



The Power of Partnership

Working Together to Advance
Climate Education in Atlantic Canada



Impact Report 2020-2025

Executive Summary

Ensuring future resilient communities and long-term environmental and economic sustainability starts with an educated and engaged youth population. Over the past five years, the Youth Climate Action Now (YouCAN) Project has engaged youth and educators across Atlantic Canada to improve climate awareness and personal mitigation efforts, support climate education and empower youth to take meaningful action.

From 2020 to 2025, YouCAN reached more than 99,000 youth and nearly 2,000 educators in the four Atlantic provinces through hands-on learning and professional development. These initiatives, offered in English and French, have sparked hundreds of youth-led, local climate actions and enhanced youths

understanding of environmental impacts. Educators gained the tools and knowledge to integrate climate science into their teaching, extending the Project's influence well beyond the classroom.

YouCAN's success—exceeding expectations—has hinged on regional representation and collaboration, local connections and shared vision among delivery partners. The Project delivered programming that prepares the next generation to actively contribute to Atlantic Canada's transition to a green economy. The momentum built through YouCAN has resulted in a greater collective impact—students and educators are empowered with the knowledge to take collective action and further their learning through environmental education.

A big thank you for making this project possible. ”
We all learned so much, and had lots of fun doing it! You help make inquiry-based STEM learning accessible to schools. Funding like this makes it possible for teachers and students to be creative and active members of a learning community both in and out of the classroom.

— Nova Scotia teacher



YouCAN Impact Report 2020-2025

Land Acknowledgement

The YouCAN Project takes place across the traditional, unceded territories and ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Beothuk, Peskotomuhkati, the Innu of Nitassinan, and the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land for the next seven generations and beyond. We acknowledge and respect the diverse cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call this region home, and commit to working in the spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

Acknowledgements

The YouCAN Project has been made possible through funding from the Government of Canada through the Environmental Damages Fund's Climate Action and Awareness Fund as well as other supporting partners, under the administration of Clean Foundation. We acknowledge their support in advancing climate change education in Atlantic Canada.

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Clean Foundation also recognizes our regional delivery partners who have led programming in their respective provinces. Their significant contributions are directly tied to the success of the YouCAN Project and development of this report.



The testimonials and quotes featured in this report were collected through surveys conducted by YouCAN's delivery partners, gathering insights and experiences directly from participants across Atlantic Canada.

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Program Overview

In the summer of 2020, organizations from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador came together with the goal of advancing climate education in our region. The following year, Prince Edward Island's delivery partner joined the Project, rounding out our Atlantic Canadian complement. With a continuous focus on sharing effective strategies for implementation in

each of our unique contexts, YouCAN's Project Team has ultimately strengthened climate education for all involved across the region.

Now, after five years of program delivery, it's clear that this partnership has significantly impacted youth and educators in our region, achieving the following goals:

Improving climate awareness and understanding of personal mitigation efforts

Supporting educators across disciplines to educate on climate science

Empowering youth to take action in their own lives and communities

Together, Clean Foundation, The Gaia Project, Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador and STEAM PEI have reached more than 99,000 students

and nearly 2,000 educators across Atlantic Canada through climate education programs and professional learning opportunities.



Clean Foundation (Clean), established in 1988, is a climate-change, program delivery non-profit organization that brings specialized teams together to work on complex problems, delivering many climate action and capacity building projects and initiatives around Nova Scotia, PEI and the Atlantic region.



The Gaia Project (TGP) is a New Brunswick-based charity with the mission to empower youth to take action on climate change through education. Reaching over 50,000 youths and 200 schools annually, TGP's fully bilingual programming is accessible to all seven districts in English, French and Indigenous schools. Established in 2009, TGP provides in-class support for K-12 teachers with over 15 different classroom-based initiatives.



Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador (CCNL) is a non-profit organization that has been operating in the province for more than three decades. Throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, CCNL empowers youth and communities to embrace, conserve and enhance our shared environment and respective cultures. CCNL envisions a place with healthy lands, air and waters, thriving peoples, resilient communities and where CCNL is a catalyst of conservation and stewardship dialogue and action.



