Mapping the Ecosystem of Climate Communication in the US and Canada: A Landscape Assessment

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JULY 30, 2026

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Overview

This project maps the ecosystem of climate communicators in the United States and Canada. We define climate communicators as "organizations and individuals actively and regularly communicating climate information."

In this document, we present a summary of the main findings from our survey of 210 of the top climate communicators in the US and Canada, representing a response rate of 22.3% of the full sample. This report presents the topline findings from our assessment. Information about the methodology utilized to identify our sample of climate communicators and the technique employed to survey them is provided in the final section of the report.

Main Findings

- Climate communicators define their audiences in a range of ways that span professional sector, geography, specific area of interest or hobby, and more.
- Most climate communicators share information at least weekly over a range of platforms (79%). The most common social media platform they use is LinkedIn (83%)
- Climate communicators have varying perspectives on a range of climate solutions and tactics: they are most agreed in their lack of support for discussing carbon removal and in their focus on connecting climate issues to other concerns.
- Although the ecosystem of climate communicators shares many of the same goals, there is very low reciprocity within the network. In other words, there is very little collaboration and information sharing among climate communicators and their networks are highly fragmented.
- There is quite a bit of homophily in the network. When climate communicators choose to collaborate and share information, they do so with organizations and individuals who are similar to them.
- Almost all respondents reported that they would benefit from additional funding to support their climate communication (97%).

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Introduction

This report presents a summary of the main findings from our survey of 210 of the top climate communicators in the US and Canada (representing a 22.3% response rate of those sampled). We begin by providing an overview of the respondents who participated in the study. Next, we present a summary of these climate communicators' targeted audiences, methods of communication and messaging, priorities, information and collaboration networks, goals, and resource needs. The report concludes by sharing details about the methodology utilized to identify our sample of climate communicators and the technique employed to survey them.

The following landscape assessment report is based on the organizations and individuals who completed our survey.

Findings

About the Respondents

Participants in the landscape assessment represented a range of sectors in which individuals and groups communicate about the climate. The most common sectors were NGOs that focused on climate, nature, and/or the environment (41%), media (16%), higher education (14%), and individual influencers (9%). This table presents the full range of responses.

Please select your primary sector (if responding as an individual) or your organization's sector (if responding on behalf of your organization).	**Percentage (N=209)**
NGO that DOES focus on climate, nature, and/or environment	40.7%
Media	15.8%
Higher education	14.4%
Individual influencer	11.5%
Businesses and business associations/trade group	7.7%
Health professional	3.8%
K-12, informal, or continuing education	1.9%
NGO that DOES NOT focus on climate, nature, and/or environment	1.9%
Federal government (executive branch and agencies)	1.0%
Professional association	1.0%
Subnational governmental representative	0.5%

Respondents worked at various scales. More than two-thirds reported working at the national scale (69%) and over half reported working at the international scale (53%).

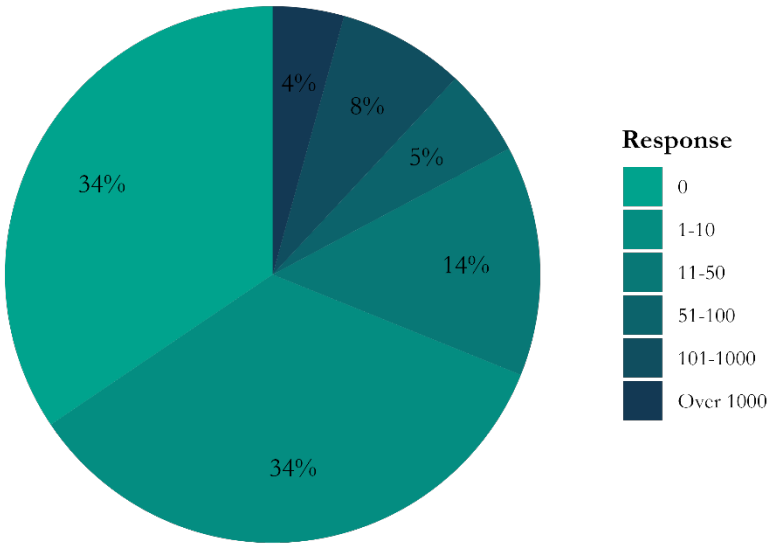
At what scale do you or your organization work? (Select all that apply)	**Percentage (N=206)**
National	68.9%
International	53.4%
State	45.6%
Local, City, or Tribe	45.1%
Sub-National/Regional	42.7%

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About a third of respondents reported either working alone (34%) or having 10 or fewer people working full time with their organization (34%). Only 17% of respondents worked for organizations that had more than 50 full-time equivalent employees.

How many full-time equivalent employees (FTE) work for your organization excluding yourself? If you primarily communicate as an individual, please enter the number of FTEs that directly support your communication, whether voluntary or paid. Enter "0" if there are none.

N=209



Audience

Respondents were asked how they group their primary targeted audience. The most common groupings were by professional sector (51%), geography (46%), and by specific area of interest or hobby (40%). The following table presents the full distribution. Then, we present the breakdown for each category.

How do you group your primary targeted audience? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice	**Percentage (N=175)**
Professional sector	51.4%
Geography	46.3%
Specific area of interest or hobby	40.0%
Demographics and/or career stage (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender, race)	37.1%
Audience within 'Global Warming's 6 Americas'	25.1%
Other	28.6%

