



OUR IMPACT

YOUTH CLIMATE LAB'S 2023 UPDATE





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FOREWORD

LETTER FROM OUR CO FOUNDERS

In a time of connected and cascading crises, and deepening inequities and injustices, Youth Climate Lab's (YCL) mission to equip young people to build just, climate-resilient futures has never been more important. As Co-founders and former Directors of the organization, it is with deep humility and gratitude that we reflect on how far we've come and we celebrate YCL flourishing thanks to Jasveen's brilliance and compassionate leadership powered by an outstanding team.

We started YCL in 2017 because we were frustrated with the lack of climate ambition demonstrated by governments around the globe, and by the absence of opportunities, spaces and resources for young people to take matters into their own hands. We envisioned a world where young people – no matter who they are or where they are from – were supported to catalyze local to global action rooted in climate justice. Six years later, YCL continues to prove that trusting and empowering youth can transform communities for the better, and must be invested in. While the youth climate landscape has changed dramatically since we started, youth-led climate solutions are still critically under-supported and undervalued, receiving [only 0.76% of climate philanthropy](#).

Those who have been following YCL's work know that it was always important for both of us to leave when we became what we (lovingly) refer to as "Elder Youths". As we reflect on the years we've spent dreaming, building and learning in the youth and climate space, there is one message we strongly want to convey; take care of yourself. This work is challenging and never-ending. Find strength in community and don't be afraid to ask for help. Rest when you need to and try to find joy amongst the chaos we are living through. Trust that your voice, ideas and lived experiences are not only valid but very much needed forms of expertise. And if there's one thing we've observed since stepping back from the organization, it's that young people are demonstrating the bold, courageous and inclusive leadership that is rarely seen in practice but so desperately needed.

So it is with great pride, and even greater confidence, that we introduce YCL's impact over the last three years and the team's vision for the work ahead. As a youth-for-youth lab, YCL exists to enable youth to design the tools, resources and programmes they know are needed. We couldn't be more proud and excited to watch Jasveen and the entire team drive the systemic shifts needed to enable youth to build the futures they deserve. Whether you are a young person, "Elder Youth" like us, or a "young-at-heart", we hope this report will inspire you to continue trusting the power of young people, valuing and integrating youth-led voices and ideas in your work, and if you have access, to shift power and resources to youth-led movements.



Ana F. Gonzalez Guerrero



Dominique Souris



LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am so pleased to present the latest impact report from Youth Climate Lab. As the Executive Director of this incredible organization, I am proud to share the progress we have made towards our mission of empowering and supporting young leaders in the fight against climate change worldwide.

Over the past few years, we have continued to expand our work, building partnerships and networks that connect young people with the tools and resources they need to create meaningful change. We have seen the incredible impact that young leaders can have when given the opportunity to drive innovation and action, and it has been an honour to support their work and amplify their voices.

Within this report, you will witness the positive impact of our diverse range of programs, initiatives, and partnerships in empowering young people to lead the way towards a more sustainable and equitable future. Our work has resulted in tangible outcomes, enabling us to create a more sustainable world for generations to come.

We remain deeply committed to our mission of empowering young leaders and accelerating action on climate change, and we know that with your support, we can continue to make progress towards a more just, climate resilient future.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve in this role and to work alongside such a dedicated and passionate team. I am proud of what we have accomplished together and am excited for what the future holds.

Thank you for your continued support of Youth Climate Lab and our work to create a better world for all.

Sincerely,



Jasveen Brar



OUR JOURNEY

GROUNDING IN THE PRESENT

Who We Are

Youth Climate Lab (YCL) is a Canada-based, global non-profit organization of youth mobilizing youth to create just, climate-resilient futures. Our vision is for young people - no matter who they are or where they are from - to catalyze transformative climate action in their communities to the highest levels of decision making.

Our Approach

We enable youth to imagine and build climate-resilient futures through the design of tools, programs, and spaces. Our approach is shaped by YCL's Shifts, Radical Collaboration and community priorities.



YCL Shifts

We design, pilot and scale creative & collaborative experiments that drive:

SKILLS SHIFT

To equip young people to transform their communities and build the climate futures they deserve



FINANCE SHIFT

To disrupt capital flows to be more equitable so young people can start and scale their climate solutions



POLICY SHIFT

To create opportunities for young people to understand and influence climate policy



Young people are empowered to catalyze transformative action at all levels, from their communities to the highest levels of decision-making



Just, climate-resilient world



Radical Collaboration

We pride ourselves on our ability to design and pilot impactful programs alongside diverse co-creators. The YCL community is a source of mutual inspiration and a support system which includes our team, Associates, audiences, partners, and funders. To facilitate an effective collaboration experience, we root our co-design processes in the following six principles of Radical Collaboration.

Our Principles of Radical Collaboration

1. YOUTH-FIRST
2. CREATIVE
3. INCLUSIVE
4. DISRUPTIVE
5. CATALYTIC
6. EQUITABLE



Read more about our Shifts and our Principles of Radical Collaboration [here](#)



Rooted in Community

Youth Climate Lab grounds our work in community priorities, tailoring our offerings to respond to the issues that matter to youth today. Key themes emerging in youth-led climate justice work that YCL is actively incorporating and responding to are:



addressing climate grief and burnout, and rooting climate spaces in healing and joy



re-imagining climate resilience through creative methods, including mainstreaming the use of art-based methods to further climate justice



continuing to challenge tokenism of youth in decision-making, and building the capacity of youth to not only be a part of decision-making but actively leading them

Centering the lived knowledge and experiences of youth who are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, and mainstreaming equity and justice in every step of the design and implementation of climate solutions has and remains at the core of YCL.



OUR PATH TO THE PRESENT

2017

YCL was founded to “help youth access the spaces, support and resources they need to scale their big ideas to transform our world”, as stated by YCL’s Co Founders Ana F. González Guerrero and Dominique Souris. In this first year, YCL’s work began as orienting around supporting and training young people at the international scale of policy.

