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

Michel Boudrias[1], Mica Estrada[2], Scott Anders[3], Nilmini Silva-Send[3], Steve Alexander[4], Emily Young[5], Zhi-Yong Yin[1], P. Wesley Schultz[2]

[1]PI, Marine Science & Environmental Studies (University of San Diego), [2]Behavioral Scientist (California State University, San Marcos) [3]Director, Energy Policy Initiatives Center (University of San Diego School of Law), [3]Senior Policy Analyst, Energy Policy Initiatives Center (University of San Diego School of Law), [1]Climatologist, Marine Science & Environmental Studies (University of San Diego), [4]The Steve Alexander Group, [5]The San Diego Foundation

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
A collaboration of climate scientists, education psychologists, formal and informal educators, private-sector strategic communication professionals, and energy policy experts will develop and implement a strategic communications framework related to climate science, mitigation, and adaptation.

2. Assess current climate change knowledge base of regional "Key Influentials"
"Key Influentials" are decision makers, thought leaders and trend-setters in the region.

3. Develop compelling Key Influential and target-audience specific message content and delivery methods
Designed to further climate science, mitigation and adaptation awareness and build a thought community of participants based on the outcomes of goal 2 (see Figure 1).

Methods

Participants

➢ 40-50 Key Influentials (KI) (elected officials, the Hispanic/Latino community, native tribal leaders, the real estate development community and faith-based community, see Figure 2)

➢ Members of KI constituent audiences

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**
Assess engagement of target behaviors:

Personal Behaviors (e.g., public transportation, reducing energy use, educating others about climate change issues)

Political Behaviors (e.g., attending public meetings, voting behavior, writing letters)

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))
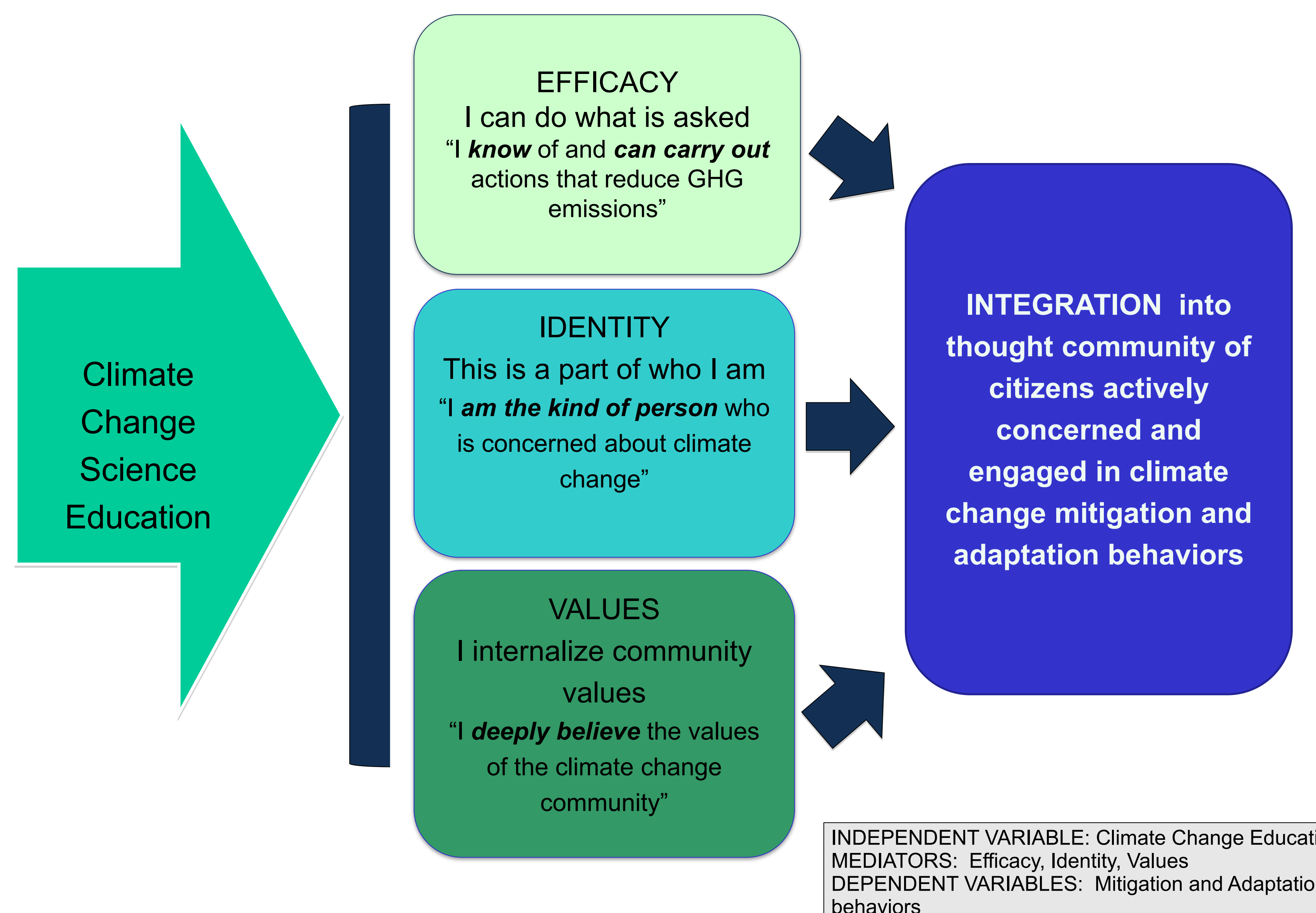
Theory

