



CENTRE FOR LOCAL PROSPERITY
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CLIMATE CHANGE and the HUMAN PROSPECT

A film that documents the vision created during
the 60th Anniversary Retreat on Climate Change
at the Thinkers Lodge, Pugwash, Nova Scotia
(Sept 28 – Oct 1, 2017).

Armed with a conviction that local action is not only possible but the path forward, 24 global and regional Thinkers, representing all aspects of community life, gathered for two and a half days of intense, intentional conversation focused on actionable, locally-focused and forward-motion Climate Change plans.

Watch the Trailer: <http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/thinkers-lodge-retreat-outcomes/>

DISCUSSION GUIDE about CLIMATE CHANGE

The Centre for Local Prosperity provides this Discussion Guide with some historical background, useful facilitation suggestions and potential questions to use for sparking the discussion after the documentary film. Due to the critical nature of the film's topic, we recommend that it be shown in a group or public audience context, followed immediately by a discussion about climate change.

Historical Background:

"In 1957 during the height of the Cold War, the Thinkers Lodge in Pugwash, Nova Scotia was host to the inaugural Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs. Hosted by philanthropist Cyrus Eaton, twenty-two eminent individuals including top-level scientists from both sides of the Iron Curtain, Nobel laureates, and thought leaders met to discuss the threat of nuclear weapons and the responsibility of scientists to work for their eradication. This courageous and groundbreaking meeting launched the Pugwash Movement, an influential transnational organization for nuclear disarmament and led to the 1995 Nobel Prize for Peace, jointly shared by Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conference."

Inspired by this original gathering and armed with a conviction that local action is not only possible, but the path forward, 24 global and regional Thinkers, representing all aspects of community life, gathered again at the Thinkers Lodge for two and a half days of intense, intentional conversation focused on actionable, locally-focused and forward-motion Climate Change plans. Climate Change is the second existential threat to mankind today.

"Our vision is that the Atlantic provinces act collectively, and by taking direct action at the community level, become a world leader in reversing global warming by drawing down more carbon than it produces, while ensuring environmental justice and economic prosperity."

—Thinkers Retreat

Facilitation Suggestions:

The Centre for Local Prosperity's goal with this documentary film is for communities to begin having conversations about climate change, and to begin to instill a sense of responsibility that is required for climate change related actions or changes at the personal life-style or broader community level. Change begins with awareness and deep conversation, and then affects all levels of community life from individual, volunteer, non-profit, business and governance sectors.

Hence, the primary goal of a discussion should be to build awareness of the impacts of climate change and how local changes can both mitigate and begin adaptation to these changes.

Facilitating a discussion can occur in several ways depending on the group size and time available. Regardless of the methods used, it is important to harvest the thoughts of the group at the end, and to identify any go-forward commitments by the group or individuals.

One facilitation technique is to introduce the topic to the full group, lay-out the discussion parameters (timeframe, goals, etc.), and then break the group into smaller groups of 2-3-4 or more, so that everyone has a chance to speak. These smaller groups then report back at the end.

Possible Discussion Questions: (these questions can be adapted and changed based on the size of group, scheduled time available and other factors)

One important question to start a discussion: "It's important that you're here today. Why did you choose to show up today?"

How well do we understand the impacts of climate change in our communities? We think primarily of warmer temperatures and extreme climate events, but it also includes sea level rise, flooding (both from sea level rise and extreme rain storms), ocean health changes with related declines in harvests, and many land-based ecological changes that can bring new pests and diseases. For example, Lyme disease in Atlantic Canada is considered to be a 'climate change disease.' Many changes will significantly affect those local economies that have not begun to adapt and build local resilience.

What can I do personally to mitigate the effects of climate change? Personal life style choices can have a big impact on your 'carbon footprint'. Two of the biggest are taking less long-haul flights and eating less meat. One nice graphic illustrating personal choices and their impact is located at: <https://phys.org/news/2017-07-effective-individual-tackle-climate-discussed.html>

What can I do domestically and with my home to adapt to climate change? Climate change adaptation is about building resilience at the local level, which can begin with your home. Lowering your home's carbon footprint and energy costs is the first step with insulation, perhaps a heat pump, using more efficient light bulbs (such as LEDs) and appliances. Consider local energy production through wood heating, photovoltaics or small scale wind energy. Finally, build resilience with a home garden and reduce your food carbon footprint while building local food security at that same time.

What can be done within my community and within its abilities? Most significant changes happen when a community pulls together to affect larger-scale initiatives. Set up an ongoing discussion group and identify what might be good starting points for your community – each one is different, with differing assets and talents available. There are a

host of great examples from other communities to learn from. Many great global movements started with only a small handful of committed individuals.

What can be done to affect local government and municipal policy and planning?

Municipal levels of government have proven to be the fastest in making policy and planning changes around climate change (compared to provincial or federal levels). Begin by attending a local council or other public forum for your government. Learn the existing policies and discuss how these can and should be improved. Think bold large leaps that have long-term vision (that can reasonably still be accomplished) and not small incremental changes. The top three areas for change are around local control of food, energy and stewardship of natural assets.

Most of media is obsessed with negative news, but who tells the stories of what works in your community? Communities thrive on good storytelling and local cultural narrative. If you're interested in the future, you can already find it in the present. Ask the community: where does it already exist now?

What are your recommendations to the Centre for Local Prosperity on how they can best move Climate Change issues forward?

We would like to hear from you on how we can best help local communities adapt to and mitigate climate change, while building local economies that can actually flourish in spite of significant climate effects.

Additional Resources:

A written document on the outcomes of the 60th Anniversary Thinkers Lodge is available on our website at: <http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/TL-Retreat-Outcomes-Final-Documents-2.pdf>

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