



CityHive

ENVIROLAB:

ACCELERATING MEANINGFUL LOCAL ACTION ON
SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ISSUES WITH YOUTH

A THREE YEAR SUMMARY, EVALUATION AND CELEBRATION REPORT OF CITYHIVE'S
INNOVATION LAB PROGRAM



APRIL 2022

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CityHive would like to recognize the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and the səílwətaʔt (Tseil-Waututh) Nations on whose land we live, learn and engage with youth.

We thank the Host nations for being stewards of their lands and for their leadership in land protection and stewardship for millennia. CityHive recognizes that the civic institutions and decision making processes we seek to influence through our Envirolab program are colonial, and have actively perpetuated harm to Indigenous peoples. It is through understanding our own unique relationship to this place, listening and learning from the Host nations and Indigenous youth leaders, and actively reflecting these learnings within program structure and content that we are working to decolonize our programs.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Envirolab is a knowledge and capacity-building think-and-do-tank for youth ages 18-30 from across Metro Vancouver. The program began in 2019 as a way to close the gap between youth –who wanted to be a part of tackling urban sustainability issues with decision makers – and municipalities – who need support to engage youth meaningfully. The program aims to enable youth to learn about urban sustainability and climate challenges from local government, sustainability leaders and organizations and to act on their learnings by collaboratively creating projects that address those challenges. Each Envirolab cohort focuses on a different issue, which is chosen based on insight from partners and youth. In three years, we have hosted five distinct cohorts of the Envirolab

Youth who participate in this program **leave feeling more confident in their knowledge, skills and tools** to engage with civic and sustainability issues they care about. Our hope is that youth who participate in these programs become a part of a diverse group of youth who are eager to **take bold action to drive climate action forward** across Metro Vancouver, and **partners gain valuable youth insights** and continue to engage youth in their work.

We have worked with 140 youth in our cohort programs, all of whom were bold, driven and curious to take action on sustainability issues they care about. Each cohort was challenged to create climate action projects or activations to drive forward issues like the climate emergency, circular economy, or climate adaptation. While developing projects was a key learning component of the program, the cohorts highlighted gaps that exist across municipal engagement strategies to ensure that youth to have safe and inclusive spaces to explore new connections to their peers, their governments and decision makers while taking climate action on issues they care about.



This report documents the last three years of the Envirolab program design, overviews of each cohort and learnings along the way, as well as an overview of the impacts we've had based on our program evaluation process. We look forward to enhancing the outcomes of the program and future cohorts. We are thankful to have had the opportunity to learn with and from this dynamic and engaged group of youth, the program mentors, and guest speakers who joined us.

After three years of running the Envirolab, **we are pleased to share the learnings, knowledge and insights of the Envirolab program, and share updates about how this program has informed the next phase of Innovation Lab programming at CityHive.** We are grateful for the financial support of the Lawson Foundation and Vancity Credit Union to run the Envirolab, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions who enabled our needs assessment research in 2021, as well as the in-kind support of multiple partners, acknowledged throughout this and past reports, to bring the Envirolab to life.

With hope,



Veronika Bylicki
Executive Director & Co-Founder



Kathryn Trnavsky
Sustainability Programs Lead



WHO IS CITYHIVE



CityHive is a youth-led non-profit organization **on a mission to transform the way that young people are engaged in shaping their cities and civic processes.** We engage youth in urban planning, city making and decision-making processes in Metro Vancouver. As a youth-led and youth-run nonprofit, **we harness the energy, experiences, and perspectives of youth to create projects and solutions to make our cities more sustainable, equitable and resilient.** We work with civic institutions to transform the way that they engage youth to be more meaningful and inclusive.



In just 5 years, **CityHive has run over 80 programs and workshops throughout Metro Vancouver and educated and engaged with over 20,000 youth.** CityHive partners with many organizations and institutions across Metro Vancouver to make our programming meaningful. **Our work centres around building youth's capacity, connections and skills to tackle complex, systemic challenges from climate change to housing to civic engagement.**

20,000+ YOUTH ENGAGED

OUR PROGRAM AREAS



CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Building and creating experiential, knowledge to-action civic education programs for youth (13- 30 years old), in partnership with municipalities.



INNOVATION LAB PROGRAMMING

Planning, convening and facilitating Innovation Labs for youth to collaborate with municipal leaders on addressing urban and sustainability issues, including programs such as the 30Network and Envirolab.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT CONSULTING

Youth engagement consulting and implementation, including fee-for-service work for municipal governments and other organizations or institutions looking to design or carry out youth engagement.



WHAT IS THE ENVIROLAB



The Envirolab was designed in 2019 to fill a gap – while municipalities were seeking to address complex urban sustainability issues like zero waste & circular economies, climate adaptation, reducing household footprints, and climate communications, youth felt they had few opportunities to collaborate with decision makers to learn and co-design the solutions.

The Envirolab is a **think-and-do-tank for youth to explore complex and challenging urban sustainability and climate issues** with municipal partners, **while learning and practicing the skills needed to meaningfully engage in their communities** on those issues. It is a 12-week, cohort-based lab for youth ages 18-30 from a wide range of identities and backgrounds – cultural, academic, professional and lived experiences. Participants deepen their knowledge on sustainability issues and work collaboratively to create projects and activations in their communities. The program exists in partnership with local organizations, decision makers and thought leaders to enable the cohort to grow their network and deepen their knowledge on each topic. Working in this way ensures that each project that youth create in the program is relevant and meets real-world issues.

The Envirolab is rooted in community-based learning, relationship building, and action planning. The Envirolab is a **meaningful way for youth to collaborate with municipalities, civic institutions and community organizations, all while learning, building capacity, and creating bold actions to address pressing sustainability challenges.**

"No other group in the lower mainland has expanded the skills, capacity, and volume of youth looking to engage in civic and global issues more than CityHive. CityHive creates space for participants to voice their perspectives, learn from and teach others in a peer-to-peer model, and build the confidence and competence of young people.

We need this work!"

- Meg O'Shea, Vancouver Economic Commission



This program was designed at a time when no municipality had yet declared a climate emergency. Since 2019, the Envirolab has been able to adapt to the changing landscape of sustainability and climate action work across Metro Vancouver. **Our intent with this program was to package information in ways that make tackling urban sustainability challenges feel approachable and less daunting to reach a wide range of youth while also working to create solution-driven projects to address a range of sustainability challenges.**

The **magic of the Envirolab is the connection and relationships formed that empower participants to feel heard, understood and respected as sustainability and climate leaders.** Youth who complete the Envirolab have gone on to pursue work in sustainability sectors, bringing new modes of thinking, a deeper justice-based understanding of urban sustainability challenges in their communities, and the ability to work collaboratively with peers on impact driven projects.





RECAPPING THE LAST 3 YEARS

5

DISTINCT
COHORTS

140

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
ACROSS 15 MUNICIPALITIES

267

YOUTH
APPLICANTS

36

UNIQUE PROJECTS &
COMMUNITY ACTIVATIONS

At the onset of the project in 2019, CityHive spent 9 months designing the lab and building partnerships for the successful launch and delivery of the program. We developed a Steering Committee of 7 partner organizations/institutions to advise on the strategic direction of the program and to support with each cohort. We designed the lab methodology and framework, and completed research into a myriad of different themes. We conducted a needs analysis with municipalities across Metro Vancouver to understand what sustainability challenges municipalities needed support with. We conducted focus groups with youth to understand their needs and have them inform the direction of the program.

