

# CLIMATE CHANGE PUBLIC CONVERSATION SERIES

## Desk Review

*One of three reports on the research behind  
Scotland's Climate Conversations 'How to' Guide*



Scotland's centre of expertise connecting climate change research and policy

# About the Climate Change Public Conversation Series

In 2009, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the most ambitious climate change legislation anywhere in the world. The Scottish Government recognises that delivering on these ambitions is dependent on the support and involvement of the Scottish public.

The Climate Change Public Conversation Series (CCPCS) has been initiated by the Scottish Government to encourage discussion about climate change with the Scottish public. The guidance and materials provided by this project can be used by others, for example community groups or education institutions, and beyond Scotland.

The project was commissioned by [ClimateXChange](#), and the research conducted by [Climate Outreach](#) with the help of consultants from the [Surefoot Effect](#).

## About Climate Outreach

[Climate Outreach](#) (formerly COIN) are Europe's leading experts on climate change communication, bridging the gap between research and practice. Our charity is focused on building cross-societal acceptance of the need to tackle climate change. We have over 10 years of experience helping our partners find their climate voice – talking and thinking about climate change in ways that reflect their individual values, interests and ways of seeing the world. We work with a wide range of partners including central, regional and local governments, charities, business, faith organisations and youth groups.

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Cover photos by [foam](#), available [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

SEPTEMBER 2016

# About the four publications of this project

This research project led to the publication of Scotland's *Climate Conversations 'How to' Guide*, along with three accompanying reports on the research behind the Guide.

## Desk Review

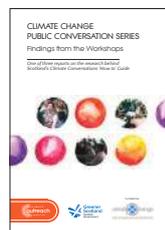
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Explains the existing research base used to inform the design of the workshops, where materials and scripts were trialed with members of the Scottish public.

## Findings from the Workshops

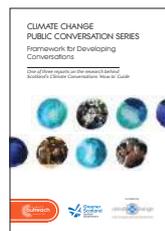
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Presents a summary of the findings from the workshops in which the contents of the draft 'How to' Guide were tested and further developed.

## Framework for Developing Conversations

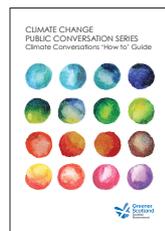
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Provides background information on the development of the 'How to' Guide and offers guidance on capturing and analysing data from a one-off or series of conversations.

## 'How to' Guide

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Provides a practical step-by-step guide to holding conversations about climate change with groups of people across Scotland, including materials to use. This is an accessible tool available to all groups, organisations and individuals wishing to hold their own conversations.

Any questions on the research reports should be directed to [info@climatexchange.org.uk](mailto:info@climatexchange.org.uk) or [info@climateoutreach.org](mailto:info@climateoutreach.org).

Any questions about the 'How to' Guide should be directed to [climate.change@gov.scot](mailto:climate.change@gov.scot).



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# Introduction

## The research goals

This document provides an overview of methods for engaging members of the public in participatory conversations about climate change. This analysis of methods is combined with an overview of the theories underlying participatory dialogues. This evidence base informs the approaches Climate Outreach trialled in the Climate Change Public Conversation Series (CCPCS) focus and pilot groups.

Findings from the three focus groups and three pilot groups were used to develop a toolkit of techniques, approaches and recommendations. Any of these can be selected to meet the various requirements of different contexts, for example: recruitment challenges, time available for conversation, type of group involved in the discussion, assumed existing levels of knowledge, level of expertise available, facilities for data capture and analysis, and other relevant criteria.

Overall the project addresses the following research questions:

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- What is the most appropriate design for a replicable series of public conversations around climate change in Scotland?
- What methodologies and materials should be used during the conversations to ensure objectives are achieved?
- What are the key findings from the six public workshops regarding:
  - » Climate change
  - » Measures to address climate change
  - » The future transition to a sustainable low carbon society

The recommendations provided in this desk review were used to plan the focus groups. They are a synthesis of:

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- Best practice principles uncovered through the desk review
- Practitioner experience and expertise
- The time and budgetary constraints of the CCPCS project
- Attention to the various contexts in which the CCPCS framework will be used

The design of the pilot groups combined the results from the focus groups and the above research findings, leading to a final report and set of recommendations.

## Project background - creating a climate-ready Scotland

Meeting Scotland's statutory targets for reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases will require a range of actions by central government, local government, the public sector, businesses, individuals and communities. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 targets for emission reductions of 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 together constitute the most ambitious piece of climate change legislation anywhere in the world.' The Scottish Government recognises public participation is paramount to meeting these climate change targets.

Put simply, coping with and limiting climate change means a very different future for everyone in Scotland. Successful transition to a low carbon society will require a broader and deeper understanding of the issues and opportunities across all sectors of Scottish society. Generating an on-going and self-sustaining national conversation about climate change is essential to building a successful future for Scotland.

## Desk review structure

There are four elements to the review structure:

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- A theoretical overview of the goals and principles of deliberative democracy
- A review of UK climate change deliberative democracy projects
- A comparison between these projects and the Climate Outreach Narrative Workshop methodology
- A summary of the principles emerging from this analysis, which provides the foundation for the 'in the room' materials trialled in the focus and pilot groups



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# A theoretical overview of the goals and principles of deliberative democracy

## Why engage?

Climate politics has been defined as ‘engagement with processes of debate and decision making on collective issues in which different values, ideals and preferences are played out and opposed’.<sup>2</sup>

The need for climate politics to be grounded in processes of deliberative democracy first received official sanction in Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration, and was subsequently adopted by Heads of State and Government in the same year. Twenty years later, the importance of participation was reiterated in The Doha Work Programme on Article 6 and adopted at COP18 in 2012, which ‘encourages governments, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations to collaborate in matters of access to information and public participation.’<sup>3</sup>

There are three main reasons given for why climate change politics requires engaging the public in discussions about the policy decisions being made:

1. The first reason is ‘normative’; living in a democracy means people have the right to be given a say in the important decisions facing a country.<sup>4,5,6,7,8</sup> Hence, participation is not only necessary in order to solve a particular policy problem but becomes the means by which a more democratically accountable, and thereby better society can be built.<sup>9</sup>
2. The second reason is to develop more effective policies. It has been argued that citizen engagement with climate politics is indispensable to finding effective responses<sup>10,11</sup> on the basis that the inclusion of alternative problem definitions and forms of knowledge have the potential to generate new thinking about policy.<sup>12,13,14,15</sup> In line with aspirations for a healthier democracy, engagement with the policy-making process also helps to legitimise current institutions and social relations in the face of environmental issues. This ensures that the knowledge and policy created by these institutions continues to be seen as ‘credible, salient and legitimate.’<sup>16</sup>
3. The third rationale for undertaking participatory exercises is to build public acceptance for policy decisions which have already been taken.<sup>17,18</sup>

These three rationales are not always mutually exclusive. It is possible to imagine a participatory exercise which not only adheres to strong democratic principles but uses those to widen the palette of policy options available to decision makers.

## Forms of engagement

Many different methods have been used to bring the public into discussions about climate policy. These methods are all forms of deliberative democracy.<sup>19</sup> It is perhaps the complexity of the climate change problem, and the way in which power, politics and science are interwoven into common framings of climate change, that has led to the emergence of a diverse set of practices of democratic deliberation on climate change.<sup>20,21</sup> Yet within this diversity there are two common themes of particular relevance to this project.

The first is the goal, to a greater or lesser extent, of ‘opening up’ the knowledge systems which underpin the development and implementation of climate policy.<sup>22,23</sup> The varying forms of deliberative democracy differ in the extent to which these knowledge systems are opened up and made responsive to the alternative value systems and preferences of the engaged publics.

The second uniform characteristic is that deliberation is an idea based on a model of education<sup>24</sup> which involves processes of dialogue based around the provision of information, processes which include “time to discuss information provided and explore key issues.”<sup>25</sup> Consequently, it is widely reported that for participants the process of participating is itself educational.<sup>26</sup>

Carvalho and Peterson<sup>27</sup> identify three forms of deliberative democracy: social marketing, public participation and agonistic pluralism. These technical terms translate into three very intuitive and recognisable forms of public engagement.

Social marketing is described as a ‘light touch’ engagement process, encouraging some small behaviour change or acceptance of minor policy interventions. Responsibility is individualised, and responses are largely reduced to lifestyle choices with participants addressed as individual consumers. The methodologies are usually centred on identifying optimal communication strategies and the most effective way to communicate those answers in a ‘top-down’ fashion to the public.<sup>28</sup> It has been argued that these approaches are insufficient to build support for more ambitious climate policies.<sup>29</sup>

The second approach, public participation, is designed to bring the public into decision making about science and technology policy. These exercises largely take the form of consultation and information gathering. Examples include appraisal and adjudication (e.g. through citizen’s juries)<sup>30,31</sup> and the discussion and mapping out of alternatives through ‘future workshops’ and deliberative mapping exercises.<sup>32,33,34,35</sup>

Deeper participatory processes (described as ‘agonistic pluralism’) prioritise the method over efforts to reach a group consensus or to get information from people; the process itself must be democratic. The process is not designed with any prior outcome in mind, but instead assumes that the search for consensus is itself anti-democratic.<sup>36,37</sup> Hence the means is the end. This approach was not one identified in this desk review of participatory climate change projects.

## Moving beyond the provision of information

As noted above, many forms of deliberative democracy employ a model which sees the public as in need of education about what the problem is and the correct way to engage in discussions about it.<sup>38,39</sup> This “deficit model” approach assumes that public opposition to policies on issues such as climate change is linked to a deficit of knowledge that could be addressed by public engagement.<sup>40,41,42</sup>

Climate change is inescapably complex and often technical, so it is probably not possible or desirable to avoid entirely the notion of public engagement on climate change being partly about members of the public ‘learning’ about the issue and its implications.

Nonetheless, the past decade has seen a concerted shift away from the deficit model of public engagement. The deficit hypothesis has been discredited by empirical evidence – multiple studies have failed to find a straightforward link between a lack of knowledge about science and opposition to it.<sup>43</sup> But the deficit approach has also fallen out of favour for another reason – it embodies the old-fashioned idea that public engagement is a one-way process, rather than a dialogue with the public.<sup>44</sup>

Consequently engaging the public through participatory approaches has become a familiar practice in the wake of the so-called ‘deliberative turn.’<sup>45,46,47,48,49</sup> Stilgoe, Irwin, and Jones (2006) have argued that successful public engagement means finding new ways of listening to and valuing diverse forms of public knowledge and social intelligence, and involving the public in fundamental questions about ‘why’ certain developments are taking place, rather than just ‘what and when.’<sup>50,51</sup> However, whereas major dialogue and engagement processes have been used extensively in other European nations such as Denmark, the Netherlands, or Switzerland,<sup>52</sup> until relatively recently they have been less common in English-speaking nations.<sup>53</sup>

Reflecting on the themes that emerge from the literature described above, it is clear that there are some lessons for engaging the Scottish public on climate change.

Firstly, the process should permit participants to engage in a two-way dialogue. Secondly, the primary focus of engagement should be on the ‘why’ questions first, and the ‘what and when’ questions second. Engaging first with the issues that participants care most about, and how they see their own values reflected in decisions about Scotland’s future, is essential to avoid a narrow focus on ‘the science’ of climate change and the technical specifications of different energy technologies. Thirdly, the Scottish public should be engaged as *early* as possible in the process of policy decision-making. This will help ensure that there is a legitimate possibility that the public’s view can be meaningfully incorporated and reflected in the policy decisions that are taken over the coming decades.

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# What is the evidence base for best practice in climate change public participation exercises?

## Background

The majority of UK climate change public engagement activities analysed here have been undertaken, at least in part, as research projects (Table 1, below). Hence they have evaluating processes built into them.

In the reports analysed, different elements of several activities were reflected on, in varying levels of detail. Aside from one study which had evaluation metrics, they lacked the application of a systematic framework applied across all groups for identifying best practice or following up with participants. Formats, timescales and activities varied across the projects.