Since 2017, YCL has employed 45+ youth, designed and implemented 50+ programs with 100+ partners and collaborators, and reached youth in 100+ countries.

2018

YCL began articulating its work under the three Shifts, allowing the organization to better communicate the role YCL plays in both the national and international climate ecosystem. Partnerships that influence YCL to this day were sparked and deepened, and Pop-Up Labs emerged as a key tool for YCL to support youth-led climate innovation.

2019

YCL expanded its capacity significantly, increasing to a team of 5 full-time employees and launching cohort-based programs. This signaled YCL’s continued commitment to compensate youth and to support youth-led climate action in new ways.



2020

YCL responded to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic by shifting to remote offerings, and creating multiple opportunities for youth to engage in equity-centered responses to the pandemic. This year, arts-based methodologies also became a key practice to drive YCL's mission.

2022

YCL underwent a significant transition marked by the departure of co-founders Ana and Dominique and the arrival of Jasveen Brar as Executive Director. This prompted deep reflection on YCL's role in the climate justice space and renewed dedication to the organization's core strengths: building the capacity of young people in climate action and amplifying youth-led solutions in decision-making spaces.

2021

YCL radically collaborated to amplify frontline voices, both globally and locally. Programs highlighted solutions led by equity-deserving groups and were grounded in storytelling, mentorship and cross-cultural exchange.

2023

YCL remains steadfast in its commitment to building youth capacity for climate action, while also delving into the themes of healing, creativity, and environmental literacy.

**THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO
COME, AND WE HOPE YOU JOIN US
AS OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES.**



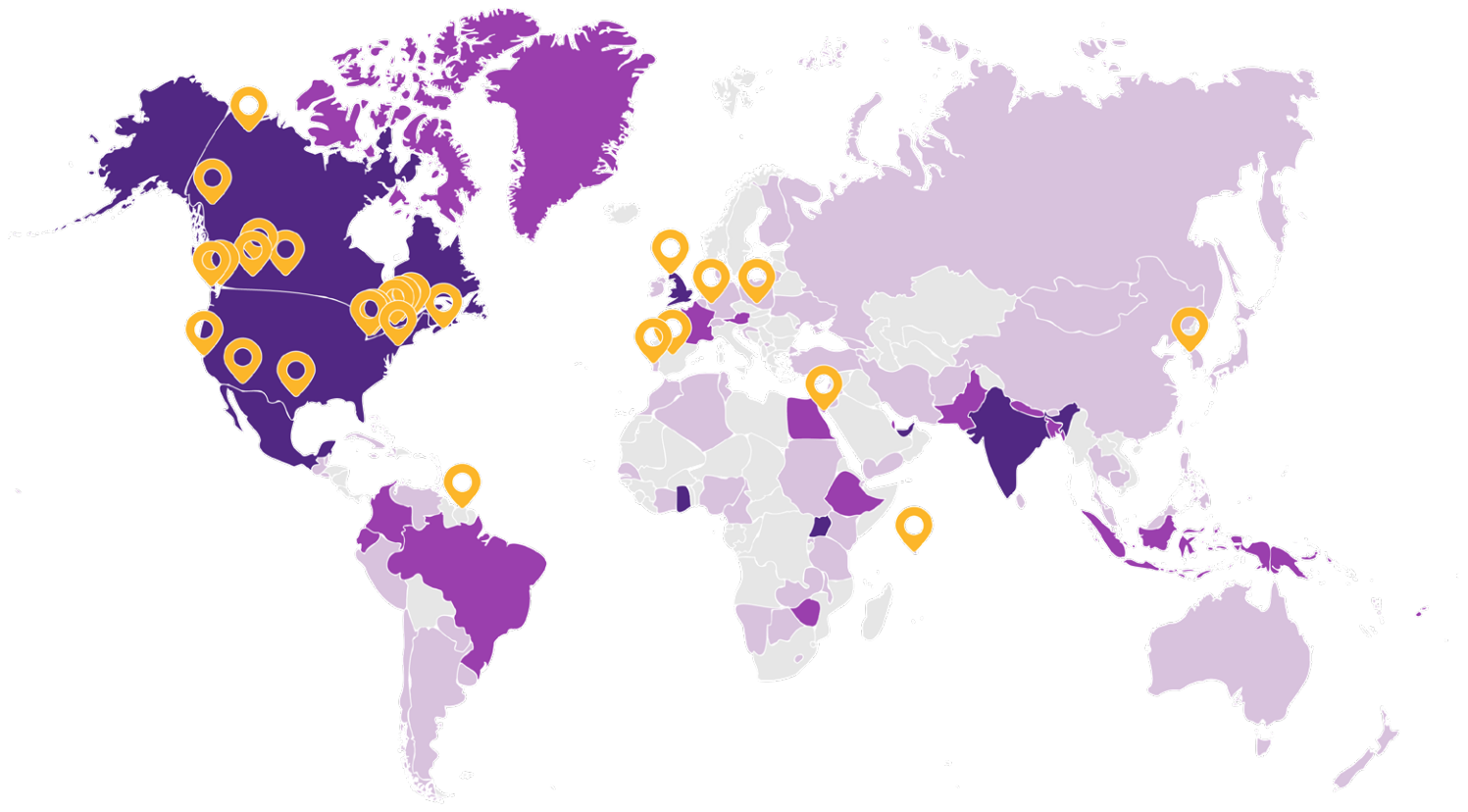
OUR IMPACT (SO FAR)



WHERE WE ARE

YCL has staff located across the land currently known as Canada. We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territories of many Indigenous Peoples. We recognize and honour the history, spirituality, and culture of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have been the custodians of Turtle Island since time immemorial.

OUR REACH

Our work extends beyond borders, connecting youth from a range of geographic and demographic contexts. Along with our work with youth from 100+ countries, we have hosted activations, events and workshops, in 50+ communities.



