**Deliberation by the Numbers**

*A sampling of statistics from large-scale projects*

Who says you can’t quantify public deliberation? It is true that quantitative measurement hasn’t been a strong suit of the field. It is also true that some of the most significant impacts, such as policy changes, are inherently difficult to quantify. But at this point, enough scholarly research and evaluative work has been done that is possible to pull together a concise statistical glimpse of the kinds of things these projects accomplish.

**People taking action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the numbers</th>
<th>the project</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>63%</strong> of participating communities report that more people in the community are <strong>taking individual actions</strong> to help people living in poverty</td>
<td>“<em>Horizons</em>” seven-state project in the Northwest (Morehouse 2009)</td>
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<td><strong>65%</strong> of the post-survey respondents indicated they had <strong>volunteered</strong> to help with an identified community activity</td>
<td>“<em>Turning the Tide on Poverty</em>” in the Southeast (Beaulieu and Welborn 2010)</td>
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<td><strong>40%</strong> of participants <strong>contacted a public official</strong> after the event</td>
<td>“<em>CaliforniaSpeaks</em>” (Fung and Lee 2008)</td>
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<td><strong>40%</strong> of participating communities are now working toward some kind of <strong>systemic poverty reduction</strong> efforts such as jobs creation, job skills training efforts, micro-enterprise or other business development</td>
<td>“<em>Horizons</em>” seven-state project in the Northwest (Morehouse 2009)</td>
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<td><strong>88%</strong> agreed that the forums had given them <strong>new ideas of possible actions</strong> to take</td>
<td><strong>National Issues Forums in West Virginia</strong> (Fung and Fagotto 2006)</td>
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<td><strong>34%</strong> of participating communities reported that people new to leadership roles have been <strong>elected to public office</strong>, and in <strong>39%</strong> of the communities, more people have joined local boards, clubs, service or other organizations</td>
<td>“<em>Horizons</em>” seven-state project in the Northwest (Morehouse 2009)</td>
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### People learning, and in some cases changing their minds

**The Numbers**

- **72%** reported gaining **“new insights”** as a result of participating in this forum, **79%** reported discussing aspects of the problem that they had not considered before, and **37%** found that they were **thinking differently** of the issue afterwards.

- **42%** of respondents indicated that they **changed their views** as a result of the dialogue.

- **35%** said that they had come to **agree with practical ideas** that they hadn’t thought of previously, and **32%** said that they had changed their minds.

- **48%** of political ‘neutrals,’ **24%** of conservatives, became more supportive of **raising taxes on the wealthy** in order to reduce the deficit.

- **49%** of political ‘neutrals,’ **28%** of liberals, and **27%** of conservatives became more supportive of **cutting entitlement programs** in order to reduce the deficit.

- **68%** of political ‘neutrals,’ **39%** of conservatives, and **19%** of liberals became more supportive of **cutting defense spending** in order to reduce the deficit.

**The Project**

- **National Issues Forums in South Dakota** (Fung and Fagotto 2006)

- **“Dialogue with the City,”** Perth, Australia (Hartz-Karp 2005)

- **“Listening to the City”** (Polletta and Wood, 2005)

- **“Our Budget, Our Economy”** (Esterling, Fung, and Lee 2010)

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### More inclusive, collaborative decision-making – and smarter decisions

**The Numbers**

- External political efficacy (the extent to which people feel that **government is responsive** to their interests) increased by **31%**.

- **94%** either strongly agreed or agreed that the process would result in **better decisions** about the city’s budget and goals.

- **75%** of the communities report that since the project, decisions about what happens in the community **involve more people**; **77%** report that there are now **more partnerships** among local community organizations.

**The Project**

- **“United Agenda for Children,”** Charlotte, NC (Nabatchi 2007)

- **Community Forum on Budget Priorities in Bell, CA** (Amsler 2012)

- **“Horizons”** seven-state project in the Northwest (Morehouse 2009)
63% of communities report that the number of people in leadership has increased and become more diverse

People enjoy participating

the numbers

93% of participants said they would participate in a similar event

95% of respondents expressed interest in participating in other forums

95% of participants agreed that such sessions are “very valuable to our democracy,” and 96% agreed that they would be interested in doing similar sessions for other issues

87% of participants agreed that “I had fun today. Politics should be like this more often.”

97% of participants agreed that facilitators provided a fair, safe and well-managed environment for participants

A wide variety of people participate

the numbers

30% of the population of the 283 communities – over 100,000 people in all – have participated in this program

17% of participants were from households earning less than $25,000 (compared to 23% in Census)

83% of those surveyed would be interested in participating in a deliberative session if given the opportunity

“Horizons” seven-state project in the Northwest (Morehouse 2010)

“CaliforniaSpeaks” (Fung and Lee 2008)

National Issues Forums in West Virginia (Fung and Fagotto 2006)

“Online Town Halls” with Members of Congress (Neblo et al 2010)

“Our Budget, Our Economy” [Esterling, Fung, and Lee 2010]

Community Forum on Budget Priorities in Bell, CA (Amsler 2012)
## Costs of public deliberation

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<td><strong>$6,000</strong> was the average cost of a public deliberation project, and the median cost was <strong>$0</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://example.com">Dialogue and Deliberation Practitioner Survey</a> (Polletta and Lee 2009)</td>
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