Despite the long-held belief in the importance of building public engagement with climate change, there are few readily available detailed reports on what elements of climate change engagement in the UK have been successful and unsuccessful. The analysis indicates that this may be due to the cost and time involved in running and evaluating these exercises, as the need for more time and funding is a common refrain emerging from the evaluations. Taken together, these restrictions mean that it is not straightforward to 'extract' lessons on best practice. However, in the following sections we interpret some of the key learnings to arise from attempts at participatory public engagement on climate change in the UK.



Photo: Innovation Lab

**Table 1 - Participatory climate change research in the UK**

Means of participation and recruitment	Number of participants	Data capture and analysis	Results
<b>My2050 (DECC).<sup>54</sup></b>			
Online, on-going. Self-selected participants. Participants use a website to choose different forms of energy supply and levels of use to try meet the UK Climate Change Act 2009 targets by 2050.	10,000 responses March to the end of June 2011. <sup>55</sup>	The choices users made to achieve UK 80% cuts target were recorded. After submitting choices, respondents were asked for their demographic information and information and the reasons for making the choices they did.	Participants expressed a stronger preference for demand-side options than for supply-side ones.
<b>World Wide Views on Energy and Climate Change (2015).<sup>56</sup></b>			
One day, 16/6/2015. Participants went to a location in their country and were given information on climate change.  A series of discussions were held with fellow participants and they voted on a series of questions.	10,000 'citizen' participants across 76 countries. Selected to represent the demographic profile of their country.	Results of votes recorded and shared with policy-makers and promoted online in the lead-up to Paris climate summit.	The results showed relatively uniform and strong support for policies to limit warming to 2C.
<b>UKERC (2013). <i>Transforming the UK Energy System: Public Values, Attitudes and Acceptability</i>.<sup>57</sup></b>			
6 whole-day in-depth workshops and a nationally representative survey.	12 people at each workshop (three cities and three locations with a particular relationship to energy generation) and a nationally representative sample of 2441 people.	Used the MY2050 online tool. Survey responses. Used this to generate own energy scenarios.	Public acceptability was shown to be dependent on policies speaking to core values.
<b>Keep Scotland Beautiful (2014). <i>Conversations About COP21 Summary Report</i>.<sup>58</sup></b>			
Remote consultation (postal and online), facilitated workshops and breakout sessions.  Six approaches adopted for six different audiences. Packs given to facilitators to run groups.	164 people in breakout sessions.  47 people in facilitated workshops.  592 consultation responses.	Triangulated between the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative results combined with quotes.	70% of respondents were either concerned or very concerned about climate change. 23% felt that it is currently the most important issue at an international, national, local and individual level.

## Means of participation and recruitment

## Number of participants

## Data capture and analysis

## Results

### ClimateXChange (2015). *Involving communities in deliberation: A study of three citizens' juries on onshore wind farms in Scotland.*<sup>59</sup>

Three jury locations were chosen – similar size and rural characteristics, but with different exposure to wind farm developments. The juries were held over two days. Jurors were paid £70 for the first day and £100 for the second day.

Aberfeldy, 18 jurors (near a wind farm); Helensburgh, 14 jurors (proposed wind-farm nearby); Coldstream, 15 jurors (no windfarm).

Mixed methods approach generating qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously. Jurors completed surveys at the beginning and end of each day (quantitative) and a range of qualitative methods based on observations and recordings were employed.

An agreed set of 'principles for wind farm development', reflecting a consensus on:

- The desirable energy mix for Scotland,
- The characteristics of the evidence needed for decision-making,
- The range of negative and positive impacts that should be taken into account for decision-making,
- The role of public responsibility i.e. reducing energy consumption,
- The limits to wind farm development,
- The question of who should benefit from this energy source.

### NERC (2010). *Experiment Earth? Report on a Public Dialogue on Geoengineering.*<sup>60</sup>

Recruitment carried out face-to-face in Birmingham, Cardiff and St Austell in Cornwall. Quotas were set to ensure a representative group of participants. Participants received a fee of £50 for attending Event 1, a further £125 for attending Event 2, and £100 if they came to Event 3.

85 people took part in total, with approximately 30 participants in each of the Cornwall, Cardiff and Birmingham events (two full day discussions). A smaller group were invited to Southampton for a final full day event.

20+ forms of data capture used including recordings, notes, what was written on flip charts, 'vox pop' interviews, written responses to tasks and questionnaires.

Educative process – awareness and knowledge of geoengineering were low prior to the sessions. During the dialogue, views on geoengineering became more sophisticated and discriminating.

## Means of participation and recruitment

## Number of participants

## Data capture and analysis

## Results

### Prepare (2013). *Climate risk acceptability: Findings from a series of deliberative workshops and online survey.*<sup>61</sup>

14 day-long deliberative workshops were held in locations across the UK. £80 for each participant. Locations chosen for exposure to particular climate risks.

12 participants recruited for each workshop from IPSOS Mori Access Panel. In total 148 participants attended across all 14 workshops.

Qualitative – participants make an adaptation plan. Combined with quantitative results from online surveys.

There is public support for the UK to invest in preparations to adapt to climate change. Public uncertainty over the existence or the causes of climate change does not negate this support. Most felt impacts in 20 years was the appropriate timescale to plan for.

### The Coastal Futures Group vision and action plan (2014). *'Waking up to tomorrow: Adapting to climate change in the lower Ouse valley and coastal areas'*<sup>62</sup>

Publicity in local press and an open evening used to recruit a steering committee made up of local volunteers called the Coastal Community Group. Group met regularly through the course of the project.

Not clear.

Largely discursive activities. No details provided.

The process built a strong level of involvement from the Coastal Community Group who helped develop and share a range of engagement resources and activities including:

- An animated fly-through showing the areas that could be affected by flooding in future
- Six adaptation plans for the valley
- Lesson materials designed for use with a secondary school class
- A workshop plan
- A short film about the CC2150 project



## Means of participation and recruitment

## Number of participants

## Data capture and analysis

## Results

### Scottish National Heritage/Land Use Consultants (2011). *Climate change conversations*.<sup>63</sup>

Climate Change panels established in two communities – Nairn in Highland and the Machars in Dumfries and Galloway. Selected for landscape characteristics.

