

enviroFund

2018-2022

Lighter Living Impact

May 2023



Vancity

OneEarth
LIVING

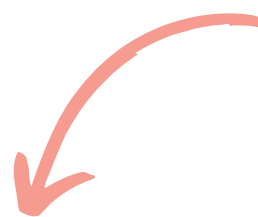
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credit: Canva

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enviroFund and Lighter Living

Impact Stories 2018-2022

Five Lessons Learned

Next Level Impact: Join Us!

enviroFund & Lighter Living



Supporting sustainable good lives for all.

credit: Canva

What is the Vancity enviroFund™?

Thanks to Vancity enviro™ Visa* cardholders, Vancity distributes grants to groups working on solutions that enable everyone to make a difference.



credit: Threading Change

What's the impact?

\$12.2M

The Vancity enviroFund™ has funded \$12.2 million to environmental projects in the community since 1990.

Use an enviro Visa credit card knowing that 5% of profits go to fund climate-action projects in your community.

Beyond the Vancity enviroFund™, 30% of Vancity's profits go to societal and environmental solutions through Shared Success. Find out more about the [Vancity enviroFund™](#).



Are you a changemaker?

You can apply for grants that support inclusion and environmental initiatives.

enviroFund and Lighter Living

Impact Stories 2018-2022

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Vancity OneEarth
LIVING

What is lighter living?

Lighter living encourages us all to consume less, waste less, live more and share more.

From 2018-2022, Vancity enviroFund™ invested in projects that make it easier for us all to live lighter and preserve the earth's resources for future generations.



credit: Canva

Lighter living allows people to spend their hard-earned money on things that really matter: quality, long-lasting goods, experiences over material possessions, healthier and more sustainable forms of transport, etc.

Lighter living means **greater access to more sustainable products and the shared use of goods and services.** It means having more time **for ourselves, our communities and our natural world.**

We are all doing something in our daily lives to live lighter, such as biking or walking instead of driving, minimising our use of plastic, repairing things rather than buying new, sharing tools with our neighbours, eating less meat and so on!

Let's celebrate what we're doing to live lighter and challenge ourselves to do more, for the sake of ourselves, our children and our planet.

Find out [more.](#)

Lighter living priorities

Our ecological footprint in Southwest BC

Some actions matter more than others in addressing our climate and ecological crises. Here is the latest science and research on our local footprint in Southwest British Columbia.

Highest-priority action areas

FOOD = 50%

Key contributors: meat and dairy consumption, wasted food

MOBILITY = 25%

Key contributors: fossil fuel use in private vehicles and other modes of transportation (e.g., air travel, buses and trucks)

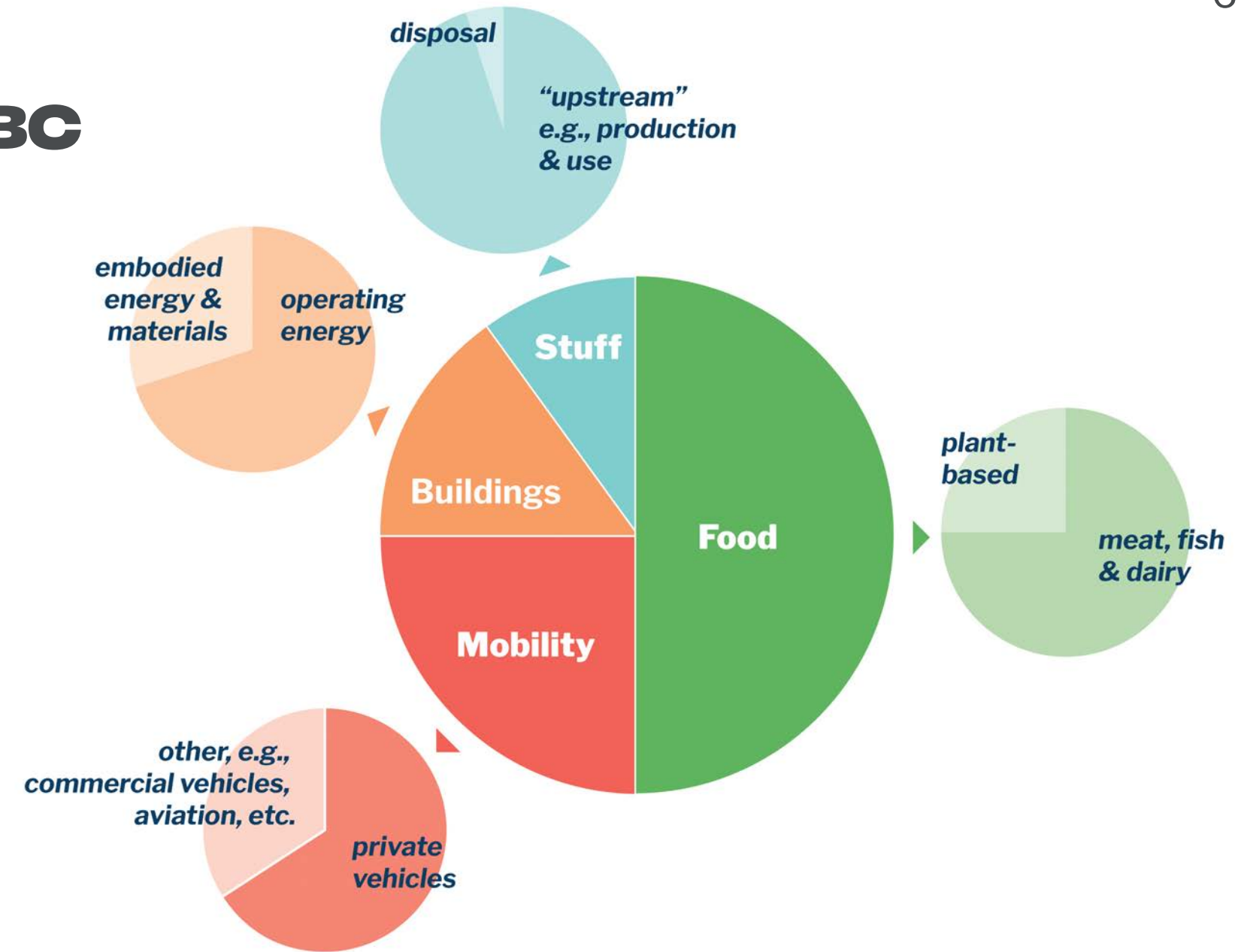
BUILDINGS = 15%

Key contributors: gas heating, energy and materials used for construction, inefficient energy use

