

# Future of Institutions

## DIALOGUE SUMMARY

**Dialogue: topic:**

Climate change communication and advocacy: Creative solutions and actions

**Organizers:**

Institute for Technology and Society (ITS) Rio

**Key takeaways:**

Climate advocates and institutions focus on defining the problems, rather than on developing strategies to address those problems. Particularly lacking are practical solutions which engage citizens. Instead, these citizens are handed a disproportionate amount of responsibility, instructed to simply change their lifestyles to stop climate change. Dialogue participants assert that institutions need to improve their communications by tailoring campaigns to target groups, earning people's trust, and including citizens in their advocacy efforts.

The current state of climate communication and advocacy are hindered by lack of trust between citizens and institutions, and unwillingness to communicate with “outsiders.” Dialogue participants suggested that institutional transparency could build trust. To do this, institutions could employ targeted creative campaigns that align with and reflect people's beliefs and priorities to bridge advocacy and communications. Or institutions could provide open data and promote local, small-scale experiments that engage citizens. Advocacy communications should strike a balance between providing purely technical information and shallow messages. Dialogue participants postulate that using media and engaging community leaders to communicate advocacy campaigns have strong potential to achieve the goal.

**The challenge(s):**

The current scenario poses clear impact and communication challenges for institutions working on the climate agenda. The climate communication ecosystem is very fragile: the sector's institutional spaces of participation have been closed, and actors opposed to environmental agendas have grown in these networks. Therefore, the impact of climate-related organizations is at risk, having access to fewer channels and fiercer competition against new narratives and actors. As a result, climate debate tends to become isolated.

**Insights for the Future of Institutions:**

“Trust,” was the most common word heard at this Dialogue. Dialogue participants discussed how advocacy campaigns are minimized due to a lack of trust between citizens and institutions. To increase the efficacy of a campaign, there should be alignment with the target community's beliefs and values. New media can be a useful tool with which to engage the target audience. Participants agreed that data must be open access to foster trust between society and climate action advocates. Dialogue participants further suggested that community leaders could serve as effective mediators and/or representatives of climate communication.

**Solutions:**

- Strike a balance in the breadth and depth of communications distributed to the society.
- Create campaigns that align with and reflect people's beliefs and priorities.
- Tailor communications to the audience (e.g., youth, women, and families). Example: ActionLab on Facebook enabled local community leaders to convey messages regarding COVID-19 to their communities. ActionLab delivered more impact than large-scale campaigns.
- Build trust between citizens and institutions.
- Create opportunities to shape public opinion of institutions to garner support for the climate agenda.

**Participants:**

- Jon Alexander, New Citizenship Project
- João Guilherme Bastos, Instituto Nacional de Ciência e Tecnologia em Democracia Digital
- Marta Russo Blazek, Fundação Getulio Vargas
- Rimjhim Dey, DEY
- Renata Guedes, Institute for Technology and Society
- Priscila Minussi, Institute for Technology and Society
- Saurabh Modi, Artha Global
- Suchismita Mukhopadhyay, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
- Fernanda Oliveira, Funatura
- Nicole Rasul, The Rockefeller Foundation
- Lori Regattieri, Mozilla
- Americo Sampaio, Instituto Clima e Sociedade
- Jagan Shah, Artha Global
- Bruna Suptitz, Jornal do Comércio
- Ana Clara Toledo, Purpose
- Emerson Zotti, Jornal do Comércio