Three two hour sessions, with the same group coming back for each session.

20–25 participants in each panel.

Qualitative analysis of discussions and workshop activities.

Considering climate change through its effects on the local landscape and quality of life provides a useful methodology for communities. Participants recognised climate change is likely to result in significant change across the area and that it will not be possible to prevent this. Participants favour small scale interventions which preserve the character of the landscape.

### Carbon Conversations.<sup>64</sup>

Word of mouth, flyers, social media. Small informal groups, sessions held in people's houses. Held in six 2 hour sessions.

6–8 per group typically.

N/A

Research shows carbon footprints reduced on average by 1–3 tonnes per person.

Taking part in Carbon Conversations helps people understand more about the ways in which their everyday lives impact on climate change and encourages them to take action to reduce their carbon footprint.

Means of participation and recruitment	Number of participants	Data capture and analysis	Results
<b>Roberts, T. <i>Narrative Workshops</i> (2010).<sup>65</sup></b>			
A professional storyteller helping participants develop stories about the world in 2050, their desired future and their expected future.	Groups of between 5–6 participants and a professional storyteller.	Ideas written up on flipcharts. Discussions recorded.	No details available.
<b>Sciencewise (2010). <i>Evaluation of the Big Energy Shift. Final report to DECC and Sciencewise-ERC</i>.<sup>66</sup></b>			
Four separate events held in nine locations, including recording activities in people's homes. Ran over two months, April–June 2009. Recruited by IPSOS Mori.	Differing numbers of participants at each event. Included stakeholders, experts and households. 245 members of the public in total. Participants received £300 in total.	Recordings of discussions (householders kept records in own homes). Questionnaires.	Participants learned a great deal and still remembered much of this when they were interviewed some months later. Attitudes also shifted. For instance many more held positive views about wind power by the end of the events.
<b>Living with Environmental Change (2011). <i>Citizens' Advisory Forum</i>.<sup>67</sup></b>			
A professional recruitment agency recruited to a specification designed to ensure that membership of the Forum was inclusive (rather than representative). Paid £150 in total for attending three events which ran Saturdays 11am–3pm, plus travel expenses.	18 Forum members were recruited from the Bristol area. The Forum met three times (October 2010, November 2010 and February 2011). Attendance decreased slightly (from 18 at the first session, 15 at the second and 13 at the last one).  Expert presentations.	Speakers, small discussion groups, plenaries. Recording of discussions. Flipcharts.	Forum members valued the learning that happened during the process. Funders had an improved understanding of what the public know and what forms of information they could assimilate.

## Means of participation and recruitment

## Number of participants

## Data capture and analysis

## Results

### Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011). *Evaluation of the process and outputs of the Low Carbon Communities Challenge (LCCC)*.<sup>68</sup>

The invitation for applications for the Low Carbon Communities Challenge was published on the DECC website and widely promoted through community networks, such as the Low Carbon Communities Network, Transition Towns and EST's Green Communities membership. Average awards were in the region of £400,000 to £500,000 per project.

22 communities.

A combination of community level implementation of low carbon technologies and infrastructure and behaviour change initiatives around that implementation. Engagement activities - information gathered by facilitators at the various meetings was written up and shared online within the project, and then collated, analysed and reported. Also data recorded and submitted by local project teams in writing and through video footage using cameras (and briefing) provided by the LCCC programme.

Some feel they have engaged their communities in low carbon and sustainable living, reporting 'heightened awareness' and 'consciousness' of what low carbon living means in practice. Some projects reported that their LCCC work has provided their communities with an example of community-led delivery in practice and inspired others to 'make a difference' in the local area.

### Department of Energy and Climate Change (2014). *Evaluation and learning from the 2050 public engagement programme*.<sup>69</sup>

A three-strand public engagement programme; advisory youth panel, three deliberative forums and an online game.

Deliberative workshops - one day discussion groups for community leaders held in London and Cumbria, half-day in Nottingham.

Deliberative forums attended by experts and stakeholders.

Activities based around the MY2050 calculator, which records choices made. Workshop design incorporated plenary explanatory sessions; use of the calculator, either individually or in small groups; interaction with experts and small group discussion on specific themes.

Participants enjoyed the chance to learn more about the issues. The input of DECC experts was highly praised by participants and observation showed they responded thoughtfully to participants' questions, without using technical jargon.

## Project objectives

Three broad fields of climate policy were addressed in the reports analysed, and these often overlapped:

### Policies or technologies

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These activities seek to engage the public in discussing the intended actions of policy-makers and other influential social actors. Sometimes this was a very specific policy: e.g., exploring community responses to the introduction and adoption of low carbon technologies (*Transforming the UK Energy System; Low Carbon Communities*) and the siting of windfarms (*A study of three citizens' juries*), or broader issues such as how to meet targets for reductions of greenhouse gases by 80% (*My2050*) or attitudes to geoengineering (*Experiment Earth*). The need for presentations from experts was a common feature of these activities.

### Climate change impacts

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These activities seek to build better public understanding of the science of climate change and what needs to be done to cope with the expected impacts.

A common theme for these activities was to site the engagements in places representative of particular risk vulnerabilities (*Prepare; Coastal Communities; Climate Change Communications*).

### The psychology of attitudes to low-carbon futures

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These exercises were aimed at understanding and influencing how people feel about and behave in respect of climate change. These were sometimes the separate focus of engagement activities (*Carbon Conversations*) or were integral to navigating and making choices about policies (*2050 engagement activities*) or responses to impacts (*Prepare, Climate Change Conversations*).

