What is Sustained Dialogue©?

Sustained Dialogue is a dialogue-to-action process that (1) **transforms relationships** and (2) **creates informed community change**. SD is rooted in the conflict resolution methodology of senior Middle East diplomat **Hal Saunders**, a key drafter of the Camp David Peace Accords. During each of his international negotiations, he observed that participants' relationships evolved through a recognizable pattern that he distilled into the Sustained Dialogue methodology. His process was first adapted to a campus context in 1999.

"Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take others' concerns into their own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up their identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims so that they will act differently toward the other."

--Dr. Harold Saunders, Board Chair and Founder of SDI

Campus Applications

SD organizers gather participants from diverse backgrounds into small groups that meet regularly to build relationships and develop informed strategies to improve their campuses and communities, especially around the following dimensions of identity:

Ethnicity	*Socioeconomic Status/Class*	*Age*	*Sexual Orientation*
Sex & Gender	*Race & Color*	*Religion*	*Ability Status*

While SD looks different on different campuses, most groups incorporate the following elements:
- Multiple dialogue groups of 8 to 15 participants meet for a semester or year.
- Some campuses have an SD course or incorporate SD aspects into a current course.
- Two trained peer moderators lead each dialogue group
- SD leaders support groups logistically and hold events throughout the school year to include the larger community.
- SD is sustained in three ways:
    1. **Participants:** Each SD group maintains the same participants and moderators.
    2. **Agenda:** Each meeting is designed to continue where the last ended.
    3. **Time:** Dialogues meet consistently at an appointed weekly time for at least an hour.

Campuses learn the **five-stage process of Sustained Dialogue** from SDI trainers:
Stage 1: The group comes together
Stage 2: They discuss personal experiences that relate to community concerns
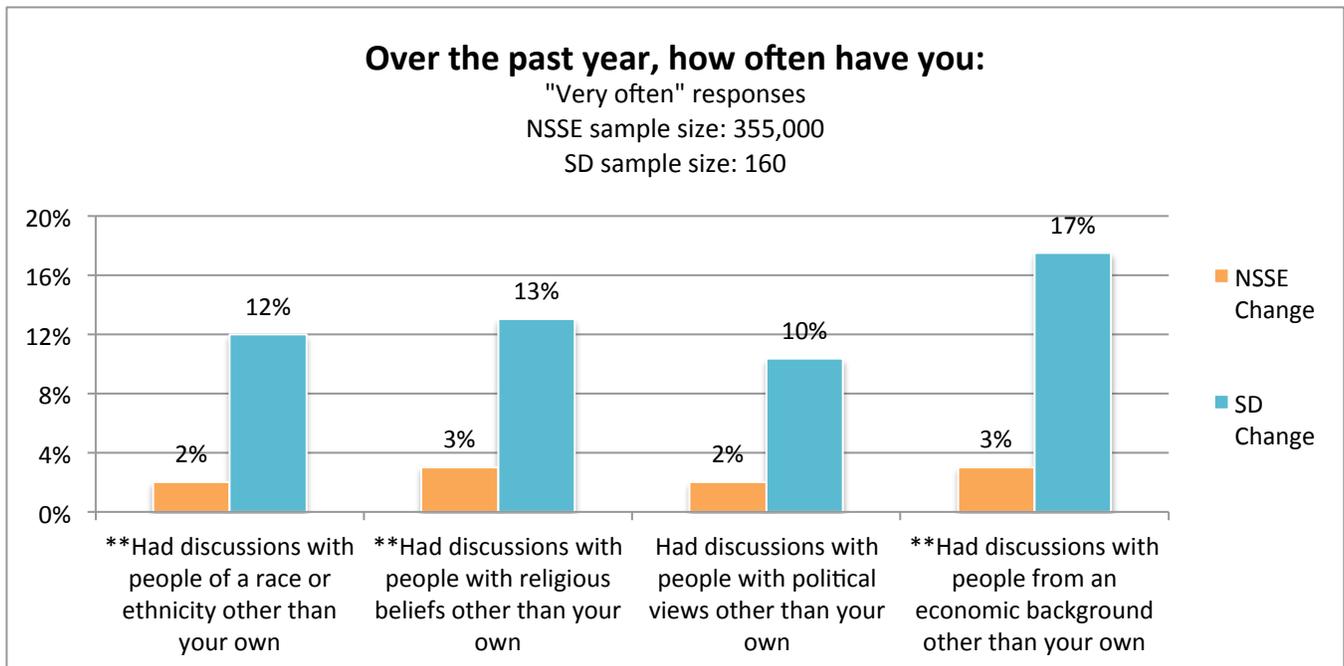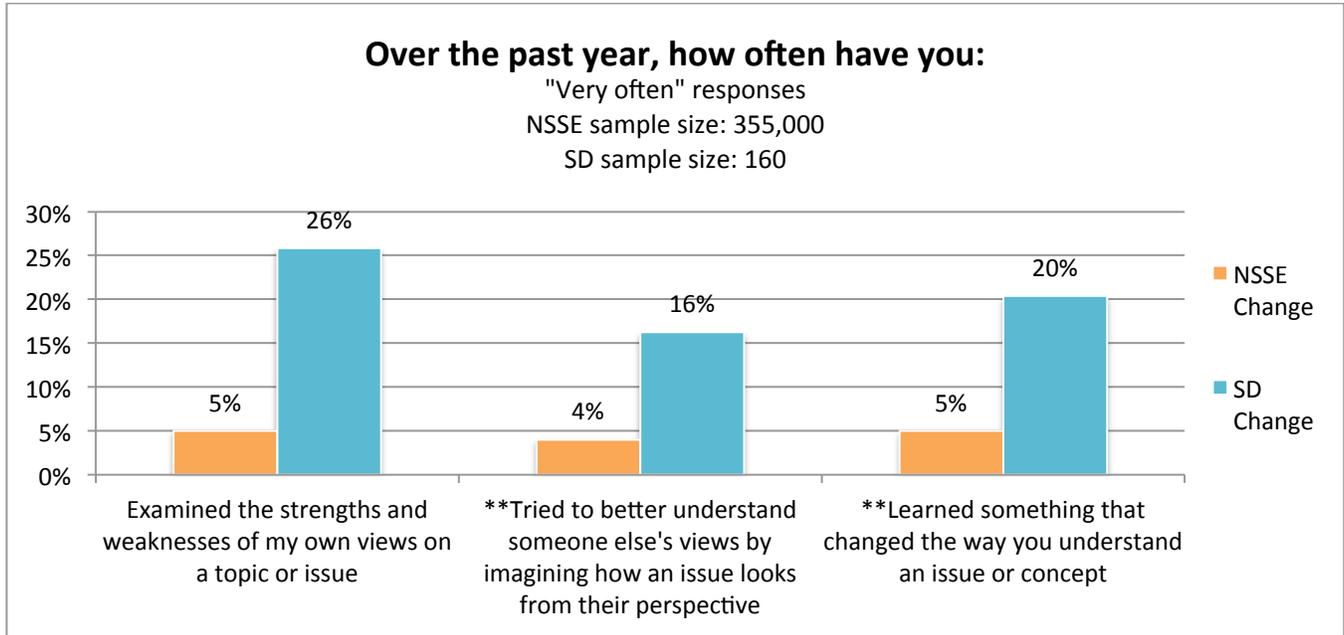Stage 3: They pick an issue to focus on and work to analyze the root causes
Stages 4 & 5: They plan and execute action/advocacy around their chosen issue
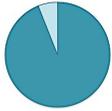
What impact should campuses using SD expect?

