

Future Visioning Activity Facilitation Guide

Developed by the Climate and Rural Systems Partnership (CRSP)

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Contact

We would love to connect if you are planning to use this activity. We have examples of worksheets, presentations and other supplemental materials that we are happy to share. The best way to get in touch is through our contact form on the CRSP web page:

<https://carnegiemnh.org/educator/crsp/>

Activity Overview

Audience: Adults, high school students

Group size: 5 - 20+ people

Time length: 1 – 2+ hrs.

Materials List

Below is a list of materials that you will need to facilitate this activity. There is more information on how to use these materials in the following sections.

- Large sheet of butcher paper for the future banner (or small sheets of poster paper)
- Table printouts (size 11x17) of the future vision prompts and action worksheets
- Post-it notes (at least 4 different colors)
- Writing utensils (pens, pencils)
- Facilitator agendas and notes
- Presentation slides (*see additional resources section of facilitator guide*)

Activity Description

This Future Visioning Activity is designed to spark group discussions about positive, climate-resilient futures to work toward. In Phase 1 of the activity, participants are invited to engage in future-thinking and respond to open-ended prompts to envision a thriving and sustainable future for their communities. In Phase 2, participants identify and discuss shared priorities, local examples, and potential opportunities to take action to implement individual and system-level changes needed to make future visions a reality. This activity can be modified and adapted to be used in different ways. It can be a helpful part of a public engagement process, professional learning program, youth engagement, or as an activity to help resolve differences, expand thinking, and surface common ground.

This activity was designed to address a common challenge in climate change communication and public engagement. When it comes to talking about climate change, people typically talk about the impacts we are experiencing in the present (e.g. flooding), how things were in the past (e.g. we used to get snow), and individual actions that are under our direct control (e.g. I will buy an electric car). While fears, grief, loss, and personal action are important motivators, communication research suggests that we need conversations about systems-level solutions and hopeful, livable, futures to empower impactful and equitable climate action. After all, we cannot create the future that we want if we cannot first imagine it! ¹

A Note Before Beginning

In our experience, preparing to facilitate this activity can take a lot of time. However, as the saying goes, you get what you put in. Taking the necessary time to consider your audience, articulate your goals, design the key parts of this activity, and plan the facilitation of your agenda to meet the needs of the group will pay off in the end. We created this facilitation guide to help your detailed planning.

We use the term guide instead of manual because we invite you to borrow and adapt the activity (or pieces of it) to suit your needs. For instance, we share prompts that our team has found engaging and generative, but tailoring your own prompts is an interesting, generative, and fun process. And the more salient the prompts are to the specific

¹ See our publication, McGill et al., 2024 “Shifting Climate Communication Narratives Towards Actions and Futures in a Rural Area of Appalachia” for more.

audience, the more meaningful the activity. Based on the size of your group or the gathering space, you might need to get creative in how you facilitate discussion or display peoples' ideas. In some situations, you might need to spread the activity over multiple sessions or days. Adaptation is good. Be flexible and creative.

Knowing Your Audience

Knowing your audience is key to setting up this activity and sparking the conversations you want the group to have. Below are some questions to reflect upon:

- What issues do your participants care about? What are they trying to get done? What do they want or need to talk about? How do those things intersect with climate change? (Climate change may not be a primary topic of concern for all people. That's okay!)
- How familiar is your audience with each other? Have you engaged them before, or is this the first time you are gathering with this group?
- What assumptions—positive or negative—might you or others be making about peoples' ideas or feelings around climate change?
- How might the group's demographics (e.g. who they are and what they do) influence their views on climate change? What types of knowledge, insight, expertise and diversity do people bring to the group?
- Where might the group find alignment or common ground?
- Where might there be conflict and how can you prepare to help people resolve it?
- Are there solutions that are hard for your group to talk about, but important to achieve systems-level change? Are there solutions that are easy to talk about, but have little impact on addressing global climate change and climate justice?
- Where might you need to slow the conversation down and process? Is there additional information, evidence, or data that could help to ground or contextualize the conversation?
- Are there accessibility considerations related to room setup, materials, audio, or visuals that might support all group members to participate fully?

We piloted the future activity with groups of environmental resource managers and environmental educators. These groups were comfortable talking about the impacts of climate change on plant and animal populations, but less comfortable talking about greenhouse gas mitigation, energy, and fossil fuel infrastructure. We tailored prompts to

elicit talk about the economic, infrastructure, and mitigation side of climate change in the local region and immediately noticed that people had a lot of hopes, ideas, and knowledge about these topics. The Futures Activity created space for a conversation that the audience was ready to have but needed some extra prompting to have it.



