



VITAL CONVERSATIONS



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING: CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY CONVENING REPORT

This aspect of quality of life refers to the degree to which residents are actively engaged in the local culture and community, and are taking action to improve their community in terms of being a good place to live.

BERMUDA VITAL CONVERSATIONS

The Bermuda Community Foundation (the “foundation”) introduced Vital Signs® as an important step in identifying resident’s priorities related to their quality of life in Bermuda and the issues most important to them. The Vital Signs® programme has become a standard of excellence among community foundations around the world. It provides a methodology that evaluates community vitality and wellbeing and plays an important role in informing the allocation of resources. The reporting and prioritisation process is tailor-made to suit each jurisdiction’s needs.

In Bermuda, we conducted research on the community’s priorities, determined standardised outcomes based on that information and then sought further input from field experts in order to prioritise funding needs. This last step is carried out through convenings, known as “Vital Conversations”.

The foundation is hosting the Vital Conversation Series to further refine the valuable information gathered from the community. In this phase, local stakeholders convene to access public opinion, local, and international data for each of the Vital Signs® areas and prioritize the top outcomes that will guide the foundation’s funding strategy.

THE FINDINGS

The 2017 Bermuda Vital Signs Report revealed Community Wellbeing as one of seven priorities contributing to the quality of life in Bermuda. Community wellbeing is defined broadly by a variety of indicators, including those related to residents’ sense of engagement with civic life on the island. Less than half (47%) of residents scored Bermuda favorably for citizen engagement and civic responsibility.

Citizen engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of the community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in Bermuda, through both political and non-political processes. The promotion of citizen engagement is commonly thought to be the role of the government but certainly there are many local organisations that facilitate engagement of many kinds.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY



47%

← RESIDENTS RATE BERMUDA AS HIGH TO EXTREMELY HIGH →

Civic Responsibility is comprised of actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation. Civic responsibility can include participation in government, voting, church, and donating to and volunteering for local associations. Actions of civic responsibility can be displayed in advocacy for various causes, such as political, economic, religious, environmental or quality of life issues. In Bermuda, the charitable sector has seen a great deal of activity in this area. A healthy majority of resident (87%) reported that they had donated to a charity. As well, many residents (69%) reported that they had volunteered their time for a charitable cause.

Citizen engagement and civic responsibility are closely related and seen as integral to the quality of life in Bermuda and many free democratic societies. To make these concepts meaningful, the government and citizens must work together. The government and other organisations encourage and initiate citizen engagement by creating structures that provide for citizen voice in decision-making processes. The act of voting has always been the supreme measure of engagement and an act of civic responsibility. In Bermuda, both male (47%) and female (53%) voters are nearly equally represented amongst registered voters. In terms of age, the heaviest concentration (53.7%) of registered voters are between 40 and 69 years of age. However there is good representation across the age span with twenty seven percent (27.6%) ages 18 – 39, eleven percent (11.4%) ages 70 – 79, and seven percent (7.3%) aged 80 and over.

Beyond voting, the interplay between government and citizens must be more iterative. One example includes The Bermuda Citizens Forum, a website launched by the Bermuda Government to encourage public discussion and input on proposed legislation and policies. As well, individuals must see civic participation as a personal responsibility and have clear motivation, knowledge and skill to participate.

WHAT PEOPLE THINK

69%

of residents volunteered their time for a charitable cause in past year

87%

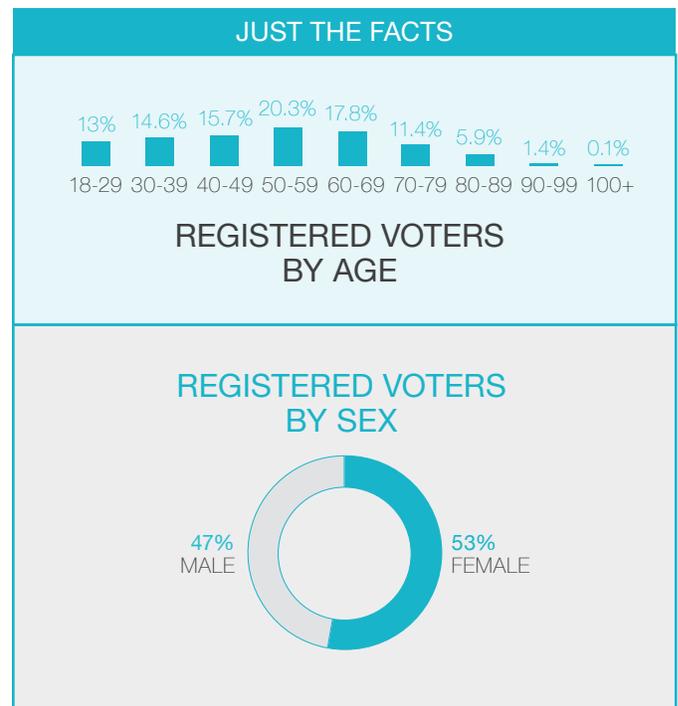
of residents made a donation to a local charity or non-profit in the past year

From a global perspective, poverty has stood as one of the most common barriers to civic participation, but certain conditions of poverty have also spurred grass root movements to improve conditions. Some other common obstacles include the lack of: civility in the political arena; attention to public affairs; role models (active in civic life); and civic and political skill. In terms of building civic and political skills as well as providing role models, one local example is the Youth Parliament whose stated mission is to provide education on parliamentary procedures, create awareness of current events and issues on a local and global scale. Efforts such as this help to build civically active individuals and prepare them for leadership.