In the end, we ran all five planned cohorts of the Envirolab:

- 1. Lighter Footprint (Fall 2019)**
- 2. Climate Emergency (Winter-Spring 2020)**
- 3. Zero Waste & Circular Economies (Fall/Winter 2020-2021)**
- 4. Climate Adaptation (Summer 2021)**
- 5. Climate Communications (Fall/Winter 2021-2022).**

"We are delighted to partner with CityHive in the delivery of the Envirolab. CityHive has a strong reputation in community for engaging young people in civic and environmental issues and we appreciate the intentional process they developed for the Envirolab. At Vancity, we are committed to building a clean and fair world and we know youth play an important role in creating a more sustainable and inclusive future. We are proud of the accomplishments of all the participants in the series of Envirolab's both in the program and beyond."

- Krista Loewen, Vancity



Each cohort had between **26-30 youth participants between the ages 18-30**. Cohort 1 was hosted entirely in person and Cohort 2 had completed 50% of its programming before the pandemic began and health orders limited in-person programming. This resulted in our team redesigning the remaining half of the program for Cohort 2 as well as the final events, to all take place virtually. In the fall of 2020, we hired on a new Sustainability Program Lead, Kathryn Trnavsky, who took over the role of managing the Envirolab program and led the design and delivery of Cohorts 3-5 between the Fall of 2022 and Spring of 2022.

In light of continued virtual programming, we adapted the program structure to take place over a longer period of time and weekday evenings instead of the previously week full-day sessions over 6 weeks. This longer program structure allowed us to make sure we kept all of the key areas of learning while avoiding full 8-hour days on Zoom, and also had many other learning benefits including more time to digest learning or independent research, and more time for project teams to work on developing their projects meaningfully. We tested this program model with Cohort 3 and made minor adjustments for Cohort 4 and 5.

The **program arc that we designed brings cohort participants through a process from inspiration/learning → ideation → implementation**, spending 2-4 weeks in each phase of the process to deepen their knowledge of the Lab's sustainability theme before beginning their journey of ideating and developing solutions to a variety of problem spaces brought forth by the cohort. Our program activities were adapted to mimic the in-person process, creating virtual whiteboards and idea jams to brainstorm, upvote and decide on priority problem spaces to be addressed. In a similar process, the cohort was able to determine and create a series of possible solutions and ways that they would look to address each of the top ranked problems to focus on. It was through this process that the cohort sorted themselves into smaller project teams for the remainder of the program and worked through a series of project development sessions to build out their ideas. **In response to running virtually, we adapted to create a virtual community for the cohort and project teams to collaborate and stay connected while creating their projects.**



PROGRESS TOWARDS CORE OBJECTIVES

The key objective of the Envirolab is to support youth from Metro Vancouver to create solutions-driven projects that address local sustainability and climate challenges. There are three key goals that drive this primary objective.



BUILD YOUTH'S CAPACITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS ON IMPORTANT CLIMATE ISSUES WHILE PROBLEM-SOLVING AND TAKING ACTION WITHIN THEIR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.

One of these intended outcomes was to have a **wide range of program participants** with **varied lived experiences** and **existing knowledge/experience in the sustainability field**, and for each participant to **deepen their understanding of the theme and expand their networks and relationships**. Across all cohorts, participants have reflected on their own personal achievements: in learning about a field they were interested in but didn't know how to access; in building relationships with other youth leaders and with program partners; and in gaining a better sense of how to engage in the urban sustainability space.



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AMONG YOUTH AS WELL AS BETWEEN YOUTH, THEIR CIVIC INSTITUTIONS, AND ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS METRO VANCOUVER.

At the onset of the Envirolab in 2019, we developed a Steering Committee of partner organizations/institutions which guided our theme selection process, strategic direction and program design. The Steering Committee has played a key role in **providing mentorship** to project teams from each of the labs, **sharing contacts, building connections** to partners across the region and supporting promotion of our program's application process and final events. At the onset of each cohort, we also created a partner map of partners relevant to that theme, ensuring to have a range of government, community organization and youth partners. We **collaborated with a wide range of partners**, including industry leaders, community organizations, academic institutions, community organizers and local governments, to ensure the program was embedded within the full landscape of key players and stakeholders that already exist within each of the thematic areas. These **partnerships were integral to ensuring participants learned directly from those most engaged in the field** and most in touch with intervention points, and also supported their project development. Ultimately, it provided the participants with meaningful relationships with decision makers and thought leaders that they could carry beyond their time in the program, helping us achieve our intended outcome of **breaking down barriers between youth and their civic institutions/leaders**. This also meant that key civic institutions/leaders could learn youth perspectives and input directly from youth, and they often reflected how these experiences expanded their perspectives on how they could engage youth in their own work.



3

CO-CREATE CLIMATE ACTION PROJECTS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS THAT ADDRESS URBAN SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES WITH A JUST AND EQUITABLE LENS.

The project development phase is critical to **providing participants the opportunity to apply their knowledge and their unique skillsets**, while developing key skills and building relationships. 36 unique projects were created through the 5 labs. At the onset of the lab, we placed a large emphasis on project creation and encouraged projects to continue after their time in the lab. We experimented with different models to support participants with carrying their projects forward after the lab, including developing the “Project Hub”. This included 1-1 support, workshops on areas they needed support in (ie fund development, business plan development, equity-centred design) and connections to experts and potential partners. With each cohort, we had a slightly different model for project development, ranging from a design thinking process for participants to develop problem statements, to partners sharing problem statements based on their work for youth to develop creative solutions to. Through evaluation and anecdotally from the first 4 cohorts (and in light of additional stress amid the global pandemic), we heard from participants that they had less capacity to develop long-lasting projects. In light of that, we changed criteria for the last cohort so that participants created smaller-scale activations that could occur within the timespan of the cohort.

Throughout the 3 years of the program, **we adapted the program design and outcomes based on feedback, the global pandemic and the landscape of sustainability/climate action in Metro Vancouver**. We pivoted the Envirolab program to a completely virtual program for the third cohort onwards which also meant redesigning the program to take place over a longer period of time and shorter sessions, which was also based on participant feedback. This allowed for deeper project ideation and development phase of programming, and more time to build relationships with their peers as well as decision makers and key program partners. **We found that while there are limitations to virtual programming, it generally enabled a wider audience of participants for the program, especially a wider geographic range of participants across Metro Vancouver.**

Our final major achievement has been the development and implementation of a full scale evaluation of the Envirolab program including both participants and partners. This has allowed our team to define the impact of the program for youth and municipalities across Metro Vancouver.



CORE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & SUMMARIES

In just 3 years, the Envirolab has served youth ages 18-30 from across Metro Vancouver. The transition to virtual program delivery at the onset of the global pandemic created an opportunity to reach a greater number of youth from across the region.

We worked with 140 youth participants from 15 municipalities across Metro Vancouver who created 36 unique projects and community activations. Our cohort has been able to learn from municipalities, local organizations and thought leaders to drive forward their learnings.

This next section details each of the five cohorts over the last 3 years including summaries and learnings from each cohort.

The Envirolab program structure ensures that youth with different levels of knowledge and experience in the sustainability field can participate and bring in their lived experience and expertise. The framework we have developed is rooted in community-based learning, relationship building, and partner-supported action-planning. This framework builds a learning arc that enables youth to come to the Envirolab with any level of understanding or knowledge about this topic and develop bold actions to address these challenges.

- **Learn** - Conversations with industry leaders (including from municipal governments, community organizations, businesses, associations and beyond) to level up knowledge to consider where we are at and where we want to be as we drive learning forward
- **Explore & Ideate** - Identifying problem statements, ideating solutions and developing projects teams
- **Apply & Create** - Developing a plan to bring project ideas to life

This process is described in detail in each cohort report.