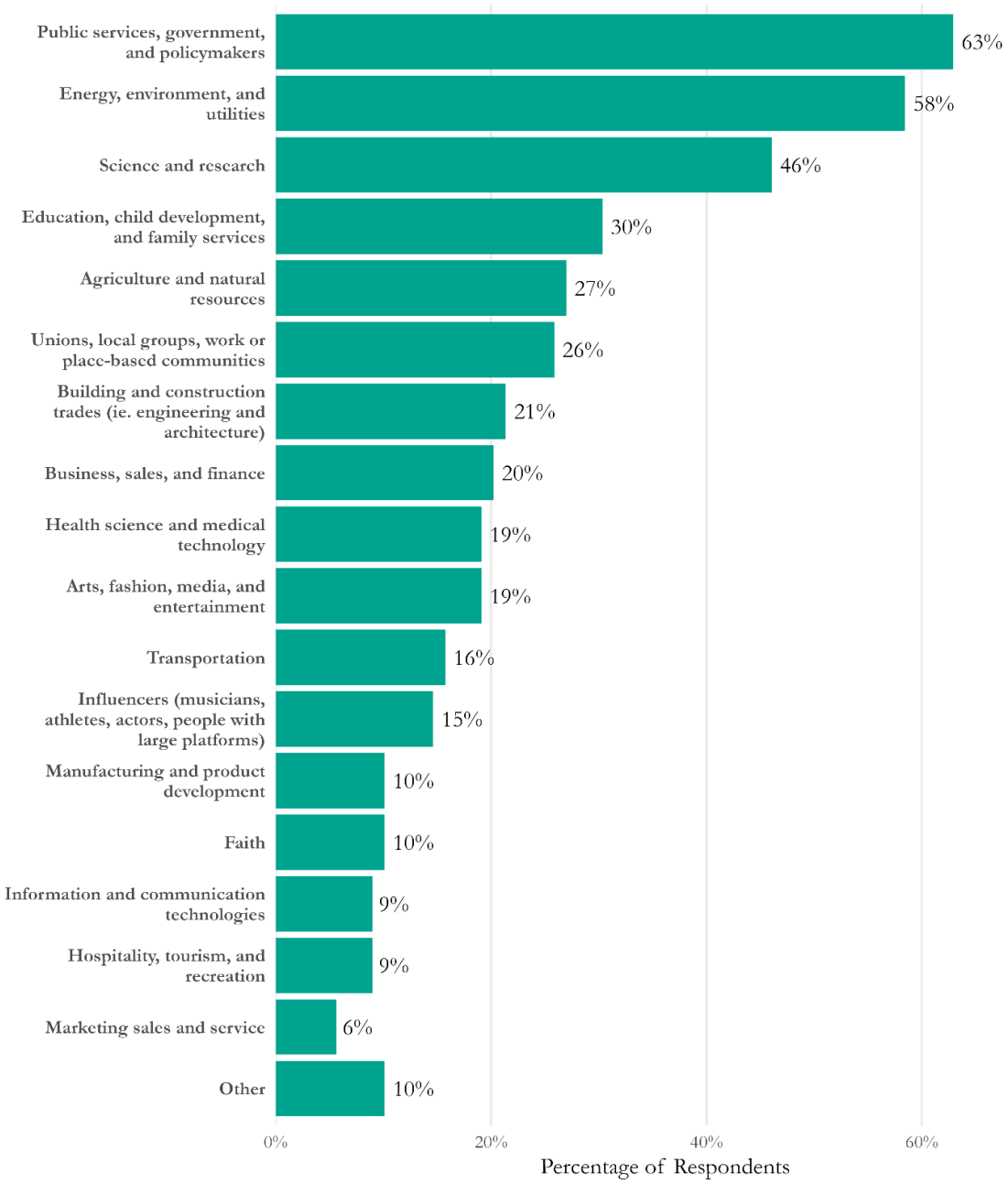
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In the following figures, we present the distribution of specific types of audiences.

Professional Sector. About half of all respondents reported grouping their primary audience by professional sector (51%). The primary audiences identified by respondents were public services, government, and policymakers (63%); energy, environment, and utilities (58%); and science and research (46%).

You selected that you group your primary targeted audience by Professional Sector, which do you target? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice

N = 89

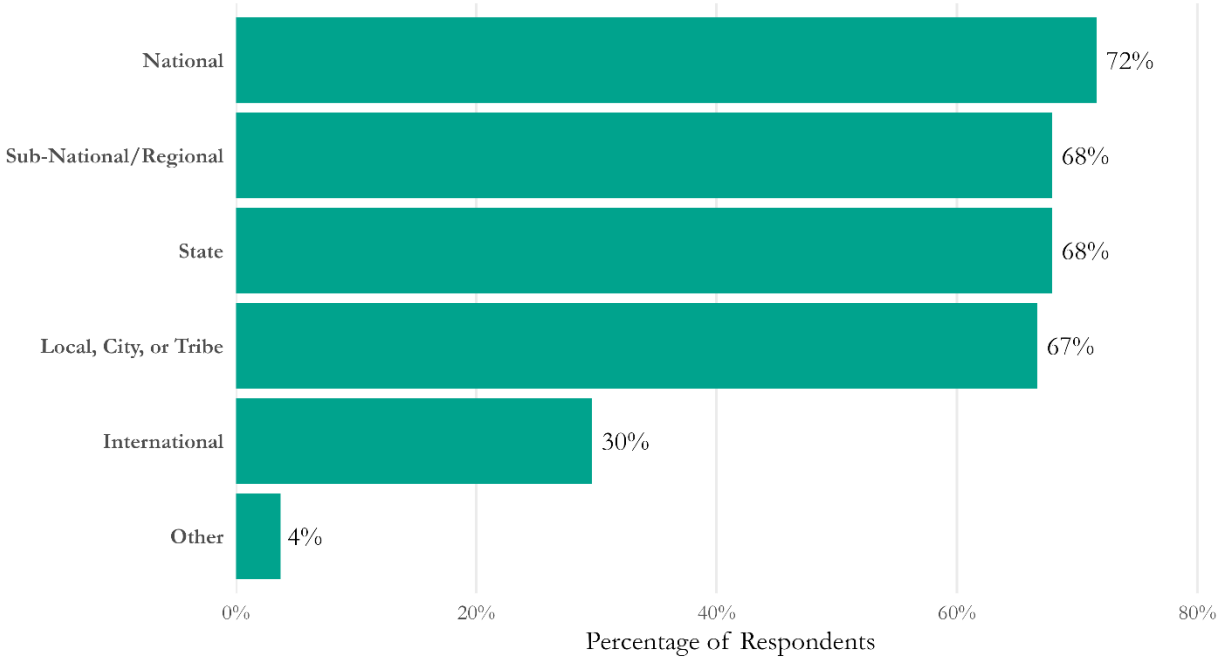


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Geography. Almost half of respondents reported grouping their audience by geography (46%). Respondents reported audiences at various scales. The international scale was, by far, the least common.

You selected that you group your primary targeted audience by Geography, which scale do you target? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice

N = 81

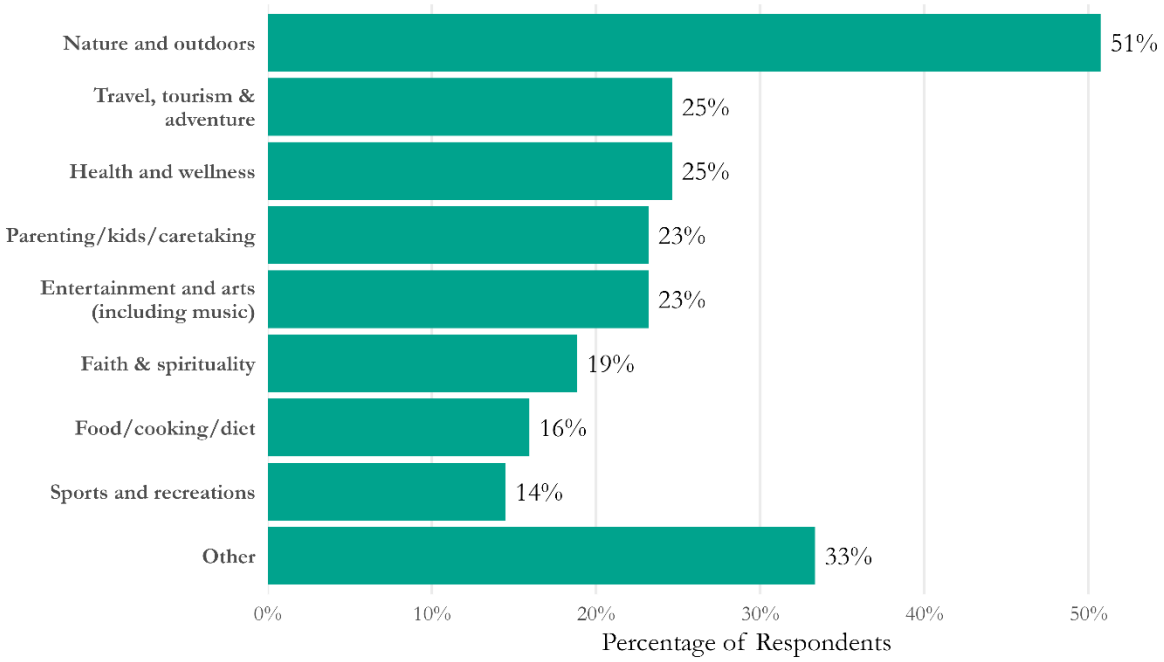


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Specific Area of Interest or Hobby. Forty percent of respondents reported grouping their audience by specific area of interest or hobby. Half of them reported their audience focused on nature and the outdoors. About a quarter of respondents said their audiences were focused on health and wellness (25%); travel, tourism, and adventure (25%), entertainment and the arts (23%), and parenting, kids, and caretaking (23%).

You selected that you group your primary targeted audience by Specific Area of Interest or Hobby, which do you target? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice

N = 69

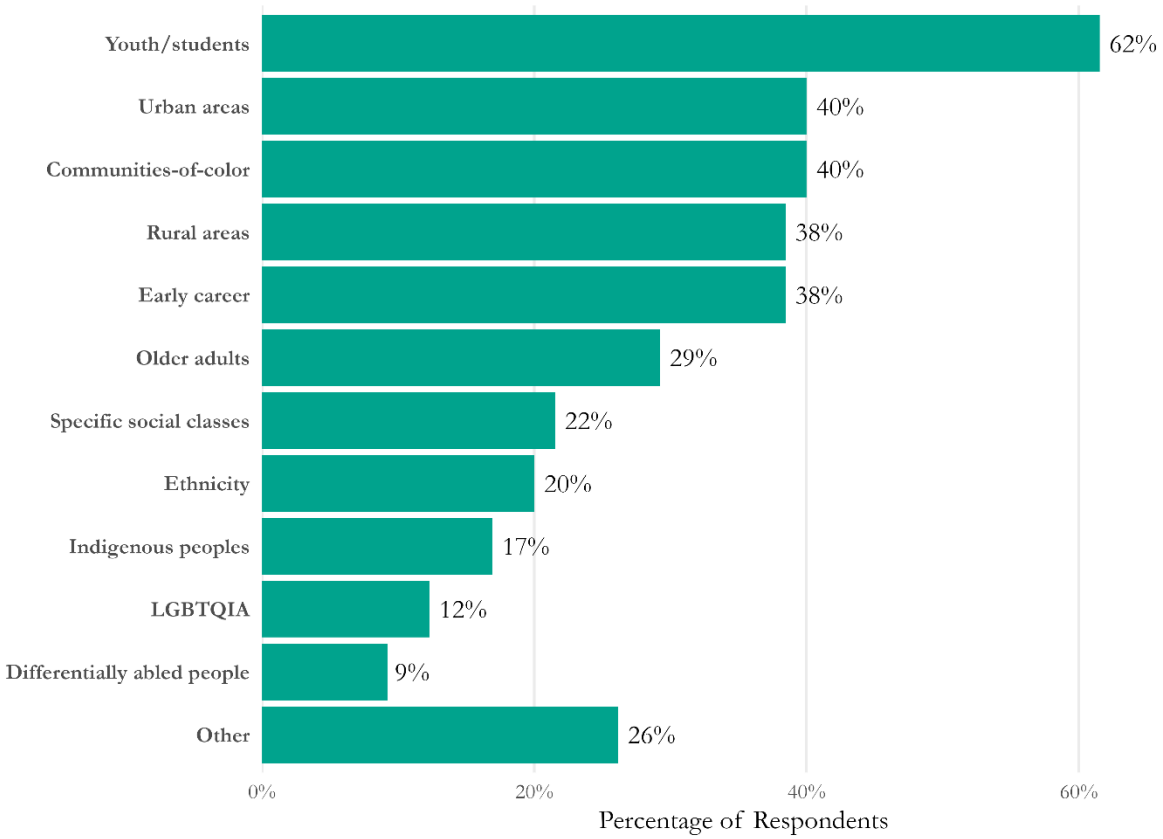


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Demographics and/or Career Stage. About one-third of respondents reported grouping their audience by demographics and career stage (37%). The most common category was youth and/or students (62%). Urban areas and communities-of-color each were each mentioned by 40% of respondents.

You selected that you group your primary targeted audience by Demographics and/or Career Stage, which do you target? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice

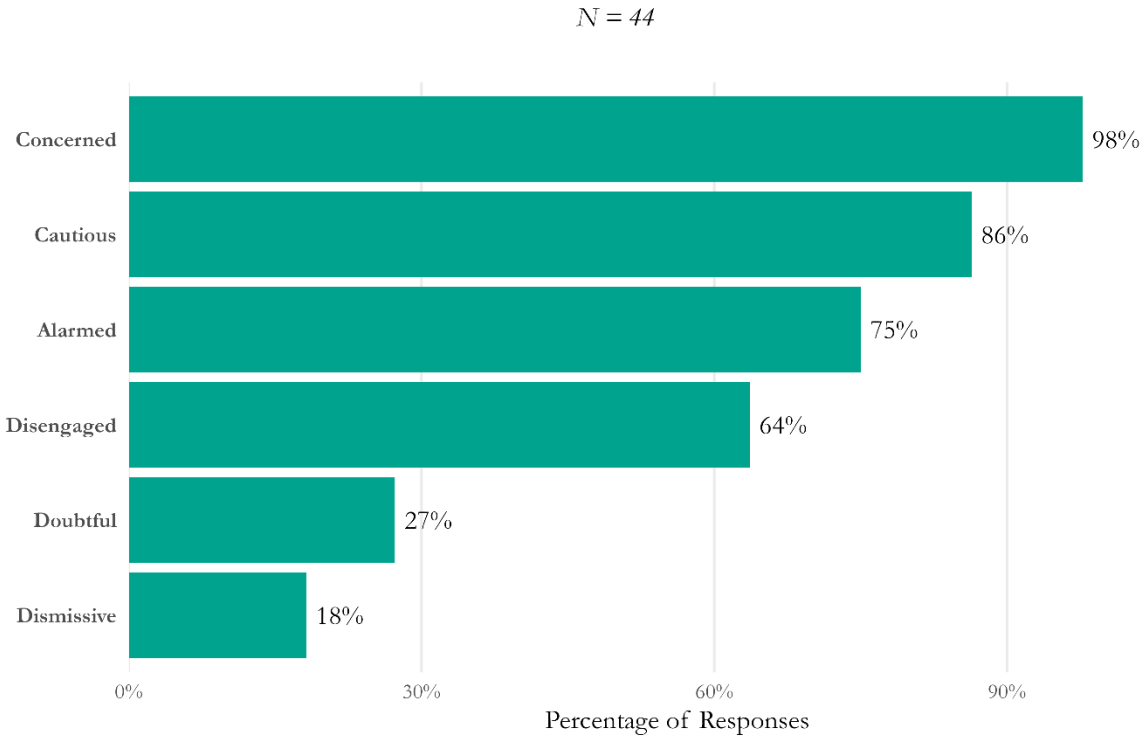
N = 65



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Category of the Six-Americas. A quarter of respondents reported grouping their audience by categories outlined in the report on "Global Warming's Six-Americas." The overwhelming majority reported targeting those who fell in the 'concerned' category (98%). Eighty-six percent reported targeting those who fell in the 'cautious' category. And three-quarters reported targeting those who fell in the 'alarmed' category.

You selected that you group your primary targeted audience by Audience Within Global Warming's 6 Americas, which do you target? (Select all that apply)



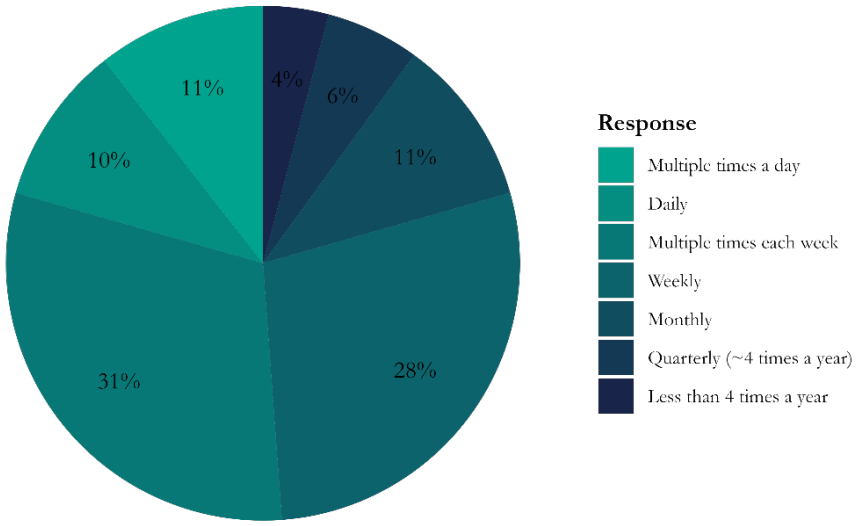
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When and Where do they Communication about Climate?

Over three-quarters of respondents reported communicating at least weekly (79%). The following pie chart presents the full distribution of their frequency.

How frequently do you or your organization publish external communications or messaging related to climate change?

N=170

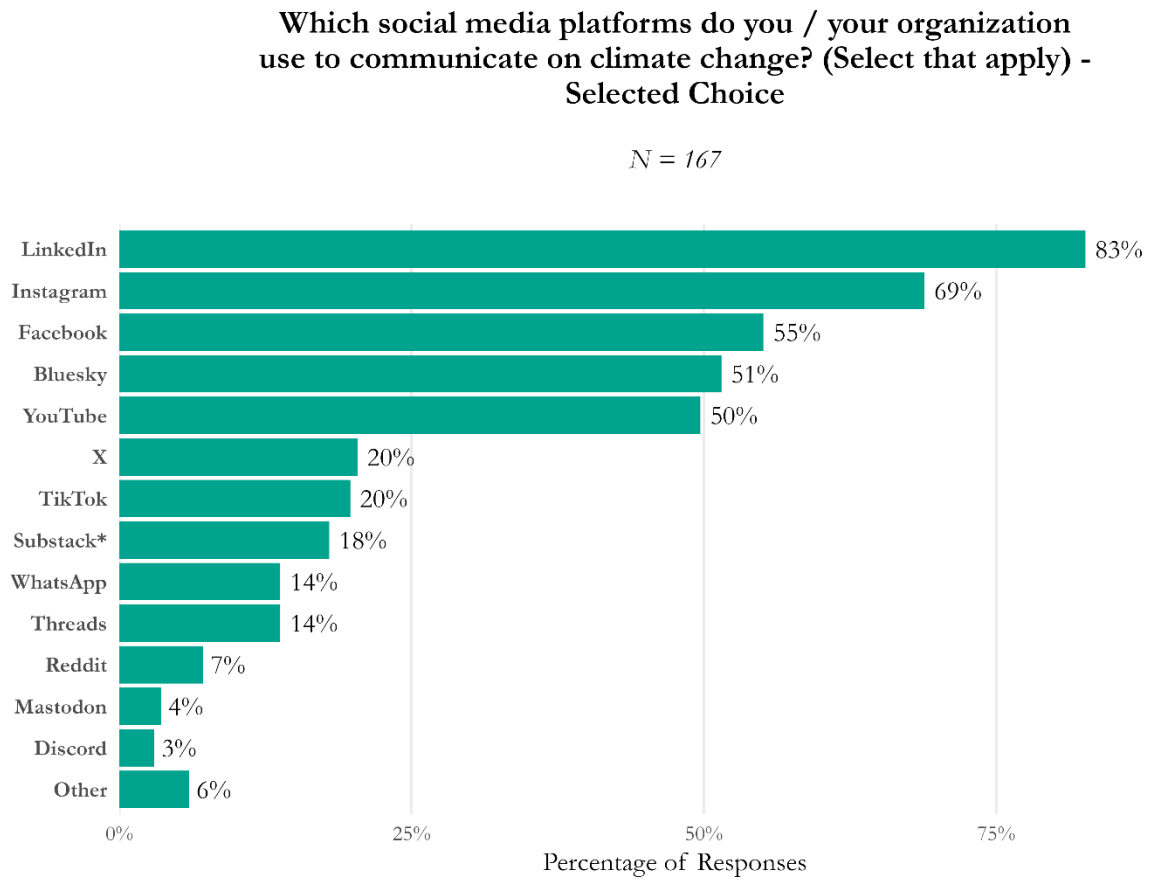


Respondents reported communicating in a variety of ways. The most common were through: social media posts (81%), content produced for and hosted on their organization's website (79%), newsletters or blogs (78%), or events that took place in person or online (77%).