STUFF = 10%

Key contributors: resource extraction, manufacturing, transportation, waste

credit: BCIT Centre for Ecocities



BC’s ecological and carbon footprint help us see how close (or far) we are to living within the limits of our planet, and what we need to do to get on track – as individuals and as communities. **From an ecological footprint perspective, the highest impact area is food. From a climate perspective, it’s mobility. The bottom line? We need to focus on all of these action areas to bring down our footprints.**

Lighter living priorities

Equity and wellbeing



An equitable climate transition

We focus our work to provide solutions to **help people who are affected by the climate emergency**, as well as those seeking support in transitioning to cleaner and more sustainable living.

Better living

Lighter living is about living better lives — with a focus on respecting our planet and each other and **prioritising more of what matters, not just more stuff or harmful consumption**. Let's build what matters — including health, security, belonging, trust and joy.

How do we support lighter living?

You are a key player!

How you live, eat, move, buy, have fun, and invest your money shapes your environmental impact.

We inspire each other. When enough people make changes in our everyday lives in high-priority footprint areas – our actions add up!

You're not alone.

You need government, business and communities to lead and to enable lighter living. Many of your choices are shaped by where you live and what is available.

You can create the world you live in by pushing for bold action by governments and business.

Join forces with others to change your community.

Together we make
lighter living
desirable, accessible,
affordable and inclusive.

Joining forces for lighter living

Vancity and OneEarth Living formed a partnership to advance lighter living in Southwest B.C.

Vancity is a credit union committed to a clean and fair world. We develop innovative products and build partnerships with communities to address our members' needs. We are Canada's largest community credit union, a financial co-operative that operates within the territories of the Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw people.

Vancity is a member-owned, community-based, full-service financial institution with 54 branches in Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Victoria, Squamish, and Alert Bay. Our head office is situated on the territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations in Vancouver, British Columbia (BC).

We use our assets to help achieve our vision of a transformed economy that protects the earth and guarantees equity for all.

Find out more at [Vancity.com](https://vancity.com)

OneEarth Living is a nonprofit 'think and do tank' advancing sustainable everyday living around the world. We partner across sectors to transform how people live their lives – what they need, what they consume and produce, and what they aspire to.

OneEarth Living is a global leader in sustainable lifestyles through the Beacon for Sustainable Living, co-led with the Hot or Cool Institute, and through the United Nations Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme. In Canada, we co-host the Fair Earth Living Funder Collaborative with MakeWay and are active on the Management Board of the National Zero Waste Council. OneEarth Living co-leads Lighter Living initiatives in SW British Columbia with Vancity and in Québec with Recyc-Québec.

We build the sustainable living field, connect research and practice, equip key actors with strategies and tools, and craft narratives and innovative programs that inspire change at scale.

Find out more at [OneEarthLiving.org](https://oneearthliving.org)

Acknowledgements (alphabetical, by last name): Dwayne Appleby, Morgan Beall, Michelle Bonner, Lindsey Boyle, Edna Catumbela, Maureen Cureton, Theodora Geach, Kira Gerwing, Cora Hallsworth, Alice Henry, Erin LaRocque, Fergus Kinnaird, Krista Loewen, Lisa Mastny, Anthonia Ogundele, Selin Oguz, Emily Pearson, Erica Priggen Wright, Max Serpa, Moira Teevan, Dagmar Timmer, Vanessa Timmer, and many other past and present team members.

What is our impact?

Explore the next section of this report to discover inspiring solutions that are making a difference.

Hundreds of changemakers created real solutions over the past five years - too many to tell all their stories!

Here is a selection of the businesses and organisations bringing lighter living improvements to life.*

* Each organisation listed in this report is hyperlinked.

Click on their name! for more information about the organisation or project.



credit: Canva

Impact Stories 2018 - 2022



Making a difference locally.

credit: Maple Ridge Repair Cafe

140+ grant recipients

191 projects

\$3.7 million distributed

Find out more on the [Vancity enviroFund™](#) page.

We...

Invested in high-impact footprint areas.

Equipped people to take action that matters.

Mapped and connected lighter living actors.

