

How Florida Extension is using deliberative dialogue to address complex community issues

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CIVIC
COMMUNITY VOICES
INFORMED CHOICES

UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

FAMU [FLORIDA
AGRICULTURAL AND
MECHANICAL
UNIVERSITY]

Agenda

What is a complex issue?

Engaging community members

How and why deliberation works

The next steps after deliberation

Wrap up

A photograph of a massive, intricate scaffolding structure, likely for a large-scale construction project. The scaffolding is composed of numerous vertical and horizontal metal poles and cross-braces, creating a complex grid-like pattern. Several workers in orange safety gear and hard hats are visible on different levels of the scaffolding, providing a sense of scale. The background is a solid, bright yellow, which contrasts sharply with the metallic grey of the scaffolding. The overall image conveys a sense of complexity and scale.

What is a complex issue?

Communities face challenging issues



RISING SEA LEVELS



SCHOOL SAFETY



AFFORDABLE
HOUSING



EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS



EFFICIENT
TRANSPORTATION
SYSTEMS

Complex community problems are not solved by individuals working alone

Types of issues



Simple

Problem identified

Bring in technical expert and
information

Utilize information and expertise

Problem solved technical



Complicated

The problem not immediately
understood

Many elements but the elements
are understood

Hidden root causes

Non-linear



Complex

No definitive formation of problem

No immediate test for solution

Values-based engagement

Symptom of other problems

A transdisciplinary, systems
approach

Requires cooperation and
collaboration



Photo by Linda Seals

Engaging community members

Who from the community engages?

- Have you had any experience with someone who had never been engaged?
- What happened? Good or bad?
- What do you wish could have happened?



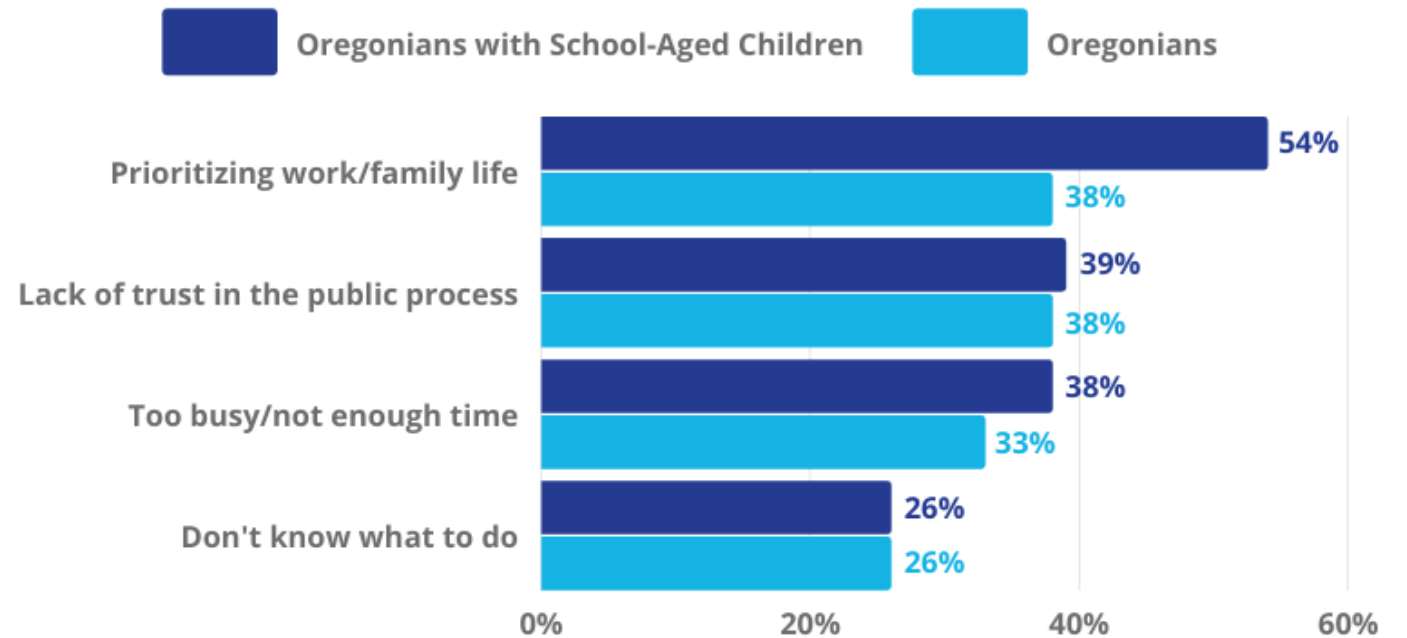
	Complex
Examples	Urban sprawl
The problem	Multiple problems
The solutions	To be discovered
Government	Encourage public discussion
The public	Learn. Consider priorities.

