

BCCI-3 features Climate Justice

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The BC Coalition Institute (BCCI) is an informal network that was launched in Kelowna at a 4-day event in 2017, followed by a similar event (BCCI-2) two years later in Victoria. The theme of BCCI-2 was “Planetary Health: Local and Global”. Linking these two events is an ongoing “Community of Practice” (CoP) to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Because of COVID during 2021, BCCI-3 had a different structure, consisting of three components:

- a Preparation Phase (May to September)
- a two-day symposium (October 1st and 2nd)
- an ongoing Community of Practice (October '21 to June '22)

During the preparation phase, self-organizing partnerships across universities and research networks were developed throughout the province. These partnerships featured a direct focus on working with local community groups (including youth) and on strengthening collaboration among groups with climate change interests at a given university and community. These local efforts were supported by province-wide virtual engagement events. The overall goal was to stimulate applied learning in response to knowledge-to-action opportunities. Over time, these partnerships came to be called “learning hubs”.

By the time of the symposium in early October, there were six or seven learning hubs across the province, involving five or more individuals in each hub. Most of the symposium activities were virtual with a few local in-person gatherings. The symposium was entitled Climate Justice: Learning from the Pandemic and events included keynote presentations, a workshop on “Synergizing and Harmonizing”, presentations by learning hubs, and “space” for optional activities such as going for walks in the outdoors. On the first day, we were pleased to hear an inspiring discussion about intergenerational equity and climate from Maya Gislason (Simon Fraser University) and to welcome special guests from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, particularly Arleigh Reynolds. Day two featured an insightful challenge from Mira Ziolo (University of British Columbia), who wove a holistic picture of animal, planetary, and human equity together. Workshops focused on how to incorporate synergy, harmony, and equity in our daily practices. The day’s conversations wrapped up with observations and future-facing remarks by Jerry Spiegel of the University of British Columbia.

As a next step, a working group will meet to design the upcoming 9-month CoP plan in more detail. The components will include regular events (webinars and workshops), an expanded resource library, strengthened support for capacity building (such as university courses), community engagement activities, and advocacy initiatives. All components will be specially attuned to synergy opportunities.

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