What are the main forms of communication you or your organization uses to reach your audience(s)? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice	Percentage (N=175)
Social media posts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Threads, X, Bluesky)	81.1%
Content produced for and hosted on your own or your organization's website	79.4%
Newsletters or blog series	77.7%
In-person, online, or recorded events (talks, webinars, workshops)	76.6%
Media (interviews, op-eds, other content production for distribution by mainstream media)	60.6%
Curricula, guides, toolkits, or exhibits	43.4%
Short-form visual content (News, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram Reels)	38.9%
Printed materials (books, reports)	34.3%
Podcasts	33.1%
Lobbying or testifying to legislative bodies	25.7%
Paid advertising (direct to consumer mailings, commercials, advertisements, etc.)	10.9%
Long-form recorded visual content (TV series, movies, documentaries)	9.7%
Other	8.6%

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Respondents reported communicating across a diversity of platforms. The most common was LinkedIn.



* Substack was not a provided option, but multiple people wrote it in under "Other" so it was added as a category and removed from "Other" if it was the sole response.

Perspective on Climate Science

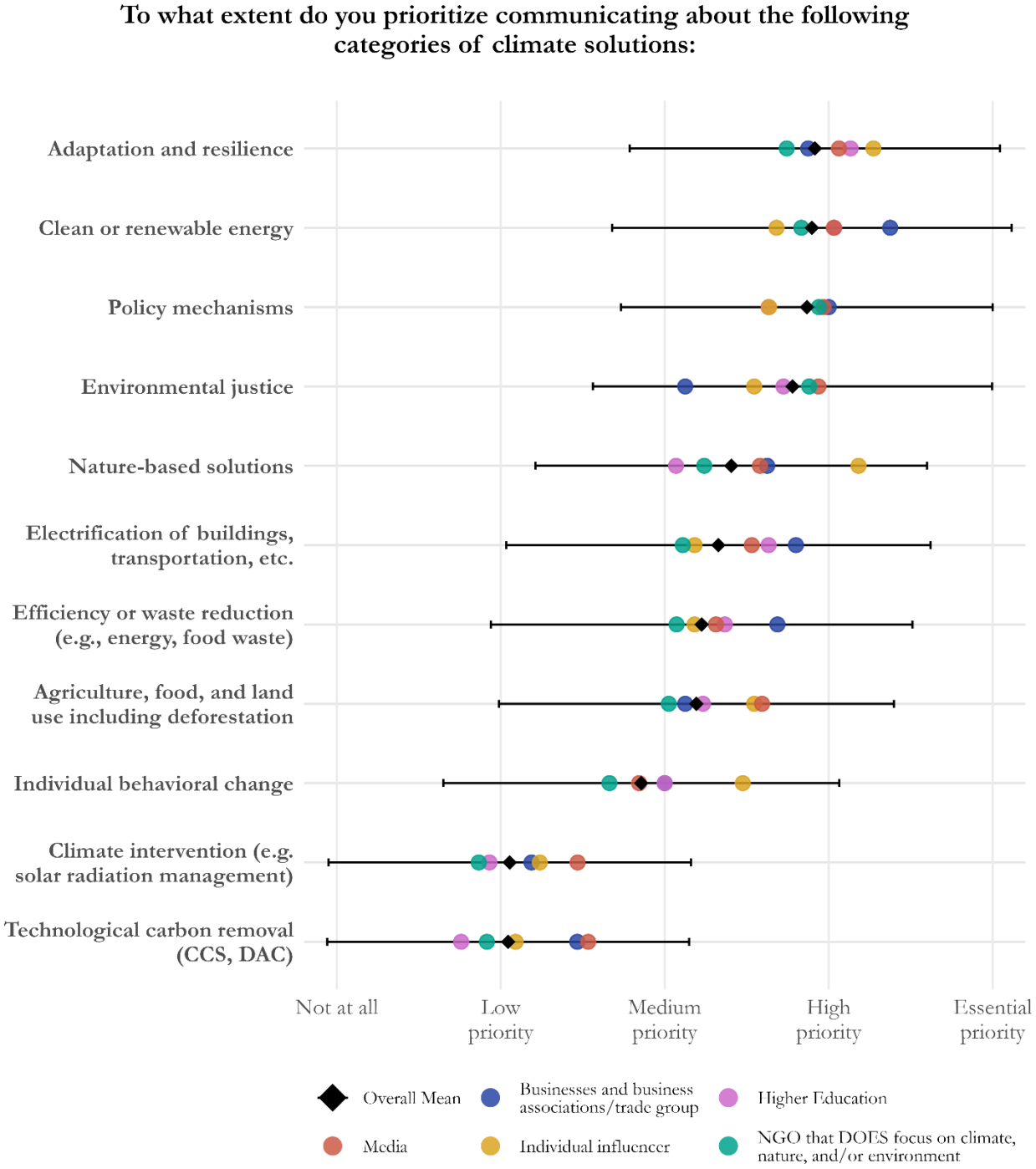
Most climate communicators strongly agree that human activities are the primary driver of climate change (87%), which is the generally accepted perspective on climate science as summarized by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) that was released in 2021.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Human activities are the primary driver of climate change.	**Percentage (N=209)**
Strongly agree	87.1%
Somewhat agree	4.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	1.0%
Somewhat disagree	0.5%
Strongly disagree	7.2%
Mean	4.64

