

## About the Green Resilience Project

Across Canada, communities are feeling the effects of climate change, rising income insecurity and their interconnected effect on community resilience. The Green Resilience Project was a series of conversations with 33 communities of varying size, geographic location and economic makeup to discuss the ways in which climate change and income insecurity affect their individual and collective wellbeing. Design and implementation of the Green Resilience Project took place between April 2021 and March 2022.

Conversation participants talked about the challenges they face in their day-to-day lives and explored solutions that have the potential to build or strengthen community resilience, ensuring everyone has what they need to navigate a changing environment and economy as Canada moves toward net-zero emissions.

In each of these conversations participants shared a wide range of viewpoints about the interactions between income security, climate change and community resilience. They expressed hope, fear, grief and a clear sense of urgency to implement transformative solutions that make life better for everyone. After reading and analysing summary reports from each community, the Green Resilience Project team identified four main conversation themes:

- 1 | People in Canada, especially those experiencing income insecurity or other forms of financial precarity, are increasingly exposed to climate impacts but are often unable to participate in proportionate climate solutions due to systemic barriers.
- 2 | People want their communities to be resilient in the face of climate change and income insecurity. They are interested in solutions that make tangible improvements to their lives, including accessible and affordable locally grown food, energy efficient housing and public transportation as well as strengthened local economies, services and infrastructure.
- 3 | People are sceptical of their ability to take meaningful action on climate change and income insecurity because of their limited influence on structural and systemic issues when compared to governments and corporations. Many feel that individual actions are limited in their effectiveness and that governments are not taking sufficient action to address these problems.
- 4 | Communities are ready to take action but lack political and economic agency to effect the scale of change that is needed. Governments must respond to this challenge with transformative policies that address the root causes of climate change and income insecurity while empowering communities to take self-directed action.

With these themes in mind, the Green Resilience Project team developed four recommendations for governments and policymakers that we consider to have the greatest, most immediate and lasting impact to empower positive transformations and strengthen resilience in communities across Canada:

**1** | **Incorporate basic income into Canada's plan for a just transition.** Canada's just transition needs to support and strengthen all people and communities. Rather than a siloed approach that treats specific sectors or climate disasters as discrete entities, we need proactive policies that enable everyone to thrive in and contribute to an equitable low-carbon future. In addition to important, oft-discussed aspects of a just transition like upskilling and retraining for workers in sectors whose jobs are impacted by climate change, a comprehensive just transition plan must also include a basic income guarantee.

Basic income creates the financial security people need to support themselves and their families. It gives them the time and energy to retrain, reskill or transition to new jobs, to engage in care work, to pursue innovative solutions to the challenges they're facing and to meaningfully contribute to their communities. Findings across community conversations demonstrate that people want to support each other in taking action on the urgent economic and environmental challenges they face, but lack both the personal and systemic capacity to do so. Basic income strengthens community resilience by framing wellbeing as a collective responsibility rather than an individual one. It gives people the capacity to help each other and to take action on the issues they care about. It can play a crucial role in ensuring that no one is left behind in the course of a rapid environmental and economic transition.

**2** | **Design income security and climate policy solutions to focus on improving individual and collective quality of life.** Across communities, we heard that people want to be part of transformative environmental and economic change but are limited by time, money and other structural barriers. People who are already struggling to support themselves and their families cannot be expected to reduce home energy consumption, retrofit their housing, purchase an electric vehicle or take other actions that require spending or sacrifice. All policy solutions that aim to address climate change or income insecurity must be framed in terms of opportunity and gain, not loss and pain.

**3** | **Empower people and communities with the tools and resources they need to build or strengthen resilience.** Communities are experts on their own experiences of climate change and income insecurity. They already know which actions would improve individual and collective wellbeing in a period of significant environmental

and economic change. As such, community-level transformative acts must be led by communities themselves, moving beyond models of cursory engagement or consultation. This includes ensuring communities have meaningful control over development that takes place on their land. Community agency must be facilitated through appropriate and accessible policy, funding and other forms of support.

A consistent message from our conversations was that communities are not benefiting from status-quo economic, social and political conditions. It is imperative that government leaders at all levels recognize that with sufficient resources, communities can create conditions for effective, transformative action on climate change and income insecurity. Given Canada's history of colonialism and cultural genocide against Indigenous peoples, working toward decolonization and reconciliation for the harms inflicted by multiple institutional and individual actors is central to this work. Implementing the Calls to Justice identified by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Calls to Action identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, including the full adoption and implementation of UNDRIP, is an essential step for the federal government.

Several partners who hosted conversations with Indigenous people and communities emphasised the importance of self-determination and governance in all matters relating to or affecting Indigenous people. This includes free, prior and informed consent on all activities affecting Indigenous people's rights and land, ending the criminalization of Indigenous land defenders and centring traditional values into multilateral decision making. A participant in one of these conversations shared that any possible future that provides balance for Indigenous communities must be rooted in Indigenous worldviews, priorities, resources and economies. Ongoing, self-reflexive work in these areas is central to empowering communities to take action on climate change, income insecurity and much more.

**4** | **Ensure that corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share.** Our recommendations are urgent and doable—but only if we are prepared to invest in them. If we are to address long-standing systemic crises like climate change, income insecurity, racial and gender inequality and other forms of systemic oppression, we must undertake major federal tax reform. We cannot justify the continued existence of tax loopholes, offshore tax havens and shrinking corporate tax rates—every person and every corporation must pay their fair share. The responsibility to pay for the changes we need should not rest on the shoulders of those who can least afford it.

The Green Resilience Project final report describes how we arrived at these findings. It includes a history of the Green Resilience Project, summary of the conversations that took place in each community and a reflection about what we learned in listening to them.

To learn more about the Green Resilience Project, visit our website at [greenresilience.ca](https://greenresilience.ca). There, you can download our [final report](#), read [snapshots](#) of each community conversation and browse [summary reports](#) written by each of our community partners.

The Green Resilience Project is managed and delivered by Energy Mix Productions, Basic Income Canada Network, Coalition Canada Basic Income - Revenu de base, Basic Income Canada Youth Network, national experts and local partners. Funding was generously provided by the Government of Canada through Environment and Climate Change Canada's Climate Action and Awareness Fund.



*In 2017, worker-led nonprofit Iron & Earth partnered with Louis Bull Tribe to deliver a five-day solar training program in which fossil fuel workers and Indigenous workers completed a hands-on solar installation at the Louis Bull Tribe's daycare centre. Photo by David Dodge, GreenEnergyFutures.ca.*