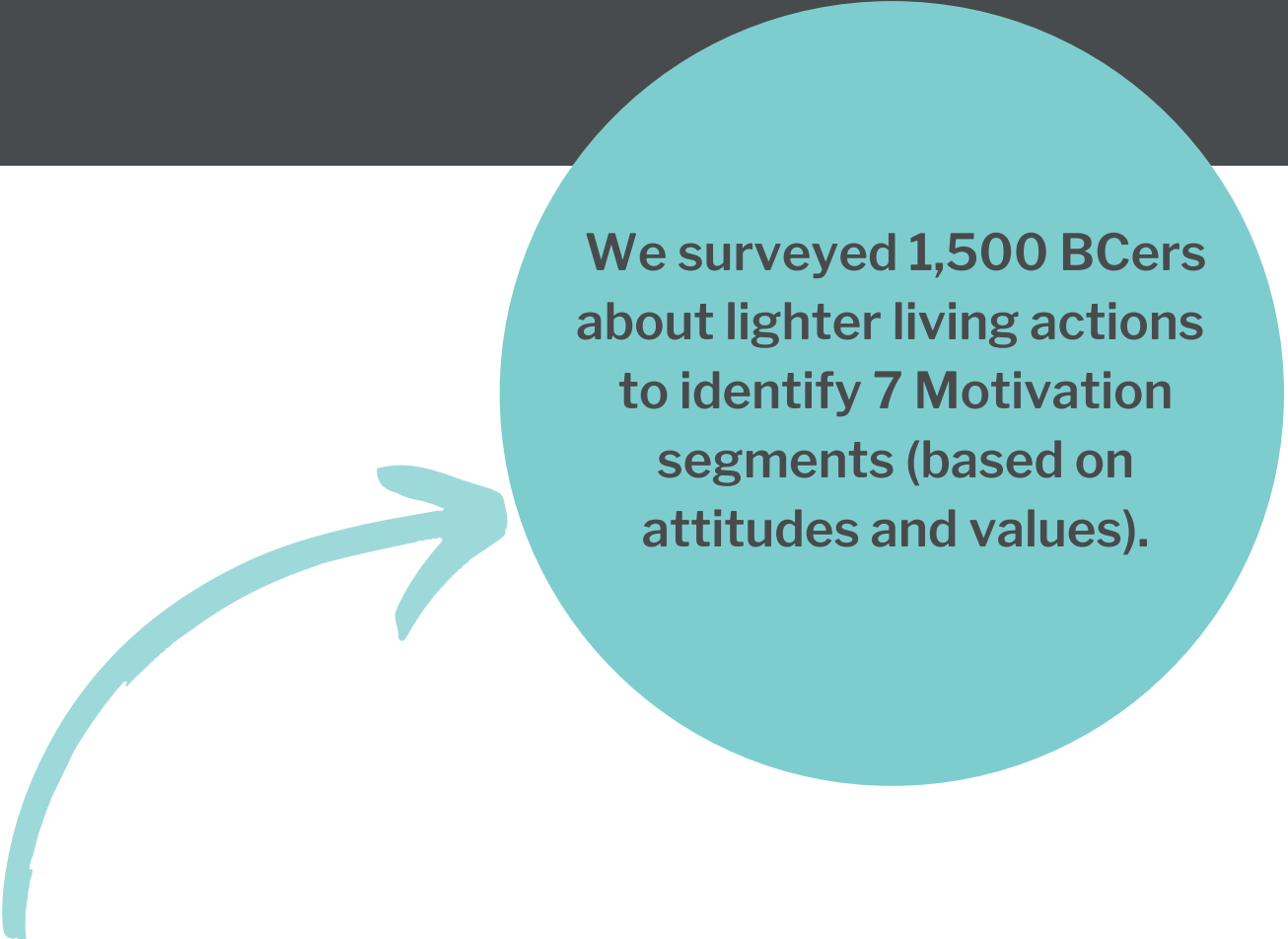
Funded changemakers across Southwest BC!

Discovered diverse motivations for people taking lighter living actions.

Catalysed business and enterprises.

Engaged Vancity leadership and staff.

Joined forces to accelerate lighter living in Canada and globally.



We surveyed 1,500 BCers about lighter living actions to identify 7 Motivation segments (based on attitudes and values).

We invested in **high-impact footprint areas.**

BUILDINGS

Home Performance Stakeholder Council

Created a network of contractors and other professionals that help residents decrease home energy use and emissions and enhance building durability and efficiency (more).

MOBILITY

Hub Cycling - Bike to Shop & Go By Bike Week

Supported local businesses in 11 neighbourhoods in attracting shoppers on bike and showed decision makers and citizens how easy, fun and convenient it is to bike routinely.