COHORT 1: LIGHTER FOOTPRINT



This cohort took place over 6 in person sessions between October and December of 2019, including a final project pitch presentation to the community and project partners on December 9th 2019.

Lighter footprint represents the practice and process of limiting one's overall environmental impacts that result from day-to-day behaviour. This concept is applicable for individuals, businesses, municipalities and nations. These environmental impacts can include: resources used (e.g. energy, food, water etc.), the amount of waste generated, the amount of greenhouse gases emitted, and more. This idea of measuring and limiting our individual and collective environmental impacts is based on the ecological footprint concept, which was developed by Dr. William E. Rees in 1992 right here in Vancouver!

This inaugural cohort of the Envirolab was challenged to explore questions like:

- *How do we create systems that mobilize individual behavioural change?*
- *What changes need to be made between business, local governments and other levels of government for systemic change?*
- *How do we encourage sustainable practices for individuals and businesses in a way that is rooted in equity, affordability and accessibility?*

In answering these questions, this cohort was able to develop 6 projects that work to amplify the role of the lighter footprint model across Metro Vancouver. You can read more about those projects [here](#).

Over 6 in person learning and knowledge mobilization sessions hosted over 3 months, the cohort was able to dive deeper into building relationships with their community and learning how to engage with those communities - ensuring solutions are informed by the community members they impact while working to envision new possibilities to address the needs brought forward through informational interviews.

You can read more about what this cohort of 30 youth learned [here](#).



COHORT 2: CLIMATE EMERGENCY



This cohort took place over 5 in person sessions hosted between February and March of 2020. At the onset of the pandemic, this cohort shifted to virtual program delivery for the final session and to host a community presentation.

Rising sea levels, increased forest fires, biodiversity loss and record temperatures are catalyzing climate-induced migration around the world. According to the UN, 55 percent of the world's population currently reside in cities, with this number projected to increase to 68 per cent by 2030. While cities are feeling the burden of the climate crisis, they are also the ones stepping up, to take powerful and necessary action. Often, the start of such action is a climate emergency declaration. This cohort theme was born of the City of Vancouver's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. Later in 2020, the City of Vancouver would adopt the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

This cohort was tasked with responding to the following questions:

- *What does a climate emergency declaration mean for a city, for institutions, and for businesses, and what are the scales and measurements of success to ensure that actual actions are implemented?*
- *How can we address the gap that currently exists between needing necessary bold action that scientists and activists are demanding with the slow pace of policy making?*
- *How can governments better involve youth in the decision-making process when proposing new innovative ways to create change at the local level?*

Through 8 weeks of hands on learning and action driven project ideating, 6 project ideas were born that would tackle the above questions. You can read more about those projects [here](#).



COHORT 3: ZERO WASTE & CIRCULAR ECONOMIES

This cohort took place over 12 sessions between November 2020 and March 2021 and two final community presentations to the broader Metro Vancouver community. The Envirolab cohort included youth aged 18-30 from all over Metro Vancouver and represents a strong diversity of identities, positionalities, knowledge and lived experiences.

Today's economic models are linear. They examine product life cycles from conception through consumer use and finally, disposal. Point A to point B. But, they fail to recognize the cyclical potential of products and of the regenerative power that is possible by reimagining HOW and WHY we create and consume 'stuff'. Through examining zero waste initiatives as they relate to the circular economy, we can work together to imagine ways to build waste OUT and build disruption IN to these models. Looking beyond the current take-make-waste extractive industrial model, a circular economy aims to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits.

Creating a shift in the system will require the collective action of individuals, businesses and governments. This will require not only a shift in our collective behaviours, but in the normalized and unconscious social practices that have become embedded within the cultural, social, and political contexts of our communities. Together, we can work to rethink, redesign and refocus the ways through which we understand and participate in the circular economy by responding to questions like:

- *How can youth voice their concerns and meaningfully engage with local governments to put forth innovations that create change at the local level?*
- *What opportunities are there to leverage zero waste initiatives to support a just and green economic recovery that creates inclusive local jobs, including those for youth?*
- *Who is traditionally missing from conversations around 'zero waste' and how do we embed a strong equity lens within this work?*

Through deepening learnings about zero waste and the circular economy, this cohort produced six project driven solutions to challenges and opportunities they identified through this process. You can read about those projects [here](#).

You can read more about what this cohort of 30 youth learned [here](#).



COHORT 4: CLIMATE ADAPTATION



This cohort took place over 13 sessions between May - July 2021 and wrapped up with two final community presentations to the broader Metro Vancouver community. The Envirolab cohort included youth aged 18-30 from all over Metro Vancouver and represents a strong diversity of identities, positionalities, knowledge and lived experiences.

Climate impacts are becoming an increasingly urgent reality and this is an especially intensive period of climate anxiety and climate grief. Wildfires throughout BC (and around the globe) are happening more frequently and are becoming more extreme. The risk of flooding and sea level rise is of concern in low lying coastal areas throughout Metro Vancouver. The social implications of climate change are more prevalent and visible than before, and the impacts of climate change are not felt evenly across our society and have to be examined with a lens on race, class and gender.

Climate adaptation measures look to reduce the vulnerability to the effects of climate change. To adapt to climate change is to acknowledge that there is no going back, only forward. We must seek to find a balance in our relationship to the earth that centres health, equity and resilience at the forefront of these conversations.

Metro Vancouver's ability to adapt to the changing climate requires projections of future extreme weather events in the region, and requires deep connection to community to understand how these events will impact the Host Nations who have been the stewards of these lands since time immemorial, those who call this place home and those who will become disproportionately impacted by climate change.

Together this cohort was challenged to tackle questions like:

- *Who is missing from conversations around climate adaptation and how do we embed a strong equity lens within this work? How can we centre those who are most impacted as we design solutions*
- *How can youth voice their concerns and meaningfully engage with local governments to put forth innovations that create change at the local level?*
- *What opportunities are there to develop climate adaptation plans that are responsive to ecological, social and economic needs in realms like health and food systems?*

You can read more about how this cohort developed 5 projects to life and our learnings from this cohort in the report [here](#).



COHORT 5: CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS

This cohort took place between November 2021 and March 2022 over 14 virtual learning sessions and a final community engagement & celebration.

The project component for this cohort differed from past cohorts, where participants would be tasked to create stand-alone projects in teams that could live on beyond their time in the cohort. This cohort was tasked to identify a community that they are connected to (ie workplace, faith-based space, school) and design a community activation. This cohort of 24 youth was bold, open and vulnerable – they were challenged to create climate action activations with communities they were already connected to, and in doing so, found a community in each other. This cohort highlighted the gaps that are present for youth to have safe and brave spaces to explore their feelings and emotions related to climate change.

Community Activations are designed for the communities - groups of people who are within our own personal spheres of influence and networks - and are meant to meet a need that community has when it comes to taking climate action. These activations could be things like leading an art night to explore creativity and its connection to climate anxiety, a mini workshop about the role of sustainable investing, or hosting an experiential nature walk to deepen one's connection to nature.

Collectively, this cohort was able to design 13 unique community activations to host in their communities and focused in five key themes:

- *The roles of art & design in climate storytelling.*
- *How we can engage with groups who haven't been connected to climate action before and what types of messaging work best in these scenarios.*
- *Understanding how we navigate our own climate anxieties and building personal strategies to navigate feelings and emotions about climate change.*
- *Building a connection to land and food systems while exploring the ways personal narratives intersect these systems.*
- *The roles of sustainable investing and finance in building a more resilient and just future for all.*

You can read more about our final envirolab cohort and their community activations [here](#).