Participants discuss ways that they, or others in their community, are already taking steps toward the future they just collectively envisioned on the banner.

Identifying Activity Goals

Identifying your goals and desired outcomes for this activity will help you refine the prompts and other resources to spark meaningful dialogue between your participants. What brings you together and what goals are relevant for your participants? What might they learn from sharing perspectives with one another? Is there a specific question you are trying to answer, or information you're hoping to gather, by running this activity?

The structure of this activity--with options to participate through individual writing, small group discussion and whole group listening—is intended to help participants feel comfortable contributing, even though the complexities of climate change can often feel overwhelming or otherwise difficult to talk about.

Below are some core goals that we have considered:

- Build a sense of community within your group by supporting them to meet, share ideas, and find common ground with one another.
- Engage in positive future thinking and visioning, purposely shifting climate conversation away from doom and gloom, and toward action and vibrant futures.
- Increase awareness about, and connections between, local people, projects, initiatives, or resources related to climate change and climate justice.
- Develop a broader knowledge of systems-thinking and community-scaled climate action within the group by eliciting peoples’ perspectives, priorities, questions, and concerns.
- Generate new ways of thinking and talking about climate change to increase efficacy for climate action.
- Encourage everyone to see their roles, individually and as part of a larger collective, in building positive climate futures in their communities.
- Develop a vision of the future that can help us prioritize, align, and direct our actions.

Building an Agenda

There are two main parts to this activity: Phase 1 - where participants are prompted to build a collective vision for a climate resilient future (the “future banner”), and Phase 2 – where participants identify starting points and brainstorm important connections, expertise, and existing progress toward that future (the “action brainstorm”).

In addition to these two parts, you’ll want to have enough time to introduce the activity, frame the context, and do a final reflection as a group. This activity can be adapted to fit one to two hours (or more), depending on the size of your group, your desired outcomes, and the depth of reflection. Facilitators are responsible for helping the group make smooth transitions through the agenda with people feeling confident that they understand how to engage.

Sample Agenda (*& facilitation notes*)

Audience: Annual gathering of elected officials, business leaders, students, government employees, and community groups to reflect on progress of a countywide Climate Action Plan.

Group size: 50 people

Time: 2 hrs.

Goals: Provide space to meet & establish empathetic connections; Gather insight, priorities, and examples on progress towards the goals of the Climate Action Plan; Create space to navigate tensions and explore competing interests; Leave people feeling like their perspectives were listened to and valued

15 min

Welcome & Introductions

Facilitator introductions: Who are we? Where are we from? What do we care about? What connects us to this place and community?

Share activity goals and agenda.

Thank participants for being present and adding their perspectives.

Climate Communications & Future Thinking

Watch Earthrise by Amanda Gorman (or other piece of media, art, writing).

Why are we doing this activity? Why does it matter? (*i.e. science communications research indicates that talking about climate actions and positive futures - instead of climate impacts and grieving losses relative to the past - is critical for empowering communities. See McGill et al. 2024 for more information.*)

Share activity instructions, discussion norms, and an example prompt & response.

40 min

Phase 1: Future Banner

Take 10 minutes to think and respond to prompts as individuals.

(Don't rush this! Give people plenty of time to think. Sometimes people will stop writing but then pick their pencils back up a few minutes later. And remember, 1 response per sticky note. Example prompts can be found in the additional resources section of the facilitator guide.)

Have participants introduce themselves to one another and discuss their responses with the people at their table (4 to 5 people per table). *(The facilitator should float between tables to listen for major themes, to help spark discussion, and to resolve any tension.)*

Construct the banner. Invite people/groups to add their stickies to the banner and read one another's responses, taking note of ideas and themes that stand out.

Reflect as a large group. Invite the note taker from each table to report what they heard and then pose 1 - 2 questions to the large group. (e.g. What ideas or themes stood out? Which prompt sparked interesting discussion? Where do you see a role for our group in working toward this vision of the future? What were you thinking or feeling as you did the activity? What did you learn about your fellow participants?)

10 min

Body break & chance to look at the full banner

40 min

Phase 2: Action Brainstorm

Briefly review activity instructions & goals.

Instruct each table group to select one sticky note to focus on during the action brainstorm phase and place it at the center of their worksheet. A concrete idea typically works best. *(The action brainstorm worksheet can be found in the additional resources section of the facilitator guide.)*

Have each table group work through the questions, taking note of places where people get excited and places where people get stuck.

