



# Pursuing Intergenerational Climate Justice Work

*A consultation with members of the Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance*

## About the MHCCA

The Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance (MHCCA) is a community of more than 50 interdisciplinary researchers, healthcare providers, and community organizers committed to identifying and addressing the adverse impacts of the climate change on mental health.

As a Canadian Not-for-Profit organization incorporated under the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, the MHCCA's purposes are to

- (1) conduct equity-based climate distress monitoring;
- (2) incubate novel interventions and policy ideas to address the mental health impacts of climate change; and
- (3) facilitate knowledge exchange and mobilization to support Canadian's experiencing climate-related ecological distress.

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**MHCCA**

## Introduction

In March 2023, we conducted a consultation with members of the *Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance* using an online survey and targeted key informant interviews. These consultations explored participant's current intergenerational climate justice work, the perceived values of this work, the needs of members to pursue this work and member's recommendations for the MHCCA to pursue intergenerational climate justice work. Information on each of these themes is summarized below:

## Current Intergenerational Climate Justice Work

Members of the MHCCA are Engaged in a variety of activities that serve the aim of promoting intergenerational climate justice. These include:

- **Conducting research projects focused on youth:** Members are involved in research projects that engage youth and other age groups. The projects aim to explore different aspects of climate change and mental health and identify potential solutions.
- **Co-designing services:** Some members are engaged in the co-design of climate distress services for young people. This involves working with youth and other age groups to develop services that address the mental health impacts of climate change.
- **Engaging of youth co-researchers:** Members work with youth co-researchers who are involved in the research process and attend team meetings. They receive additional support from a youth consultant to ensure their engagement is meaningful and impactful.
- **Facilitating intergenerational dialogue:** Members are involved in facilitating intergenerational dialogue through their work with organizations such as Break the Divide. This involves creating opportunities for youth and other age groups to come together and discuss important issues such as climate change.

Overall, these programs aim to promote intergenerational collaboration, dialogue, and understanding. They provide opportunities for youth to be engaged in meaningful ways and to work alongside other age groups to address important issues such as climate change and mental health.

## Perceived Value of Intergenerational Climate Justice

Overall participants were enthusiastic about intergenerational climate justice initiatives and they identified a variety of benefits of this work, including:

- **Strengthening work through diverse perspectives:** Members believe that intergenerational justice would strengthen their work by bringing diverse perspectives to the table. This could help them better engage youth in an ethical and reciprocal way.
- **Avoiding age-related biases:** Members believe that current work may drop off the ends of the age spectrum or fail to appreciate that quantitative differences can become qualitative differences. Intergenerational justice can help avoid age-related biases and ensure that all age groups are considered.

- **Strength through intergenerational engagement:** Members believe that intergenerational engagement can help build strength in their work. By engaging all age groups, they can leverage the strengths of each group and build a more cohesive approach to addressing climate justice.
- **Providing a variety of viewpoints:** Members believe that intergenerational justice can provide a variety of viewpoints. This can help them better understand and address the complex challenges associated with climate change and mental health.
- **Sharing diverse knowledge paradigms:** Members believe that intergenerational justice can help share diverse knowledge paradigms to drive action. By leveraging the unique knowledge and experiences of each age group, they can develop more effective strategies to promote climate justice and mental health.

These various benefits outline the importance of intergenerational work.

## Member-Identified Needs

Based on our consultations with MHCCA Members, the following are the types of support they need to promote intergenerational justice:

- **Recruitment support:** Members need support to recruit participants, partners, and other researchers in the same area. This support can help them connect with relevant individuals and organizations who can contribute to their intergenerational work.
- **Collaboration on funding and knowledge transfer:** Members need support to collaborate on funding and knowledge transfer. This can involve identifying potential funding sources, sharing knowledge and resources, and working together to secure funding for intergenerational projects.
- **Research support:** Members need research support in areas such as messaging, program evaluation, and content development. This support can help them design effective programs and interventions that promote intergenerational justice.
- **Engagement and linkages support:** Members need support to engage with a broader range of individuals and organizations who may not be currently engaged in climate action. This can help them expand their networks and reach new audiences.
- **Funding and mentorship in project management:** Members need support in project management, including funding and mentorship. This can help them effectively manage their intergenerational projects and ensure they are successful in achieving their goals.