COHORT PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS



Lighter Foodprint

Lighter Foodprint is an initiative focused on unpacking the food production chain to educate the community about food sustainability and the need for climate labeling. **This team is on a mission to integrate the climate into our every day food choices.** Founded by Sandy Wan and Theo Guevara during Envirolab's Climate Emergency Cohort, **this project has been actively operating for the last three years.**

During the Envirolab, The Lighter Foodprint team sought to uncover the problem of food production's impact on global greenhouse gases. This passionate group of youth wanted to shift away from individual actions towards large scale systemic changes and were able to identify gaps in the existing markets.

The urgency of the climate crisis and the significant impact that food has on greenhouse gas emissions means that food services and consumers have an important role to play in their food choices, by creating demand for less carbon-intensive foods. By providing transparency on the carbon emissions of food by using menu labels, consumers will be able to make more climate-informed choices.

Co-Founder Sandy joined Envirolab during a transition phase after working abroad for two years, looking to find a new project and reignite her civic engagement. **With her Envirolab team, she launched Lighter Foodprint, Canada's first climate labelling initiative.** Lighter Footprint is now a mighty team of 15 youth across the country. Sandy also works as a Program Manager at Amazon Web Services.

You can learn more about their work [here](#).

"When you're trying to make an impact in a new way, there are no answers for all the tough questions. Create your own path so that other like-minded youth can walk in your footsteps."

- Sandy Wan, Co-Founder, Lighter Foodprint

COHORT PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS



Surge

SURGE is an initiative focused on **building resiliency and health for shorelines** through nature-based and community-centred solutions. It was founded in June 2021 by Sherry Da, Will Crolla, Tiffany Hui, Tim Brazier, and Peter Dougan during the Envirolab's Climate Adaptation cohort.

SURGE hopes to build **a model of sustainable shoreline protection**, inspire communities to protect future generations, and imagine healthy thriving societies by building a coalition of researchers, industry experts, government officials, Indigenous groups, and communities who want to prevent the damages of shoreline degradation through nature-based solutions.

For the SURGE team, it was vital to acknowledge that oysters have been traditionally cultivated and harvested for consumption and cultural practices by various Indigenous Nations in B.C. With this in mind, they hope to be drawing upon the traditional knowledge of oyster cultivation in the area and leveraging the natural strengths of oysters as a natural living breakwater. They have been consulting with a number of Indigenous nations, researchers, and similar projects and have garnered plenty of support thus far, including a key partnership with the Semiahmoo First Nation and the City of Surrey .

Sherry and Will continue to lead SURGE and have found their respective backgrounds in the freshwater and marine conservation spaces a key factor that combine to build organizational strength as they work to address coastal resilience and health.

You can learn more about their work [here](#).

Founding member Will Crolla also joined CityHive's Facilitation team for the Climate Communications Cohort, and was recently named one of the Top 25 Environmentalists under 25.

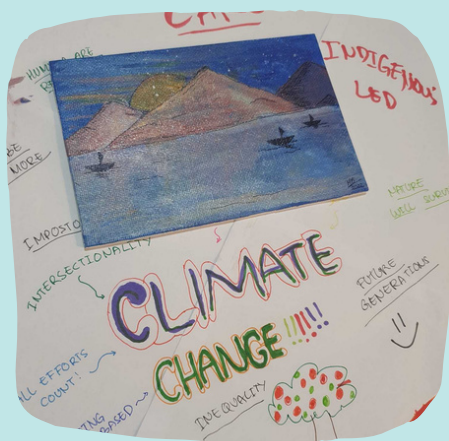
COHORT COMMUNITY ACTIVATION SPOTLIGHTS

Climate Art Night

Climate Art Night was designed and hosted by Deandra during the Envriolab's Climate Communications Cohort for **friends who are already working in the environmental, social and food justice realm**. This community activation combined art with focused discussion about climate justice, climate change and climate action while highlighting self care tools we can utilize as workers in this industry. **Combining art with discussion enabled this community to deepen the tools and coping mechanisms used to manage climate anxiety in a safe space with friends**. Through holding space to intentionally connect in this way, we were able to:

- **Validate** each other's feeling and find comfort in our shared community
- Lean into **art as a form of expression** and therapy
- Listen to good news and **highlight** the positive stories that are happening
- **Envision** a bright future for ourselves and future generations

This night provided a sense of relief for my friends as well as a space for them to let out their grievances about the current climate (and world) state. It also provided a space for them to reflect on why they are doing the work that they do as sometimes people working in the 'environmental field' are exhausted from constant negative news; the reflection really helped reignite the passion and the drive that people had and reminded them why they are in this field in the first place.



Community Climate Anxiety Quilt

This activation is being designed and led by Sammy, a participant in the fifth Envirolab cohort. The activation is a community quilt that **stitches together old fabrics** from friends & strangers to **create a collective narrative about textile waste, circularity, and our relationship to the natural world**. This is a process-focused initiative that will be actively shaped through community participation and her own creative exploration. Sammy is currently in the gathering phase, and in the coming weeks, will shift focus to begin designing and slowly piecing together textile submissions. The hope for this community quilt is to demonstrate how climate storytelling can take many forms, how old belongings can become new, and how many small contributions can come together to create something whole. A quilt may not save the planet, but it is **visual documentation of people coming together in community to imagine a new narrative**.

COMMUNITY QUILT

A STUDY OF /
COMMUNITY ART-MAKING AS ACTIVISM
OLD TEXTILES AS NEW NARRATIVES
CURIOSITY AND IMAGINATION AS SELF-CARE
FRAGMENTS AS PART OF SOMETHING WHOLE



COHORT COMMUNITY ACTIVATION SPOTLIGHTS

Greener Design Principles

This activation was led by Shane, a participant in the fifth Envirolab cohort. Shane works as a Design Producer in a local tech firm and has spent a lot of time thinking about the **impact of digital product design** and learning more about why our design choices matter.

He designed this community activation for his colleagues and design team to build awareness for the ways in which design principles and climate can (and should) intersect. The Greener Design Principles Activation had three goals:

- Inform colleagues **about the environmental impacts of their design decisions;**
- Become aware of actions they can take to create **planet and people focused products;** and
- Have the knowledge to go forth in activating others within their company to **make greener design decisions.**

Shane designed a collaborative learning activation that had two parts; the first being a compelling presentation that focused on the **climate impact of design** decisions, the different approaches they could take to 'green' their craft and advocacy, and the actions they could take to make positive change. The second part was an **ideation and brainstorming session** with the design team members in attendance to **apply some of the learnings and identify some meaningful actions** they could take into their day to day design work.