Why should we increase community engagement?

- Increase the likelihood that projects or solutions will be widely accepted.
- Create more effective solutions.
- Improve citizens' knowledge and skills in problem-solving.
- Empower and integrate people from different backgrounds.
- Create local networks of community members.
- Create several opportunities for discussing concerns.
- Increase trust in community organizations and governance.

Why don't all citizens engage?

- Recently, a curious mix of apathy, mistrust, blame, AND desire, motivation, engagement.
- We are connected but also lonely
- We want to engage but need better opportunities and access



More than half of Oregonians with school-age children say that prioritizing work and family life keeps them from being more civically engaged

Survey conducted by the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center. <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/survey-findings-civic-engagement/>

How CIVIC engages citizens

1. Deliberately and purposefully seek to invite those who aren't often engaged in community decisions
 - Build partnerships with community organizations
 - Work in concert with municipal agencies and individuals

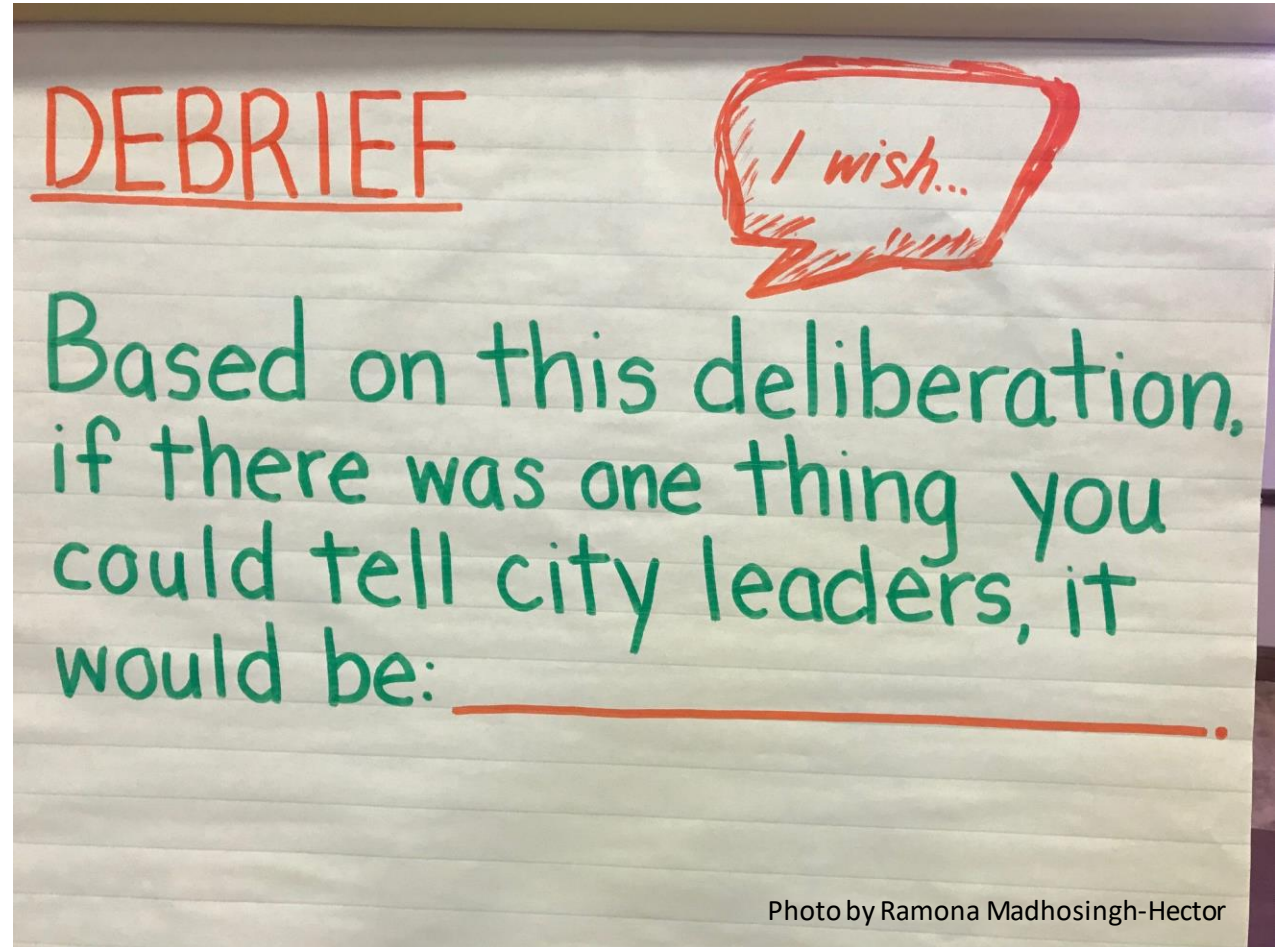


Photo by Ramona Madhosingh-Hector

City of Oldsmar stormwater forum

How CIVIC engages citizens

2. Create opportunities to learn, listen, speak with those who have different ideas
 - Town Hall meetings with invited speakers
 - Deliberative forums with issues pre-framed around value positions
 - Trained facilitators set the tone, create atmosphere conducive to productive exchange