Overall, members require a range of supports and resources to promote intergenerational justice. These include recruitment support, collaboration on funding and knowledge transfer, research support, engagement and linkages support, and funding and mentorship in project management. By providing these supports, the MHCCA and others can help members successfully engage youth and other age groups in promoting climate justice and mental health.

## Member's Recommendations for Facilitating Intergenerational Climate Justice

The following recommendations emerged to guide the MHCCA in pursuit of facilitating intergenerational climate justice:

- **Create intergenerational partnerships:** The MHCCA should prioritize creating partnerships with youth-led organizations to ensure that their voices are heard and they are included in the decision-making process. By creating intergenerational partnerships, the MHCCA can bring together individuals of different ages, experiences, and perspectives to address climate justice issues and promote mental health. Participants recommend we engage a variety of youth-led and youth centered organizations, including:

- Alberta Youth Leaders for Environmental Education (AYLEE)
- Climate Education Reform BC
- Toronto Youth Environmental Council (TYEC)
- Future Majority
- Be the Change Alliance
- City Hive
- Environmental Youth AllianceYouth Climate Lab
- Break The Divide
- Shake Up The Establishment

Participants also recommended we engage seniors and adult-led organizations, including:

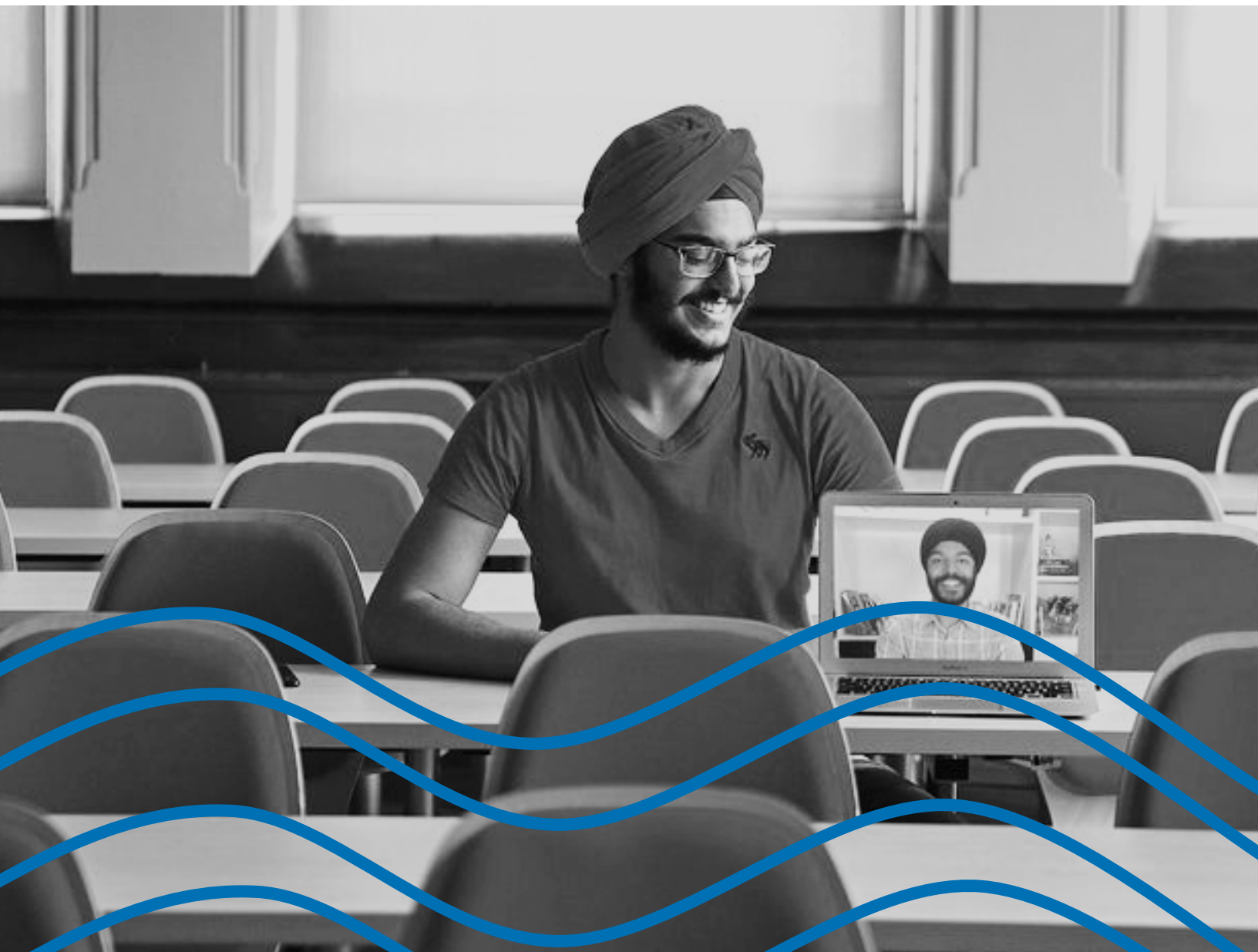
- GreenLearning
- Learning for a Sustainable Future
- Gaia Project
- Green Teacher Magazine
- Granville Seniors Centre and similar
- Local Rotary Clubs
- Suzuki Elders