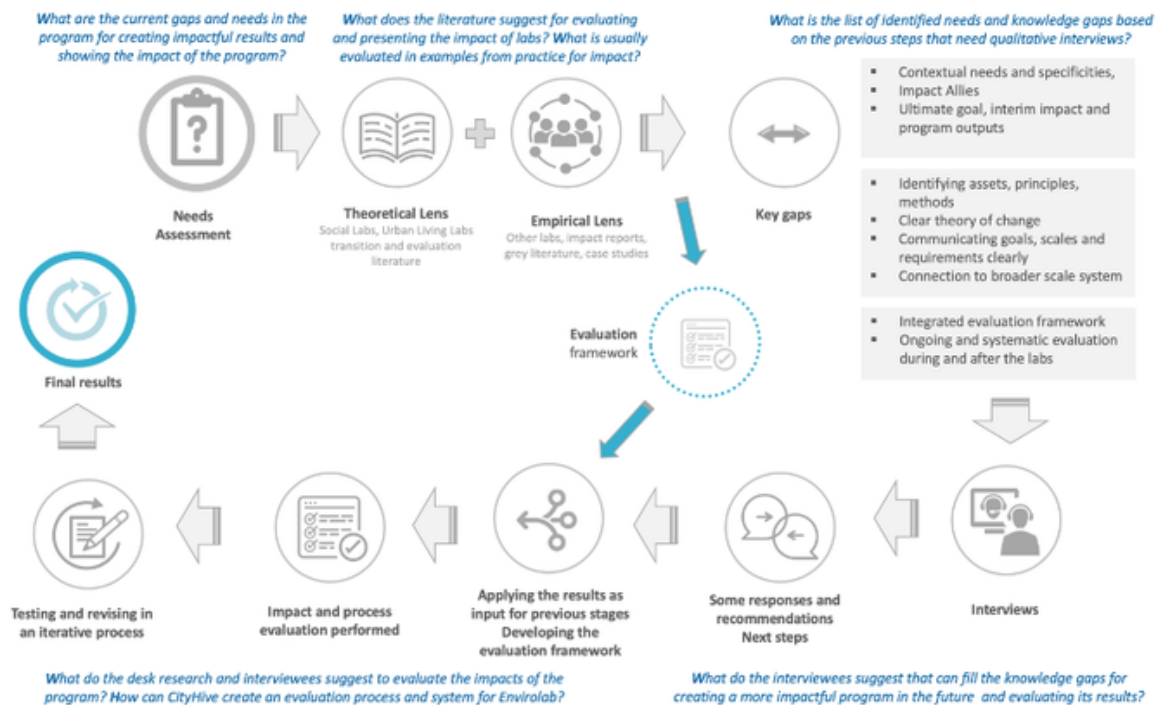
The activation was a **wonderful success**, with more workshops and activations now being rolled out to scale this impact and learnings within the wider organization's design teams!

Designers who are **informed** on the environmental impacts of their design decisions and the **actions** they can take to create planet and people focused products.

ENVIROLAB RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY



In 2021-2022, CityHive embarked on an impact measurement process and assessment of where to take the program next. **We wanted to better understand how the Envirolab can address urban sustainability and climate change issues while meeting the needs of youth and enabling meaningful co-creation with local governments.** This program evaluation and municipal needs assessment research focused on identifying gaps in the current urban lab model of the program, investigating local needs, and exploring different approaches for local governments to work with youth. This research process conducted in three main steps: (1) Program study and needs assessment based on the previous and current Envirolab practice and evaluations (2) Research, including literature review on impact and evaluation, finding common impact evaluation examples in similar programs and case studies and (3) Conducting interviews with local municipalities and organizations in Metro Vancouver. Through funding from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, we were able to hire a researcher, Peyvand Forouzandeh, a PhD Candidate focusing on living labs.



Caption: Relationship between all pieces of the research process building towards the interview phase of this project. Graphic created by Peyvand Fourouzeh and referenced in CityHive internal Research Report.



This research study intended to **provide a roadmap to guide the next steps and direction for CityHive’s innovation lab programming that brings together local governments and organizations with youth to create climate action.** The lab evaluation and municipal needs assessment research serves as a living tool for the CityHive team and partners to use in developing future program offerings that meet the needs of youth across Metro Vancouver while ensuring that outcomes are working towards municipal climate targets and are being done so with municipal decision makers. Over the 6 month duration of this research project, CityHive is taking away the following learnings:

- There is a strong role for third party organizations like CityHive to create stronger models for co-created climate action with youth (and youth engagement in general) to meet the increasing demand and desire by municipalities to collaborate with youth;
- The conducted interviews highlight and reinforce the system within which CityHive (and other youth organizations) are working to innovate within and does not examine external leverage points for systemic change;
- Municipalities require partner organizations like CityHive to present explicit outcomes that are connected to existing policy windows and CityHive is committed to designing outcomes and key impact metrics that align with such policy windows to advance climate action across the region;
- CityHive’s future Innovation lab programming will require a comprehensive evaluation strategy to articulate the impact our programs are having on municipal climate policy and within municipal youth engagement processes; and
- Future Innovation Lab programming should consider partnership models that include working with local educational institutions to leverage existing climate action research.

This research project provided a great opportunity for CityHive to investigate and deepen our understanding of the role that lab models play in urban sustainability and climate action at a critical time in the trajectory of our programs. It has been an influential research position for CityHive to better understand how to evaluate program outcomes while working to meet emerging municipal climate action needs across Metro Vancouver. In addition, the research on urban living labs was able to highlight some of the opportunities that CityHive can further explore as we refine and develop the Climate Innovation Lab model used by CityHive.

You can read the summary report [here](#).

OUR IMPACT



Throughout the Envirolab, we have had a range of processes to evaluate the cohorts and program, both to understand our impact and to gather feedback to improve following cohorts. For each cohort, we carried out a baseline intake form, end of program survey evaluation, session feedback forms as well as alumni focus groups. The Steering Committee provided valuable partner input following each cohort and at the onset of each cohort. Significant changes were made to the program structure and outcomes based on this feedback.

To support our review of the Envirolab, CityHive also conducted a full 3 year review which includes an alumni and partner survey as well as a review of each cohorts data across all five cohorts. The highlights and learnings from these evaluation processes are described on the following pages.

91% WOULD LIKE TO DO THE LAB AGAIN

"Envirolab introduced me to people and concepts that allowed me to have a better understanding of the greater context for which we are all living. I got to see others who were just as passionate as I am doing amazing work. It reminded me that we need all hands on deck to create the biggest impact."

- Envirolab Cohort 3 Alumni, Noah Gould

"Envirolab has revealed how powerful youth can be with a strong support system and platform to share their experiences and ideas. I know I can positively impact the Metro Vancouver community with my project. I see it as my responsibility because I want to make this a better place to live and inspire others around me to create change."

- Cohort 4 Participant



YOUTH FROM OUR PROGRAMS ARE BRINGING A SUSTAINABILITY LENS INTO THEIR ROLES AND GETTING JOBS IN THE SUSTAINABILITY SECTOR

Youth who complete the Envirolab program report bringing a sustainability lens into their roles, whether in the sustainability field or not. **Alumni continue to reach out and utilize CityHive as a reference when applying for jobs after the lab.** And while many are getting jobs post Envirolab, **youth are seeking specific skills that can set them up for future careers** in the sustainability sector and are **curious to deepen their ability to tackle complex and systems level problems**, while growing their confidence to become leaders and manage complex problems and projects in their communities.

92% OF ALUMNI

BRING A SUSTAINABILITY LENS INTO THEIR ROLE OR ARE IN A SUSTAINABILITY BASED ROLE

YOUTH ARE LEADING CLIMATE ACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The Envirolab is a think and do tank and we place a strong **emphasis on building awareness and understanding of the different local level initiatives that are happening across the region.** Many youth had not gone through the process of ideating a project from the beginning, and found immense value in learning the steps and stages of project development - many program alumni utilize this skill post lab.

Program alumni felt one of the biggest takeaways from their time in the program was the **ability to develop a project idea from scratch and work with a range of stakeholders** along the way. Learning about the project ideation and development phase enabled participants to apply those skills in new ways outside of their time in the Envirolab.

86% OF ALUMNI

ACTIVELY UTILIZE THE SKILLS THEY GAINED DURING THE ENVIROLAB

62% OF ALUMNI

ARE INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES OR CLIMATE ACTION PROJECTS





YOUTH HAVE INCREASED CONFIDENCE TO ENGAGE WITH THEIR PEERS, CLIMATE LEADERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS ABOUT LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES.