STEAM PEI inspires young islanders to pursue careers in STEAM fields by fostering their curiosity and confidence through engaging experiential learning opportunities. STEAM PEI offers a variety of programs that inspire wonder and autonomous exploration and builds confidence. From exploding potions to building wind powered vehicles, its programs are for every student, at every age.

Our Collective Impact

The success of the YouCAN Project is firmly rooted in the diligence and dedication of our delivery partners to come together in partnership. By aligning our efforts toward a shared vision, we have not only achieved our Project goals—we have exceeded expectations for our collective impact.

By the Numbers (Cumulative)

Youth reached with environmental and climate change learning programs / opportunities

99,201 ↗

40% above target (71,000)



Educators reached through professional development resources and opportunities

1,969 ↗

above target (1,740)



Youth climate actions supported

2,435 ↗

117% above target (1,124)



Percent of participants who feel that their awareness of climate change increased

91% ↗

(rounded) above target (80%)



Percent of participants who feel they will make a change in their personal behaviours

91% ↗

(rounded) above target (80%)



Success Stories

The impact of the YouCAN Project is further underscored through the voices and experiences of those involved.

The following success stories showcase the dedication, innovation and collaboration that brought our goals to life—demonstrating achievements, as well as the lasting value created for participants and their communities.

Goal #1: Youth Engagement

Improving climate awareness and understanding of personal mitigation efforts.

When the United Way of Central New Brunswick invited The Gaia Project to spotlight a young environmental leader at their annual ‘Song for the City’ celebration in Fredericton, one name stood out: Priya.

Then a student at Nashwaaksis Middle School, Priya had previously participated in The Gaia Project’s outreach and programming during the 2022-23 school year and was inspired to take a leadership role at her school.

But her passion truly ignited after a summer visit to her family in India, where she witnessed the devastating effects of air and solid waste pollution.

She returned to Canada even more motivated to make an impact.

When The Gaia Project asked her to share her story with the community at the ‘Song for the City’ event, Priya did not hesitate. In front of 500 captivated attendees, she spoke with heart and purpose.

As part of the event, Priya’s story was translated into a song by a local artist. The song was played live, and Priya watched her story inspire art right before her eyes.

For Priya, the community and The Gaia Project, this was more than a celebration—it was a spark for change.



At the Learning for Sustainable Futures Summit in October 2023, Hannah Vaughan stepped into a Clean Foundation workshop called Fashion for Future—and walked out with a mission.

Inspired by her learnings, Hannah teamed up with another youth and applied for a Climate Action Grant from Clean. Their goal? To raise environmental awareness in younger students. With the grant, they developed an environmental education workshop for younger grades.

This taste of leadership lit a fire in Hannah. Throughout her grade 12 year, she delivered the project with passion

and purpose—and went on to apply to the Nova Scotia Youth Climate Council with Clean Foundation.

As a member of the 2024-25 council, Hannah has applied her experience leading educational experiences for youth to help develop and co-facilitate an environmental engagement session for over 150 youth, supporting climate change policy recommendations to the Government of Nova Scotia.

From student to changemaker, Hannah’s journey demonstrates what’s possible when youth are empowered to lead.



Goal #2: Professional Learning

Supporting educators across disciplines to educate on climate science.



The opportunity to provide meaningful, in-person professional learning for educators on climate change and environmental stewardship is both vital and challenging. At the October 2024 Eco Schools Conference in Grand Falls-Windsor, NL, CCNL addressed this need by delivering a dynamic session to 43 teachers across all grade levels, guiding participants through a reflective and practical exploration of climate education.

The session emphasized three key components of effective climate pedagogy: understanding climate science, emotionally processing the topic and identifying solutions rooted in realistic hope. Teachers engaged deeply with these ideas, especially when prompted to consider how aligning curriculum with the UN Sustainable Development Goals could foster systemic change and meaningful student engagement. This sparked a powerful “ah-ha” moment, as educators envisioned a more connected, purposeful approach to teaching that integrates Indigenous perspectives, global goals and real-world action.