## Means of recruitment

Recruitment for qualitative face-to-face workshops normally required financial payment to the participants and the employment of professional recruitment organisations. IPSOS Mori was an organisation used frequently, sometimes recruiting from their pre-existing 'access panel' (*Prepare*). The absence of payment in one qualitative research programme (*Climate Change Conversations*) was reported as a significant barrier to recruitment. Recruitment through existing networks can circumvent the need for payment but cannot guarantee a representative sample (*Carbon Conversations; Conversations about COP21*). Even with payment it is not always possible to recruit the desired number of participants (*Prepare; Citizen's Juries*). The stricter the selection criteria, the more difficult it is to recruit to the quota. Some projects worked to nationally (*WWViews*) or regionally (*Prepare*) representative samples. Trying to recruit representative quotas from small areas can be very difficult (*Citizen Juries*). Others sought to be inclusive in their recruitment, not representative (*Citizen's Advisory Forum*).

There was no consistent approach to the issue of whether or not to reveal the purpose of the activities prior to the event. However in some circumstances the failure to provide information upfront led to confusion about the purpose of the workshop, even after the event had finished (*DECC 2050 engagement*).

Community-based engagements (*Carbon conversations; Coastal Communities; Low Carbon Communities Challenge*) used mechanisms such as public events, advertising, news stories in the local press, advertising and existing networks to recruit participants. The *Keep Scotland Beautiful COP 21* research drew in professionals and school children as participants.

## 'In the room' materials used

The very diverse set of activities employed can be reduced down to a stimulus-response model. Participants are given information, either visually, in written form or as a presentation from an expert. They are then asked to reflect on the stimulus, either individually or in small groups, before coming back together as a whole group to share their thoughts.

### Stimuli

- Maps
- Stimulations
- Stories
- Character Cards
- Scenarios
- Interactive Websites
- Photographs
- Presentations
- Film/Video
- Slides
- Graphics
- Games

Few reports provided details on the workshop activities or breakdown of how well individual activities worked. Film/video and games were not a prominent feature of these exercises. *Keep Scotland Beautiful* lists resources including some simple games but to date there has been no testing of their efficacy.<sup>70</sup>

## Data capture and analysis

Means for capturing data were diverse. Unfortunately, there was limited reflection offered on the advantages and challenges of different forms of data capture and analysis.

- Completing or marking passages of text
- Ethnographic observation
- Mapping preferences
- Voting on preferences
- Listing preferences
- Questionnaires
- Surveys
- Feedback forms
- Participants writing responses down onto sheets
- Audio recordings of conversations
- Photographs of completed task sheets
- Note taking/writing responses onto flip charts by observers

Carbon Conversations is built around an energy-saving board game, but there is no built-in data capture element to the game.

### Time taken

Most projects were longitudinal; i.e., the participants had to attend more than one event, normally between two and three times. The desire for more time to plan the events and for longer and a greater number of events was a common reflection across all the projects. The complexity of the topic was listed as the reason for running more than one session.

Workshops lasted a minimum of half a day. Some were whole day. Individual sessions generally lasted no longer than 2 hours. The projects themselves, from planning through to completion, ran from between one and two years.

### Facilitation and expertise

Skilled facilitation is an important determinant of success, especially in helping participants confidently navigate complex subject matter. The level of facilitation needed varied. The ability of the facilitators to run an interesting group which allowed everyone to speak was an important factor in how much participants enjoyed the activities.

Subject expertise was key and was much valued by participants. This wasn't just climate change expertise – in the case of the *Deliberative Storytelling Workshops*, storytelling expertise was essential to support participants in developing storylines.

### Lessons learnt

Participants repeatedly cited the opportunity to learn more about the issues as a benefit of attending. “Citizens of all backgrounds can enjoy addressing complex policy issues when they are adequately supported to do so as part of a fair and engaging process” (*Citizens Juries*).

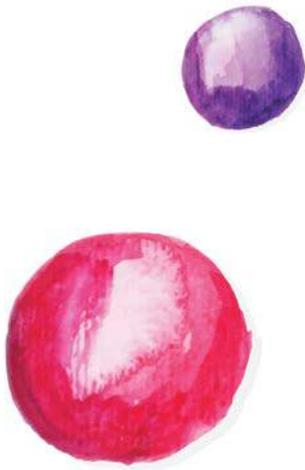
Group engagement takes longer than anticipated, and building trust takes time. This was especially true with the community-based engagements, which often required fostering the collaboration of diverse stakeholders. Without sufficient time given to the activities in the workshops the

participants reported that they struggled to understand the complexities of climate science and relevant technologies. More time was needed for recruitment, planning and the workshops themselves.

Using small numbers for in-depth qualitative research means that it is not possible to extrapolate findings from the research to the wider population. However, face-to-face communication and being in communities to talk about the issues is seen by stakeholders as ideal as the complexity of the problem is not suited to remote quantitative surveys.

In summary, the following themes of relevance to the CCPCS project were identified:

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- Time was needed to explain the technical and policy contexts of the decisions and the choices participants were being asked to discuss. This is an important consideration both when planning the amount of time to give to workshop activities and the workshop length.
- Participants valued the opportunity to learn more about the issues.
- Participants reported that they found the experience enjoyable and reported higher levels of engagement with the topic after participating.
- Good facilitation was a significant factor in reported levels of satisfaction with the workshop.
- It is important that participants understand clearly the purpose of the project they are contributing to and the reasons they are being asked to participate.
- Participants enjoyed fun and accessible activities. Avoid setting participants a set of tasks to work through.
- Recruiting participants from the general population is expensive, difficult and time consuming. Costs include the use of professional recruiters and payments to participants for their time.
- Data was frequently collected as a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative results from the participatory exercises.
- There were more activities using images than activities using text.
- Formal structured games, with winners and losers, were not a feature of these projects.
- Project deliverables were often a compromise between desired outcomes, the complexity of the issue being debated, and time and resources available.
- Because no two projects are exactly alike not all the learnings from one project are directly applicable to other projects.

The next section compares how the Climate Outreach narrative methodology differs and matches these approaches.

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# How does the Climate Outreach Narrative Workshop methodology compare with other forms of deliberative climate change politics?