The Envirolab acts as a **source of knowledge** for youth who enter the program with limited knowledge of the opportunities, resources and initiatives they can access to engage on climate action issues. We hear that the Envirolab is a **place of connection** to other youth leaders in the region, especially for youth who are less familiar with sustainability sector, newcomer youth and those who are making transitions between careers or away from an educational setting.

Youth who complete the program are walking away with **greater confidence to engage within their own networks** as well as an understanding of where else they can seek out opportunities to connect with local initiatives happening in their communities. These youth are also being respected as climate leaders in their own right, and are recognized as holding a unique set of knowledge and experiences on the issues of the labs.

Further, our surveys told us that youth have a self identified increased **ability to lead conversations about climate change**, hold more knowledge to share within their communities and have an **increased sense of who is a part of their community** and how they can scale actions to have a greater impact.

"My AH-HA moment was the joy and energy that came from running my own activation and seeing what it felt like to activate others in their own climate journeys. SO awesome."

- Envirolab Cohort 5 Participant

73% OF ALUMNI
FEEL THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR COMMUNITY, PEERS AND CITY HAS POSITIVELY SHIFTED AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ENVIROLAB

PARTICIPANTS ARE ABLE TO MODEL JOY AND HOPE IN THEIR FUTURE CLIMATE ENDEAVORS.

Many youth have not had safe spaces to explore their feelings related to climate change and working with speakers who were able to lead with joy and hope - modeling the ways the climate industry can (and should work) was a big takeaway for many youth. This was most noticeable during our fifth and final cohort where cohort mentors consistently modeled vulnerability and openness when discussing their own feelings related to climate change, and were also able to encourage participants to engage in conversation with one another in this way. **Cohort members found a sense of community, hope and joy as they built new relationships with their peers and in their communities.**





THE ENVIROLAB IS A MODEL OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND AMPLIFYING YOUTH INSIGHTS

The Envirolab has become a core component of CityHive’s “Innovation Labs” pillar of programming. Whereas in the past, we focused on a different theme for each of our labs, having the 3 year arc of the Envirolab has allowed us to go deep in the urban sustainability space, build stronger collaborations and commit to seeing a larger feedback loop through. We have been able to further carve out our niche as a convener of both youth organizations and different partners across the region. At times, we’ve received feedback that we have brought together partners that wouldn’t have necessarily been in the same room together (ie. construction sector leaders and textile innovation) that have since been able to connect and collaborate on their own.

In addition, CityHive has been able to showcase this work, methodology and learnings by being on a variety of committees, advisory councils and also being able to pass those opportunities along to alumni from the programs. CityHive has also been invited to present and share more about our work at a number of conferences and workshops, including the Leading Change Forum in 2020, 2021 and 2022 - all of which showcase the ways in which we work and the types of projects that are coming out of the Envirolab. We also see a large number of cities and municipalities actively engaging youth on their policies and strategies, this is matched with youth who feel confident to be a part of that process.

“At Leading Change, we believe it’s important for young people to take ownership of the ability that they have to make a difference. That’s why we have been so pleased to partner with CityHive at Leading Change Forums this year and in the past. Their sessions have given our delegates tangible ways to empower themselves on this journey of seeing a more equitable and sustainable future.”

- Executive Director, Leading Change

ALUMNI STORIES



Meet Rachel



Rachel was first introduced to Envirolab during the early stages of exploring what climate action might look like for her. Being a part of the first cohort, the program allowed them to learn about concepts of "sustainability", build new networks with other participants and learn from a range of expert speakers. In particular, Envirolab provided the structure, tools and space to guide her through identifying a problem or gap and going through the ideation process before arriving at a proposed solution. She shares that, *"Envirolab opened my eyes to what youth engagement and meaningful participation could look like."*

Rachel joined the Envirolab's facilitation team for the next two cohorts where she enjoyed bringing in new speakers, working alongside other youth to design workshops and meeting new participants. Through her work with the UBC Community for Community Engaged Learning Grant, she had the chance to pilot a BIPOC Mentorship Program under the guidance of CityHive.

"These experiences have shaped the way I view my role as a youth in the problem-solving space and as a facilitator, building and weaving new connections...I hope to pass on what the Envirolab has taught me"

Rachel is currently back home in Singapore and exploring ways to continue growing as a facilitator and community organizer and is currently developing workshops for new and incoming divestment organizers in Singapore. They recently co-founded Energy Colab with the goal of building a learning community co-create projects that address energy issues in Singapore and the ASEAN region.



Meet Edna

As a newcomer to Vancouver, Canada, Edna was looking for opportunities where she could learn about the sustainability field in a new city and create a place to build community. Through CityHive's Envirolab, she got just that and more! Having completed Envirolab's Zero Waste & Circular Economies Cohort, Edna shares, "I learned of the various environmental challenges facing Vancouver, found community in the diverse youth cohort and an introduction to multiple organizations and professionals, including my current employer." Edna is currently working with OneEarth to make change in Vancouver and beyond!



Meet Noah

Noah was first introduced to the story of stuff project, unaware of how it would impact his journey towards a circular economy. He shares that "This was the beginning of my consciousness journey, which has led to me living zero-waste, vegan and low emission."

Noah hold a deep curiosity for discovering the different ways to adjust lifestyle in order to have a better impact on the planet. He uses the wisdom & knowledge he's gained through life's experiences as well as his time in the Envirolab's Zero Waste & Circular Economies cohort to help educate and inspire others to do the same.

" I want people to know that I am recovering and healing from a period of climate anxiety induced despair. For the last few years I invested so much energy to ensure that I reduced my personal footprints as much as possible. It came at a cost to my wellbeing as I really dove into the depths of climate catastrophe. Now I have found a happy balance and I have rediscovered the joy of life. I will continue to lead by example, compassion and love."



Meet Heather

A neuroscientist by trade, Heather moved to Vancouver from Halifax to pursue her graduate studies at UBC. While her degree is what initially brought her to the west coast, the mountains and vibrant community are what has kept her here. After transitioning into the non-profit sector, Heather realized her passion for grassroots movements and community-based projects that empower and equip a community to create a more sustainable, equitable future. Heather is a food nerd, avid reader, collector of new hobbies, and is happiest when camping. She was a member of the final Envirolab Cohort - Climate Communications and brought forward a community activation to engage the farmers market communities to learn more about food waste and its impacts on our home planet.

"I learned in EnviroLab that the best way to build climate hope is through action. I have found this to be true in my own life, and I can see the ways in which designing and enacting a community project gave me a sense of ownership of what is happening globally, and a sense that I could be an active participant in a future that looks different."



REFLECTIONS

ENVIROLAB HURDLES

Designing a program over a three year cycle leaves room to adapt to the changing needs of the program. As we reflect back, a few key challenges have emerged:

SUPPORTING PROJECTS THAT EMERGE FROM THE LAB.

While each cohort results in 4-6 projects being developed, we learned a great deal in what types of supports these projects require to continue beyond their time in the lab. We made sure to better communicate that working on projects beyond the time in the lab is a possibility, when youth apply for the program. In response to this, we developed the 'Project Hub', a supportive model to ensure projects are getting the support they need through skill-based workshops (ie equity-centred design, fundraising 101), peer feedback sessions, and 1-1 support (including being connected with the right partners or other incubators). In utilizing learnings and insights from previous lab cohorts, we built in more time for project development in Cohorts 3-5 and kept this a focus of the labs from the start. We have also learned that project development post-lab is not a main driver of participation for cohort members, who are more interested in building strong connections with their peers and learning more from local decision makers. As a result of that, we experimented with changing the project requirements for the final cohort, where participants were tasked with creating community activations that were smaller in nature and that they could complete within the timespan of the cohort.