-  where we've hosted activations
-  the darker the shade, the more participants have been reached in the country



OUR PORTFOLIO OF EXPERIMENTS

APR
2020

PROJECT
START DATE



Creativity for Climate: A Generative Process

Co-designed a tool with summer 2020 artist-in-residence, Savanna Harvey, containing a generative process designed to grow information into creative expression.

With: International Centre of Art for Social Change, Judith Marcuse Projects, and the McConnell Foundation



Just Recovery & Climate Jobs for Youth Open Studio

Hosted a space to cultivate dynamic and creative conversations on the challenges and opportunities for youth to access climate-related employment in a time of COVID-19.

With: MaRS Data Catalyst, and the McConnell Foundation

2021



Climate Action Cohort (CAC)

CAC once again brought together SOI alumni to bridge the gaps between policy decisions, community action and youth engagement through retreats and independent project implementation.

With: Students on Ice Foundation, and the Lawson Foundation



COVID-19 Economic Recovery: Youth and Climate Report

Conducted a study exploring how youth employment and climate action were considered in COVID-19 responses.

With: University of Waterloo, and Mitacs Accelerate Program



Municipal Infiltration Manual

Created an educational resource to demystify municipal governance and provide youth with practical tools to take climate action at the local level.

With: Climate Caucus and the McConnell Foundation

Collaborated and consulted with 9 youth + 10 councillors.





Canada's Net Zero Future & Finding Our Way in the Global Transition

A workshop to support youth in ideating their desired net zero futures, through exploring CCI's Net Zero Future report and hearing from storytellers about the connections between climate and their art practice.

With: Future Ancestors Services Inc., Student Energy, and the Canadian Climate Institute



ImpactCOVID: Road to Recovery Design Jam

A workshop which engaged youth and employers in the collaborative development of a youth and climate action informed Pandemic Recovery Plan.

With: Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity



Innovate4Climate Session: Outraged, Overwhelmed and Optimistic Open Studio

An interactive workshop to spark creative discussions and actions to centre youth and climate priorities in COVID-19 recovery.

With: Connect4Climate

Engaged 94 youth across 40 countries.



RAD Cohort

RAD (Research, Activate, Deepen) Cohort was a six month project and partnership accelerator that supported youth of plural identities to explore the intersections between climate justice, radical collaboration, and the 2030 Agenda, alongside peers and a community of coaches.

With: Employment and Social Development Canada

Sparked 60+ partnerships on the SDGs across so-called Canada.



HerStart

A multi-year program in which YCL provides educational materials and facilitation on climate action and green entrepreneurship for HerStart Fellows and partners from Canada, Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana.

With: Youth Challenge International

Trained 150+ Fellows since 2020.



Youth Voices on Climate Action and Recovery on the road to COP26

A multi-media project where young leaders from the Global Majority were interviewed on multi-solving and their recommendations for climate action at COP26 and beyond.

With: International Development Research Centre and Green Africa Youth Organization

Engaged 10 Global Majority youth in the creation of an audioblog and policy brief.





Climate Action Cohort (CAC)

CAC once again brought together SOI alumni to bridge the gaps between policy decisions, community action and youth engagement through retreats, independent project implementation and attendance at UN Climate Change Conference (COP26).

With: Students on Ice Foundation, and the Lawson Foundation



Climate Resilience Collective

A global, multi-partner initiative focused on building North-South solidarity and relationships, and enabling the scaling frontline climate action with youth from Bangladesh (Bay of Bengal) and the Yukon (sub-Arctic).

With: International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Assembly of First Nations: Yukon Region, The Council of Yukon First Nations, and the Climate Justice Resilience Fund

Supported 24 youth across both pilot regions

2022



LAND(ING) BACK

A multi-media project showcasing Indigenous youth perspectives, culminating in a policy brief identifying key barriers to Indigenous youth engagement in climate decision-making and recommendations to address these barriers.

With: 4Rs Youth Movement

Released 5 audioblogs sharing Indigenous youth's perspectives.



Everyone VS Climate Change: YCL @ SXSW

Hosted a panel, "How are You(th) Showing up for Climate Action?", and a climate party, "Brunch & Brews", at South by Southwest (SXSW) in Austin, Texas.

With: Climate Justice Resilience Fund



Climate Stories Ottawa

A series of video interviews with young racialized climate justice activists living in Ottawa discussing their experiences with the climate movement, created in collaboration with Jaku Konbit Ottawa and filmmaker Stephane Mukunzi.

With: Engaged and compensated 8 youth in climate storytelling and reflection.

Engaged 10 Global South youth in the creation of a 3-part audio series which informed a policy brief.





Greenpreneurs Pacific & Eastern Caribbean

Supported curriculum development and localization for the Greenpreneurs program in the Eastern Caribbean and the Pacific, including developing green entrepreneurship incubator trainings and events celebrating 'Women in Green Innovation'.

With: Global Green Growth Institute, Employment and Social Development Canada

Provided trainings for emerging green entrepreneurs in 12 countries.



#DIGITALART4CLIMATE

Supported the creation of a digital media arts and environmental advocacy toolkit, designed and facilitated by 2022 artist-in-residence Emel Tabaku, as part of the FUTURES/forward program.

With: International Centre of Art for Social Change and Judith Marcuse Projects



(YOU)th Achieving a Sustainable Future Pop-Up Lab

A Pop-Up Lab on the Canadian Government's 2022-2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, Achieving A Sustainable Future. Youth were supported in articulating their priorities for the strategy, and YCL formally submitted a summary to the Government on behalf of participants.

With: Alliance 2030, the Community Foundations of Canada, and the Government of Canada



United Nations Oceans Conference

Supported Ocean Wise in bringing a delegation of Ocean Bridge alumni to the United Nations Oceans Conference in Lisbon, Portugal.

With: Ocean Wise

Trained and supported 6 youth delegates.