MOBILITY

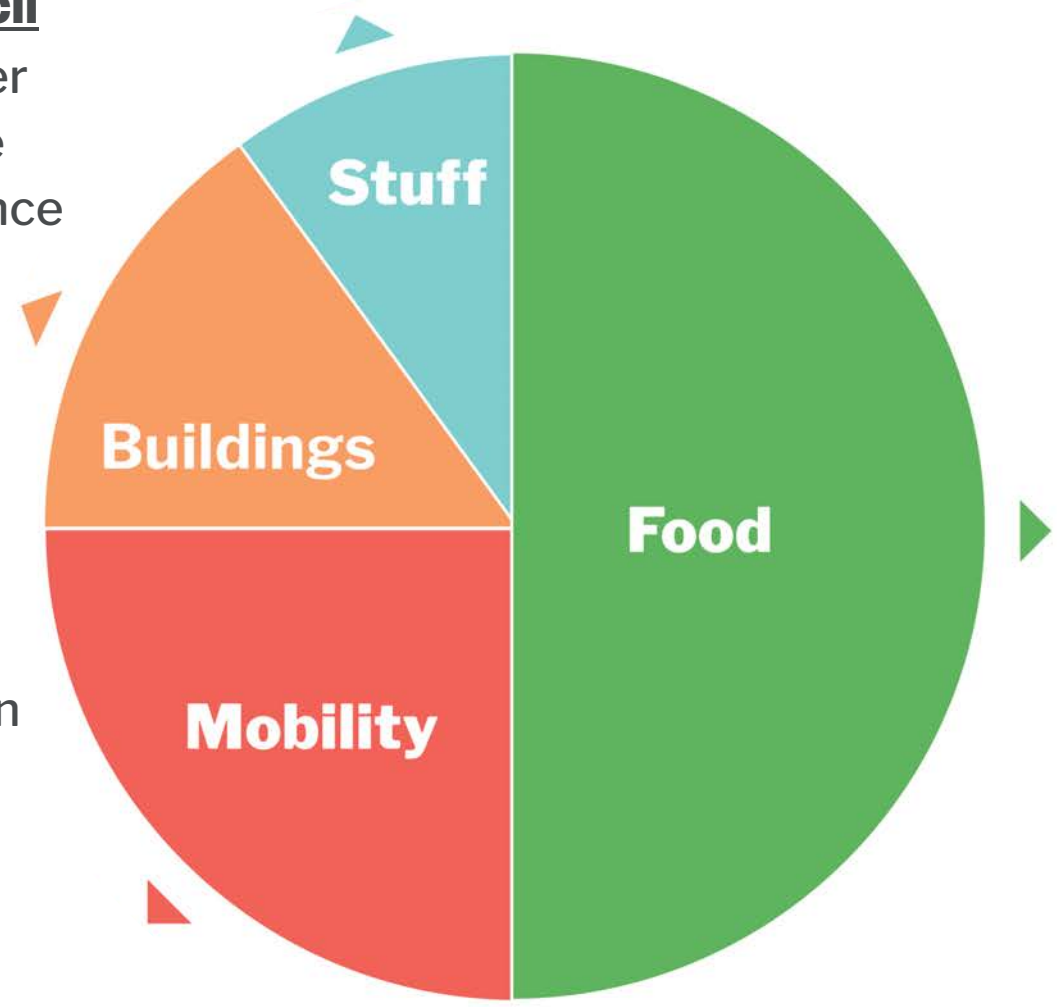
Kickstand Bikes

Helped more people embrace a cycling lifestyle by providing a volunteer-run community space that supports bike repair, refurbishment and reuse.

STUFF

SUPPLY Victoria Creative Reuse Centre

Diverted used art, office and school supplies from the landfill and put them into the hands of artists, students and teachers.



FOOD

FarmFolk CityFolk

Engaged citizens on how to shop and eat to support low-carbon food systems, and involved 160+ farmers in a climate-friendly farmer network.

FOOD

Emma's Acres - The L.I.N.C. Society

Brought together incarcerated individuals, crime victims, correctional staff and the public to learn sustainable agricultural practices and access fresh produce.

We invested in: (De-) Construction



BUILDINGS

The demolition industry generates millions of tonnes of waste annually in Canada. Through Vancity enviroFund™ support, we helped develop alternatives to wasteful practices during home renovations, while also creating new local jobs.

37% of demolition waste in Canada is valuable lumber.



credit: Unbuilders



credit: Habitat for Humanity



Tip: Vancity's [Planet-Wise Teardown Financing program](#) can be used to employ contractors to deconstruct your building.



We provided early investment in the “deconstruction” startup **Unbuilders**, which is now an established company with an up to 99% salvage and recycle rate on homes.

We funded the launch of The Rebuild Hub (Habitat for Humanity with Unbuilders) a marketplace that sells salvaged building materials.



credit: Unbuilders

- The hub diverts **thousands of tonnes of usable product** from landfills and recycling stations.
- People can use these materials in their home projects, and the **funds raised build safe and affordable homes** for working families.



We invested in: Food waste and recovery

FOOD

Wasted food is both a climate and ecological priority. Building on the Vancity enviroFund™ first 5-year focus on food, we were well-placed to bring together key players – like groceries and farms – to support food waste reduction and composting while also helping to feed the community.



That contributes 56.5 million tonnes of CO₂-equivalent each year.

And yet, 1 in 6 children in BC are food insecure.

[Food Stash](#)

We helped **individuals** divert food waste from landfills – and remediated soil.

- We funded the [Compost Education Centre's](#) Ground Beneath Our Feet [project](#), which explored the use of compost, fungi, and native plants to remediate soil contaminated with heavy metals. The project increased community access to soil restoration techniques and safe food growing practices with the objective of increased food sovereignty.

We mapped the path to **national** reductions in food waste.

- We funded the [National Zero Waste Council's](#) research to create a Food Loss and Waste Strategy for Canada, a guide for country-wide collaborative action developed through extensive consultation with the agri-food sector, government, community organisations and international experts (see [report](#)).



We made reducing food waste attractive to businesses – and helpful to communities.



credit: Low Entropy Foundation
Volunteer Emilie Bouwman

● **FoodMesh** created a **B2B Marketplace platform** that allows suppliers to sell or donate unsold food products through a network of food recovery agents and recipients. The platform measures meals provided, food rescued, CO2 emissions and money saved.

- With our support, **FoodMesh** was able to create revolving funds to bring more charities on board as recipients.
- An average of 116 shoppers visited **Food Stash's Rescued Food Market** weekly in 2022, each taking home an average of 16.4 pounds (over \$40 worth) of healthy food per visit.
- **Immigrant Link Centre Society (ILCS)** supports 4,200 people per month, improving access to healthy food for immigrants and refugees by gathering and distributing usable, unsold food from grocery stores to the community at no cost.
- **Low Entropy Foundation** connects at-risk, food-insecure families to community food recovery resources.

We invested in: Our Clothes



STUFF

Everyday goods and “stuff” are a big piece of our carbon and ecological footprints. Through the Vancity enviroFund™, we helped people transform their relationship to textiles and how they acquire, use and discard clothing and accessories.

This included promoting alternatives to “fast fashion” and encouraging people to repair items and to buy, sell and swap used or sustainably/ethically produced clothing and shoes.

We mapped out solutions for textile recycling in Western Canada.

- Our investment in the [Textile Lab for Circularity](#) led to the development of a [Roadmap for Textiles Recycling in Western Canada](#), exploring scalable solutions that divert apparel and textile waste from landfill in BC and Alberta.

