



Globally Positioning the South

Making Choices for Your Community

Global events used to be something that happened “over there.” Today, globalization affects everyone’s lives – people are laid off after decades of loyal employment; communities are coping with an influx of new residents from around the globe, many of whom can’t speak English; and everyone feels the after-effects of September 11, 2001.

The shrinking world has caused many changes in our lives, but it is inaccurate to suggest that the effects of globalization are all negative.

On the positive side, globalization creates good jobs in growth industries. It has allowed thousands of firms to make and save more money, thereby making it possible to pay better wages to millions of workers. Today, at least 15 percent of all workers depend on international commerce for their paycheck. If Southern businesses increased their exports to match the U.S. average, we could have nearly a million more export-related jobs, and \$60 billion more in sales annually.

Globalization has also significantly reduced consumer costs, increased consumer choices, and brought us important scientific inventions and literary works. With more than 95% of the world’s consumers living outside the United States, the future of business is in global trade. Southern communities must channel their time, energy and leadership to take best advantage of globalization. What can states and communities do to *Globally Position the South*?

This discussion guide is designed to stimulate thinking on the question and to choose a path to the future for your community. The guide does not advocate a specific solution or point of view. Rather, it is intended to inspire thoughtful examination of differing points of view and a movement towards common ground around which the community can make plans for its future.

Equipment/Supplies Needed

- *Globally Positioning the South* issue booklet for each participant
- Pre-Forum and Post-Forum Questionnaires for each participant
- Pencils/pens for completing the questionnaires
- Flip chart and markers
- Ground rules poster (optional)

Copies of the issue booklet can be obtained from the Southern Growth Policies Board. Call Niraj Goswami at (919) 941-5145 to place an order. Moderators are free to copy the entire booklet as well as the Pre-Forum and Post-Forum Questionnaires.

Suggested Format for a Two-Hour Forum

Welcome

(5 minutes)

Introduce yourself and tell participants about the organization(s) convening the forum. Stress the co-sponsorship if several organizations are involved. Give a brief introduction about the importance of globalization to the community.

Explain that the results of the forum will be shared with Southern leaders through the Southern Growth Policies Board, by saying something such as the following:

This booklet was prepared by the Southern Growth Policies Board. Southern Growth is a regional public policy think tank that works with 13 Southern States and Puerto Rico on economic and community development issues. Southern Growth provides its members, and the region, with authoritative research, discussion forums and pilot projects in the areas of technology and innovation, globalization, workforce development, community development, civic engagement and leadership.

Participating in this forum means that your views will be heard by many Southern leaders.

Southern Growth plans to prepare a report on forum results that will be presented to Southern governors and other leaders at the 2004 Conference on the Future of the South, scheduled for June 13-15, 2004 in Oklahoma City. You are also invited to attend the conference to hear what others are saying about the South's future in the global economy.

Pre-Forum Questionnaire

(5 minutes)

Ask participants to complete the Pre-Forum Questionnaire. Explain to participants that the Pre-Forum Questionnaire is a way to get everyone focused on the issue and a way for each participant to take inventory of their initial feelings on the issue. Tell them that there will be another questionnaire for them at the end of the forum.

Ground Rules

(5 minutes)

Review ground rules with participants before beginning the discussion. Make clear that the forum is not a debate. Stress that there is work to do (this is not just a free flowing discussion with no purpose), and the work is to move toward making plans for the community's future. The work will be done through deliberation.

The moderator should guide the discussion yet remain neutral. Make sure that:

- Everyone understands that this is not a debate.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- No one or two individuals dominate.
- Every approach is considered fairly and fully.
- An atmosphere for discussion and analysis of alternatives is maintained.
- Participants listen to each other.

The moderator should ask the group if they agree with these rules and invite them to suggest others to add to the list.

Moderators can call the Kettering Foundation at (800) 433-7834 to request a free poster that outlines these ground rules.

Personal Stake

(15 minutes)

Connect the issues to people's lives and concerns by getting participants to talk about their personal experiences with the issue. This makes the issue human rather than abstract.

Some questions you might ask include:

- Has anyone had a personal experience with a job lost or created through trade?
- What kinds of interactions do you have with immigrants in your community?
- Have you traveled overseas? If so, what effect did it have on you?

Reviewing Possible Approaches

(45 minutes)

The next step is to review and deliberate on each approach, one-by-one. Deliberation requires weighing the "pros" and "cons" of different approaches so it is important to be sure that both are fully aired. Questions to help ensure a fair and balanced examination of each approach include:

- What makes this approach a good idea? What do you find most appealing about it?
- What are the costs or consequences associated with this approach? Is there a downside to this approach?
- How might others see this approach?
- What would someone who favors this approach be likely to say?
- If we followed this approach, what would be the effects on your life?
- How might your concerns differ if you were poor? Lacked a high school education? Were a business owner?