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Communication Priorities

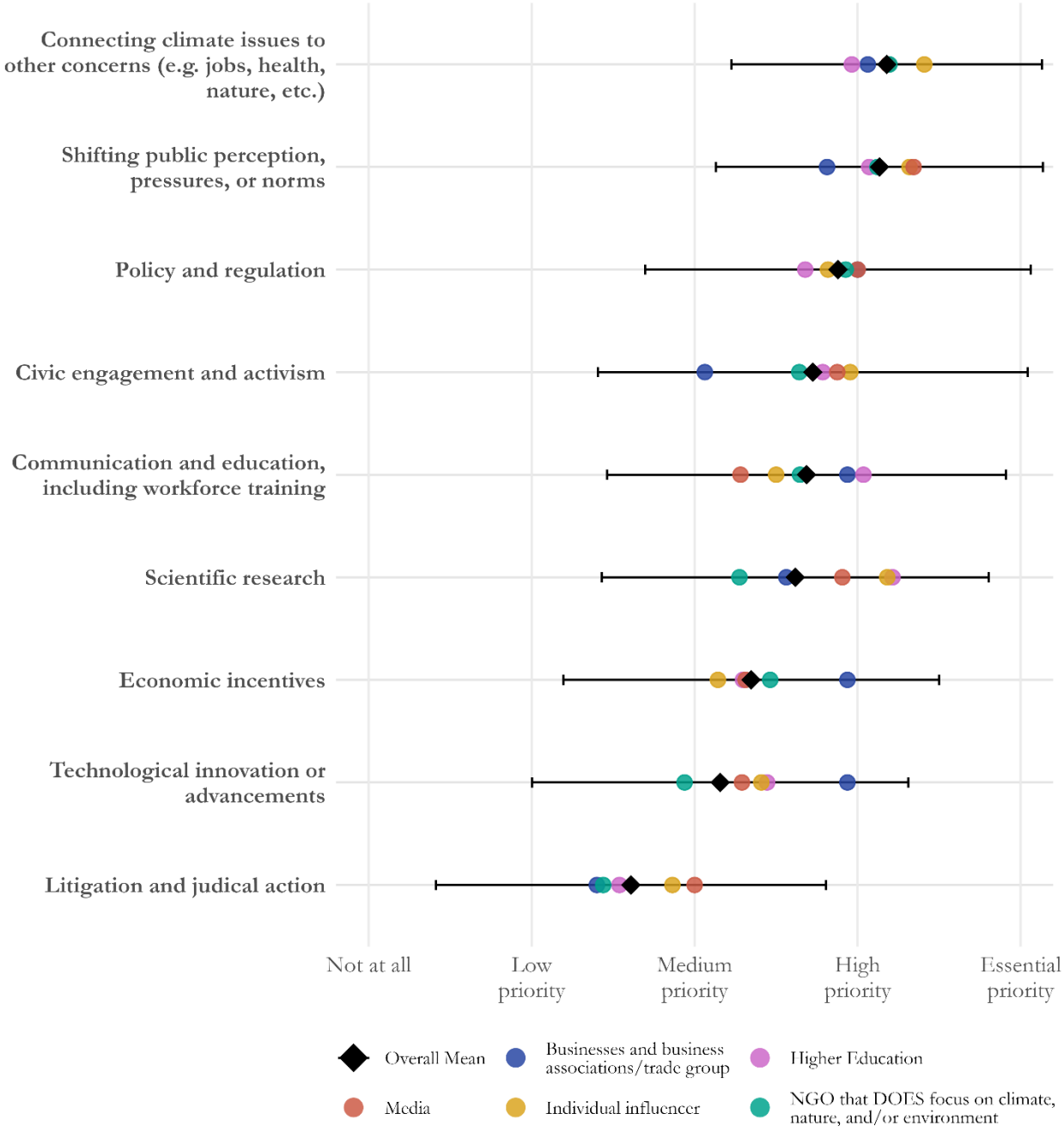
Climate Solutions. Respondents were asked to respond to a range of questions about how they prioritize communicating about various types of climate solutions. In the figure that follows, we display the overall mean for each type of climate solution as a black diamond with an error bar depicting one standard deviation from the overall mean in black. Each bar also includes the means of the most common categories of respondent in a range of colors (those that were chosen by at least 10 respondents).



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Tactics. The following figure displays the distribution of responses to a range of questions regarding how respondents prioritized communication about specific tactics. In the figure that follows, we display the overall mean for each specific tactic as a black diamond with an error bar depicting one standard deviation from the overall mean in black. Each bar also includes the means of the most common categories of respondent in a range of colors (those that were chosen by at least 10 respondents).

To what extent do you prioritize communication about the following tactics:



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Network Connections

Respondents reported how they collaborate and share information. Specifically, they were asked to provide the names of individuals and/or organizations: 1) with whom they regularly worked (Collaborate), 2) to whom they provided information (Gives To), or 3) from whom they received information (Gets From) related to climate communication in the past 12 months.

This table presents a range of descriptive metrics that describes the network ties reported by respondents for the three networks. The total number of respondents who provided identifiable responses varies, as does the number of named individuals and organizations (we were unable to analyze general responses like 'scientists,' since they do not identify a particular individual or organization). The network from whom respondents reported getting information (the Gets From Network) is the largest, with the most individuals and organizations named (676 vs 596 for the Gives To Network and 571 for collaborators). Similarly, the Gets From Network has over 200 more connections (i.e. edges) than the other two networks, as well as a higher average number of nominations.

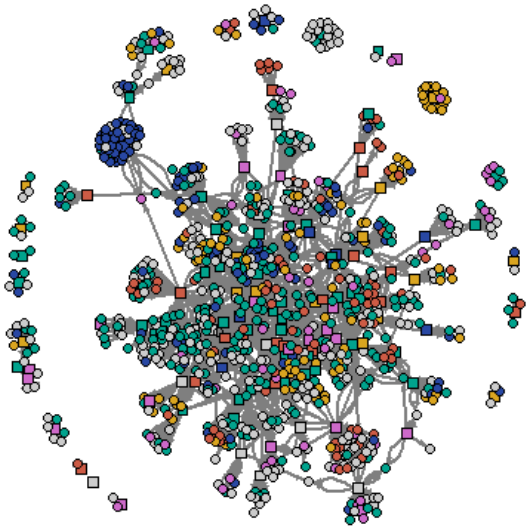
Across all networks, there is very limited reciprocity. In other words, there are very few mutually reported connections. Only three pairs of respondents in each network reported a tie to another respondent who nominated them back, and these three pairs are not the same in each network. Although the open nature of the network questions likely contributed to this finding, organizational networks typically show far higher levels of mutuality in ties.

Next, we looked at how connected or fragmented the networks are. In networks, a 'component' is the term for a connected group, where the individuals or organizations are connected to one another. When a network has more components, it is more fragmented or separated. We consider the size of the largest component to determine how large of a central, connected core exists in each network. The table shows that the Collaboration Network and the Gives To Network are both more fragmented with higher numbers of components and a smaller largest component compared to the Gets From Network. Moreover, we find that these networks are significantly more fragmented when compared to simulated networks with the same numbers of respondents and edges.