Putting Y(Our) Money Where It Matters

An interactive Q&A exploring sustainable financial decision making in the landscape of our current climate reality.

With: Greenportfolio





Putting a Cap On Canadian Oil & Gas Policy Jam

A virtual Policy Jam on the Government of Canada's proposed oil and gas emissions cap options in 2022. Participants feedback was summarized into a formal submission to the Government of Canada.

With: Canadian Climate Institute



Putting (YOU)th on the Agenda

A workshop series to amplify RAD alumni's community projects and radical collaboration practices for the 2030 Agenda. Topics included making green jobs accessible for all, creating the future of food, and building meaningful partnerships.

With: Alliance 2030, the Community Foundations of Canada and Impact Hub Ottawa

Compensated 4 RAD Cohort alumni in furthering their public speaking and leadership skills.



Youth Climate Toolbox

Created an open access digital library of interactive resources to help youth leverage their lived experiences as expertise and take action on key climate issues.

With: Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Government and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

20+ tools are now available on the Youth Climate Toolbox.



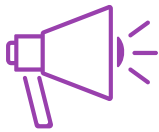
Northern Climate Policy Manual

Created a tool to demystify Territorial and Federal governance structures, providing youth with practical knowledge and tools on how to take climate action at those levels, informed by needs identified by FutureXChange participants.

With: Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Government, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, BYTE Empowering Youth Society, Students on Ice Foundation, and Canadian Climate Institute.

Co-created the manual with 19 youth from across so-called Canada.





COP27

Supported the Students on Ice Foundation in bringing a delegation of Northern Indigenous youth to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm El Shiek, Egypt. Delegated and YCL staff presented at 5 panels.

With: Students on Ice Foundation



The Refuge / Le Refuge

Fostered spaces of rest, recovery, connection, and joy for youth activists at climate convenings, held in tandem with the 2022 Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15/CBD) and the GLOBExCHANGE Forum.

With: Foundation for Environmental Stewardship, Mino Bimaadiziwin Collective, Leading Change Canada and The Echo Foundation

Engaged 160+ individuals throughout COP15.



Youth Environmental Literacy Initiative

Hosted an engagement campaign to understand youth perspectives on environmental literacy in Canada and their dreams for its future. Learnings led to the creation of the Common Ground Conversation Cards.

With: Environment and Climate Change Canada

Gathered perspectives 130+ youth from coast to coast to coast.

2023



From Root to Sky

A virtual program using a healing justice approach to climate justice, empowering youth to explore their creativity, to deepen their connection to the land, and to cultivate mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being.

With: Embers of Hope, Canadian Race Relations Foundation, and Urgent Action Fund



Art for Climate

Hosted a student-led research project exploring: how is art integral in building the just, climate-resilient futures we all deserve? why should and how can art be used to mobilize change?

With: Dalhousie College of Sustainability



TALK NUMBERS TO ME

From May 2017 - May 2023, we have:

Implemented

53 

unique programs

Directly engaging over

3000 youth 30 and under,

800 young-at-heart individuals,

and indirectly engaged over

3600 folks*



Collaborated with

100+

partners from all around the globe to reach youth in

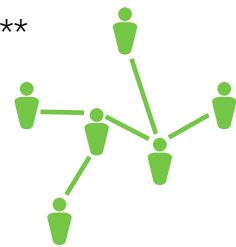
105

countries.***



Paid **189**
youth to contribute to climate
justice, including employing

48 youth.**



* Direct engagement includes youth ages 30 and under who have participated in YCL programs and initiatives, young-at-heart individuals include people who are 30+ in age that have directly participated in YCL offerings, and indirect engagement is defined as folks who have directly supported or expressed being impacted by our work.

** Youth is defined as individuals ages 30 and under, and paid contributions is defined as participant honorariums, youth hired as contractors, and employees of YCL.

*** Partners are defined as folks who we collaborate with and who contribute to our work, both creatively and financially, including governments, organizations, foundations, etc.





Leveraged over

1.8 Million USD

to support youth-led climate action, with over

1.4 Million USD

going directly to youth.

Have steadily grown our reach on social media, reaching over

907K

individuals across YCL's social media platforms, with a follower growth rate of

82% on Instagram

52% on Twitter and

20% on Facebook since December 2020.****



ATTRIBUTION VS CONTRIBUTION

Our vision can only be accomplished alongside other's work. Efforts and results presented in this section multiply alongside other individuals and organizations, and we want to emphasize that our interventions are only contributions to the system change needed to create a more climate-resilient and just world.

DATA COLLECTION GAPS AND ASSUMPTIONS

We collect quantitative and qualitative data during each stage of our programs, initiatives and partnerships. In some instances, where data was unavailable or insufficient to draw meaningful conclusions, the data has been excluded from this analysis.

**** YCL's first Impact Report used "Impressions" data to represent reach on social media. Impressions is the number of total visits to a page or platform, while reach is representative of the number of unique visitors. To give a more accurate representation of our reach, we have used reach data where available and an approximation where unavailable (approximate reach for Twitter was calculated by dividing Impressions by 2).



OUR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Rad Cohort

The award-winning RAD (Research, Activate, Deepen) Cohort fostered and highlighted the importance of youth-led radical collaboration to achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), while integrating a justice-oriented approach to the 2030 Agenda. The ultimate goal of the program was to equip youth with the skills, resources, and connections needed to transform their communities in ways that were collaborative, intersectional, creative, bold, and relevant to them.

LEARN MORE

RESEARCH · ACTIVATE · DEEPEN

RAD
COHORT



In 2021 YCL supported 15 youth across Canada explore the dimensions of radical collaboration with peers and community of coaches to:

RESEARCH gaps & opportunities for collaboration in their communities;

ACTIVATE new partnerships to address these impact gaps; and

DEEPEN connections & knowledge, eventually through the co-creation of a community activation project aimed at advancing radical collaboration.