***Review of Approach One:
Focus on Strengthening the Workforce***

Begin with an overview of the approach, such as:

In this view, strengthening the workforce is the best approach to securing our future in the global economy. We can't stop all job loss, but we can recover faster. Jobs will follow skills, so we need to make sure that everyone is upwardly mobile. This approach calls for boosting college attendance and completion, promoting training of current workers, beginning career awareness and counseling in the early grades, and internationalizing the school curricula, including putting more emphasis on foreign language training.

Initiate discussion by using the general questions outlined above or some below:

- If people received more education and/or training, what impact would that have on the community's future?
- What success is your community having in making sure all kids graduate from high school? Do they leave high school with a good sense of their career options and interests? Are young people aware of the global nature of their future?
- Does the current school curriculum adequately prepare students for careers that may require international skills, such as knowledge of foreign languages, cultures, customs and geography?

***Review of Approach Two:
Focus on Strengthening Businesses***

Losing jobs to trade and technology requires no effort, but gaining jobs does. Supporters of this view argue that we should use international trade to support business viability, in turn creating plentiful, good jobs. Strategies would focus on giving businesses access to a steady stream of useful information about global markets and new technologies and providing them with lots of hand holding until they gain experience.

Initiate discussion by using the general questions outlined above and/or some of the following:

- To what extent are businesses in the community already involved in exporting? Are both large and small firms active in trade? Does the community have any success stories that might serve as an example to others?
- How active a role do you think government should play in encouraging exports?
- What might be holding potential exporters back?

***Review of Approach Three:
Focus on Strengthening Civic Relationships***

Supporters of this approach view our immigrants, exporters, foreign visitors and international relationships as untapped assets in the community. They call for strategies that create better connections with and among these resources to build stronger communities and businesses. They say that our best approach for the future is to tap into these resources by convening the community's international stakeholders to plan strategically for the future, nurturing overseas relationships and better integrating immigrants into community life.

Initiate discussion by using the general questions outlined above or some below:

- How would you describe the relationships between immigrants and native residents in the community? What impact would improving relationships between these groups have on the community's future?
- Does the community have any formal relationships with communities overseas? What benefits, if any, do you think the community gains from these relationships? Do you see ways that these relationships could be strengthened?
- How do you think the community is perceived by foreign investors and/or foreign visitors? How could the community be made more welcoming?

Working through tensions or conflicts (15 minutes)

Help participants see and work through the tensions or conflicts between the approaches by asking some of the following types of questions:

- What do you see as the tensions between the approaches?
- Can anyone think of something constructive that might come from the approach that is receiving so much criticism?
- Should communities focus on improving education and worker training, EVEN IF it takes a long time to show results and top graduates might leave the community?
- Should communities foster export promotion and technological modernization, EVEN IF it might get firms thinking about importing or investing overseas?
- Should communities pursue closer relationships with immigrants and those living abroad, EVEN IF it might change the community culture?

Moving towards a shared sense of purpose

(15 minutes)

Remind people that the objective is to work toward a decision. Test to see where the group is going by asking questions such as:

- Can someone suggest areas that we seem to have in common?
- What values appear to be in conflict?
- What trade-offs are we willing (or unwilling) to accept?
- What are we willing to do as individuals or a community to solve this problem?

Ending the Forum

(15 minutes)

Before ending a forum, take a few minutes to reflect on what has been accomplished. Questions like the following have been useful:

Individual Reflections

- Did you hear anything that surprised you?
- Has your thinking about the issue changed?
- Has your thinking about other people's views changed?
- How has your perspective changed as a result of what you've heard in this forum?

Group Reflections

- What remains unsolved for this group?
- Can we identify any shared sense of purpose or direction?
- What trade-offs are we, or are we not, willing to make to move in a shared direction?

Next Steps

- What do we still need to talk about?
- How can we use what we learned about ourselves in this forum?
- Do we want to meet again?

Post-Forum Questionnaire

(5 minutes)

Ask participants to complete the Post-Forum Questionnaire. Please collect both pre- and post-forum questionnaires and return them along with a *Moderator Summary Sheet* to Carol Conway, Southern Growth Policies Board, P.O. Box 12293, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. This information will be used to help inform Southern leaders about citizens' views on this issue.



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After the forum, please complete this brief response sheet and return it with the questionnaires from the forum. Use additional paper, if needed. Your response will help ensure that your community is recognized in our final report to regional leaders.

Moderator's Name: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Date of Forum: _____ **Number of Participants:** _____

Location of Forum: _____ (City) _____ (State)

Briefly describe the participants (age, ethnic diversity, educational level).

What key concerns about globalization emerged from the discussion?

Was there a shared sense of the future direction the community should take?

What were areas of disagreement, if any?

Did the group identify possible actions or next steps? Please describe.

What unique information came out of the forum that our leaders need to know?