ENSURING THAT YOUTH WITH IDENTITIES THAT ARE OFTEN EXCLUDED FROM CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL INNOVATION PROCESSES PARTICIPATE IN THE COHORT.

The Envirolab program has continued to see an increase in interest in the program and we have always received more applicants than we are able to accept. Our challenge has been to reach new groups of youth and include youth with often excluded identities, including Indigenous, racialized, and newcomer youth. The CityHive team is working as a whole to better center equity, diversity and inclusion principles in all facets of programming including outreach and recruitment including redeveloping our intake processes, selection and recruitment campaigns. The Envirolab team is making this a priority to ensure that we can uphold these principles throughout our program. We are also looking forward to begin to co-design and co-deliver programs with service agencies and other organizations that work with specific communities of youth to make sure that programs on a whole are meeting the assets and needs of youth who may face different barriers.



THE LANDSCAPE OF WHAT MUNICIPALITIES NEED AND WHAT YOUTH NEED IS CONSTANTLY SHIFTING.

When we first designed the Envirolab, no municipality had yet declared a climate emergency, and many municipalities in Metro Vancouver were creating their first sustainability plans. Youth-led climate movements just started to gain momentum in the mainstream and popular media, and more institutions began to understand the conceptual need for youth engagement. In the last 3.5 years, the landscape of climate action on a municipal level has shifted dramatically. This meant that we had to constantly make sure to be keeping a pulse on what the needs of both municipalities and youth were. Being a youth-run organization, having a pulse on youth's needs is built into our DNA, while maintaining a pulse on the plans and strategies that municipalities were developing and hence what the leverage/intervention points for our youth cohorts were was more challenging. Our Steering Committee as well as our strong partnerships were immensely helpful in making sure we continued to have a pulse. Over this period, we adapted both the themes of the program and the outcomes to meet not only the shifting language of climate action/sustainability work, but also to meet the shifting needs of municipalities and youth.

STAFF CAPACITY TO REVIEW LEARNINGS AND PROGRAM EVALUATION ON A WHOLE.

Throughout the Envirolab, we grew our understanding of how to effectively evaluate programs to ensure participant experiences continually informed the objectives and structure of the Lab. The evaluation process for the Envirolab is modeled after similar evaluations done throughout CityHive programming. Our challenge has been staff capacity to thoroughly review learnings, examine reach or impact and review program evaluation results as a whole, and not just on a cohort-basis. As a team we have appreciated the opportunity to learn with others from the Lawson cohort about the evaluation process and tools that we can implement to track, monitor and evaluate our programs across all three cohorts. In the last 6 months we have been able to bring on a team member to support wider CityHive impact measurement, and that Impact Researcher has worked with our Sustainability Programs Lead to better understand how to apply those findings and evaluative processes for future cohorts. We are also spending more time learning about the types of information we are collecting from our participants and how we can better use that information to inform program development.



REFLECTIONS



ENVIROLAB LEARNINGS

In response to our learnings from each cohort, the challenges and hurdles this project has experienced during its three year run, there are many major key learnings that the Envirolab team is taking away. All of these learnings are helping to shape and inform the climate action innovation programming CityHive will host in the future.

THERE IS A NEED FOR CO-CREATIVE SPACES FOR YOUTH TO WORK ALONGSIDE DECISION MAKERS TO TACKLE COMPLEX PROBLEMS AND HAVE A REAL WORLD IMPACT.

Although this was one of our core assumptions underlying our objectives of the program, we continually had this validated through youth participants and partners. Youth crave community and opportunities to explore complex problems with their peers and local decision makers and climate leaders. CityHive's programming provides a space for youth to learn with other youth in their communities and discuss key issues that matter to them. In having opportunities to explore complex issues with decision makers and climate leaders, youth are able to build confidence to carry their ideas forward, recognize their roles as leaders in their communities and own the knowledge and expertise they already hold on a specific topic to continue to engage. When we initially designed the program, we placed a large emphasis on the outcome of project development; over the course of the cohorts, we placed more and more emphasis on building skills, knowledge and connection for long-lasting engagement, based on evaluation and our assessment of shifting needs.

DEVELOPING PROJECTS IS NOT THE MAIN DRIVER OF PARTICIPATION IN THE LAB AND YOUTH FELT STRAPPED FOR CAPACITY IN CARRYING PROJECTS FORWARD; HOWEVER APPLYING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DURING THE PROGRAM WAS A MAJOR HIGHLIGHT.

While most projects created in the program did not continue, many participants shared that creating the projects with partner input was a major highlight. We experimented with different project support mechanisms during the 3 year cycle to try to support youth projects, and by the last cohort, pivoted to a model for projects that were ideated and delivered during the timespan of the cohort. Developing projects with the intent of carrying them on put lots of pressure on project teams and detracted from learning. We find projects and community activations have greater success when they are connected directly to a relevant local climate policy in the region and have organizations or individuals who can play a strong mentorship/champion role. Going forward, we intend to maintain a project component but shift the criteria and capacity needed to deliver the project.



YOUTH DO NOT HAVE FORMAL SAFE OR BRAVE SPACES TO DISCUSS THEIR FEELINGS AND ANXIETIES RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

This means that the Envirolab becomes an entry point for many to process ideas they had not processed before. The COVID-19 pandemic also directly impacted and limited the in person community spaces that youth are exposed to develop, deepen and maintain their connection to their own communities. Youth are craving in person social gathering as the means to connect with their peers, and while our virtual learning space has provided a sense of community where there was not one before, youth are fatigued of virtual programming and gatherings. Going forward, any climate engagement and educational spaces need to include socio-emotional modules or components for youth to process climate grief and anxiety.

YOUTH UNDERSTAND THAT THERE CANNOT BE CLIMATE ACTION WITHOUT CLIMATE JUSTICE.

Centring our JEDDI (justice, equity, diversity, decolonization and inclusion) principles in our programs also takes time, and participants come into the program at very different learning points and self awareness on equity & justice. We learned how we can better include JEDDI curriculum and content in our programs, and also made sure to reflect that in the speakers that were invited into the cohort. Two areas where we are committed to doing deeper and further work to embed JEDDI into our programs are 1) developing partnerships where we can co-design programs from start to finish, to make sure we're meeting the needs of specific communities of youth and (2) recruitment strategies to make sure that we reach a wider audience of youth with all of our programs.

MORE STAFF SUPPORT CREATES A MORE MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE FOR PARTICIPANTS.

Over the course of the 5 cohorts, we tweaked and landed on a facilitation team model that distributed the load of work better and also made sure that participants had adequate support and a wider representation of lived experiences/expertise on the facilitation team, which contributes to creating safer spaces. We also offered alumni opportunities to return as facilitators, which offered a capacity building opportunity for youth that were interested in staying involved. In the future, we will ensure to adequately budget and plan for more staff capacity to make sure we have enough capacity to do partnership development, program design, facilitation and evaluation all more meaningfully and at a reasonable pace/work load.



THERE ARE SPECIFIC INTERVENTION POINTS AND LEVERS THAT MAKE CHANGE POSSIBLE.

We have been able to learn that each municipality holds a different level of understanding on how to engage youth in their region, and that many of these regions require some support to understand what meaningful youth engagement can really look like. We are excited to explore this last learning some more, by creating a tool and resource for municipalities to better understand how to engage youth in climate initiatives.

PARTNERSHIPS MAKE THIS PROGRAM MEANINGFUL.