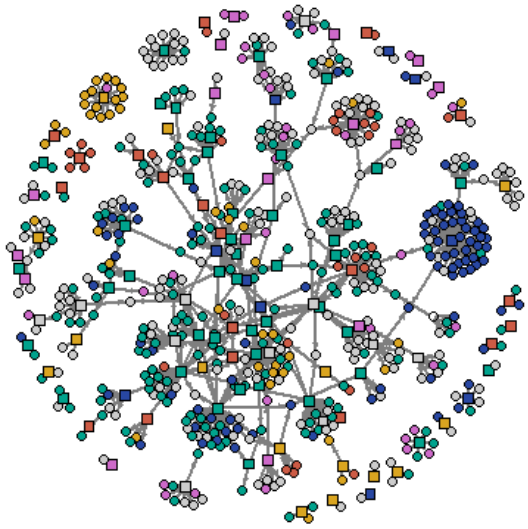
	Collaboration	**Gets Info From**	**Gives Info To**
# of Respondents Nominating Others	115	120	105
# of Organizations or Individuals Nominated	571	676	596
# of Edges	682	912	704
Avg # of Nominations per Respondent	5.93	7.6	6.7
Max # of Received Nominations	5	12	7
Avg # of Received Nominations (excluding those not mentioned)	1.19	1.35	1.18
Mutual Ties	3	3	3
Number of Components	370	262	354
Size of Largest Component	516	654	521

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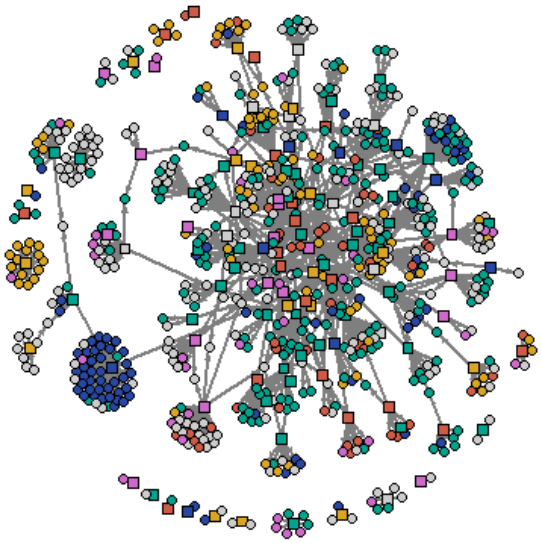
Mapping these Networks. In the following figures, we present the network maps based on the self-reported responses regarding: A) the entire stacked network, B) the Collaboration Network, C) the Gets From Network and D) the Gives To Network. Nodes are colored using the same key as the communication priorities. Respondents are depicted with a square. Other individuals and groups that were mentioned but did not participate in the study are depicted with a circle. The direction of the tie is shown with an arrow.



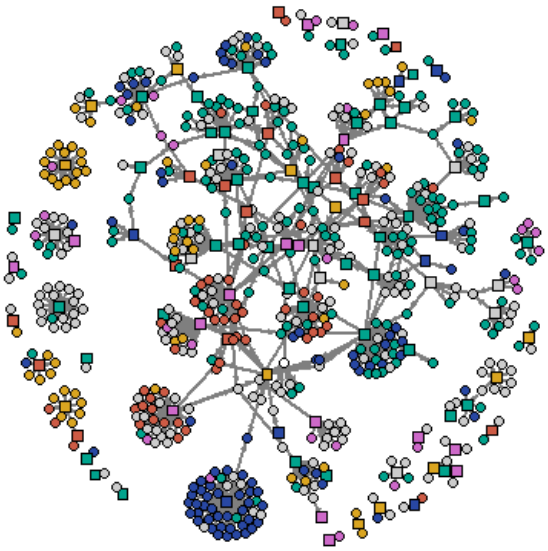
A) Combined Network



B) Collaboration Network



C) Gets Info From



D) Gives Info To

Organization Type

- Businesses and business associations/trade group
- Higher Education
- Individual influencer
- Media
- NGO that DOES focus on climate, nature, and/or environment
- Other

Node Type

- ☐ Survey Respondent
- ○ Network Partner (Non-Respondent)

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The network images depict how each network includes a lot of disconnected clusters and fragments, along with a larger component that shows a highly centralized 'hub and spoke' appearance. In each image, we see a connected core component where all the individuals or organizations are connected to each other. We also see that components have some level homophily (i.e. similarity in those that are connected), particularly among the Business, Environmental NGOs and the Influencer categories, which report that 52%, 44% and 33% of their nominations are to other individuals or organizations that are in the same category.

In the Collaboration Network, the most named partners are Climate Action Network Canada and the Natural Resources Defense Council (both with 5 nominations). In the Gets Information From Network, the most central actors are Climate Central and Katharine Hayhoe (with 11 and 12 nominations respectively), and in the Gives Information To Network, the central actors are Climate Central and the Sierra Club (with 6 and 7 nominations respectively).

Goals and Aims of Climate Communication

Respondents were also asked about the goals of their climate communication. The most common goals for respondents' climate communication were to inform or educate audiences about climate action or responses (79%); to inform about climate science, risk, and impacts (71%); to empower audiences to talk about climate change (68%); or to change people's behavior on climate change (61%).

The goal of my own or my organization's climate communication is to: (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice	**Percentage (N=174)**
Inform or educate your audience on climate action or responses	79.3%
Inform or educate your audience on climate science, risks, and impacts	70.7%
Empower your audience to talk about climate change themselves	67.8%
Change people's behavior on climate change to get them to engage in climate action	60.9%
Grow your audience	58.6%
Foster community or build coalitions among your constituents	54.6%
Fight disinformation or dispel climate myths	54.0%
Engage your audience in your organization's work, events, or activities	48.9%
Highlight your own or your organization's work	44.8%
Advocate for specific policies	40.8%
Change people's minds related to climate change (e.g. from cautious to alarmed)	37.4%
Demonstrate your own or your organization's values	32.2%
Change people's behavior on climate change to get them to reduce their personal carbon footprint	24.7%
Show how you or your organization is relevant/paying attention to culture or current events	24.7%
Advocate for specific elected officials	4.0%
Other	15.5%

Messaging

Respondents were also asked about their messaging and what they focus on in this work. About half reported specializing in messaging around environmental justice (53%), climate science (52%), and energy (50%).

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Do you or does your organization specialize in work or messaging around the following climate change-related topics or sectors? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice	Percentage (N=168)
Environmental justice	53.0%
Climate science	52.4%
Energy	50.0%
Nature and land use	47.6%
Economic impact	42.9%
Oceans, coasts, rivers, and other waterways	42.9%
Education	36.9%
Human health	35.1%
Food, agriculture, or forestry	34.5%
Water availability and quality	31.5%
Disaster response	31.0%
Infrastructure, housing, and the built environment	30.4%
Transportation	30.4%
Climate finance	22.0%
Industry and manufacturing	17.9%
Tourism, recreation, sports, or entertainment	13.7%
International negotiations	13.1%
National security	13.1%
International development	10.7%
Other	20.8%

Funding and Other Resource Needs

An overwhelming majority of respondents (97%) acknowledged that they would benefit from more funding for communication. Forty-one percent of respondents reported receiving funding specifically to support climate communication in the past 5 years. The following table breaks down how respondents ranked their resource needs.