Through these experiences, participants develop a diverse set of leadership skills, including strong personal identity awareness, knowledge of social justice concepts and systemic inequities, empathy, facilitation and conflict resolution skills, and more.

SDCN conducts pre- and post- dialogue surveys for student participants based on key measures from questions similar to The National Survey on Student Engagement, NSSE. Compared with NSSE statistics, total percentages of participants who responded "Very often" to the following questions were as such (** indicates statistically significant results in the SD data):

Over the past year, how often have you:
"Very often" responses
NSSE sample size: 355,000
SD sample size: 160

Question	NSSE Change	SD Change
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of my own views on a topic or issue	5%	26%
**Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective	4%	16%
**Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	5%	20%

Over the past year, how often have you:
"Very often" responses
NSSE sample size: 355,000
SD sample size: 160

| Question	NSSE Change	SD Change
**Had discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than your own	2%	12%
**Had discussions with people with religious beliefs other than your own	3%	13%
Had discussions with people with political views other than your own	2%	10%
**Had discussions with people from an economic background other than your own	3%	17%

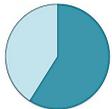# After their time in Sustained Dialogue:

94% of participants are likely or very likely to recommend SD to a friend, peer, or co-worker
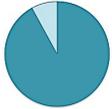
92% of participants experience transformative moments in dialogue in which they "listened deeply enough to be changed by what they heard."
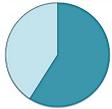
59% of participants worked together as a group to create action to improve their campus

59% of participants considered changing their major or anticipated career path because of their involvement in SD

Impact internationally:

Sustained Dialogue is used at over 20 campuses across Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mexico, and Ethiopia. In a randomized field trial* conducted comparing two-term SD participants at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia with students who did not participate, the study found statistically significant attitudinal change:

- A decrease in mistrust
- An increase in trust between people of different ethnic origin
- An increased sense of ethnic identity
- An increased perception of being ethnically discriminated
- An increase in accommodative feelings towards students of other ethnicities leading to resulting positive relationships

*Svensson, Isak and Karen Brounéus. "Dialogue and interethnic trust: A randomized field trial of 'sustained dialogue' in Ethiopia." Journal of Peace Research (August 20, 2013): 1-13. Available at:
http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/08/19/0022343313492989

Where can I turn for more information about Sustained Dialogue?

For more information on the campus application, please contact info@sustaineddialogue.org. The tenets of SD work have also been described in Hal Saunders' books, including A Public Peace Process (2001), Politics is about Relationship (2005), and Sustained Dialogue in Conflict (2012).