RAD Cohort was a space to explore, connect, and cultivate a community of care and curiosity. Participants and program leaders worked together to create a safe and brave space where learning, creativity, and collaboration could thrive within the context of COVID-19. This was achieved by honouring the multiple identities and lived/living experiences held by everyone involved.

Among the 10 youth-led initiatives selected for a Canada [SDG Youth Award](#), YCL's RAD Cohort was recognized as an awardee under the category of "Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action".



Together we celebrate:

- Supporting participants [pilot 5 projects](#) to further the 2030 Agenda and climate justice;
- Building and strengthening over 60 new partnerships on the SDGs across Canada;
- Creating the [RAD Collab Toolkit](#)
- Supporting the development of skills in youth required for a just transition, including: radical collaboration, creativity, communication and emotional intelligence.



“An intrinsic lesson from the RAD Cohort on radical collaboration is that our healing is inseparable from our connection to the land. We hurt together, and we heal together. From systems of domination, exploitation, and control. So inevitably, we must be in [radical] relationship with the land, for any meaningful change towards climate justice to actually come about.”

– [Celeste Alcena](#), [YCL Community Manager](#)

“My time in the RAD cohort exceeded my expectations. I was able to connect and develop great friendship and working relationships with many folks across Canada. The opportunities that have come since the cohort have been truly life changing for me, from running a session with Impact Hub and Alliance 2030, to designing the rad collab toolkit for YCL. It truly has opened so many new doors for me, increasing my confidence and willingness to put myself out there.”

– [Rae Landriau](#), [founder of Create Change Collective](#)



LAND(ING) BACK

In March 2021, [4Rs Youth Movement](#) and YCL collaborated to develop a multimedia project, LAND(ING) BACK, showcasing Indigenous youth contributions to climate action, reconciliation, youth leadership, and a just transition to a low carbon economy. This project linked these contributions and lived experiences to the barriers Indigenous youth face when trying to engage in climate decision-making, and moved past awareness by creating recommendations to address the barriers.



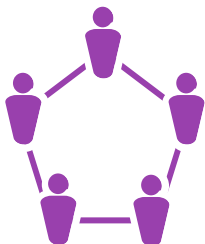
Through this collaboration we co-developed:



[A series of audio blogs](#) highlighting the climate work of five Indigenous youth making change within their communities through climate work.. The interview topics range from the interconnectedness of land justice work and climate work to relationship building and power redistribution in climate spaces.



[An Op-ed](#) by Riley Yesno highlighting the barriers that young people face doing climate work, including organizing in their communities. It complements the audio blogs, which Riley participated in, by linking organizing and activism as a “community service” while calling attention to how climate spaces and careers often remain inaccessible for youth, and ignore their lived experiences as expertise.



[A Policy brief with recommendations for Sector Leaders and Policy-Makers](#) to highlight the importance and opportunity of compensating and investing in youth and the need to compensate the often unpaid, tokenized, and undervalued labour of Indigenous youth leading climate action. The policy brief provides context, analysis, insights and recommendations drawing from the audio blog series, Indigenous policy leadership, and youth testimony.



Our Toolbox

In 2022, YCL launched the [Youth Climate Toolbox](#), an open access digital library of engaging resources to help youth leverage their lived experiences as expertise and take action on climate change. The Toolbox was sparked from a direct call to action from YCL alumni and participants who expressed the need for key resources to help accelerate their climate action journeys. The resources were created to:

demystify climate
policy processes

build skills, including
advocacy, communication,
creativity, and multi-solving

increase knowledge
of climate justice and
intersectionality

You can now find 20+ resources on the Youth Climate Toolbox, that can be explored by theme or by learning style. Click each icon below to explore the toolbox.



LISTEN



IMAGINE



READ





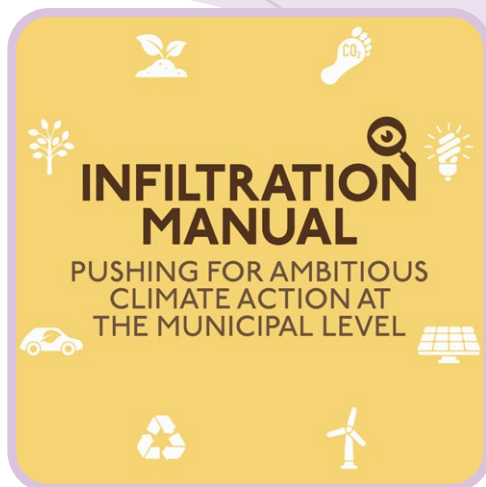
POLICY SHIFT TOOLS

Municipal Infiltration Manual

- In Canada, municipalities account for over 50% of the national greenhouse gas emissions (Source: [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#)). The Infiltration Manual aims to demystify municipal governance and provide youth with practical knowledge and tools on how to take climate action at the local level.
- Since publication, YCL has had the opportunity to share this work at Canada's Local Conference of Youth (LCOY), GreenPAC's FLIP Summit, Leading Change Forum and beyond.

"Everyone we have worked with at YCL has been so great and supportive. Our work together on the Infiltration Manual created a helpful tool that can and has been used by climate advocates of all ages. Hopefully, our organizations can continue to collaborate to connect youth and build their capacity to take action at a local government level!"