Share out. Have a representative from each group share out the sticky note they worked with and summarize their group's discussion.

15 min

Final Reflections & Closing

Thank participants for being present and adding their perspectives.

Make meaning of the session with this turn-and-talk prompt: "Based on your perspective, what is something important that you feel we are called to do for future generations?"

Share a future- or action-oriented quote or reading and remind folks that we need them to keep being advocates and partners in this work. *(We suggest quotes from activists, community organizers, spiritual leaders, artists, or feminist sci-fi writers.)*



Materials for individual use, such as post it notes, writing utensils, and print outs, can be put out on tables for easy access.

Phase 1: Future Banner

The first part of this activity is designed to build a collective vision of the future by responding to prompts that elicit the group's hopes and ideas for a future we might work toward. The goal is to have a different kind of climate conversation--one that shifts dialogue away from fears and losses in the past and present toward articulating what we *want* our future to be. Conversations focused on desires and interests can provide an attractive vision of the future that can then be used to ground conversations about collective action and encourage timely, systems-level problem solving.

Pre-workshop: Developing Your Prompts

In this phase of the activity, participants create a future banner by choosing from a bank of open-ended fill-in-the-blank prompts, responding to whichever ones inspire their thinking. The prompts act as sentence starters, balancing structure to help kickstart and focus thinking with freedom to interpret and draw upon knowledge, interests, identities, and relationships that might not ordinarily come up. Utilizing prompts in this way can help to break people out of unconscious routines in how we think and talk about the future (especially when it comes to climate change).

For example, the prompts below were used with a group of around 100 people attending an annual sustainability summit in a mixed urban and rural county in Western Pennsylvania. Participants included a range of people working in different sectors of business, government, education, and conservation across a broad spectrum of age and political views:

<i>It's 2035 in [Insert your County name here]...</i>		
<i>Economy</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Environment</i>
<i>People move to our area for ____.</i>	<i>We're proud that ____ can be passed on to future generations.</i>	<i>Local farms are now ____.</i>
<i>We've saved money on our energy bills by ____.</i>	<i>Almost everyone can agree that ____.</i>	<i>Decision-makers prioritize ____ in managing public lands.</i>
<i>Young people are excited about local job opportunities in ____.</i>	<i>Our technical schools now train people for ____.</i>	<i>Collaboration on ____ reduced the impacts of flooding.</i>
<i>Our approach to ____ is recognized nationally due to local leadership in this sector.</i>	<i>____ and ____ are working together in new ways to address climate resilience.</i>	<i>Conservation efforts are celebrated for improving ____.</i>

Examples of post-it note responses to the prompt “People move to our community for...”

<i>People move to our community for <u>lower taxes, affordable housing, and the quality of life.</u></i>	<i>People move to our community for <u>the network of parks, trails, and game lands.</u></i>	<i>People move to our community for <u>jobs in energy and clean industries with staying power.</u></i>	<i>People move to our community for <u>education opportunities, but more importantly people are excited to stay.</u></i>
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When you look at the examples above, which prompts and responses stand out to you, and why? How did the prompts provide structure to focus the conversation on sustainability? Where did they leave space for flexibility and interpretation for different values, priorities, demographics or areas of expertise? What patterns, themes, or connections do you notice? What qualities might make a prompt “boring” or “bad”?

The prompts, along with the explanation and discussion of the participants’ responses, were intended to put specific interests and ideas about sustainability on the table for discussion and create an opportunity to think more concretely about priorities for the

future. From there, people can draw connections, look for areas where there's common ground, and begin to wrestle with discussions about tensions or trade-offs. The prompts are meant to empower people to talk about the things that matter to them, while not forcing them to talk or think in a certain way.

We have experimented with several versions of prompt banks, each slightly different based on our audience and our activity goals. When you facilitate the activity, you can use or adapt the prompts we provide (*see additional resources section of the facilitator guide*) or develop new ones to fit your specific needs.

Here are some of our insights and tips to help spark ideas and get you started on designing prompts unique to your audience:

- We have found that 3 to 4 categories, with 4 to 5 prompts per category, provides plenty of choices without being overwhelming.
- We choose categories that connect to broad or universal themes (especially as they relate to climate justice & resilience), and prompts that focus on collaboration, community, joy, wellbeing, intergenerational learning, and interdisciplinarity.
- As you develop prompts, try to balance presenting topics that are known priorities or areas of expertise, while being open to surprises about what people think, feel, do, or care about.
- We recommend at least one prompt in each category should be explicitly about climate mitigation and/or adaptation—topics people tend to dance around and avoid—because few people have opportunities to articulate their stances and beliefs.
- Leverage people's pride, love, and hope for their community.
- Color code each category to align with a color of post it notes. This will help you see the spread of responses across the whole banner.
- Give wait time. Don't rush to fill moments of silence. Trust the process and your people.