Which of these resources would benefit your organization? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice	Percentage (N=170)
Additional funding for climate communication	81.2%
Help finding peers and collaborators - making connections & forging collaborative opportunities	57.1%
Regular updates on best practices in effective climate communication	53.5%
Support for rapid response to timely climate-related events or news	38.8%
Customized tips for different forms of communication (e.g. social media, video)	37.6%
Regular feed of curated, trusted content to quote, share, or repost	34.7%
Fact-checking or combatting disinformation	31.2%
Topical content resources you can access on demand	30.6%
Training on climate communication	26.5%
Education on climate science, impacts, and/or solutions	24.1%
Mental health support specifically tailored to climate communicators, including dealing with anxiety, trolling, etc.	15.3%
Other	7.1%

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Methodology and Data Collection

Identifying and Sampling the Population of Climate Communicators

Since no comprehensive dataset of climate communicators in the US and Canada exists, we had to construct one for the purposes of this study. A dataset was assembled from two types of data sources: organizational sources and online sources. Our methodology for identifying the top climate communicators from each source is described in detail in the following sections.

Organizations Engaging in Climate Communication. We took an expansive approach to identifying organizations to include in our landscape assessment of climate communicators. We included three types of organizations in our sample: 1) groups that have a climate-related topic as their primary focus; 2) groups that have a different primary focus but have a climate-related topic as a secondary focus or have communicated about climate change multiple times in the last five years; and 3) groups that are members of the US or Canadian Climate Action Networks (CAN), the Climate for Health Coalition, and EcoAmerica's Circles. To gain further coverage beyond the original sampling procedure, the team consulted with a panel of experts, including the leadership team at the Talking Climate Collaborative. We also pooled communicators affiliated with the following groups: Re.Climate, Good Power, EcoAthletes, and the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health to provide the names of individuals and organizations working on climate communication.

Online Climate Communicators. The team identified a sample of the top online climate communicators on a range of platforms. Since there is no universal measure of popularity or influence for online communication, we combined numerous sources to create our sample. Due to the lack of accessibility to data on some platforms,[1] we built our sample by merging top climate communicators from YouTube, podcasts, and Substack, along with individuals listed on the Climate Creators to Watch List.[2] In all cases, we employed key word searches that included the terms "climate," "carbon emission," "greenhouse gas," "clean energy." All searches excluded the term "political climate."

Because each platform is unique, we had to modify our methodology for identifying the top creators to work for each platform: YouTube channels were pulled using Channel Crawler and statistics from the Google API; podcasts were exported from the Podscan API; and Substack was sampled following the Breadth First Search (BFS) crawl technique for Substack newsletters, which is based on four 'seed' Substack pages.[3] The four seed pages were: The Crucial Years by Bill McKibben, Heated by Emily Atkin, Talking Climate by Katharine Hayhoe, and Volts by Dave Roberts. In addition to these searches, we included all creators who made the Climate Creators to Watch list since it began in 2021. For more details about the process of searching and selection on each platform, including the parameters used in each step, see our online supplement.

Taken together, our search of these sources generated a list of 1598 total organizations and individuals engaged in climate communication.

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[1] We only included platforms that either had open access to their APIs or a 3rd party site that provided access to a real-time database with up-to-date details and statistics. Our application for access to data from platforms run by META was rejected.

[2] https://climatecreatorstowatch.com/ (Accessed 6/15/2026).

[3] For details, see Catanese, Salvatore A., Pasquale De Meo, Emilio Ferrara, Giacomo Fiumara, and Alessandro Provetti. 2011. "Crawling Facebook for Social Network Analysis Purposes." Pp. 1–8 in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Web Intelligence, Mining and Semantics*, *WIMS '11*. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery. See also, Mislove, Alan, Massimiliano Marcon, Krishna P. Gummadi, Peter Druschel, and Bobby Bhattacharjee. 2007. "Measurement and Analysis of Online Social Networks." Pp. 29–42 in *Proceedings of the 7th ACM SIGCOMM conference on Internet measurement*, *IMC '07*. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery.

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Final Review for Inclusion in the Sample. We then applied specific selection criteria for inclusion to winnow down the sample. The following table presents the criteria for inclusion that was applied to both organizations and individuals.

Selection Criteria for Inclusion

Variable	Criteria
Geography	Must be based in Canada or the US (or have an active US or Canadian office) and communicate about those countries (e.g. based in the US but focused entirely on the Amazon = excluded).
Scale	Must have a regional, national, continental or global scope. Any group with a state, provincial, city, or local focus was excluded.
Scope	Must not exist solely to communicate or manage engagement about a single product like a documentary or a book.
Position on Climate Change	Must not promote climate denial and must support the idea that humans are contributing to our changing climate
Affiliation	For organizations: must still exist and have a functioning website. For individuals: Must be currently alive and, if they post under a pseudonym, must be trackable.
Time since last post	Must have posted in the last 12 months (since April 2025).
Organization/Creator Type	Must not be a government, state or federal agency, a politician, or a political entity. Professional journalists are permitted, but professional journalism companies or groups are not. Individual academics are permitted, but university-based centers are not.
	For-profit individuals are permitted but for-profit organizations are not.

Methodology for Data Collection

We consolidated the outputs from these various methods into a complete sample of organizations and individuals to be included in our landscape assessment of climate communicators in Canada and the United States. Any organization or individual that appeared more than once was counted only once. This process yielded a sample of 1151 unique organizations and individuals. The team worked to identify a working email for the individual or representative in charge of climate communication at each organization. The search yielded contact information for 90% of the organizations and individuals in our sample (N = 1034) to receive an invitation to participate in our study. Of those email addresses, 941 were non-duplicates that did not fail or bounce.

Our survey instrument asks about communication priorities, perspectives on salient policy issues, connections to other communicators, audiences, and organizational characteristics and approaches. Data collection was conducted in accordance with American University IRB Protocol #2026-165. The survey was hosted on the online Qualtrics system through American University and personalized invitations to participate were distributed via email. The survey opened on May 5, 2026, and closed on June 12, 2026. Weekly reminders were sent to everyone who had not yet completed the survey. The survey yielded 210 completed surveys, representing a response rate of 22.3%.

Electronic copy available at: https:/doi.org/10.57912/32957927

Acknowledgements and Funding

This research was conducted in partnership with the Talking Climate Collaborative with funding from Earth HQ, a fiscally sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. The authors would like to thank Katharine Hayhoe, Bernadette Woods Placky, Lis Cohen, Allison Crimmins, Sweta Chakraborty, and Laura Schifter for their input on the survey design and sampling.



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