- Olivia Dymek, Climate Caucus

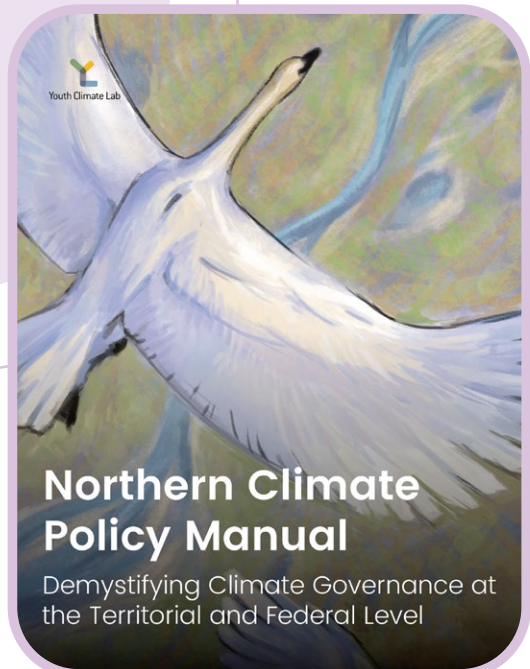


Northern Climate Policy Manual

- Developed in response to the need for more educational material on climate policy in the North of so-called Canada, as articulated by participants in YCL's FutureXChange program (2019-2020). The Northern Climate Policy Manual demystifies Territorial and Federal governance structures, providing youth with practical knowledge and tools on how to take climate action at those levels. The Manual was co-created and authored by a diverse team of youth, including Indigenous, settler, Northern and Southern youth. To support youth learning, YCL gathered oral and written stories from Northern youth to highlight examples of climate action already being led by youth in the North.

"YCL has been an incredible organization to work with - their values of radical collaboration are evident... They also recognize areas where they don't currently have the same capacity to engage youth (i.e. in the North) and seek out local youth-serving organizations to collaborate with accordingly... The youth that we worked with to engage on this YCL project felt like their words & experiences had impact and meaning through this collaboration."

- BYTE Empowering Youth Society





FINANCE SHIFT TOOLS

Youth Inclusive Climate Finance Report

- This report was prepared to provide insight into the importance for climate-designated grants and financial instruments to better consider youth in their deployment. The report highlights the need for Canada to demonstrate leadership on building explicit strategies for global youth climate finance from 2020, onwards.



COVID-19 Economic Recovery: Youth and Climate

- This study was conducted to determine if youth unemployment and climate action were being considered in COVID-19 recovery responses in Canada, and across the globe. The study revealed that youth employment in climate-related sectors, sectors critical to a just and sustainable recovery out of the pandemic-caused economic recession, were barely mentioned in COVID-19 economic response policies at the time. Youth researchers provided three clear recommendations addressing the gaps in existing COVID-19 economic recovery plans.





SKILLS SHIFT TOOLS

Multi-Solving Resources

- Youth Climate Lab has developed multiple tools relating to multi-solving, including an [audioblog series](#), [a research brief](#), and an [interactive tool](#). The tools make multi-solving more understandable and accessible, and showcase how youth are already putting multi-solving into practice across the globe.

"As we work to popularize the idea of multisolving (implementing solutions to climate change that also improve health, equity, and wellbeing) we were thrilled to discover that the Youth Climate Lab team had created an in depth audio series on the concept. In the series, youth leaders from around the world explain multisolving in the context of issues they are engaged in. We were impressed with both their accuracy in reflecting the research that's been done on multisolving and their application of the ideas to their own places in the world. We often point those interested in multisolving to this valuable product."

- Dr. Elizabeth Sawin, Director Multisolving Institute

Creativity for Climate: A Generative Process

- A workbook co-designed with summer 2020 artist-in-residence, Savanna Harvey, containing a generative process designed to grow information into creative expression. Creative for Climate is open you to new possibilities, new ways of thinking and creating, through guided activities,

"There is no right or wrong way, no good or bad result. Sow seeds of knowledge and see what strange little plant pops up out of the soil. You don't have to understand it right away, just trust that it has a vital role and is part of an interconnected process that is larger than you can perceive at this moment."

- Savanna Harvey



From Root to Sky

From Root to Sky was created to address the climate crisis as a symptom of historical and systemic issues like colonialism, racial capitalism, and patriarchy that perpetuate violence against Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities.

The program uses a healing justice approach to climate justice, empowering youth to explore their creativity, to deepen their connection to the land, and to cultivate mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being. Through capacity building, relationship building, and self-compassion, young people will be empowered to mobilize for change and make a meaningful impact.

During its pilot season, Winter 2023, YCL collaborated with 4 BIPOC contributors to host sessions on:

- Exploring Climate Joy
- Spirituality, Land Connection & Anti-Oppression
- Engaging with Eco-Grief and Climate Anxiety
- Arts-based Approaches to Climate Justice
- Storytelling + Narrative Writing



The Refuge

In 2022, Youth Climate Lab and the Foundation for Environmental Stewardship (FES) collaborated to spark a healing justice space for youth in climate spaces – The Refuge. Climate conferences and convenings are often stressful and exhausting for youth and activists. These spaces are difficult to navigate for newcomers, especially without a proper support system or place outside of the conference to convene, collaborate, and rest in the company of peers. In response to these barriers to participation and feelings of burnout, FES and YCL collaborated to host by-youth-for-youth convenings to engage in resistance through rest.

The first iteration of The Refuge took place in tandem with the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15/CBD) held in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) in December 2022, and was made possible with the financial support of The Echo Foundation. From December 6th-16th, The Refuge reached 160+ individuals through daily open studio hours for casual connection, and 12 events focussed on amplifying youth, fostering connections and accessing rest. In February 2023, YCL, FES and the Mino Bimaadiziwin Collective hosted the second iteration of The Refuge, providing a place of rest and connection for youth delegates at the GLOBExCHANGE Forum in Tkaronto (Toronto).

Together, our collective of youth organizations –YCL, the Mino Bimaadiziwin Collective and FES – are exploring ways to expand and continue The Refuge. offering spaces of rest, recovery, connection and joy, for young climate and social activists at climate convenings to come.



OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration is essential to building a just and climate-resilient world. YCL has **100+ partners** from across the globe, including youth-led organizations, foundations, grassroots movements, Indigenous communities, and multiple levels of government.

YCL's commitment to Radical Collaboration is demonstrated through co-designing with partners. By valuing lived experience as expertise, YCL engages all partners in the design process, resulting in outcomes that reflect the needs and voices of youth, are practical and accessible, and promote collective responsibility, accountability, learning, and ownership.