**Seldom do people just “burst out” in stories. It takes work. A narrative space must be established in the give-and-take of social interaction. In other words, in one way or another, narratives must be invited, incited, or initiated.”<sup>71</sup>**

Roberts<sup>72</sup> has developed a storytelling workshop methodology which rests on the claim that the reason for a muted public response to the threat of climate change is a disconnect between the technical and abstract language of policy and the public’s grounded set of storied experience.<sup>73</sup> Or to put it another way, narrative methodologies recognise that policy options are often presented in narrative form and so can be responded to, countered and refined through other narratives.<sup>74</sup> The goal of participatory exercises then becomes to find ways of closing the gap between policy and public narratives, so that the public can engage in conversations about climate change in their own terms, with reference to the things that matter to them.

The Climate Outreach Narrative Workshop methodology draws upon these principles to develop a means by which the goals and values of the general public can be given a space within the climate debate. To take one example, in our 2012 report *Climate Silence (and how to break it)*<sup>75</sup> we argued for:



**A national series of conversations about climate change, initiated by representatives of different communities...to unearth the values and principles on which different people base their views about the world, and build a bridge – a meaningful storyline – between people’s values and those of a more sustainable society. The challenge for anyone invested in re-igniting public interest in climate change is to catalyse a chorus of public debate and discussion.”**

Hence our work often begins with people, rather than a particular policy proposal or technological response. In this sense it is more strategic, creating the means by which these more instrumental discussions can be conducted in an inclusive manner.

We have found that people are more likely to react positively to climate change messages when they are presented within narratives that validate their values and identity.<sup>76,77,78</sup> The validity of this approach has been confirmed by research which shows that what motivates people to engage with climate change stories and low carbon behaviours is not ‘worries about the ecosystem’ as such but the desire for a fairer and more compassionate world.<sup>79,80</sup>

Climate Outreach workshops follow best-practice dialogic and deliberative public engagement research principles.<sup>61</sup> Our ‘funnel’ design starts with discussion of participants’ values, concerns and aspirations. We find this process leads to recognition that there is a set of core values held in common. The next step is to take the conclusions from this discussion and focus in on a more personal and localised interpretation – are these values common in the local community; are they undergoing change? This conversation around change serves as a bridge into discussions about fears and hopes for the future. The conclusions emerging out of these conversations provide a ‘lens’ through which to discuss climate change and explore different language and narratives for public engagement.

The Narrative Methodology relies on an informal approach to conversations, hence the minimum use of slides and presentations. Instead we largely rely on participants’ own voices to build a narrative arc through the workshop. This is a very inclusive and accessible approach, as we draw on the values and beliefs that we hold in common.

It is our experience that people find this process has a profound impact on their level of engagement with and concern about climate change.



Photo: Innovation Lab

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# Focus group design

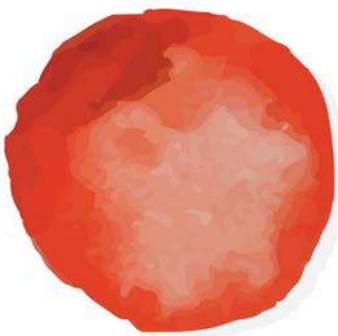
## Summary

The focus groups researched core principles of engendering climate change conversations amongst the Scottish public, built understanding of current public attitudes to climate change and trialled different forms of data capture. The design of the focus groups drew on findings from the desk review and practitioner experience.<sup>82</sup>

The three focus groups were designed to improve understanding of:

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- How to recruit participants
- What language resonates most strongly with the Scottish public
- How location, age and gender shapes those attitudes
- What values matter to the Scottish public
- What language encapsulates those values
- How those values may shape attitudes to different climate policy options
- How much time should be allowed for workshop activities
- What forms of data capture are most effective
- Current attitudes to climate change
- Opinion on different options for mitigating climate change
- Opinion on different options for adapting to climate change
- What factors shape those opinions
- What activities were most enjoyable
- What activities were least enjoyable
- What further information people would like to receive
- What level of facilitation expertise is required
- What forms of climate knowledge are required by facilitators



## Number of participants

For best results with this type of qualitative research, an optimum group size tends to be around 10 (aiming to recruit 13, allowing for 'no-shows'), with one facilitator and one support staff present per group. In terms of trouble-shooting, 5 is the minimum number required not to cancel a workshop and 12 the maximum before group dynamics are affected. Too few participants, and people can feel over-exposed and pressurised into contributing more than they feel comfortable with. Too many people, and quieter voices can get drowned out and neglected while the more extrovert participants can dominate the discussion. Alternatively the group may be difficult to manage, with people talking over each other.

## Location

We aimed for a rural and urban mix. A key factor here is the constraints on recruiting in very rural locations, accessibility of locations for recruiters, availability of appropriate venues and travel problems during the winter in Scotland (see Appendix 1 for a map of workshop locations).

## Demographic representativeness

We used age, gender, ethnicity and income bracket as the recruitment criteria (the more limiting the selection criteria, the more difficulties in recruiting in the time available). We used local census information to ensure the group was representative of the region (rather than Scotland as a whole).

## Contracting a recruiter

The goal is to build a national conversation. For this reason participants were recruited from outside existing community networks of engaged publics. A professional recruiter was used for this project, given the short timescales and the need for local knowledge to help understand the best locations for workshops.

Following a tendering process and receiving several quotes, CJM Research were selected. The details they provided in their proposal for the work demonstrated a stronger understanding of our requirements than the other companies.

A financial incentive for participants is the only one a recruiter can provide and £40 was indicated to be the minimum required to ensure people attend. We provided text for the recruiters to use which avoided mention of climate change as we wanted to use the focus groups to understand unprompted levels of concern about climate change.

## Timings

Workshops were run weekday evenings as close together date-wise as possible, from 6pm-8.30pm. We ran them in the evenings to make it possible for working people to participate. Weekend workshops were not feasible, given the timescale, as it would take three weeks to get through each cycle of workshops.