During the workshop: Setting the Stage

Before having your audience respond to prompts, take some time to help your audience get into the right headspace. In our experience, it can be difficult to jump right into a mindset of possibility-- imagining the future we want--when our minds are burdened with social, political, ecological, and economic challenges we experience today.

You may have to remind your audience several times that they should not feel limited by present challenges and the pragmatics of their ideas when answering prompts. Be honest that change is hard and try to avoid dismissing people's skepticism. Instead, remind them that our ability to envision hopeful futures to work toward is as important as envisioning the doomful futures to work against. It's not naive, it's strategic. What is it they *want* their future to be? What do they *value* and *hope for*? What can they *imagine* that would *attract* or *galvanize collective action*?

Here are some facilitation tips:

- Choose a future year that makes sense for your group and the goals of the activity. Generally, we think 10 years in the future works well because it is close enough to work towards, yet far enough away that a lot of positive change can happen.
- Invite participants to close their eyes and imagine what life is like in the future year that you choose. How old will they be? What might a thriving and sustainable future look like, feel like, or sound like? What do they hope will have changed? What do they hope will remain the same? (*Please note that this can bring up thoughts about death and loss, which is hard.*)
- Don't be afraid to get creative with your setting. Introduce props, music, or a narrative to help set an imaginative futuristic scene. You could offer some buttons to pin on, or hats to wear. Anything that helps people to symbolize their future self and psychologically shift their perspective.
- Share an inspiring quote, poem, reading, video, or local example of positive action for a climate resilient future (*see accompanying slides in the additional resources section of this guide for examples*).

During the workshop: Building Your Future Banner

This activity works best when 1) participants can see and discuss one another's answers, and 2) the result is a dynamic, colorful, and fun-to-look-at end product. The banner makes people's hopes and ideas about the future visible and allows participants to see how others responded to prompts in similar or different ways. We encourage you to consider how you might invite participation by using writing implements and materials that balance quality, sustainability, and visual appeal. The banner can be quite simple and doesn't need to look like an artistic masterpiece, however some intentional care toward creative design can draw people in, inspire imaginative thinking, and push them to take the activity seriously.

You can be creative and flexible in making modifications in what form the banner takes based on the size and mobility considerations of your group, the arrangement of the room, and the sorts of conversations you're looking to have. Here are some example scenarios:

Scenario 1: Small group discussion

A team of 15 people from different stakeholder groups is meeting for the first session of a strategic planning process. The facilitator introduces themselves, explains the activity, and gives groups 10 minutes to think and write their responses. Once finished, the facilitator invites people to move to the front of the room to post their responses on a large banner with the words "Our Town in 10 Years" and a few rudimentary but recognizable doodles of local landmarks. Participants take a few minutes to read the responses and make casual conversation with the people next to them. The facilitator then invites them to move sticky notes to highlight important themes, asking people to discuss what they notice about the group's priorities, hopes, and desires.

Scenario 2: Workshop or Public meeting

30 community members are gathered at the public library, seated at tables in small groups of 4 to 5 people. They introduce themselves to their tablemates and take 20 minutes to think about, write, and discuss their responses to the prompts. The facilitator then invites participants to move around the room to post their responses--which are color-coded--onto four different banners representing the prompt categories. As participants walk from banner to banner, they read the responses posted by other table groups. Once all the responses have been posted, the groups return to their tables. One-by-one the note taker from each table shares the major topics from their group discussion with the larger group.

Scenario 3: Tabling activity

Families are drawn to the table at a county fair by a colorful fabric banner that acts as a tablecloth. Facilitators engage parents in the future visioning activity while their kids are engaged with another educator. The prompts are displayed on a stand and the facilitator briefly explains the activity and invites the visitors to add a few responses. After asking them about what they wrote and why, the facilitator invites the visitors to look at other people's responses, share what stands out to them, and sort the responses to identify major themes or points of interest across different prompts and categories. After a short discussion, the facilitator thanks them for participating, they leave, and the facilitator resets the table.

