



Community Summary Report #23

Location: Montréal, Quebec

Partner Name: Y4Y Quebec (2 of 2)

Green Resilience Project Community Summary Report (2 of 2)

Community Partner name: Y4Y Québec - info@y4yquebec.org

Conversation date: January 26th, 2022

1. Introduction

A. Summary

For question 1, a consensus of anxiety emerged around a failing climate, and the inability to save up financially for an unpredictable future. Luckily, this common insecurity is leading to a sense of solidarity amongst many young people. For question 2, many participants believe that the current economic order, with its overreliance on mass consumption, contributes to destabilizing the climate and punishing those unable to participate economically. For question 3, most thought we should focus on the community level for solutions. Governments should promote circular economies, especially in lower income communities, by providing subsidies and incentives to those who contribute to it. For question 4, participants mostly agreed that with greater power comes greater social responsibility. Solutions will emerge once those affected most are centered in the conversation. Therefore a culture shift is required, and regular citizens need to hold government and big business accountable for solutions to emerge.

B. About the Green Resilience Project

This community conversation was part of the Green Resilience Project, a Canada-wide series of conversations exploring and documenting the links between community resilience, income security and the shift to a low-carbon economy. Working with a designated partner organization from each community, the Green Resilience Project aims to create spaces in which a wide range of participants can talk through the links between climate change and income security, and identify possible next steps to build or maintain community resilience in the face of these challenges.

This Community Summary Report reflects what we heard and learned in our community's conversation. Each Project partner organization across Canada will be producing a similar report. In March 2022, the Green Resilience Project will produce a final report summarizing findings across conversations, which will be available to the public and shared with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Funding for the Green Resilience Project is generously provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada's Climate Action and Awareness Fund. The 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.

C. About Y4Y Québec

Y4Y Québec is a provincial non-profit youth network committed to addressing the issues facing English-speaking youth (between the ages of 16 to 30). We aspire to create a strong sense of belonging to the community so that all youth will feel part of Québec society.

While we are a provincial group, Y4Y is based in Montreal, and that is where the majority of our staff and volunteers live, therefore we are especially connected to the English-speaking youth of this community.

Mitchell Beer from The Energy Mix reached out to Y4Y to participate in the Green Resilience Project based on a referral from Lorraine O'Donnell. Lorraine is a Research Associate at QUESCREN with whom Y4Y has frequently collaborated. We were immediately interested in the offer, as we know how much climate change and income insecurity are important topics for our English-speaking youth demographics. Furthermore, I have written my Masters thesis on a climate change topic, so therefore I was personally interested in the project.

D. Why this community was selected to have a conversation

- In terms of climate change, this Montreal community faces flooding, heat waves and smog in the summer, and hot and cold snaps in the winter. In terms of income security, the community faces issues like the lack of affordable housing, a rising cost of living, underfunded social programs, etc.
- The local environment is changing by warming by 1.2 degrees Celsius from 1979 to 2016, and that trend is likely to continue. To address flooding and community resilience, the city of Montreal has had the army build dikes and stuff big balloons inside municipal drain pipes. To address heat waves, the city is setting aside land for public green spaces, and planting trees to cut down on the heat island effect. To combat smog, the city is banning oil and wood heating. Addressing the energy transition, while including some of the previously mentioned initiatives, also includes installing electric car charging stations. To address income security, the city is buying empty properties and investing in social and affordable housing, and supporting various nonprofit initiatives that combat homelessness.
- Montreal's strength in terms of climate change is geographic. The island is not near an ocean, nor do its nearby forests get as hot and dry as those in British Columbia, which lead to forest fires. Montreal's strength in terms of income security is that, globally speaking, it remains a relatively affordable city, unlike, for example, Toronto or Vancouver.