## Duration of workshops

The focus groups each ran for 2.5 hours. This is longer than is envisaged for the community engagements. Hence, the pilot groups ran for 70 minutes (this included time for an additional 10 minute research activity which is not included in the 'How to Guide'), although a clear lesson from previous participatory engagement on climate change is that allowing plenty of time for engaging participants is crucial to the effectiveness of the process.

### Running the focus groups for 2.5 hours allowed time to:

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- Generate a robust body of evidence about current attitudes to climate change amongst the Scottish public
- Trial different activities
- Explore the science and policy questions that inevitably arise around the questions and issues surrounding climate policy and climate science

## Focus group structure

The focus groups shared a similar structure of trialling discursive approaches in the first half and, after a small break, testing out a range of visual prompts and responses to policy language (see Appendix 2 for details of how the different activities were scheduled across the focus groups).

There was a six day gap between the second and third focus group. This allowed time to reflect on the first two focus groups and change the structure of the third focus group to reflect findings from the first two.

## Part 1 - Narrative methodologies

The first part of the focus groups followed the Narrative Workshop methodology. We trialled the use of flipcharts and voting and ranking exercises as used in the projects reviewed above. We did not anticipate that these would add anything to the quality of the discussions - instead we explored how these activities function as methods for data capture.

In addition to the specific research goals, the activities detailed below share in common the attempt to answer the following research questions on the data capture and analysis process:

- Do the participants use the data capture materials in the way intended?
- How long does it take to capture data in this way?
- What materials are required to capture this data?
- What is the quality of the data captured?
- What is involved in analysing the data?

## Values discussions

This discussion addresses three key themes:

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- What are the values you most admire in a person?
- Are those values becoming more or less prevalent?
- Are these values commonplace in Scotland?

Key research goals:

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- To identify the values which should be reflected in Scottish climate change communications

## Unprompted views on climate change

We asked participants what they felt were the three most pressing issues facing Scotland and investigated their reasoning. We then looked at how these issues differed from those facing the rest of the UK and the world. This included individual work, listing issues on a sheet which captured age and gender, as well as workshop location. This was followed by a plenary exercise where people shared what they wrote. These were listed on a flipchart and ticks put against each item for the number of people who included it on their list.

We then moved into exploring reasons for reported levels of concern about climate change and reasons for that concern.

We asked them if they ever talked about climate change – if not, why not, and if so, with whom and how long ago?

Key research goals:

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- Activity timings
- Current concerns for Scottish publics
- Saliency of climate change
- Current level of public understanding of climate change science
- The most powerful and effective issues and points of discussion that can be used as entry points to open up a conversation about climate change
- Barriers to talking about climate change

## Part 2 - Testing image and text based activities

### Image based activities

Analysis of other participatory projects indicates that images and visual prompts can help the public engage with climate change conversations. We trialled different formats, reflecting on the possible scenarios in which climate conversations are held and assessing opportunities for building data capture and analysis into those activities.

#### ≈ Video activity

A four minute Greener Scotland video entitled 'Stupidly Simple' was shown in two parts. The first part addressed climate science, and the second explored the role of the individual in mitigating climate change. The participants were given a sheet at the beginning and asked to note down any words, positive or negative, that came to mind as they watched the video. After each part the video was stopped. Participants were asked to turn to the person next to them to discuss what they wrote. Then we came together for a plenary to discuss people's reactions before repeating the process for the second half of the video.

#### Key research goals:

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- Understanding current level of climate change knowledge
- Exploring attitudes to common climate change messages
- Assessing where people feel responsibility for taking action
- Trialling time taken and level of engagement with the activity

#### ≈ Image activity 1: What would you protect?

This activity is based on the '*Climate Ready Places*'<sup>83</sup> website but does not require internet access. Participants were given two sheets of paper addressing different areas of Scottish social and economic life requiring government intervention in the face of a changing climate. This was an image with an accompanying piece of text. The options included, amongst others, agricultural adaptation, infrastructure protection, developing new tourist activities, flood protection and wildlife habitat conservation.

The assumption is the Scottish Government has enough money to fund two of these possible options for coping with climate change in the future. Working individually, participants ticked the two they would most like to protect and marked the one they would least like to see money spent on. Then the participants talked through the choices with the person next to them and looked at whether they could agree on a most favoured and a least favoured. Participants came back in a plenary session to discuss choices. These were listed on a flipchart.

## Key research goals:

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- Understanding current level of knowledge of climate change impacts
- An in-depth exploration of what publics value most about Scotland
- Understanding if these at-risk aspects of life are a good entry point for climate change conversations
- Trialling time taken and level of engagement with the activity
- Assessing how engaging the activity is

### ≈ Image activity 2: Supply-side vs demand-side actions

This activity followed the same principles and process as the above but with a focus on mitigation rather than adaptation. In this instance the images were of large scale and small scale low carbon generation (solar farms, solar panels on houses, nuclear reactors, offshore wind farms, single wind turbines) mixed up with images of low carbon transport, people insulating their houses, etc. There was no text with the images.

## Key research goals:

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- Understanding current level of knowledge of climate change
- An in-depth exploration of where the public believes responsibility for action on climate change lies
- Gauging how publics feel about the scale of the changes needed to mitigate climate change
- Trialling time taken and level of engagement with the activity
- Assessing how engaging the activity is

## Language testing

Each participant was given a sheet with a short (150 word) paragraph drawn from different Scottish Government climate policy communications. The texts used the most emotive words within the policy communications. They varied between each workshop to explore a different theme: Scotland as an international leader; all in it together; and social justice.

The facilitator read out the script with the participants, and asked them to read the text again themselves, highlighting any words or phrases they felt a negative (red) or positive (green) response to. Afterwards there was a plenary to explore the choices made and the reasons for those choices. We asked participants to suggest alternative framings, based on values explored at the beginning of the session.

## Key research goals:

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- Trialling time taken and level of engagement with the activity
- Testing how engaging the activity is
- Assessing what words and phrases to use and what to avoid in climate change communications
- Understanding if responses differ by age or gender
- Exploring how the effectiveness of language relates to core values

## Further information

Participants were given a “Further Information” sheet which provided more detail about the purpose of the workshop, the organisations involved and website addresses where people could go to find out more about climate change. The sheet included an email address if the participants had further questions.

