School, Edward Smith, Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network, Don Lucas and Cynthia Downey, St. Joesph's High School, St. Georges, and Brian Foley and Marg Lockyear of CONA.

The moderators reports showed a broad range of public participation. Most people looked at the 3 choices for action on climate change. After discussion, they took pieces of the three and came up with a fourth choice as their middle ground. The people who participated were committed to the process. The participation of youth in their schools provided a much needed youth dimension It's where the next generation of leaders and change agents are to come from. . The moderators stated the young people were very positive and really liked the way the information was presented and they actively participated..

Climate change is an important community issue which affects us economically, physically, emotionally and environmentally. It is a serious global issue. Often people think it is so big that they cannot do anything about it. Bringing it to a community level of ownership is the base for action. The approach of talking about it in communities and organizations is not new. The exciting aspect of deliberative dialogue is not only does it facilitate an awareness and stimulate discussion at the community level, it enables and encourages individuals to act on their own behalf.. It's about bringing a democratic process to the community where people can set an agenda, reformulate, redefine, and reframe issues, exchange information, provide their perspectives, reflect and look at all sides of the issue and make decisions where possible on issues that affect them. They have to be part of the action if an kind of transformation is to happen.