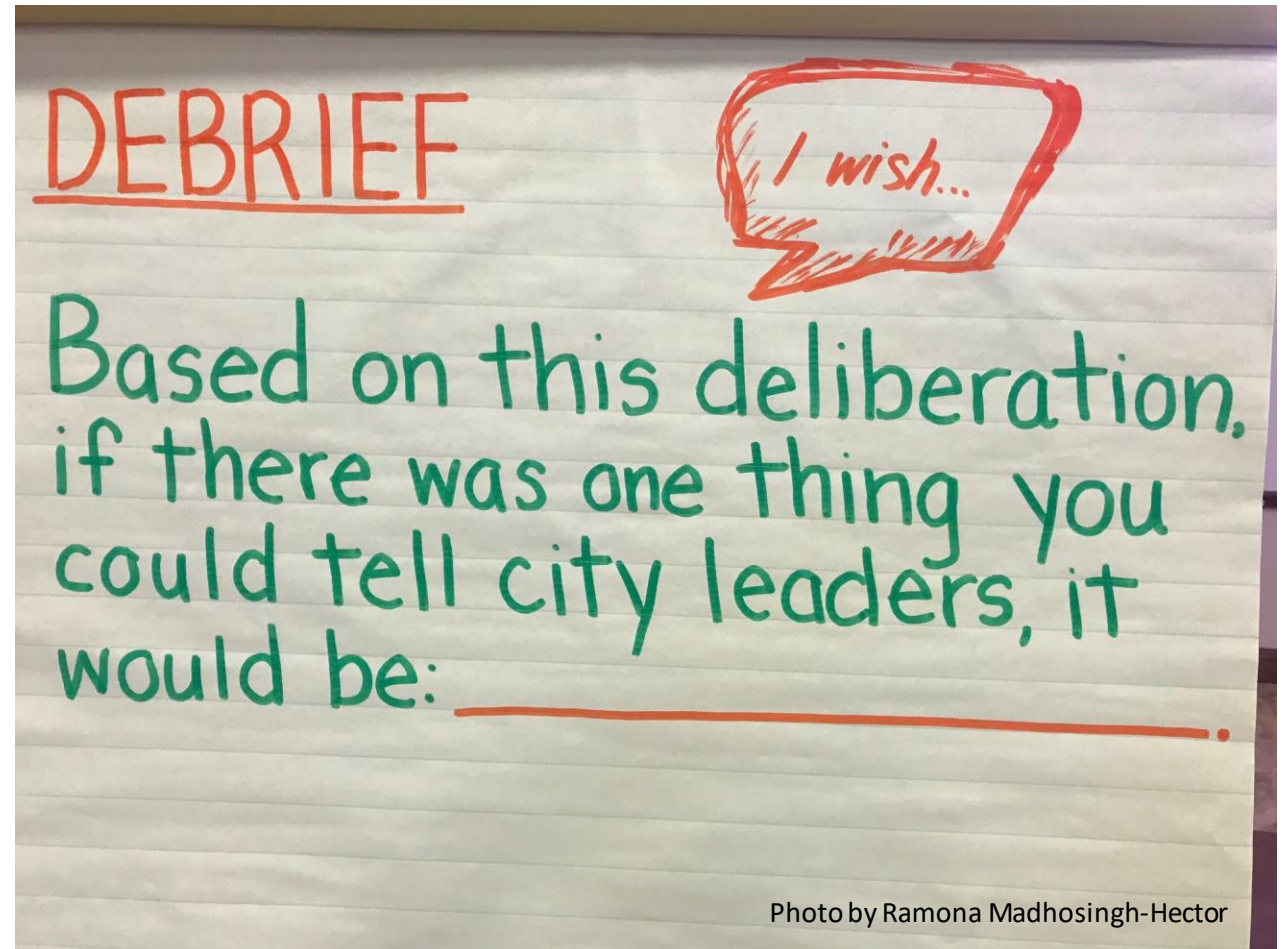


Photo by Ramona Madhosingh-Hector

City of Oldsmar stormwater forum

How CIVIC engages citizens

3. Help small groups continue to work together toward reasonable solutions
 - Linking community with government
 - Hearing from new experts
 - Providing opportunities for people to make a difference

