Climate Science Meets Social Psychology and Strategic Communications: Applying proven learning and communications strategies to climate literacy in the San Diego Region

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Introduction

The vision of the project is to create a science based, climate literacy movement in San Diego with innovative and targeted messages for Key Influential thought leaders and their constituent communities. This will promote a regional community receptive to climate science information and who engage in climate change mitigation and adaptation behaviors.

GOALS

1. Create an innovative partnership
2. Create an interdisciplinary project
3. Create a collaborative project
4. Create a community engaged project

Methods

Participants

- 40-50 Key Influential (KI) (elected officials, the Hispanic/Latino community, native tribal leaders, the real estate development community and faith-based community)

Measures

- Key Influential interview protocol and target audience survey will measure components of the theoretical model (see Figure 1)

- Climate Change Knowledge
  - Test agreement with statements such as:
    - average annual temperatures between 1990 and 2010 in our region have been the warmest recorded (Cayan et al, 2007)
    - awareness and importance of regional strategies to reduce energy use as electricity or transportation (Anders et al, 2008)
    - awareness of resilience to effects of global warming in the region (Focus 2050, 2008)

- Efficacy, Identity and Values

- Integration

Procedure

- (1) Pilot survey with 80 persons
- (2) Conduct 40+ KI interviews and longer public survey (led by The Steve Alexander Group) in late spring 2011
- (3) Develop compelling message content and delivery methods (based on results of (2))

Theory

The Tripartite Integration Model of Social Influence (TIMSI), based on Kelman’s social influence theory 1956, 2006) will be used as the basis for:

1. Measuring knowledge and integration of KIs and their constituents into a defined climate change thought community
2. Designing compelling messaging and education for KIs and their constituents
3. Assessing real world impact on San Diego’s mitigation and adaptation behaviors and policy [Phase II]

The TIMSI model posits that education that results in individuals gaining efficacy, identifying with the climate change movement and internalizing the values of that group, are most likely to engage in behaviors consistent with that social group across time and circumstances (Estrada et al, 2011).

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References


Cayan, D.R., P.D. Bromirski, K. Hayhoe, M. Tyree, M.D. Dettinger, R.E. Flick. 2007. Climate change projections of sea level rise and extreme events in the California Climate Scenarios. Accepted for publication in Climatic Change.