We supported the circular economy for textiles at Vancity branches.

- The nonprofit [Framework Education Society](#) teamed up with Vancity to bring “fix-it” events to three Vancity branches in Richmond, Surrey and Port Coquitlam.



Five new garments a year

— that’s the maximum we should each purchase to stay in line with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

[Hot or Cool Institute](#)

credit: Canva



credit: Canva

We improved awareness of sustainable fashion and connected BIPOC youth to this work.

We helped [Threading Change](#), a BIPOC, youth and women-led organisation, advance its efforts to build a sustainable fashion future in Vancouver through:

- business and community engagement events
- job placement for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and other People of Colour) youth at local sustainable fashion companies
- a global map of ethical brands and
- a series of clothing swaps to help people find used items that are “new to them.”

We empowered businesses to be part of the circular economy.

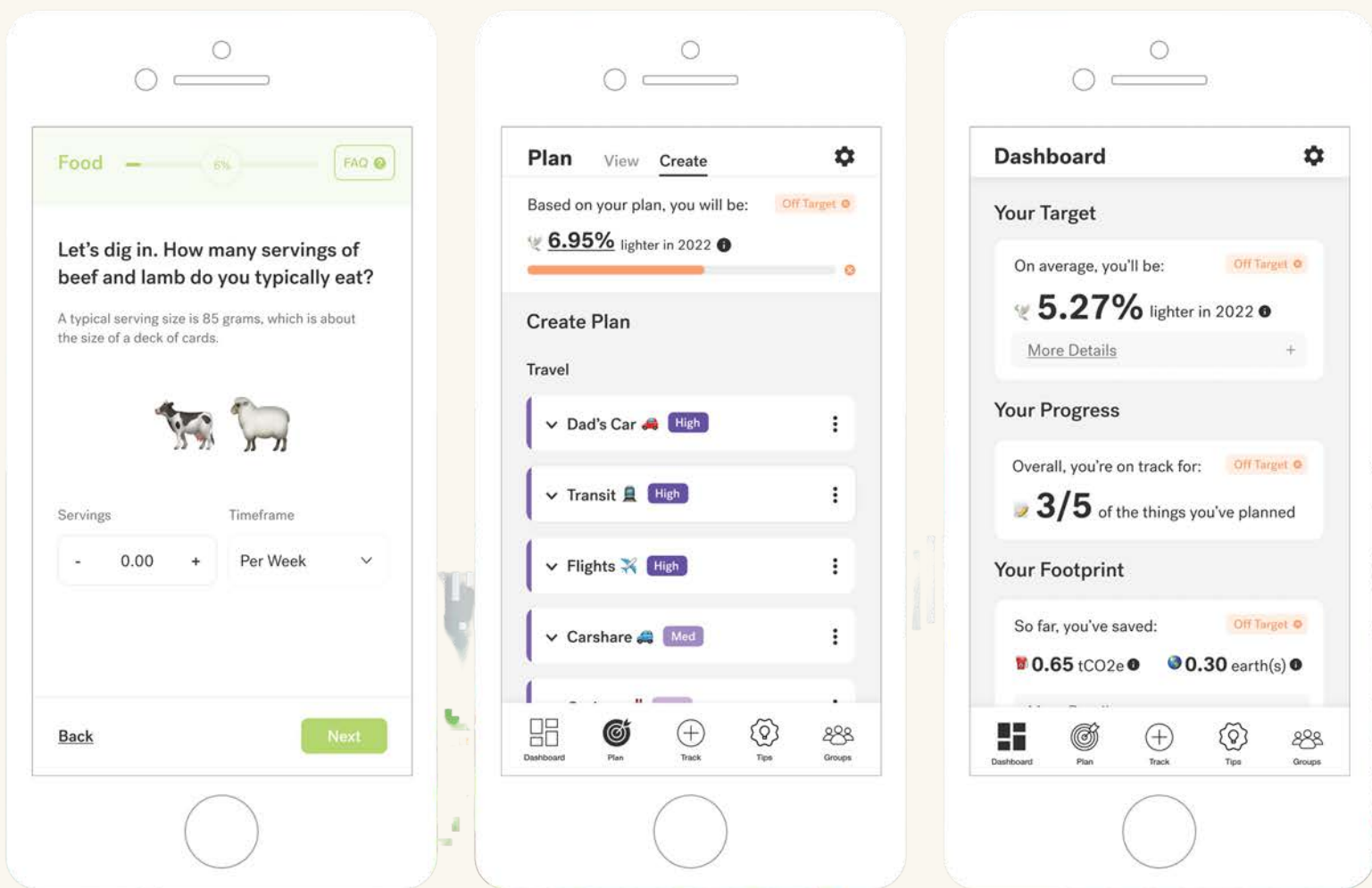
- Our support helped [Fabcycle](#), a sustainable textile retailer and recycler, conduct research on business model scalability. They also provided clothing weigh stations at the ARCHIVE consignment sale to show buyers how much material they’ve saved from landfill.

We equipped people to take action that matters.

People around the world are ready to consume less and live more. We supported them to take highest priority footprint actions. We linked them in peer groups to inspire and encourage each other.

Lighter Footprint App

Designed to help people build lighter footprint habits - for themselves and for the planet - informed by the ecoCity Footprint Tool and backed by community data from across BC. (BCIT Centre for Ecocities)



credit: BCIT Centre for Ecocities

Vancity conducted a 2 Cents Survey with members We asked what lighter living means to people and what they are doing to live lighter. When asked about the enviroFund theme, one member said: "This discussion on lighter living can engage people on a more personal level to make changes."