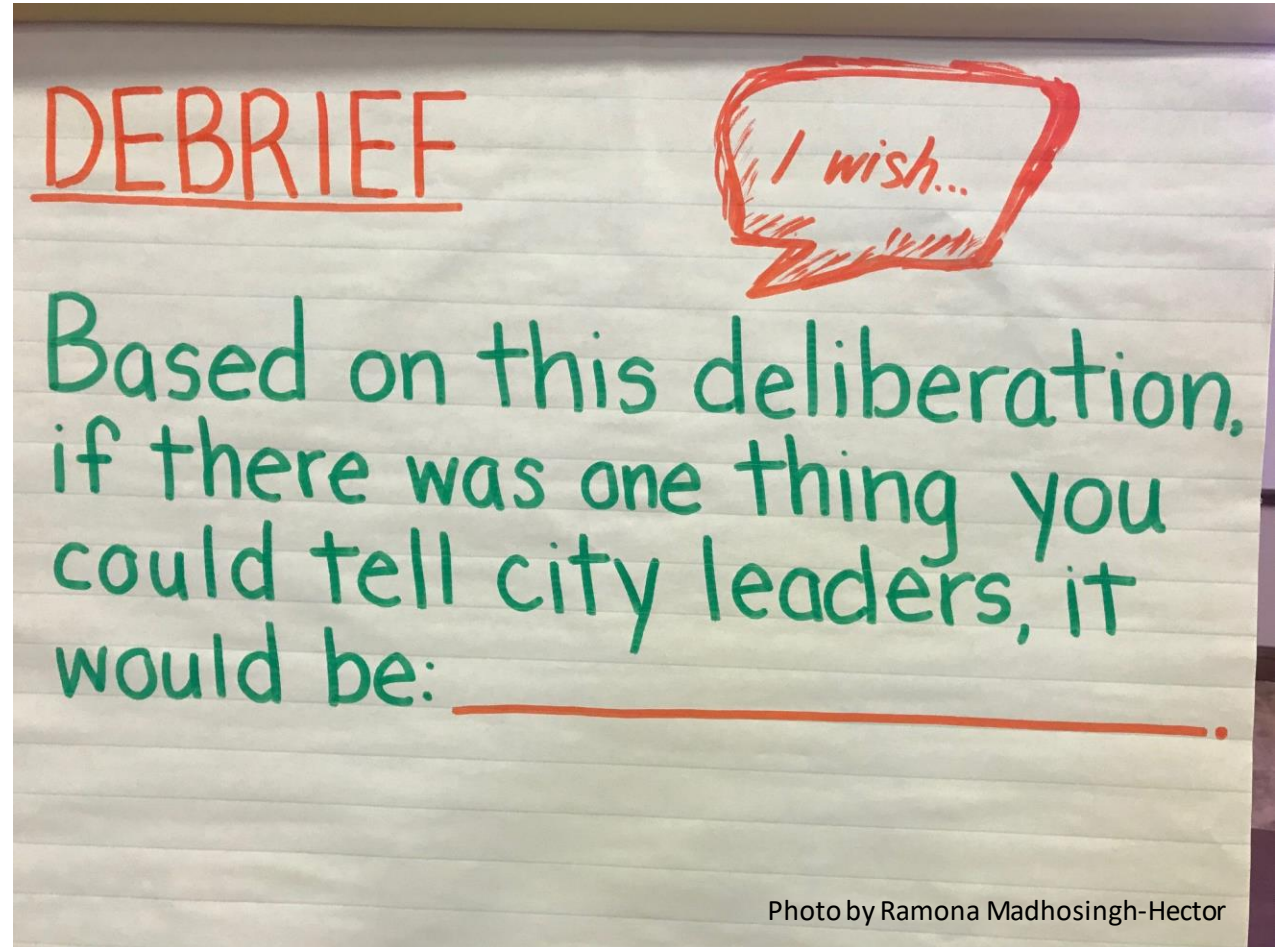