These partnerships have varied in scope and resulted in a diversity of outcomes, including events, innovative programs, educational materials and supporting youth in creative, and empathetic ways. YCL's partnerships are vital to achieving climate justice, as they promote working together towards a common goal.





From our partners...

As an organization created and led by youth, your work to accelerate youth impact on climate policy, projects and businesses is striking. Your ability to connect and engage with youth in places as diverse as Bangladesh and the Canadian Arctic shows the considerable momentum behind your approach.

- Climate Justice Resilience Fund

Youth are at the forefront of the climate movement and are the first to understand the importance of centering equity and justice in climate action. Our collaboration has supported communities to do this work better, faster.

- Tamarack Institute



YCL supports Youth Challenge International's work in streamlining climate action through our international programs, while championing and supporting our partners around the world to continue improving their communities' response to the climate crisis.

- Youth Challenge International

The partnership between the Green Africa Youth Organization (GAYO) and Youth Climate Lab has been instrumental in promoting climate sustainability and in advancing the inclusion of young people in climate discussions. YCL's unwavering dedication and commitment to this partnership have been a source of inspiration to GAYO over the years. We are confident that this collaboration will continue to drive positive change and empower the next generation to lead the way towards a greener and more equitable world.

- Green Africa Youth Organization



LOOKING AHEAD

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

As a youth-led organization, we remain committed to achieving systems change, and we understand the importance of being intentional and accountable in our next steps. We are determined to stay focused on our mission while staying connected to and representing our global network of youth.

To establish a foundation for a sustainable and impactful future as an organization, YCL's strategic objectives for the year include:

**1**

STRENGTHENING OUR FOUNDATION

YCL is exploring different avenues to ensure long-term financial stability, including the launch of Activate (You)th. Activate (You)th is a service from YCL that provides tested, scaleable workshops to foster youth engagement and catalyze climate action. This will allow us to continue empowering young people to take action on climate change and environmental justice, while increasing our financial security. We are also working towards optimizing the efficiency of our internal systems to improve staff and organizational capacities.

**2**

FOSTERING CLIMATE JOY AND HOPE

We recognize the importance of fostering climate joy and hope as we work towards more just, climate resilient futures. We believe that promoting the well-being of youth in the climate justice movement is an essential aspect of co-creating these futures. YCL is committed to providing the necessary support for youth's physical, emotional, and mental health. Integral to this is the power of art-based approaches, to both engage youth in creative solutions to environmental challenges, and to help us collectively heal and adapt in the face of the climate crisis. By practicing hope and care with youth, YCL seeks to inspire and empower the next generation of climate leaders to take action and create positive changes in their communities and beyond.



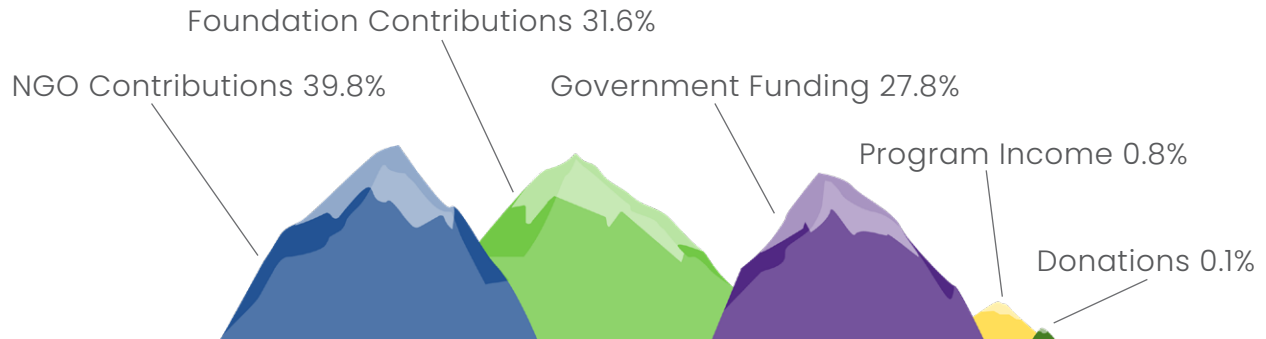
3 FOSTERING COMMUNITY AND RADICAL COLLABORATION

We recognize the importance of building and maintaining a strong community of climate leaders. Our Associates and Alumni are an integral part of this community, bringing their unique perspectives, experiences, and expertise to the table. By staying connected with our community, we are able to continue to learn from their successes and challenges, and to support their ongoing growth and development as climate leaders. We are also committed to building and strengthening intergenerational collaboration and collective responsibility for the future of our planet, by fostering connection between youth, elders, decision-makers and their communities at large. Together, we can create a powerful movement for climate justice that will have a lasting impact on our communities and the world.



FINANCES

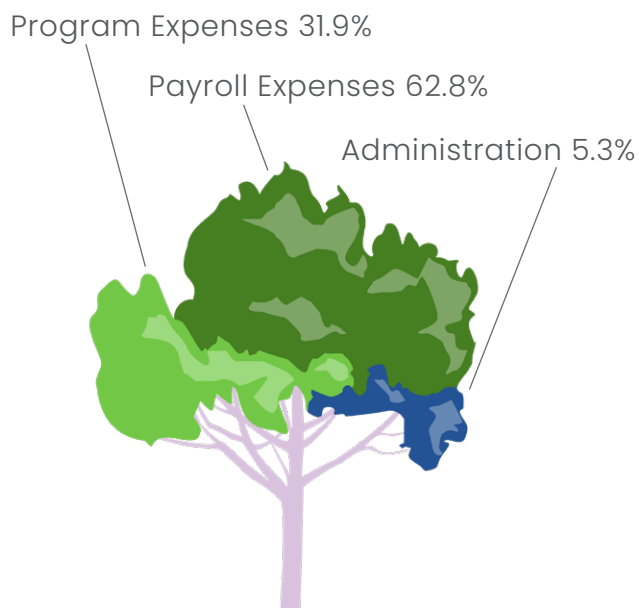
WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM:



Breakdown of overall funding sources from April 2021–March 2023.