E. About the conversation participants

of conversation participants: 20

I chose to invite Montreal-area young professionals for three reasons. (By 'professional' I mean that each attendee was or has either attended a post-secondary institution, or are established in skilled job sectors). First, I wanted to hear from a young demographic. Attendees, roughly speaking, were all in their late 20s. Second, I wanted to contrast their perspectives with those of the Filipino Youth Group of the Evangelical Mission Community Church in Montreal, who were featured in my first Green Resilience Conversation. The Filipino Youth Group was on the whole much younger, largely disconnected from Montreal's professional world, and were mostly unaware of the broader elite led conversation around

the topics discussed. Third, I was curious about what the young Montreal professionals' consensus on these topics is, if any.

While I had hoped to have this conversation in person, COVID forced it to be held over Zoom. I invited these participants primarily through reaching out to my Y4Y Québec peers, my own personal community, and used Y4Y Québec's social media accounts, offering a 50\$ stipend for participation, to entice a few more participants.

20 Montreal-area professionals attended. The timing of the conversation was based on a Doodle poll I had sent out. As previously mentioned, attendees were all roughly in their late 20s. While all were to some degree part of a nascent Montreal elite, there was a distinct range of lived experiences on display. Some were current undergraduate students, some had finished their education, some worked at a playwrights' workshop, while others worked in nonprofits and community organizations. Furthermore, there were white and BIPOC folks involved, recent immigrants, and male and female participants. To my knowledge, however, there were no Indigenous persons present.

As mentioned, I chose to focus on Montreal-area young professionals in order to counterbalance the responses I had received from the Filipino Youth Group of the Evangelical Mission Community Church. I therefore invited a few friends of mine to attend, both from within Y4Y and my own circle, who I believed fit my description, and then sent out an invitation for participants. While there was no explicit call for 'professionals,' I know the Y4Y ecosystem well enough to have largely predicted who would respond.

F. The Community Conversation

- This conversation took place over Zoom at a time of the participants' choosing. As mentioned, I sent out a Doodle poll in advance.
- The event lasted for two hours. I followed the script offered by the Green Resilience Project organizers quite closely.
- All group questions remained the same. I decided against breakout rooms, however. I felt the group was small enough to allow for a conversation to flow, and I believe I was correct. Furthermore, I knew some of the participants previously, therefore I thought I could most comfortably moderate.
- I believe the conversation was a very successful community event. Just about everyone contributed frequently. Roughly half of the participants have since messaged me, asking to invite them if ever there is another similar event in the future. Luckily, I did not encounter any noteworthy challenges in organizing the event. Having already conducted a Green Resilience Conversation the previous week with the Filipino Youth Group of the Evangelical Mission Community Church, I generally knew what to expect in terms of preparation.

2. What We Heard

A. How are the changes to our community's environment and economy discussed in the introduction affecting you, your family or the community as a whole?

A consensus of uneasiness and anxiety about the future emerged, in terms of a failing climate, and the inability to save up financially for an unpredictable future. These changes

have “[psychological] effects on young people, [they bring] a lot of anxious, depressive and insecure feelings.” Luckily, there is a sense of solidarity amongst young people that is equally emerging, based on a common insecurity. “[The] massive climate strike in 2019” was cited as an example of “solidarity” in action and a cause for “hope.”

B. How are these environmental and economic changes related to each other?

Many participants believe that the current economic order, with its overreliance on mass consumption, inherently contributes to both destabilizing the climate (“unless we can reorganize the systems we have in place then we are going to keep facilitating climate change”) and punishing those unable to participate in its marketplace (“[the] growth of the economy depends on us buying all this stuff we can’t afford or don’t need”).

C. What are some possible solutions to the challenges we’ve discussed that will help the community respond to climate change and create income security for all community members?

Most thought we should focus on the community level for solutions, and not on large scale plans. “We often brainstorm a lot about tech heavy solutions and abandon what we are doing now, there is a lot of looking over what is actually accessible to us at the moment and these innovations take a long time to actually come to fruition.” Many of these plans, like “tesla[,] [have] turned into a status thing.” Governments ought to promote a circular economy, especially in lower income communities, by providing government subsidies and incentives to those who contribute to it. This includes “subsidizing local food producers[,]” and “[increasing] space or more access to community gardens[.]”