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 KI's and their constituents into a defined climate change thought community

2. Designing compelling messaging and education for KI's and their constituents

3. Assessing real world impact on San Diegan'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).

Figure 1:
Tripartite Integration Model of Social Influence (TIMSI)

EFFICACY
I can do what is asked
"I *know* of and *can carry out* actions that reduce GHG emissions"

IDENTITY
This is a part of who I am
"I *am the kind of person* who is concerned about climate change"

VALUES
I internalize community values
"I *deeply believe* the values of the climate change community"

INTEGRATION into thought community of citizens actively concerned and engaged in climate change mitigation and adaptation behaviors

Climate Change Science Education

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: Climate Change Education
MEDIATORS: Efficacy, Identity, Values
DEPENDENT VARIABLES: Mitigation and Adaptation behaviors

Acknowledgement

Key Findings

Potential Global Warming Impacts

San Diego voters were particularly concerned about the "reduction of our water supply" (80% concerned) and the "increased risk of severe fires" (78% concerned).

Is Global Warming a Proven Fact?

Don't Know/NA, 5%
Proven Fact, 54%
Has Not Been Proven, 41%

For many San Diego County voters, the debate about global warming is unsettled. The results indicate that nearly half (46% percent) of San Diego County voters are not convinced global warming is a proven fact.

(TSDF, 2010)