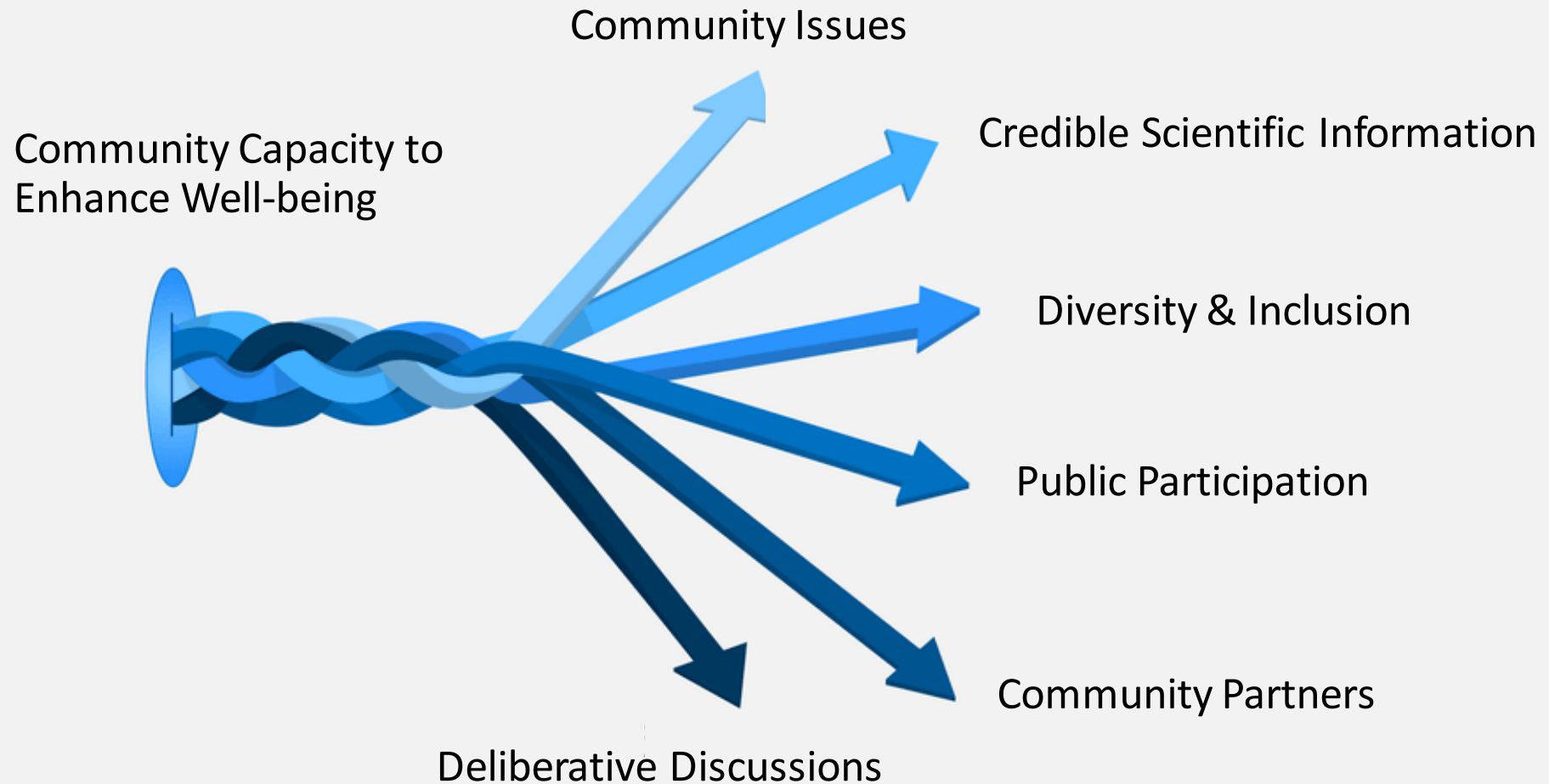