## Feedback and follow-up

A feedback form was provided at the end of the session with six questions. The goal was to ask what the participants did and didn't enjoy about the evening, what they might do as a result of what they had learnt and the help they might need to achieve those actions.

The final part of the form asked if they would be willing to be contacted with follow-up questions a week after the event. If so, we asked them to leave an email address.

The follow-up questions asked them if they had spoken to anyone about climate change since the workshop. They were asked if they would be willing to be contacted again in a month's time with further questions. These questions were developed as part of the analysis of the focus group and pilot group research finding.



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# Appendix 1. Workshop locations

**Focus groups - First week of February 2016**

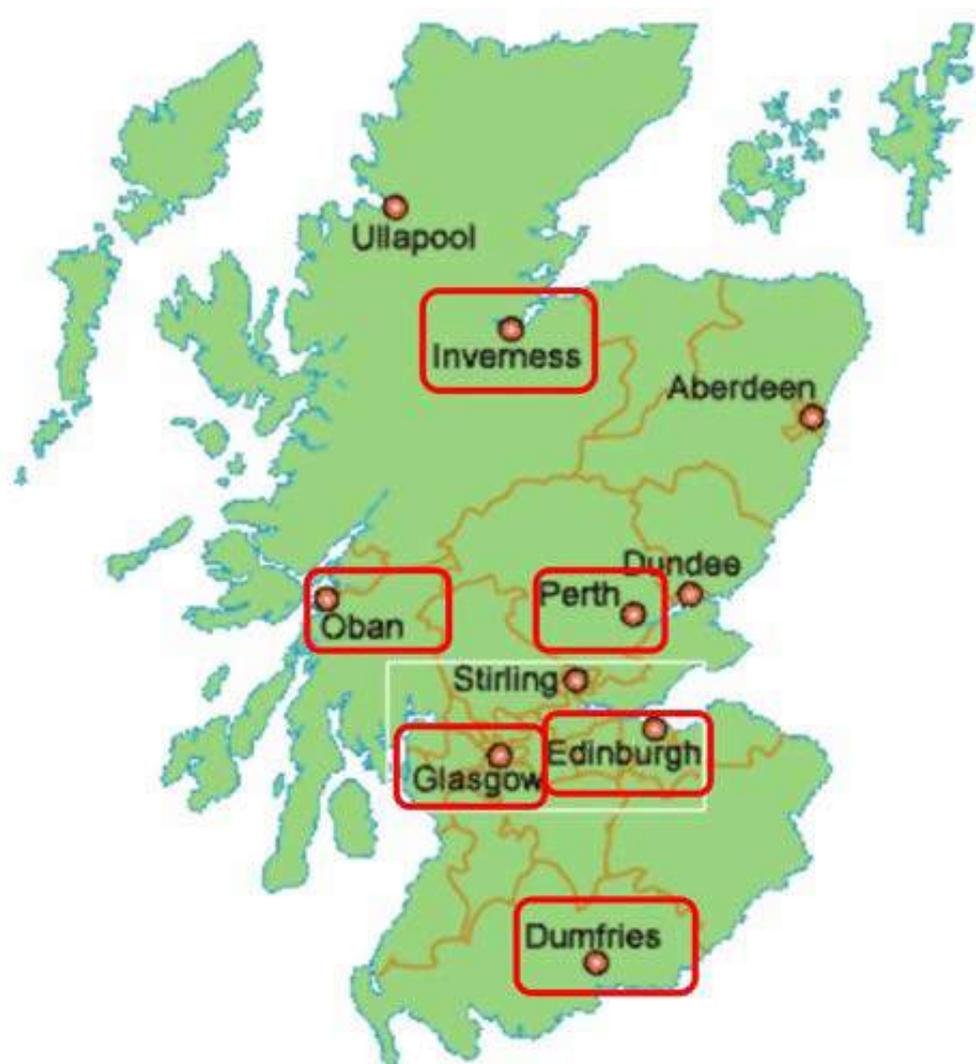
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- Edinburgh
- Perth
- Oban

**Pilot groups - First week of March 2016**

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- Glasgow
- Dumfries
- Inverness



## Appendix 2. Focus group structure

<b>Edinburgh</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> February</b>	<b>Perth</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> February</b>	<b>Oban</b> <b>8<sup>th</sup> February</b>
<b>Welcome and housekeeping</b> 10 minutes	<b>Welcome and housekeeping</b> 10 minutes	<b>Welcome and housekeeping</b> 10 minutes
<b>Introductions</b> 10 minutes	<b>Introductions</b> 10 minutes	<b>Introductions</b> 10 minutes
<b>Values discussion</b> 15 minutes	<b>What makes Scotland unique?</b> 15 minutes	<b>Scottish values</b> 15 minutes
<b>Issues facing Scotland / Issues facing the world</b> 15 minutes	<b>Issues facing Scotland</b> 15 minutes	<b>Issues facing Scotland</b> 15 minutes
<b>Climate change and Scotland</b> 25 minutes	<b>Climate change and Scotland</b> 25 minutes	<b>Climate change and Scotland</b> 25 minutes
<i>Break: 15 minutes</i>	<i>Break: 15 minutes</i>	<i>Break: 15 minutes</i>
<b>Video - stupidly simple</b> 20 minutes	<b>Voting 'What we should try to protect'</b> 20 minutes	<b>Ranking supply side v demand side images</b> 20 minutes
<b>Text version 1 - Scottish leadership</b> 20 minutes	<b>Text version 2 - All in it together</b> 20 minutes	<b>Text version 3 - Social justice</b> 20 minutes
<b>Reflect on values and climate change</b> 10 minutes	<b>Reflect on values and climate change</b> 10 minutes	<b>Reflect on values and climate change</b> 10 minutes
<b>Feedback and follow-up forms, further information sheets</b> 10 minutes	<b>Feedback and follow-up forms, further information sheets</b> 10 minutes	<b>Feedback and follow-up forms, further information sheets</b> 10 minutes

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