Transition Salt Spring Society

Mobilised islanders and organisations to lower their emissions and prepare for increasing climate change risks.

credit: Transition Salt Spring Society



Lighter Living Groups

Ran 5 x month-long online Lighter Living Groups: a total of 46 people across ages and geographies, sharing with each other and taking 403 Lighter Living actions, with measurable results in food, energy, transport and stuff (more). (OneEarth Living with CityHive and SPEC)



“...as a university student, my living environment changes regularly and, thus, so do the resources around me. Therefore, **I would like to learn more ways I can improve my own sustainability as well as that of the community** that are adaptable and I can take to wherever I may end up!”

“I'm very interested in learning about my own footprint, as I'm sure there are ways in which I'm unaware of how my lifestyle is impacting the environment. **I'm also very pragmatic - and find a lot of climate hope when I'm able to take some form of positive action.** I think this opportunity also sounds like a wonderful way to meet more like-minded people in BC and learn and grow together.”

From the intake forms of two Lighter Living Group participants.

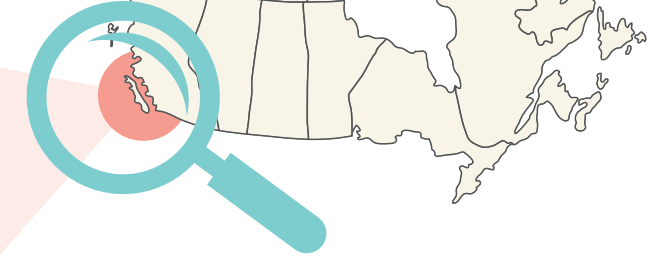
We mapped and connected **lighter living actors**.

- We identified **1,000+ organisations, initiatives and businesses** advancing lighter living in BC. This space wasn't well understood and was often focused only on actions by individuals and on small steps.
- We saw **new Vancity enviroFund™ project opportunities**, both geographically (e.g., beyond Metro Vancouver) and thematically (e.g., wasted food), as well as at the systems level.
- This supported **additional outreach and engagement**, including to new partners across the region doing exciting things to advance lighter living.

We funded changemakers across Southwest BC!

Map of Canada

British Columbia



Port McNeill: Anglican United Fellowship

Installed a solar backup system to support refrigeration for the weekly food distribution program.

credit: Anglican United Fellowship



Squamish: Zero Urban Logistics

Provided zero-emission last-mile delivery of packages via cargo bike.

credit: David Lee



Victoria: Bike Victoria Society

Launched a safe and free bike parking service to support 4,500+ attendees of local events.

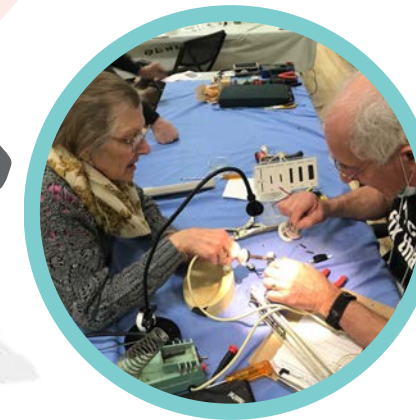
credit: Bike Victoria Society



Maple Ridge: Ridge Meadows Recycling Society

Implemented a volunteer-run repair cafe to help residents repair broken items.

credit: Ridge Meadows Recycling Society



Vancouver: Hopehill

Helped senior community residents adopt energy and waste reduction practices.

credit: Hopehill



Langley: Langley Environmental Partners Society

Supported local food and farmers via a two-week "eat local" event to reduce food miles.

credit: Langley Environmental Partners Society



credit: BritishColumbia.ca
(Map edited in Adobe Photoshop)

We discovered **diverse motivations** for people taking lighter living actions.


We funded a key insight study to explore the reasons **why** people across BC are taking lighter living actions, like buying second-hand, biking and eating more plant-based diets.


- We surveyed 1,500 British Columbia residents
- And identified 7 Motivation segments based on attitudes and values.


Great news! Many motivations lead to lighter living:


Not everyone is driven to make choices “for the planet.”

Other drivers include waste prevention, comfort and pleasure, and what’s trendy.