As YCL becomes more established, we are working to move away from government funding, which is often highly restricted, towards increased contributions from foundations and other NGOs. Since April 2021, YCL has been able to grow and diversify our funding, reducing government funding to 27.8%.

WHERE WE SPEND OUR MONEY:

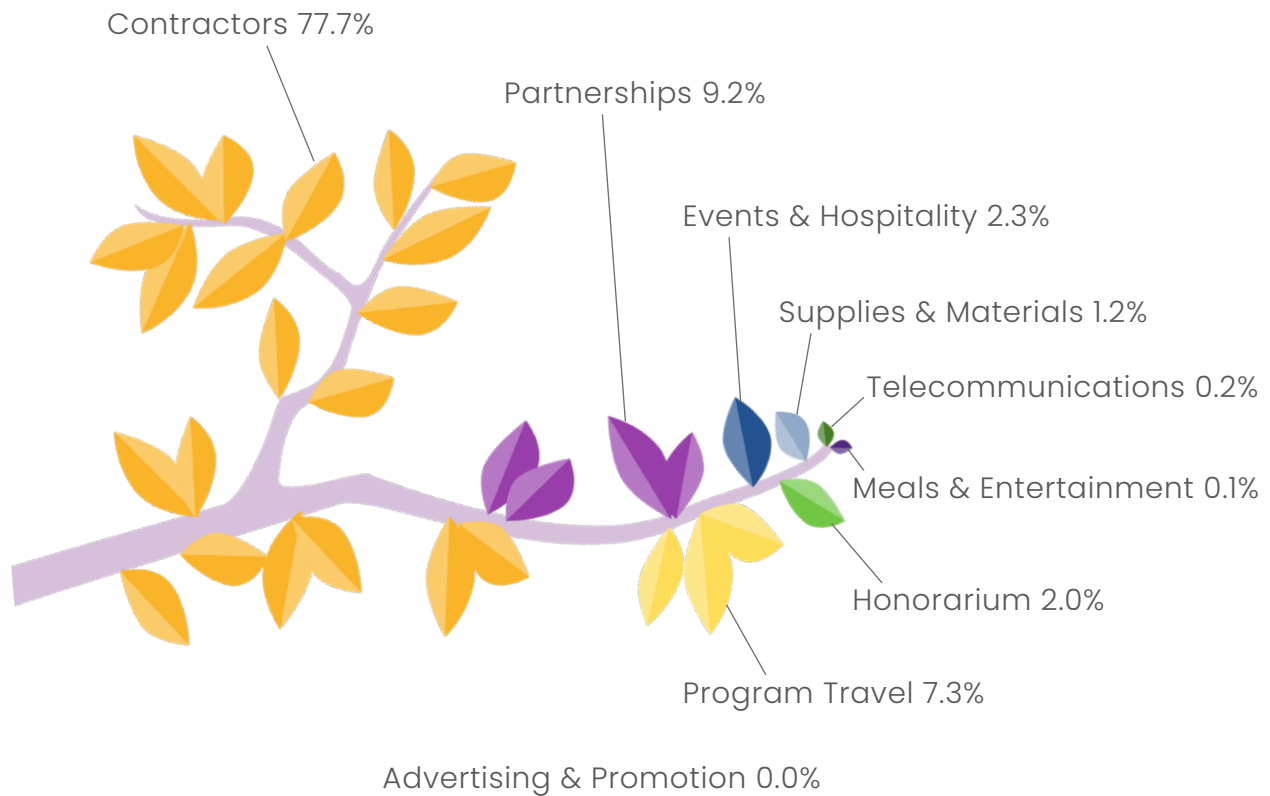


High-level breakdown of all YCL expenses from April 2021–2023

YCL worked hard to increase wages in September 2021. At YCL, we recognize that youth are often undervalued for their work and that the not-for-profit sector struggles to offer competitive wages to their staff. This is something YCL is looking to change. Although not completed overnight and there are still improvements to be made we are happy that we were able to bring wages up to industry standards in September 2021. YCL's primary expense is payroll at nearly 63%, which includes taxes paid on behalf of employees, wellness allowances, and staff perks.



WHERE WE SPEND OUR PROGRAM FUNDING:



Breakdown of program expenses from April 2021–2023, excluding YCL staff time.

Knowing that YCL exists amidst an extensive global ecosystem of organizations and individuals working towards similar missions, YCL strives to support the efforts of our network. Additionally, YCL strives to ensure all of our programs are by and for the communities we collaborate in. Thus, YCL allocates a significant portion of program funding to contractors and partners. Contractors account for 78% of program expenditures and are YCL's second largest expense organization-wide.



GRATITUDE

In closing our sixth year, we are so grateful to the countless people who support Youth Climate Lab. Now and always, we send our appreciation and celebration to...

Our Staff and Board Members, past and present, who invest their time and leadership to shape YCL into what it is today.

Our associates and alumni, for their knowledge, expertise and commitment to YCL's mission and vision

Our funders for investing in our innovative ways of approaching climate justice.

Our collaborators for consistently helping us bring our Radical Collaboration principles to life

Our Co Founders, Dominique and Ana, for their continued guidance and support

All the youth we've worked with, who never cease to inspire us

We recognize the tremendous impact and influence of those who have come before us and paved the way for the work we do at Youth Climate Lab.

We stand on their shoulders and are grateful for their dedication, perseverance, and wisdom. Thank you for showing us what is possible and inspiring us to continue fighting for a just, climate resilient future for all.



BOARD MEMBERS

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 Paula Ethans
 Skw'akw'as (Sunshine) Dunstan-Moore
 Ngozi Chukwueke
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 The Council Of Yukon First Nations
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