Here are some additional facilitation tips with groups:

- Encourage people to write in complete sentences, with one response per sticky note.
- If folks don't already know one another, build in time to do brief introductions.
- Take time as a facilitator to read several responses aloud or invite groups to share a few important themes or responses. Don't skip this step, hearing positive ideas spoken aloud is a powerful moment!
- Allow time for folks to react, draw connections, or respond to what was shared. Folks can also mingle and review the responses during a break.
- Reflect with the whole group: What feelings are coming up? Is there anything that stands out or causes an emotional reaction? Are there common themes? Do you see a role for yourself or your organization?



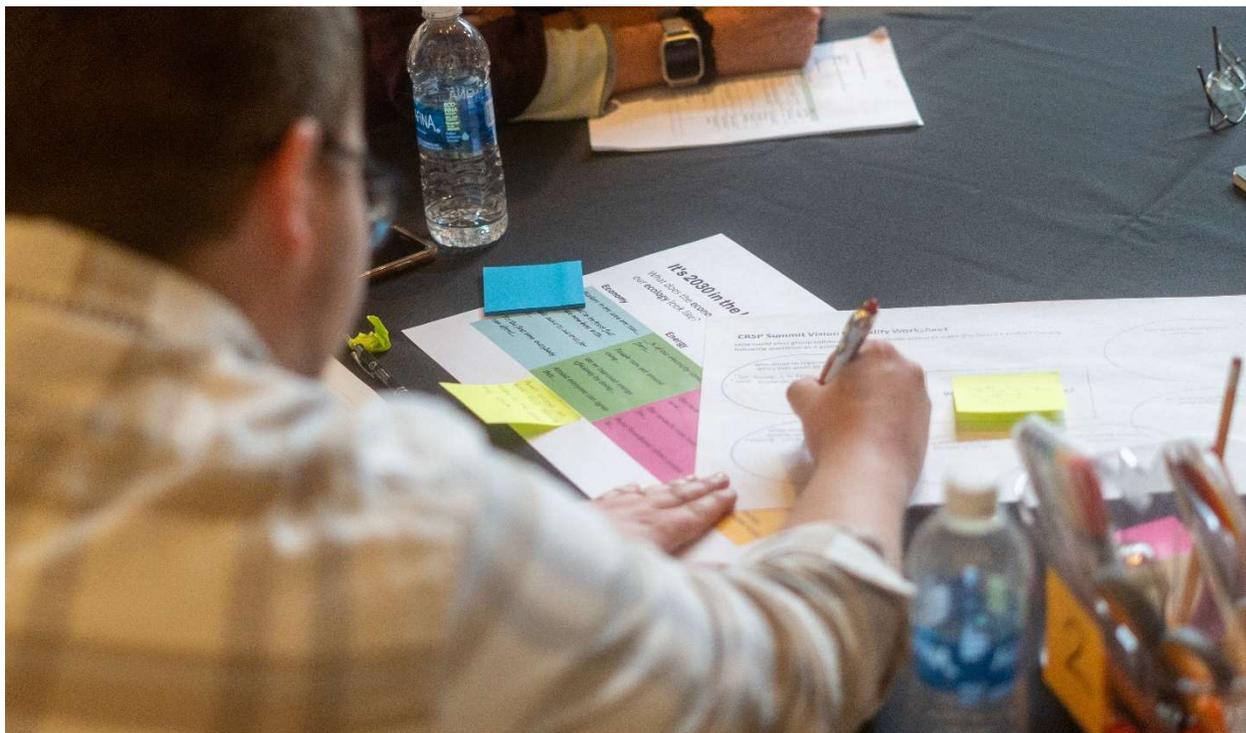
Participants take time to read everyone's sticky responses that make up their collective future vision.

Phase 2: Climate Action Worksheet

The “climate action worksheet” is designed to bring the group back to reality after the brainstorm by exploring one idea from the future vision they created together and talking about ways that the community is already (or could be) working toward it. Connecting the

future vision to tangible, present-day work that feels meaningful, actionable, and exciting is important because it shows that there are already strong starting points and that their future visions are not out of reach.