Photo by Ramona Madhosingh-Hector

City of Oldsmar stormwater forum

Each of these strands forms a key part of **CIVIC:** Community Voices, Informed Choices



A detailed historical painting depicting a group of approximately 15 men, identified as the city council of The Hague, gathered around a large, rectangular table covered with a green cloth. The men are dressed in formal 17th-century attire, including dark, wide-brimmed hats and black robes with prominent white lace collars. They are engaged in various activities: some are looking towards the viewer, others are looking at documents or each other, and one man on the right is holding a hat. The table is cluttered with papers, a rolled-up document, a small bowl, and a glass. The background features a green wall with several small, ornate plaques or coats of arms. The overall scene suggests a formal meeting or deliberation.

Questions?

The city council of The Hague deliberating in 1636, Jan van Ravesteyn. Historical Museum of The Hague.

A group of approximately 15 people are seated in a circle of chairs in a room with a plain wall. A woman stands at the front, holding a paper and gesturing towards two flipcharts. The flipchart on the left is titled 'OPTION 1: CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES'. The flipchart on the right is titled 'ASSESSMENTS' and lists several bullet points: 'LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND', 'CHALLENGE EACH IDEA', 'ELIMINATES', 'DISAGREE', 'ISSUES', 'E', and 'BUSINESS'. The participants are engaged, some looking at the presenter and others at their own papers. A green bar is at the bottom of the image.