Relationships are core to everything CityHive does, so this isn't a brand new learning, but we were reminded through the amazing support of our Steering Committee over the 3 years that supported us strategically and in program delivery, as well as a wide range of knowledge experts and other partners, that partnerships mean that this program is embedded and attuned to real-world needs. It allows youth participants to build long-lasting relationships they likely wouldn't have direct opportunities to build otherwise, and it allows institutions/organizations to gain valuable youth input. Going forward, we intend to build out clear partnership commitments for our Steering Committee to ensure that we feel like we can make clear asks for support and guidance, and so that the Steering Committee can reasonably commit for the duration of the program. We also intend to continue to expand the web of partners that we work with.

"[CityHive plays] an important role since there aren't really any other programs such as this. We need more like this to support the next generation!"

- Envirolab Program Partner





INTRODUCING A NEW PROGRAM

THE YOUTH CLIMATE INNOVATION LAB

After this three year cycle of the Envirolab and extensive evaluation of the Envirolab Project, including the research project completed by the Impact Researcher we brought on, CityHive will be revamping this program model and will continue to offer a similar lab program. After doing work on assessing needs, CityHive has **identified 3 core needs** that have informed how we restructure our innovation lab programming to adapt for shifting needs that enable youth led climate action.

1

MUNICIPALITIES AND CIVIC INSTITUTIONS NEED BROAD BASED CITIZEN SUPPORT.

Passing and implementing climate emergency action plans requires support from residents and community members through meaningful engagement opportunities and ongoing relationships with decision makers.

2

YOUTH ARE FEELING MORE CLIMATE ANXIOUS THAN EVER BEFORE.

Youth require spaces to build and develop the skills and tools they need to manage these feelings and emotions, and need opportunities to apply those skills.

3

YOUTH AND MUNICIPALITIES NEED CO-CREATIVE SPACES TO TAKE CLIMATE ACTION.

Hosting collaborative spaces for youth to work alongside decision makers, and flex their climate action muscles, is a key to building lasting and impactful climate solutions.



THE YOUTH CLIMATE INNOVATION LAB IS A PROGRAM FOR YOUTH TO COLLABORATE WITH MUNICIPALITIES, CIVIC INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, ALL WHILE LEARNING, UPSKILLING, AND CREATING BOLD ACTIONS TO ADVANCE A JUST TRANSITION AND ADDRESS CLIMATE CHALLENGES.

The Youth Climate Innovation Lab holds three core objectives:



BUILD KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND CAPACITY.

Enabling youth to act on climate change in a local context - with a focus on upskilling - including leadership capacity building - and reskilling to ensure youth have the foundational skills to take climate action and apply a systems lens and climate justice lens.



CREATE TANGIBLE PATHWAYS FOR YOUTH TO PROVIDE CRITICAL INPUT.

Supporting institutions, businesses and municipalities to gain critical youth input to strengthen their climate action commitments by presenting real work problems and projects for youth to work on during the program.



ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN YOUTH, THEIR CIVIC INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS METRO VANCOUVER

Build relationships between youth, their civic institutions and organizations across Metro Vancouver, embed a civics lens for youth to understand policy windows and engagement opportunities in their communities to understand where they can have a real impact.





OUR NEXT STEPS

In the lead up to launching the Youth Climate Innovation Lab, some of our next steps include:

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND FUND DEVELOPMENT:

CityHive seeks to ensure that our program offerings are accessible to all youth who want to participate. We constantly evaluate our partner map, community network and groups we are connected with to share our program details, including relevant promotional materials related to program intake and program events. In alignment with our JEDDI Action Framework - we are committed to working with an even more diverse group of partners to help inform, shape and ensure that youth are connected with decision makers and leaders. We are working over the next six months to build stronger relationships with each of the Host Nations, including Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations to bring deeper connections to Indigenous knowledge, values and ways of doing to climate work. We are also building new partnerships for this next iteration of the program who are aligned with our program outcomes to serve on a new Steering Committee.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN:

CityHive will continue to work with an aligned Steering Committee who will work to support our team in developing the next iteration of the Envirolab to fill a new gap we are identifying throughout our program evaluations. This new program model will place a stronger focus on providing youth a space to learn and practice skills needed for advancing climate action in their careers and lives. We will work closely with our Steering Committee and key partners to provide insights, guidance and feedback on the program model to ensure this program will continue to fill a needed gap for both you and municipalities to take action on climate issues across Metro Vancouver.

PROGRAM DELIVERY:

CityHive will spend the next five - six months developing the next iteration of the Envirolab, aiming to launch this new lab in Fall of 2022. We will seek to bring a Program Coordinator to support weekly program delivery, planning and facilitation of the program and will hire on additional youth facilitators to support the delivery of programming while growing the capacity of youth within our alumni community to step into program roles in the future.

PROGRAM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT:

CityHive is conducting a full review of the Envirolab program, which coupled with previous Impact researcher reports and recommendations, learnings from the evaluation toolkit developed during this cohort with the Lawson Foundation, and additional learnings from staff development workshops will enable CityHive to develop a more comprehensive framework for future programming across our suite of program offerings.

WITH THANKS

The Envirolab is made possible with generous support from the Lawson Foundation, Vancity Credit Union and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions.

LAWSON
FOUNDATION

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FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

We are proud to work alongside an amazing set of partners who make up our Steering Committee to provide guidance and support to the development of this program and the cohort projects. We extend this thanks and gratitude to Vancity Credit Union, Vancouver Economic Commission, Social Purpose Institute, OneEarth, The Share.Reuse.Repair. Initiative, and the City of Vancouver.

Vancity



VANCOUVER
ECONOMIC COMMISSION



SOCIAL
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OneEarth



ShareReuseRepair
INITIATIVE
making the most of Things

CITY OF
VANCOUVER

making business better
Burnaby
BOARD OF TRADE

EVERGREEN

WE EXTEND THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THE ENVIROLAB OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS AS GUEST SPEAKERS, PROJECT MENTORS, AND FACILITATORS:

Aarti Kamat
Adam Corneil
Adriana Laurent
Alice Henry
Amanda Mitchell
Amelia Huang
Angela Han
Anna Bohn
Anna Zhuo
Bruce Ford
Cate Burton
Carleen Thomas
Cheryl Brooks
Cheryl Ng
Chris Arkell
Cinci Csere
Dagmar Timmer
Daniel Rotman

Deb Hardford
Dina Sadeghi
Dr. Stephen Sheppard
Elder Xwechtaal
Elder Margaret
Em Mittertrainer
Emily Pearson
Erica Lotelli
Erin Desaultels
Felix Bock
George Benson
George Radner
Grace Nosek
Igor & Reihane
Irina Mackenzie
Jasmine Chauhan
Jaylen Bastos
Jenna McNeil

Jim Boothroyd
Julie Kanya
Karen Storry
Katia Tynan
Keeshan
Krista Loewen
Leah Bae
Lucy Duso
Manisha Narula
Matt Horne
Max Lindley Peart
Maya Chorobik
Meg O'Shea
Melanie Chanona
Michelle Xie
Naitik Mehta
Nicola Jones-Crossley

Paul McBride
Petros Kusmu
Rachel Cheang
Rob Fischer
Robin Cox
Robin Hawker
Rosemary Cooper
Sandy Wan
Shalen Chen
Simon Donner
Sophia Yang
Svend Anderson
Tamsin Mills
Tara Lamond
Tara Mahoney
Tessa Vanderkop
Vanessa Timmer
Will Crolla



STAY CONNECTED WITH CITYHIVE

As we plan, design and deliver upcoming climate action programs through 2022 and beyond you can Stay connected with us!

Reach out to connect about partnerships, collaborations or learning more about our programs!

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CityHive

April 2022