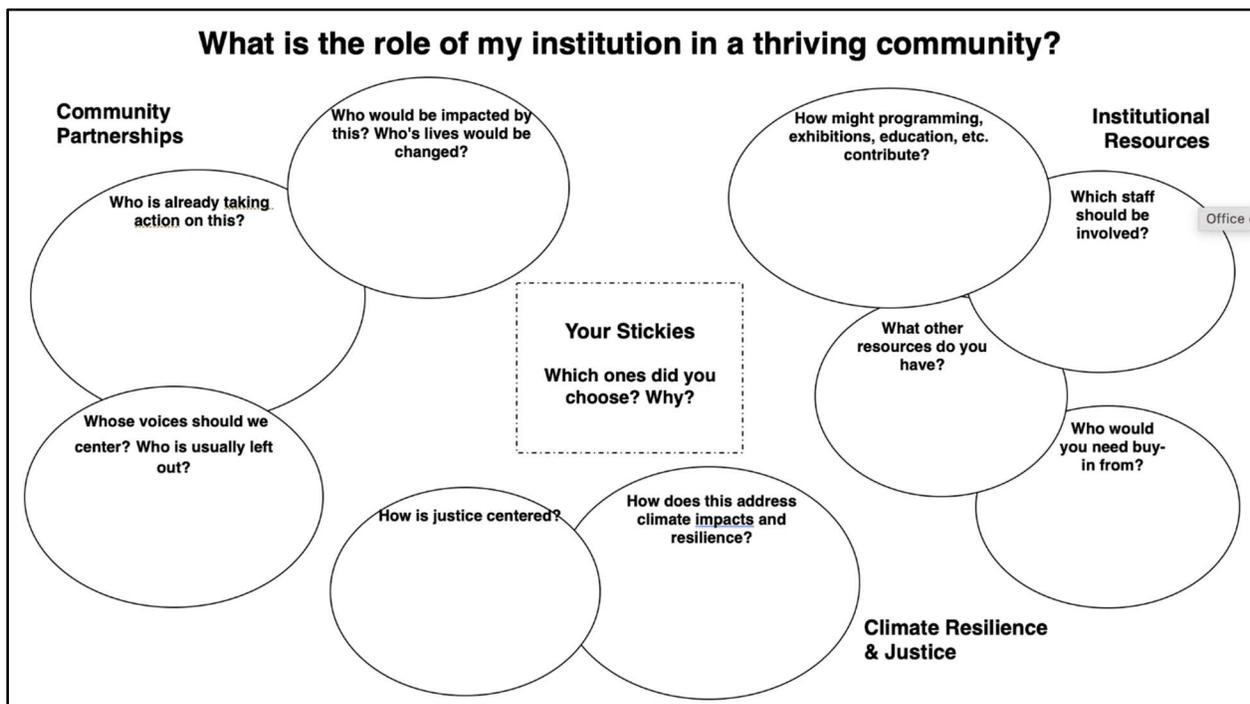
The worksheet draws attention to local people, projects, practices, and examples that can be seen as seeds that the group is excited to cultivate, plant, harvest, and grow into future. Making their visions a reality in 10 years will rely on care, coordination, and collective action in the present, and the problems, solutions, and building blocks of our future are likely present around us in some form now.



Participants work together to complete the action worksheet around a piece of the future banner (the yellow sticky note) that they are excited about.

During the workshop: Brainstorming Climate Action

In our experience, some people can easily root a big imaginative vision in smaller concrete actions that can be applied now, while other people find it difficult to draw connections between an aspirational future vision and present realities. In either case, you may need to remind your audience that this activity is a brainstorm to help us think and talk in new ways about climate action, specifically ways that are *for* something we want, rather than *against* something we don't want.



Here are some facilitation tips to help your audience move through the action worksheet when using it in a workshop:

- Sort your participants into small discussion groups (4-6 people).
- Have each group take one sticky note off the future vision banner that they are particularly excited or knowledgeable about. This sticky note is placed at the center of the worksheet surrounded by brainstorming questions.
- Allow ~20 minutes for the groups to work together through the action worksheet to draw on the knowledge, experience, and relationships of the group.
- Each group should share out what was exciting to them and where they got stuck. Both are important places where we should be working.

Call out: In early experiences doing the Futures Banner we noticed that people felt inspired by the activity of creating the banner, but also, they left without concrete next steps. The worksheet was developed to help bridge this gap. It is designed to facilitate small group thinking about how to take an idea from vision to reality. And how to do that in ways that are collaborative, equitable, and build on the work of others. No reinventing the wheel!

Pre-workshop: Guiding Questions

The climate action worksheet is organized around a few categories of questions that help each group think about concrete next steps, in the context of considering who is already taking action, what are they doing, potential collaborations, resources needs, their own roles (as individuals and as part of specific institutions) in moving this action forward, and how this will contribute to climate resilience and justice. You can adapt our questions (see accompanying worksheets) or create new ones that fit your audience and your goals.