Engaged and civically responsible citizens can improve the delivery and quality of public services, enhance the management of public finances, and bring about greater transparency, accountability and social inclusion - resulting in tangible improvements in the quality of life in Bermuda.

THE PLAN

On September 29, 2018 the eighth in the series of Vital Conversations was convened with sector experts to examine the public opinion data from the Vital Signs® Report as well as relevant local and international data. The Bermuda Community Foundation selected a list of outcomes and indicators for the group to examine and prioritise. The result of this collaborative prioritisation effort yielded the following key outcomes and indicators that the foundation, and potentially other funders, can use to guide its funding decisions through 2021.



CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT VS. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT	CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
 CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT Government initiated	 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION Citizen initiated
Formal	Informal
Aim: improving public service deliveries and public policies programs	Aim: improving public service deliveries and public policies programs

VITAL CONVERSATIONS PRIORITISED OUTCOMES & INDICATORS

• CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY •

Changes to public attitudes and behaviour		
Change in public attitudes	Change in public behaviour	Increase in public awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in people's attitudes towards a specific issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed change in behaviour based on pre-defined metrics Self-reported change in behaviour based on pre-defined metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people aware about a specific campaign
Improved citizens		
Improved attitude towards others from different backgrounds	Improved view of the community and local area	Improved willingness to be involved in community activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved attitude towards others from different backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score on psychological scales measuring community perception and feelings towards local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of hours in the previous four weeks spent doing unpaid or voluntary work for any organisation Number of people who given any unpaid help or worked as a volunteer for any type of local, national or international organisation or charity Score on NCS or similar scale measuring participation and helping others
Strong public participation in citizenship and communities, and good social cohesion		
Improved public and community awareness	Increased Rates of Voting	Increased sense of belonging in the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in public perception around the values of citizenship and community Level of media exposure for communities and related issues (e.g. number of relevant articles published in the mainstream media; exposure on tv, radio; internet traffic) Level of public and community awareness of the community and what it offers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of registered voters who voted in the last general election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people who report feeling a sense of belonging in the community

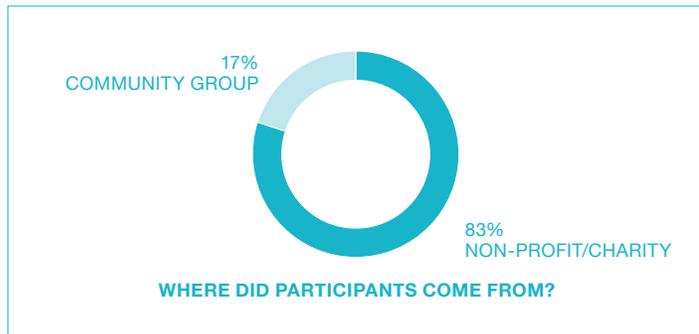
Key Outcome Category **Specific Outcome** • Indicator(s)

We are pleased to make more detailed outcome and indicators reporting available to BCF fund holders. Special terms and conditions apply. Contact info@bcf.bm

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAID

Most participants for this conversation were from the charity/non-profit sector (83%) and the remainder representing community groups (17%). Together, this group engaged in thoughtful and fruitful conversation. A participant who valued the conversation stated, *“there is always room for growth and improvement in organizational aims and objectives. It was great to cross-reference with others in the group, to network and to develop a better sense of how we can work more collaboratively in Bermuda to achieve similar goals and outcomes.”* Another participant shared, *“If you change the way people think, you can change society. There is transformational learning that occurs within community meetings and convenings.”* This would suggest that the actual experience, of convening diverse individuals to share their perspectives and to collaboratively seek solutions, could lead to change in the greater society.

“ this exercise is important because it helps us identify the most important levers of change that may indeed help move other important outcomes ”
 - Participant comment



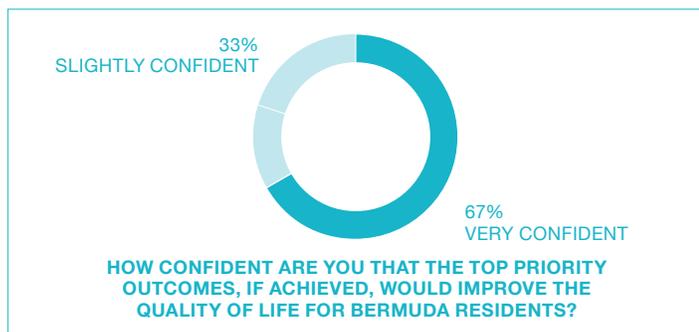
The goal of the convening was to yield prioritised outcomes and many participants (66.67%) felt very confident that the resulting outcomes would improve the quality of life for Bermuda residents. The remainder were slightly confident (33.33%) of the efficacy of the outcomes. This relevant quote from a participant encompassed a high level of confidence in the ultimate outcome of their work, *“if the top outcomes are achieved, more people will participate in society.”* Given that the primary goal of this group was to increase and/or improve civic engagement and responsibility, there was a general theme that the chosen outcomes would begin to accomplish this goal. Another participant shared, *“I believe the top priorities chosen by the group are a good start in helping Bermuda citizens feel more like an intricate part of a country that has a quality of life and living that engages and supports everyone.”*

