How to communicate climate change with the general public

Women’s Institute Wales

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WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

1. The power of persuasion
How you can reach people

2. Different kinds of people
Talking to values and what people really care about.

3. Making it local
Climate impacts- working locally
I. The power of persuasion
In pairs

“....the strengths and qualifications I bring when talking about climate change are...”
What is your greatest concern about talking to the public? What do you need help with?
People’s views are formed by the people they know and trust – their peers.
The power of ‘I’

I am ...
I have things in common with you....
I am not a ‘typical’ environmentalist
I believe that the climate is changing because....
I was not always like this. What changed for me was...
I have seen big changes in my lifetime.....
When I think of climate change I feel....
We have to do something because....
So I am doing....
It’s not always easy....
But doing something feels.....
II. Different People

What works?
Communications based on disasters, negativity and distant impacts have little effect on attitudes.
The only people motivated by facts and figures are the people who understand them.
People *are* motivated by shared values and identity, and the joy of belonging..
STRONG COMMUNICATIONS SAY:

This is who *you* are.

This is what *you* care about

Other people *like you* agree with this.

When you do this you belong *more* to your group.

And the world becomes *more* how you want it to be.
AUDIENCES

Imagine someone you might talk to

Tell me about them.

What are their values.

How do they want the world to be.
The typical storyline...

A terrifying future is coming. Whatever we do it will be a disaster.

You must immediately give things up to prevent it being even worse.

And even then it may be too late.
Big changes are already happening.

We are resilient, creative and proud of who we are. We can work together to prepare and protect ourselves.

When we do, we can make the future better.
Tell me about the values of the typical WI member?

What would be a positive vision of the world for her?
Many people distrust environmentalists

Green
Eco
Save...stop..defend...protect
Polar bears
Environment
No!
Talking to conservatives:

One word to describe your core values?

- integrity
- honesty
Talking with c’onservatives

Balance/common sense/fairness
Responsibility
Health/dirt/purity
Waste
Quality of life
Opportunities/good jobs/small business
Differentiating by age- target youth
Welsh Narratives 2012

Finding narratives to speak to Welsh identity on climate change and sustainable development

25 interviews.
16 focus groups
Talking with Welsh people

Yes
Landscape
Community ...better life
Pride in language and culture

Not
Big claims
Leadership
Eco stuff
Welsh landscape
(not environment or planet)
Wind farms prevent damage to the global environment.

Wind farms are damaging to the local landscape.
Talking with Welsh people

Yes
Landscape
Community ...better life
Pride in language and culture

Not
Big claims
Leadership
Eco stuff
Scepticism

What are the reasons people put up for not accepting climate change or taking action on it?
Responding to ‘sceptics’

**Do not**
- Argue the science or believe you have to be an expert
- Put people down or disrespect their views
- Denigrate other sceptics (e.g. as “dupes” of oil companies)

**Do**
- Respect them and find common ground
- Recognise their entitlement to *their* view (as a personal view)
- Focus on solutions and a positive vision
- Speak from the ‘I’
- Show how other people they know care and act (the norm)
III. Making it local
What are the current climate change impacts in your area - what is coming?

flooding
sea level
heat
storms
economic/health/social
Find out more:

Climate Impacts Programme
www.ukcip.org.uk/
What are/will be the main low carbon opportunities in your area

clean energy
clean transport
doing things locally
well insulated cosy houses
THANK YOU

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