- **Raise awareness of mental health impacts of climate change:** The MHCCA should raise awareness about the mental health impacts of climate change, especially among young people. The alliance should use social media platforms to share stories and experiences of individuals who have been affected by climate change. This can help increase understanding of the relationship between climate change and mental health and promote the need for action.
- **Advocate for policy change:** The MHCCA should use its platform to advocate for policy change at the local, national, and international levels. This can include advocating for policies that address the root causes of climate change, promote sustainable development, and protect vulnerable communities from the impacts of climate change. The alliance can also advocate for policies that prioritize mental health and wellbeing in the context of climate change.
- **Provide resources and support:** The MHCCA can provide resources and support for individuals who are experiencing mental health impacts of climate change. This can include providing mental health resources and services, connecting individuals with community resources, and providing support groups and other opportunities for individuals to connect with others who have similar experiences.
- **Foster education and skill development:** The MHCCA can foster education and skill development among individuals, particularly young people, to build capacity for addressing climate change and promoting mental health. The alliance can offer training and educational opportunities on topics such as climate justice, mental health, advocacy, and community organizing.
- **Establish an Intergenerational Advisory Panel:** As part of this consultation, we asked members about the value of establishing an intergenerational advisory panel to provide guidance on projects affecting individuals across the life course. Members supported this idea and identified

it as a need shared by their organizations. Two-third of members said they would join, support, or leverage an advisory panel hosted by the Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance.

- **Recognizing cultural differences.** Participants explained that intergenerational justice lens may differ across populations and contexts due to factors such as ethnicity, project goals and objectives, cultural background, and generational conditioning. There is a need for more research on this topic, and it is important to take into account cultural differences when addressing intergenerational justice. However, there are also common grounds that need to be identified and acknowledged in order to break through barriers and achieve intergenerational justice.

Overall, the MHCCA can promote intergenerational climate justice by creating partnerships, raising awareness, advocating for policy change, providing resources and support, and fostering education and skill development. By implementing this strategy, the alliance can create a more just and equitable world for current and future generations.

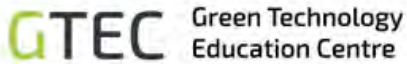


# Partnering Organizations

## Academic Partners



## Community Partners



## Funders



## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the contributions of the MHCCA members in contributing to the content of this report. The final report was written by Dr. Kiffer Card. We appreciate the support of Maya Gislason, Angel Kennedy, and the TAKENOTICE Project team for their support for this work.

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