Here are some questions and tips to think about when designing your worksheet:

- It is important for participants to see how they can be a part of making this vision a reality, but it should move beyond individual action. Questions about organizations already working on this and who to partner with can help achieve this.
- If there is an area that you want your audience to spend time considering, be explicit about it! For example, if you want your audience to consider equity and justice, include direct questions about how it will build equity and justice.
- Keep the activity rooted in climate resilience by explicitly asking how the chosen sticky note builds climate resilience or promotes climate mitigation or adaptation.
- Walk around the room and stop by each group to see how they are doing, where they might be excited or stuck, and if they have any questions.

Closing the Activity

One of the most important roles that a facilitator plays is to provide a smooth opening and closing to the activity. The introduction sets the scene and prepares people to participate. The closing encourages them to reflect, make sense of what they heard, and identify how what they learned from one another could be useful.

Examples of closing activities that encourage reflection and a feeling of being heard:

Turn and talk: Pose a reflective question, give people time to think, and ask them to share a 2 to 3-minute response with the person next to them or someone they haven't spent much time with today. This is great for large groups when you want to make sure everyone gets to speak and be heard, but a drawback is that good ideas may only be shared within small groups.

Orbit: Pose a reflective question, give people time to think, and then go around the room inviting each participant to share a word, phrase, takeaway, or reflection from the activity that captures an important concept or essential idea. This is great for small groups

because it provides a final shared experience where everyone participates equally, but a drawback is that it can take a significant amount of time.

Silent meditation: Guide folks to close their eyes, slow their breath, and then ask them to consider a prompt. This is a great activity for large or small groups to offer some quiet calm after a conversation-heavy agenda, but one drawback is that people may walk away wishing they'd had a chance to share their final thought with others.

Here are some suggestions and facilitator tips to close the activity:

- Thank participants for their contributions.
- Summarize important themes, conversations, or observations from the activity.
- Highlight ways that the activity connects to past and future work.
- Explain any next steps or how insight from the activity might be used.
- Share a quote or poem about hopeful futures and collective action.
- Ask participants to identify a specific action and commit themselves to doing it.

Follow-up & Evaluation

In addition to the learning that happens when people engage in open discussion, we believe this activity is well suited to gathering information when seeking public input, developing a plan, or engaging people in relationship building or conflict resolution. In these cases, both the process (the act of engaging in conversation) and the products (what gets said in the discussion) can hold great value.

Spending time to write a summary document or report that can be shared with participants afterward can serve as a reminder of what was said or agreed upon while also providing helpful insight to people who were not present. The participant responses, notes from small group discussions, and insight or reflections from facilitators can all act as valuable information in such a report.

Here is a process we have used:

Step 1: Transcribe the sticky notes and any notes taken during small or big group share outs. If the responses weren't written in complete sentences, you may need to clean the wording up and identify as best as you can which prompts were being referenced to help ensure accurate interpretation.

Step 2: Look for words that received repeat mentions in the transcriptions, concepts that seem to be related, or ideas that elicited noteworthy reactions/discussions from the

group(s). In our experience, it's been helpful for the facilitators to meet immediately afterward to reflect on the activity and record what stood out to them as interesting or important.

Step 3: Identify a few major themes and use those categories to sort the responses and facilitator notes. This can be done using the physical sticky notes themselves or a spreadsheet on a computer. This is an experimental process. You may find that categories can be split apart or lumped together, that responses might fit in multiple categories, or that some responses don't fit into a category or aren't necessarily useful.

Step 4: Once you've settled on your themes, write a narrative to summarize each theme, borrowing language directly from the transcriptions whenever possible. Identify two sticky note responses to serve as examples of the themes.

Step 5: Review the full transcription(s) and facilitator notes to look for important ideas/outliers that might have been missed. You may not be able to capture all of the ideas in their complexity, but your goal should be to provide as faithful a testimony as possible.

Step 6: Produce a simplified summary report, which includes an introduction to help readers understand how the information was generated and provides the prompts that were used.

Step 7: Send the report out to participants and facilitators and invite their feedback, corrections, additions, clarifications, and other input. Make sure to get written consent if you'd like to include specific names, photographs, or any other identifying information. People should feel confident that their consent and confidentiality is respected. Some important or interesting things may need to stay in the room or remain anonymous.

Additional Resources

[**The Climate in Rural Systems Partnership \(CRSP\)**](#) is a learning research project funded by the National Science Foundation (#1906774 and #1906368) to study the collaborative development of resources and strategies to support climate learning with people in rural communities in western Pennsylvania. The Climate & Rural Systems Partnership develops and uses activities like this one to strengthen social ties and support conversations about climate change. We believe it's important to bring different ideas together, challenge one another, and work together to find common ground.