D. How do you think these solutions can be achieved to build, maintain or strengthen community resilience? Who is responsible for these changes—individuals, community groups, governments or a mix?

A consensus was less clear cut. However, participants mostly agreed that “the more power you have the more responsibility you have and [that] it’s very easy to shirk that responsibility when you have the power”. Therefore some sort of culture shift is required to happen, and regular citizens need to hold government and big business accountable to allow for solutions to emerge. “[Change] has to come from the top.” Solutions will materialize when those affected most by climate change and income insecurity when these “most impacted voices are heard and are centered.”

3. What We Learned

- I found the aforementioned points fascinating. While there were different solutions and a variety of ideas suggested, the overall tone of anxiety, solidarity, and a belief in government and big business as those responsible for solution-making was relatively uniform. When some participants suggested that everyone bears a level of responsibility in addressing climate change and income insecurity, pushback often (politely) emerged. I believe this group reflected much of the elite feelings and

opinions on the aforementioned topics. There may have been some group think at play, but I am surprised, nonetheless, at the uniformity.

- To what extent do you think your conversation built a wider and deeper understanding of the links and synergies between community resilience, livelihoods, income security and the low-carbon transition?
 - 4. While few participants were officially versed in questions of income insecurity and climate change (in terms of their employment or university degrees), I believe the current emerging elite consensus allowed for a fairly advanced understanding of these synergies. This is why I did not select '5'. However, no doubt the conversation elevated the median degree of knowledge. One participant, for example, emailed me afterwards, stating that the event was “an intellectually stimulating conversation.”
- To what extent did participants demonstrate increased awareness of climate change and their own capacity for climate action?
 - 4. Again, there seemed to be a base rate amount of climate change knowledge, as well as an understanding of one’s capacity for climate action. That being said, there were clearly some participants with a more advanced awareness of environmental phenomena, such as when someone mentioned that “[we] have black widow spiders that are characteristics of the south that are coming into Quebec.” This would undoubtedly raise peoples’ awareness. As well, the conversation, if anything, appeared to somewhat reduce peoples’ belief in their capacity for climate action. The degree of pessimism may have dampened the optimism of some.
- To what extent were new relationships between community partners and conversation participants created and fostered?
 - 5. New relationships between community partners and conversation participants were absolutely created and fostered. Three participants came from Playwrights’ Workshop Montreal, for example, an organization that Y4Y will now help host an event of theirs in March. Three participants from Y4Y events decided to return, furthermore, allowing for a renewal of dialogue with former advisory committee members.
- To what extent did your conversation create opportunities to foster ongoing discussion of solutions related to climate change, income insecurity and community resilience?
 - 3. No official follow up event was created, but roughly half of the participants asked to let them know if there were any other further climate resiliency conversations in the future. An opportunity for ongoing discussions therefore potentially exists, if an event of some sort can be assembled.

- In your opinion, what does the community need to do next in order to build or maintain resilience in the face of climate change and rising income insecurity?

I believe that the city of Montreal should begin to host its own versions of the Green Resilience Project. I would be happy to propose the idea to the municipal government, especially because I believe there would be a certain openness to it. While I imagine there have been similar consultations before (of which I am not aware), such a moment in time (with growing dread about climate change, and increased income inequality) seems opportune to do so. My conversations' participants, both the Filipino Youth Group as well as the Montreal professionals, would be excellent attendees.

4. Next steps

As previously mentioned, roughly half of the participants asked to let them know if there are any other further climate resiliency conversations in the future. As such, I would be pleased to invite them to a Green Resilience-style municipal conversation, or to the Green Policy event entitled "Saving the Planet: What's Quebec Doing?" which I am hosting at Y4Y's 5th Annual Youth Forum on March 19th. As the moderator of this event, I intend to incorporate elements of the topics explored in these community conversations. This event is still in the works, however I am happy to share the complete plan to the Green Resilience Project Coordinator in the coming weeks.