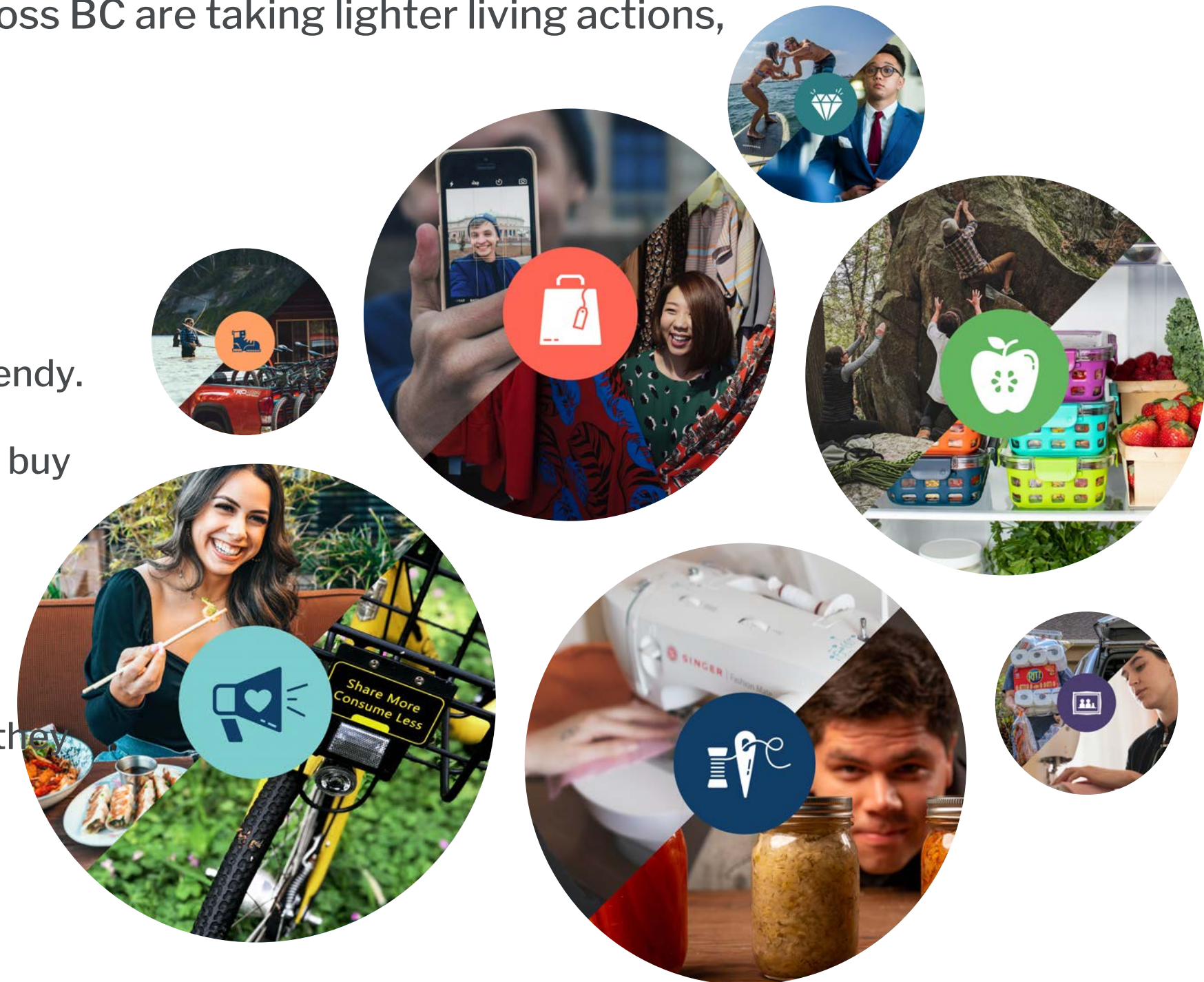
 Eco-Trends (dominant for 20% BCers) – align with positive trends and buy consciously.

 Shop, Style and Social (20%) – want to try new, cool experiences and things, influenced by popular culture.

 Waste Not, Want Not (22%) – minimise what they own, use only what they need and reduce all forms of waste.

 Healthy Life and Planet (14%) – do what’s best for their health and wellness, and that of the planet.

Learn more about all 7 Motivations and how to design for them: www.oneearthliving.org/motivations



✓ FAVOUR WALKING OR CYCLING

These three people have distinct reasons for walking or cycling.

And this is true for each of the 30 lighter living actions that we asked about in our research.

“Walking gives lots of time to think and it’s cost effective.”

“I just hop on the bike to work, for groceries: I get exercise out of it too.”

“We moved closer to stores and transit since having a child.”

With these insights, we can encourage lighter living choices among more people by tailoring our messaging and our support to their diverse motivations.

We helped businesses and others tap into these **diverse motivations** to mainstream lighter living actions.

Based on the 7 Motivations, businesses, governments and other changemakers have (re-)designed their strategies and communications, goods and services, campaigns and infrastructure to support wider adoption of lighter living practices.

- **25 businesses** applied the Motivations to their marketing and strategies in Vancouver and Victoria.
- **9 circular innovators** used the Motivations to better understand their target markets, via the [Share Reuse Repair Initiative](#)'s first SHIFTing Consumer Behaviour program (see [report](#)).
- **Vancity** and [Open Technologies](#) used the Motivations to identify why homeowners opt to install electric heat pumps and make climate-friendly retrofits (see “Stuck” [report](#)).

The Motivations are presented by OneEarth Living and the Share Reuse Repair Initiative (MakeWay platform), with lead sponsors Vancity Credit Union and Sitra (Finnish Innovation Fund). Co-sponsors are Modo, HUB Cycling, River Select Fisheries Cooperative, the Rebuild Hub (Unbuilders and Habitat for Humanity Restore), Kambo Energy Group and the Vancouver Foundation.



credit: OneEarth Living's Motivations for Lighter Living in BC

We catalysed **businesses and enterprises** in support of **lighter living.**

We supported **green business incubators and innovation spaces**, leading to stronger business success, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Market research – like the Motivations – brings all of our work to the next level.

By **uplifting businesses and enhancing their supportive networks**, we can foster a more robust circular economy in the region while enabling lighter living.

We coached **330 businesses** in zero-waste practices.

- [Ocean Ambassadors Canada](#) ran zero-waste education events and coordinated with business improvement areas or associations and boards of trade to support their members.

We increased understanding of the demand for circularity.

- [Share Reuse Repair Initiative](#) and [Circular Citizen](#), with [Alice Labs](#), hosted the Canadian phase of the [Stuff in Flux global insights study](#), identifying four new innovation areas for mainstreaming circularity in consumer goods in the country.



credit: Ocean Ambassadors Canada

We invested in: Project Zero Incubator



We supported the [Project Zero Incubator Program](#) - [Synergy Foundation](#) by sponsoring an **eight-month program** for early-stage startups, businesses and nonprofits to receive coaching and other support to **launch and market their sustainable product or service.**

6 ventures in 2019

In 2019, the first Project Zero Incubator Cohort was launched, supporting six ventures to develop their business model.

9 ventures in 2020

In 2020, the program took 9 ventures from idea to launch and created 34 new green jobs.

14 ventures in 2021

In 2021, Project Zero expanded to the Lower Mainland and welcomed its third cohort of 14 ventures.

