



Engaging in Climate Outreach

Climate change is a global problem that will take a global effort to solve. “Global” means all of us contribute to the best of our ability and all change our lifestyles to reduce our impact on climate change. But is there global support for this?

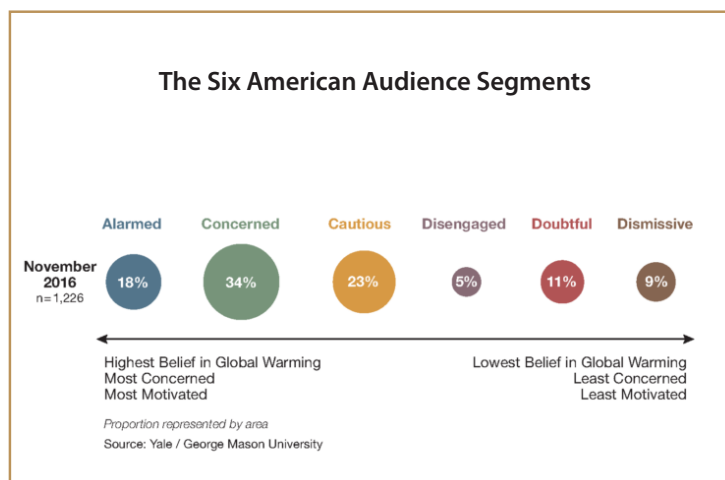
The Six Americas Audience Segment is a chart that shows the distribution of beliefs about climate change of 1,058 people surveyed in September 2012. Of those surveyed: 45% are concerned or alarmed by climate change. These people will be most likely be active participants in the global effort to combat climate change. 55% will likely not care or think about how climate change affects them. Without this 55%, we cannot solve this global problem. A global effort takes dedication and conviction by many. Outreach may help.

We'll need outreach programs to explain and answer questions about climate change, so people can decide for themselves how they'll react to the situation.

Social Tension Around Discussing Climate Change

Mention global warming in almost any discussion and you're likely to bring out strong opinions on both the validity of the arguments and on the personal financial impact of any solution. Most people heavily depend on fossil fuels. Giving them up—or even partially replacing these energy sources with alternatives—is not cheap. The cost is hard to calculate and likewise hard for an individual to comprehend. Many individuals view the desire to reduce the use of fuels that release CO₂ as a personal attack on their way of life. Compound this with questions about the accuracy of scientific models, and you have a large segment of the population resistant to the changes that many scientists and climate-change modelers propose.

If they want to forge a global consensus to reduce climate change, the scientific community must deal



with these two issues. In the Article *What Roles Can Scientists Play in Public Discourse?* Michael Oppenheimer says that a scientist must clarify and continually respond to questions as they arise from the public. They also must lay out the cost of not acting—in a truly respectful and factual way. As Mr. Oppenheimer suggests, devolving into a name-calling match turns people off to what is being said. Only by addressing issues that frighten people, such as a rise in the cost of living, can scientists make progress towards broader acceptance and support of climate change reduction.

Agricultural Concerns

Communities need to forecast coming weather changes to prepare for long-term trends and changes to their lives resulting from climate change. Climate change will affect local agricultural processes and production, transportation, and economic development.

Those connected with agriculture will notice change in:

Precipitation

This is one of the most obvious and important changes affecting agriculture and people's lives, as the amount of rainfall will impact the local ecosystem. Some crops need more moisture in the soil and some need less. With

different plant requirements, the precipitation directly affects agriculture selection and development.

Temperature

Temperature is an obvious and important issue, too, as the fluctuation in local temperature influences the plant life cycle. Some plants need cold temperatures prior to flowering. If the atmosphere stays too warm, the timing of flowering and needed fertilization are affected.

Sunlight (frequency of light)

Sunlight can be separated into strength and hours of daylight. The Growing Degree Day (GDD) requirements for each species is different. GDDs are influenced by cloud cover and the ozone layer, which are connected with climate change.

Resources

Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. Global Warming's Six Americas, (2008). <http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/about/projects/global-warmings-six-americas/>

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