Deliberative Dialogue

Fishbowl Exercise

- We will demonstrate deliberation using a National Issues Forum issue guide.
- The issue guide title is *Youth and opportunity: what should we do for future generations to thrive?*
- First, let's watch a video...



Different problems need different solutions

Extension has a role to help build community capacity to resolve some issues:

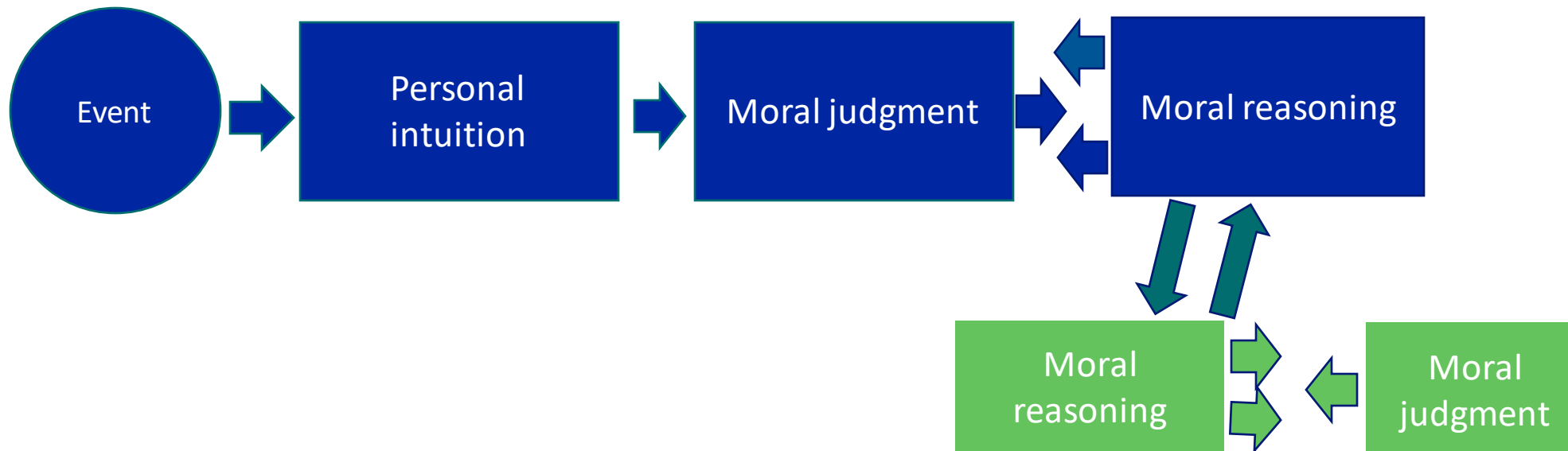
- Community scale
- Multiple solutions
- Uncertain problem
- Public funding
- Where input could be helpful

	Type 1	Type II	Type III
Examples	Potholes in streets	School funding	Climate changes
The problem	Clear	Clear	Complex
The solutions	Clear	Several	Many
Government	Implement solution	Publicize alternatives	Encourage public exploration and discussion
The public	None	Consider priorities	Learn. Consider priorities.