The value of this professional learning lies in its ability to shift mindsets, empower educators, and inspire curriculum innovation. Through the YouCAN partnership, CCNL facilitated not just knowledge transfer, but a movement—one that equips teachers to nurture environmentally conscious, action-oriented students across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Delivering consistent, high-value professional learning can be complex. In 2022, The Gaia Project embraced a new opportunity by accepting an invitation from St. Thomas University’s School of Education to deliver a series of climate change workshops to pre-service teachers. The workshops were designed to support future educators before they even entered the classroom.

One unexpected standout was Bri Durant from Saint John, New Brunswick. With a background in arts and language, she took the course on a whim.

Now years later, inspired by her experience with Gaia’s workshop, Bri is a teacher at a local high school in Saint John and

facilitates the school’s climate action club. Under her guidance, students have hosted community events, explored sustainability projects and even wrote a children’s story about climate change.

In 2025, Bri was named the Gaia Champion Teacher of the Year—a testament to her dedicated efforts, empowering her students to be climate leaders in their community. She’s proof that passion and opportunity can spark real change.

The same year, the Gaia Project’s Executive Director was hired to instruct the climate change education course at St. Thomas University—continuing an impactful collaboration that’s shaping the next generation of climate-conscious educators.

Thank you to The Gaia Project for all of their support.”
Without them, it wouldn’t have been possible to do a lot of the things that we’ve accomplished this year. We are forever grateful to have a great relationship with them and I hope that more people reach out to be a part of their programming as well.

—Bri Durant, teacher, Saint John, New Brunswick



Goal #3: Climate Action

Empowering youth to make change in their own lives and communities.

After attending STEAM PEI's fast fashion workshop, several parents provided feedback that their kids walked away with more than just knowledge, having also discovered a passion for upcycling and thrifting.

Through hands-on activities, students learned about the environmental impact of the fashion industry and explored creative ways to reuse old clothing. One student transformed her old sock into an adorable stuffed toy for her baby sister. Another convinced her family to start shopping second-hand whenever possible.

These youth didn't just absorb information—they became changemakers in their communities, proving that with the right tools and a little creativity, sustainable fashion can start right at home.

Thank you for what you do.
We are truly fortunate to have an organization such as yours in our little Island!
— Parent of youth programming participant,
Prince Edward Island

In the summer of 2021, amid the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving public health measures, CCNL launched Get Outdoors!, a bold new program rooted in the belief that a personal, reciprocal relationship with nature is foundational to climate action.

With nearly 100 Green Team youth employees, operating across Newfoundland and Labrador in collaboration with valued community partners, CCNL empowered local program teams to organize outdoor, family-friendly events that celebrated the beautiful community spaces and important conservation work within their communities.

What happened that summer was so much greater than the sum of its parts: CCNL's youth employees put untold effort and passion into creating their events. Care was taken in organizing these events in partnership with the Association for New Canadians, connecting newcomer communities on the Avalon Peninsula with local community gardens and green spaces in their newfound community.

In the Town of Whitbourne, a memorable event called Finding Lichen was organized by a two youth. After weeks of planning and promotion, they turned a local park—home to several critically endangered lichen species—into a scavenger hunt to identify the different lichen. Over 50 participants of all ages joined in the fun. After the scavenger hunt, participants gathered in an outdoor theatre space (pictured left) where the team explained the importance of these species and the threats they face, including climate change. The evening ended with a screening of Finding Nemo, thanks to generous equipment donations from the Town.

The impact was immediate. Community members praised the creativity, care and leadership of these young organizers.

The success of the event reinforced the necessity of safe connection during a challenging time, and led to a celebration of community, learning and youth-led climate action.



Yellow map:

- I am yellowish green in color
- I am actually the oldest lichen that ever existed... and you thought your grandparents were old!
- I am found on the biggest rock in Sir Robert Bond park



Advancing Climate Education in Atlantic Canada—What's Next?

The success of the YouCAN Project proves that when partners collaborate to create meaningful, regionally developed educational opportunities, they empower youth and educators—transforming climate education into a powerful driver of change.

We have the established local teams, a proven partnership model and ready-to-use resources to deliver future education programs that build on the success of the YouCAN Project.

Looking forward, we welcome the opportunity to continue our high impact work in Atlantic Canada through environmental education and collective action.



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