In terms of the outcomes that were prioritised, many participants placed the onus for change on individual citizens with individual attitudes and behavior as primary. The top outcomes were - Changes to public attitudes and behavior, Improved Citizens, and Strong public participation in Citizenship and Communities, and Good Social Cohesion. This could indicate that some participants believed that sufficient structures were in place allowing for citizens to freely engage in their civic responsibilities. However, there was also a strong spirit for advocacy amongst the group. While the focus was on the individual, many valued the power of collective individual action to create change. One participant stated, *“that regulatory and government structures - needed for better society – is connected to individual activism, morals and values. We are talking about these things together.”* Clearly there are several things that government and other societal structures could do to increase full participation across all members of society but ultimately this is representative of a healthy democratic society.

Finally, there was a clear sense that this was a preliminary process that would require more attention in the future, as evidenced by the following comment, *“this exercise is important because it helps us identify the most important levers of change that may indeed help move other important outcomes.”* Another commented, *“if the top priority outcomes selected by the group are reached, we will observe a ripple effect on other important outcomes from the original list. In that sense, I am confident that their achievement will impact the society at large.”*

WHO NEEDED TO BE IN THE ROOM

Representatives of key government entities, policy influencers and makers, nonprofits, vendors and service providers in the relevant field were invited to participate in the convening. They were also encouraged to nominate additional participants we may not have considered. The purpose was to ensure that the convening outcome would reflect input from those with the greatest experience and knowledge of the topic under review. This would include senior civil servants, nonprofit executives, industry leaders and community experts in their respective fields. At the convening, participants were asked to step aside from their individual affiliations and participate in the discussions as policy influencers, programme and service providers, researchers and other professionals for the benefit of Bermuda.



WHO WAS THERE

Adrian Harnett-Beasley	Deputy Chair/ Co-Founder	OUTBermuda
	Official Board Member	Wesley Methodist Church
Cordell Riley	Vice President	Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda
Danielle Riviere*	Executive Director	Centre on Philanthropy
	Executive Officer (former)	Commission for Unity and Racial Equality
David Northcott	Member	Two Words and a Comma
	Diversity Consultant / Trainer	British Airways / Metropolitan Police
	Programme Manager (former)	Diversity Institute of Bermuda
Françoise Palau-Wolffe	Human Rights Coordinator	Warwick Academy
	Chairperson (former)	Amnesty International Bermuda
Glen Fubler	Director	Imagine Bermuda
Janet Ferguson, PhD	Executive Director	Lifelong Learning Centre
Joanne Wohlmuth	Chairperson	Peace and Social Justice Ministry of the Roman Catholic Church
	Human Rights Mediator	Consultant
	Social Activist Contemplative	The Living School, Center for Action and Contemplation (New Mexico)
Lisa Reed*	Executive Officer	Human Rights Commission
Lynne Winfield	President	Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda
Michelle Scott	Director	Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda
	Former Chair	Human Rights Commission
	Former Chair	Commission for Unity and Racial Equality
Nadine Henry*	Senior Youth Services Development Officer	Youth Services / Department of Youth & Sport / Government of Bermuda
Russel Lister*	Advisor	Youth Parliament
Sara Clifford*	Education Officer	Human Rights Commission

*Regrets = Confirmed but not in attendance

The Vial Signs Convenings are facilitated with the support of the BCF Vital Signs team: Research Coordinator, Dr. Tamara Gathright Fritz of Strategic Evaluation Consulting; BCF Managing Director, Dr. Myra Virgil; BCF Programme Associate, Michelle Grant; and BCF Intern Mercedes Pringle.

AN EVOLVING PROCESS

We strive to inform these convenings with high-level field and content area expertise. We ask participants to use their knowledge to inform this work at a national level. We appreciate the participation of the attendees of this convening. Also considered for participation, and therefore, potential community resources on this issue are:

Access Bermuda
 Age Concern Bermuda
 Ageing and Disability Services
 Association of Bermuda International Companies
 – Diversity and Inclusion Committee
 Bermuda Centre for Creative Learning
 Bermuda College / Student Groups
 Centre Against Abuse
 Centre for Justice
 Chain Reaction / Rachel's Challenge

Community Education and Development Programme
 – Government of Bermuda
 Youth Services, Department of Youth & Sport –
 Government of Bermuda
 ICT Policy & Innovation – Government of Bermuda
 Parliamentary Registrar Office
 Rotary Interactors
 Windreach
 Women's Resource Centre

THE BERMUDA VITAL SIGNS® ARE ALIGNED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development