These are complex problems that require public input for helpful long-lasting solutions

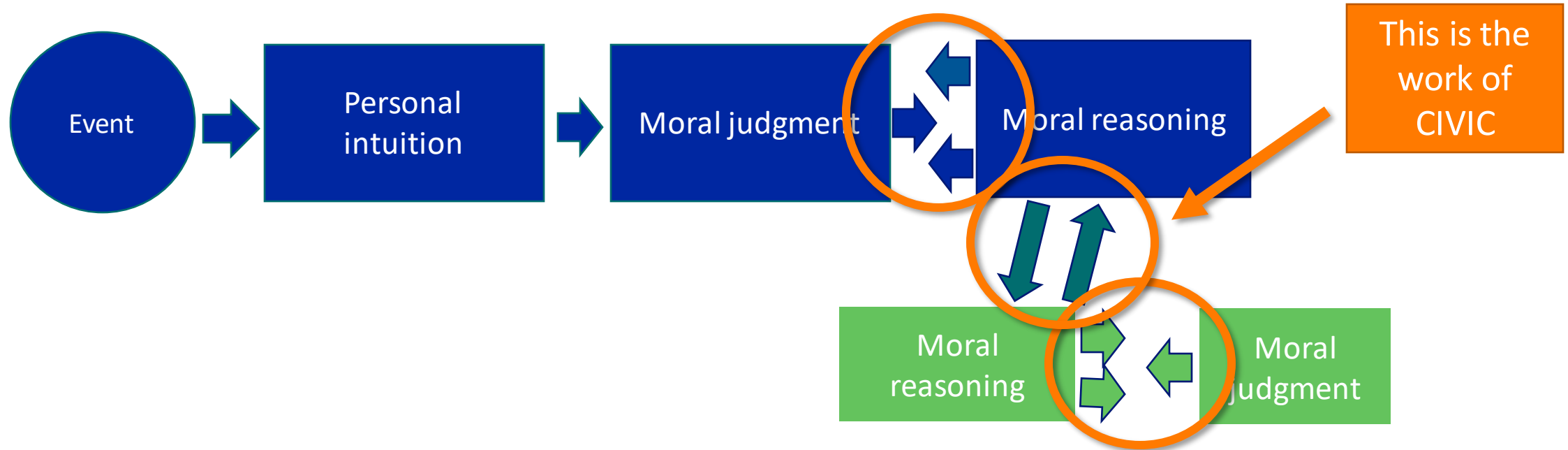
Recognize how people consider moral judgments

- They respond immediately with their heart - Right or Wrong
- If asked to explain, they take time to use their head
 - Moral reasoning comes later and tends to confirm judgment
- Unless we hear new ideas and reflect on our own



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A photograph of a group of people in a room with round tables and whiteboards, engaged in a deliberative discussion. The room has a drop ceiling with recessed lights and two large black speakers on the walls. Several whiteboards with handwritten notes are visible in the background. People are seated at round tables, some facing the camera and others with their backs to it. A man in a white shirt is standing in the background, possibly a facilitator. The overall atmosphere is collaborative and focused.

Essential aspects of deliberative discussion

- Diverse perspectives
- A framed issue
 - Focus on values, tradeoffs, not facts
- Facilitator
 - Establishes atmosphere conducive to listening, sharing
 - Keeps to the options and surfaces values

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Essential aspects of deliberative discussion

- Leads toward local actions
 - Collecting more information
 - Engaging local experts
 - Raising public awareness
 - Making recommendations

What happens after deliberation?

- Pre-post-survey and notes from participants lead to report
- Common ground leads to small working groups
- Partners get new ideas for activities
- New relationships are formed



What happens after deliberation?

- People meet each other
- New ideas arise
- People become more willing to engage
- New resources are identified
- Training opportunities



Some examples of our work

Land use in the Panhandle

- Forums were held in historically Black communities in the Panhandle
- Participants said they want:
 - Places to gather
 - Locally owned businesses
 - Their history preserved
 - Representation in governance and decision-making matters
 - Green spaces that are appropriate and useful
- They worry that revitalization may price people out of homes





Photo by University of Florida



Photo by University of Florida

Indian River Lagoon Water Quality Forum and Fishing Clinic Event

Orange Park Wells Road Project, Clay County



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How can
Extension and
counties help
each other?



Gouwenaar Images: Assen, Netherlands