

# Using Online Dialogues to Connect Local Leaders and Climate Experts: Methods, Feedback and Lessons Learned from the Resilience Dialogues

Thriving Earth Exchange | U.S. Global Change Research Program | Meridian Institute  
 Melissa Goodwin, Raj Pandya | Chris Weaver, Sarah Zerbonne, Natalie Bennett | Brad Spangler  
 mgoodwin@agu.org

**Problem:** Small, isolated, and historically underserved communities may not have access to the expertise, engagement strategies, and best-fit resources they need to advance just, equitable, and inclusive climate resilience.

### The Gap between Community Needs and Available Resources

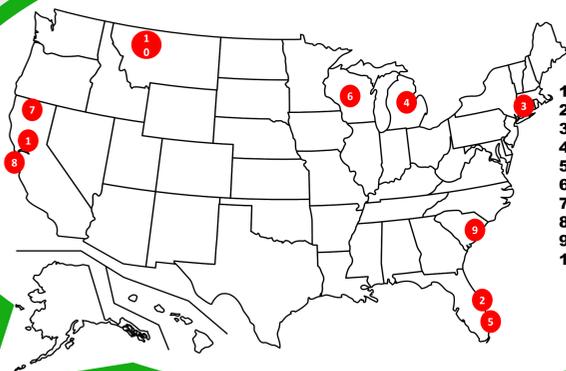
Community Needs	Available Resources
Clear climate impacts described at a local scale	Focused on global or sometimes regional trends; Emphasis on large population centers
Selected, ready-to-use resources that are well-matched to local context	Hundreds of tools, datasets and resources distributed across various organizations and clearinghouses.
Local buy-in, time, and resources for resilience	Divergent priorities and a focus on "essential services" that don't include adaptation
Participation from the full-fabric of the community, including the private sector and vulnerable populations	Duplicated or closed-door conversations that aren't inclusive or cross sector
Lessons-learned from communities facing similar challenges	No awareness of activities in other communities – or opportunity to identify potential connections

**Solution:** Partner with communities to explore their risks from climate variability and change. Through a series of facilitated online dialogues, subject matter experts and communities around the country work together to take steps toward resilience.

### Goals of the Resilience Dialogues

- ✓ Help communities, especially underserved communities, define their climate priorities, outline first steps toward resilience, and find best-fit resources.
- ✓ Help communities connect with similar communities, and regional and national efforts to advance resilience into action.
- ✓ Provide scientists with the opportunity to work with community leaders.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for non-profit, public, and private sector actors to cooperate to support local communities.
- ✓ Offer real-world feedback to the scientific community as it develops new research, tools, and resources.

### Communities



1. Antioch, CA
2. Boynton Beach, FL
3. Bridgeport, CT
4. East Lansing, MI
5. Hallandale Beach, FL
6. Menominee Reservation
7. Mt. Shasta, CA
8. San Francisco BCDC
9. Savannah, GA
10. Whitefish, MT

### Recruiting and Onboarding

1. Establish relationships with Community Networks
2. Identify Communities
3. Recruit Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and Facilitators
4. Match SMEs to Communities Based on Expertise
5. Train Participants According to Role
6. Introductory Telecon for each Community Dialogue

### Online Dialogues

#### Framing Dialogue

Identify local climate risks and opportunities

- Day 1: Establish Community Context
- Day 2: Identify Climate-Community Intersections
- Day 3-5: Discuss and Refine Community Questions

#### Connecting Dialogue

Identify relevant and useful resources, and next steps

- Day 1-2: Identify Action Areas
- Day 2-3: Identify Next Steps
- Day 4-5: Identify Supporting Resources

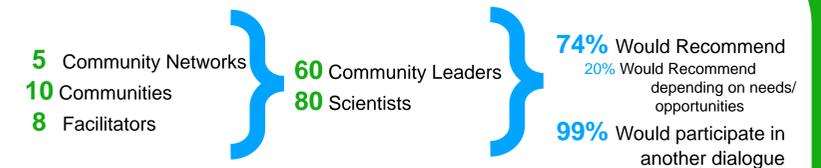
### Outcomes

- Individualized synthesis reports summarizing the conversation and highlighting next steps
- Community resilience planning informed by experts and supported by public and private resources
- Follow-up engagement with and access to a network of resilience scientists, professionals, and community leaders

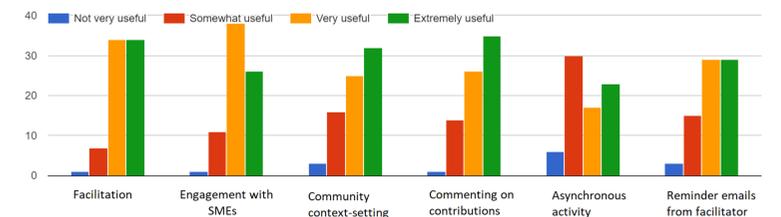
### Science to Action Innovations

- 10 Communities took (their first) steps toward resilience. They:
  - Linked civic priorities and climate resilience.
  - Identified climate resilience priorities and learned about the most appropriate resources to tackle those priorities.
  - Connected with national and regional efforts that could help them advance adaptation beyond the Resilience Dialogues.
  - Integrated climate change into comprehensive community planning processes.
- Scientists learned about community resilience-building needs.
- Resource providers connected with community leaders to offer tools and services and get feedback that helps improve those tools.
- Regional Networks enhanced engagement with communities in their network.

### Feedback



### Evaluation of Dialogue Components



### Lessons Learned

Conversations that include climate and resilience experts and community leaders can effectively help communities advance climate resilience in a systematic and coordinated way.

#### People

- **Everyone wants to solve the problem before defining it.** In general, SMEs need help listening and community leaders need help talking.
- **Facilitation is important**, but finding and preparing facilitators is time intensive.
- SMEs with regional/local knowledge or connections are an asset.
- In successful interactions, SMEs embrace community knowledge and think broadly about connections.

#### Process

- **Structure** encourages responsiveness, especially for community-based participants.
- **Mixing** online, asynchronous, synchronous, and telecons works best.
- Focus on **clear outcomes and actionable next steps**.
- **Technology has to be simple to use**, or people lose interest.

#### Next Steps

- **Streamline onboarding** for optimal efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Connect communities to networks, federal agencies, and regional partners** to enable further action and connections.
- Potential new topics: **financing**, community engagement, and climate justice.

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