Please reach out using the contact form on the CRSP webpage if you would like examples of specific facilitation materials used by the CRSP project. We can provide:

Sample Future Banner Prompts

- Sample Action Worksheets
- Sample Activity Slides
- Notetaking Worksheets

External Resources

You may also want to bring in outside resources that support learning and dialogue about climate resilience, either before or as part of this activity. Here are some of our favorites.

- [Project Drawdown Table of Climate Solutions](#)
- [Climate Action Venn Diagram](#)

About CRSP – our design principles

We learn by tapping into a diverse network of local experts

CRSP creates time and space for people to come together, build relationships, and encounter diverse knowledge and perspectives about climate change. For example, farmers, fisherman, foresters, and foremen can be critical sources of insight about how changes in temperature, rainfall, and extreme weather are being thought about, talked about, acted upon, and experienced locally. When ideas are shared among people who face similar issues but in different disciplines, it creates opportunities to check assumptions, identify gaps in our own and others' understandings, break routines of how we approach things, and see things in new ways.

- Are there people, places, or projects that highlight local examples of climate solutions?
- Whose expertise is or might be trusted in my community, and why?
- Whose voices and perspectives haven't been listened to yet, and why?
- How can climate change adaptation and mitigation support efforts on other related issues? e.g. housing, hunger, energy, transit, infrastructure, health, biodiversity, immigration

We learn by seeking the “right” questions and information

CRSP recognizes that climate data is not one-size-fits-all, and that scientists and educators should produce and deliver information that people can apply in their lives and decision making. Co-production of scientific research and educational programs and materials can equip people with the right information at the right time, with an understanding that the framing and sources matter. While scientists and educators play a critical role in driving public understanding and action on

global warming and climate change, they should work in reciprocal collaboration and with the wisdom, expertise, initiatives, and practices of other experts in their community.

- What questions do people in our community have?
- What information might help them answer those questions?
- Who in our community might have the information or help to answer the questions?
- What assumptions do we have about what people do or don't know?

We learn through experimentation and “messy examples”

CRSP invites engagement and participation through the co-design of climate learning resources and approaches, including things like tabling activities, pamphlets, posters, field trips, programs, events, museum exhibitions, social media content, articles, podcasts, webpages, and research papers. Target users and content experts from a range of settings and disciplines work together through ideation, prototyping, testing, evaluation, refinement, and adaptation. This process provides the group with an opportunity to contribute their perspectives to a collective effort, while gaining knowledge, insight, experience, and a more usable finished product.

- What are the places, events, platforms, and programs where people are (or could be) talking and learning about climate change in our community?
- How might resources be designed for use with different audiences or messengers?
- What values, norms, and emotions might we consider as we present scientific evidence?
- How might we inspire curiosity about systems- and future-thinking?

The CRSP DNA

While there are many approaches that are worthy of consideration, the CRSP team has identified five concepts to ground how we design resources, activities, and programming to support climate learning. The list of concepts--which we call “*the CRSP DNA*”--have been a helpful tool to identify starting places and to find our way when we're feeling lost, stuck, or confused.

1. **Local relevance** – The topic must be presented in a way that meshes with a person's or community's interests and experience. *How is climate change being witnessed, talked about, and acted upon locally?*
2. **Opportunities to participate** – Connecting to a role, a concrete opportunity for engagement, or a possible next step with others creates a social identity with the topic. *How might collaboration on a project help us understand the problem (and one another) better?*
3. **Interconnections between systems** – Understanding how components of the issue impact each other can support systemic change, rather than solely individual change. *How can we make sense of the relationships between social and ecological systems at local and global scales?*

4. **Feelings and emotions** – Human-caused climate change is a challenging emotional issue. *How can we create space for emotional processing, perspective taking, conflict resolution, and spiritual healing?*
5. **Scientific evidence** – Science can help ground our understanding of changing climate. *How might scientific data, projections, and research serve as a tool to understand, plan for, and take action to mitigate global climate change?*

Our strategy is informed by interdisciplinary research across social science, learning science, and science communication. To learn more, we suggest that you read these publications with case study examples of how the CRSP approach has been applied:

McGill, B. M., Nelson, T., Steiner, M. A., & Heller, N. E. (2024). Shifting Climate Communication Narratives Toward Actions and Futures in a Rural Area of Appalachia. *Science Communication*, 46(2), 178-209.

Steiner, M. A., Knutson, K., Crowley, K., Heller, N., McGill, B., Giarratani, L., Russell, J., & Nelson, T. (2023). Taking time to listen and learn: a museum partnership designed to engage rural audiences in climate change conversations. *Museums & Social Issues*, 1-16.

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