Figure 2: Implementation
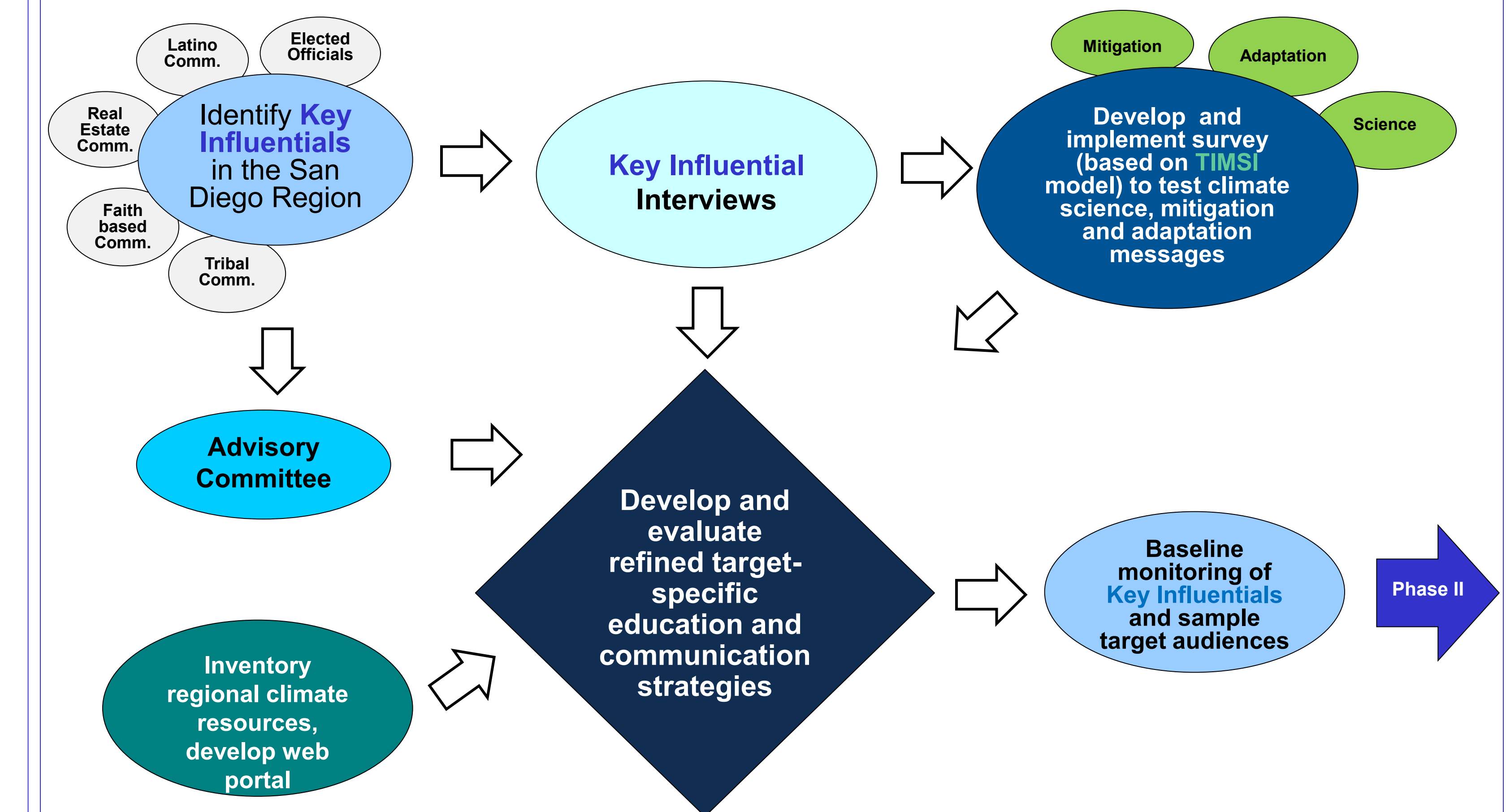
Progress & Next Steps

Progress to date
(1) Gathered public opinion data on regional awareness and attitudes of climate related issues;
(2) Identified a diverse group of 50 "Key Influentials;"
(3) Established a regional advisory board;
(4) Develop Key Influential interview protocol and follow-up public opinion polls;
(5) Ongoing development of web-based portal for regional climate related resources.

Next Steps
(1) Interview 40-50 Key Influentials;
(2) Convene meeting of the regional advisory board;
(3) Poll members of KI constituent audiences;
(4) Develop effective messages and methods to educate target audiences about climate change;
(5) Continue development of and make public web-based portal for regional climate related resources.

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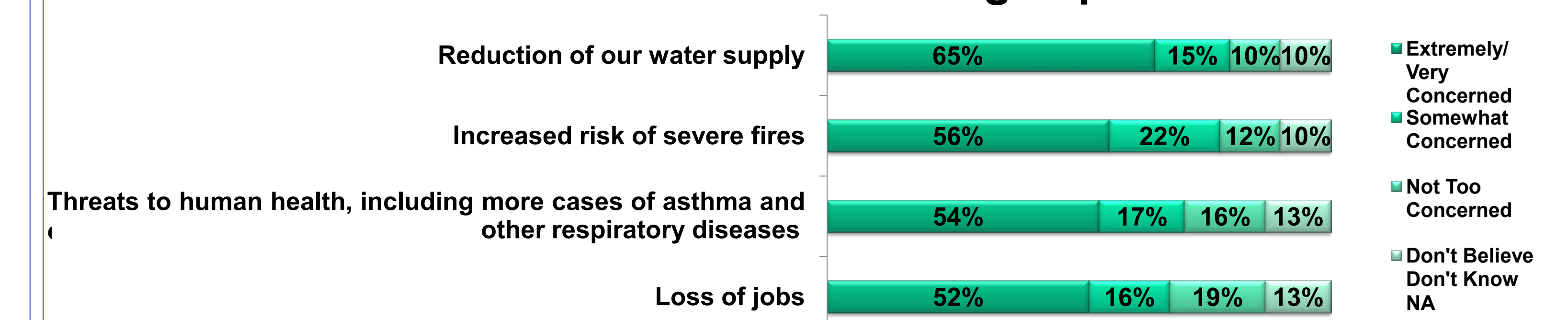
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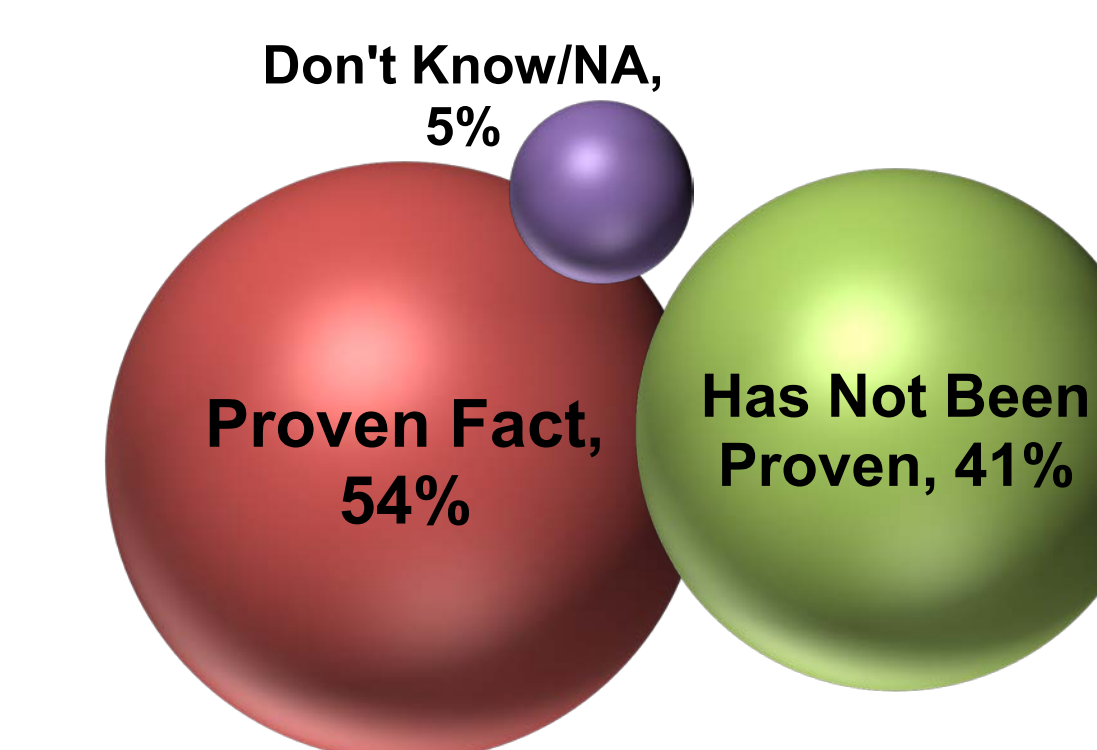
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