17 ventures in 2022

In 2022, they expanded across BC with another 17 ventures.

Participants **learn** entrepreneurial skills, **connect** with mentors, and **develop** a business plan and investor pitch for their idea.



“One of the challenges is access to early-stage funding, including microloans, so having Vancity as a partner is **a key enabler to pushing the circular economy forward.**”

Jill Doucette, Executive Director
Synergy Foundation

We invested in: Uptake of Reusables



Reusables – the promotion and use of reusable products – **is a strategic business niche**, not just because practicing reuse can help reduce waste from disposables, but because this area is highly visible to the general public.



credit: Nulla Project

Encouraging reusables can result in the engagement of new audiences and potential adopters of lighter living concepts.

Through targeted interventions, **we raised the profile of reusables as a business opportunity** and catalysed support for scalable business models and early commercial applications.



What other business niches can we advance in the years ahead?



credit: Nulla Project



credit: Reusables.com



credit: Ocean Ambassadors Canada

- [Nulla Project](#) scaled its reusable container service, enabling customers to return empty take-out containers to establishments after use to help both businesses and customers reduce their impact.
- [Reusables.com](#) partnered with local restaurants, cafes and grocery stores in an initial pilot effort to help food businesses replace single-use packaging with trackable, reusable stainless steel containers.
 - In the past 2 years of operations, **120,000+ containers** have been reused, eliminating **5+ tons of waste** and avoiding close to **20 tons of CO2e**.
- [Ocean Ambassadors Canada](#) provided collaboration, capacity building and expert support to help businesses and citizens reduce their waste from single-use plastics.

We engaged **Vancity leadership and staff** to enable **lighter living**.

We walked the journey together, building capacity within Vancity for lighter living strategy, action and investment.

- Engaged **600+ Vancity staff** through 5 lighter living webinars, including on mobility, waste, and energy.
- Ran a **lighter living waste challenge** in the branches to reduce unnecessary waste.
- Created the **Vancity Green Wave team**, a cross-functional group of staff with an interest in sustainability who signed on to dedicate 10% of their time to deeper learning and ongoing team engagement on lighter living.
- Identified **100s of lighter living-aligned businesses** across the trade region to expand connections with, as well as strategic business niches to invest in.
- Staff used Vancity's internal social channel, Yammer, to **share their own lighter living journeys** – from local thrifting, to using reusable cups, to hosting repair cafes in local branches, and more!

“Our goal is to empower Vancity staff - to talk together about what lighter living means to them. We are all doing something in our lives to live lighter. **Let's celebrate what we are doing, and encourage each other to do more!**”



Krista Loewen
Community Investment Associate
Vancity

We joined forces to accelerate **lighter living in Canada and globally.**

Global events: inspiring others to enable lighter living

Sample joint events:

- 2021 – [UN Climate Change Conference \(COP 26\)](#) side event on [Catalysing Our Net Zero Future: working with people to take action on climate change](#) included the launch of the [Lighter Living Action Pack for Neighbourhoods in BC.](#)
- 2020 – [World Circular Economy Forum](#) side event on [Sustainable Lifestyles & Circular Economy: Canadian Insights on Motivations](#) exploring motivations for lighter living actions, hosted by OneEarth Living, Share Reuse Repair Initiative, Vancity, Sitra's Shift 1.5 Network and Circular Citizen.
- 2019 – [EcoCity World Summit](#): Canadian and international lighter living workshops with partners, a public event and a session on Sustainable Lifestyles and Ecocities: Radical Reframing for Strong, Urgent Climate Action.

Funder networks: promoting ambitious action for equitable and sustainable ways of living

Vancity is a member of:

- [Fair Earth Living](#) Funder Collaborative in Canada, co-hosted by MakeWay and OneEarth Living
- [Funders Network for Sustainable Living](#), an international network hosted by the Hot or Cool Institute

Global Leadership:

- Vancity is a proud member of the [Global Alliance for Banking on Values](#) and has joined a global effort among financial institutions to **track and monitor emissions from loans and investments.**
- OneEarth Living is an active member of the [United Nations Sustainable Lifestyles and Education program](#), working with governments and partners to **implement Sustainable Development Goal 12.**

Five Lessons Learned



**Building
on our
successes.**

credit: One Planet Saanich meeting; OneEarth Living

Five Lessons Learned

- 1** Lighter living leads to **co-benefits**.
- 2** Lighter living is **inclusive** and appeals to a wide range of people.
- 3** **Groups** are a great way to spread lighter living.
- 4** **Context** shapes lighter living.
- 5** **Story and peer influence** are key to advancing lighter living.

1 Lighter living leads to **co-benefits**.

Lighter living **minimises ecological impacts while enabling a flourishing life** for individuals, households, communities and beyond.

Among other **co-benefits**, it enables:

financial
literacy and
inclusion

resilience

health and
wellbeing

jobs and
security

monetary
savings

advancements in
racial equity and
social justice.

We grew **youth capacity** in sustainable agriculture - and supported farms as **community hubs**.

Neighbourhood Farm Schools developed and delivered five farm-based programs focused on sustainable agriculture knowledge and practice.

The program:

- **Helped 536 youth ages 5-16** become healthy contributors to their communities.
- **Expanded the role that local farms can play in the broader community** as key hubs for education and local events.



credit: Neighbourhood Farm Schools

We invested in training for a **future-ready workforce and economy.**

- The [Electrical Joint Training Committee](#) (EJTC) offers training to help women, Indigenous workers and others get ready for careers in solar power, electric vehicle technology and other clean energy fields (story [here](#)).
- [LightHouse Sustainability Society](#) provides a certification in Zero Waste Construction.
- [Climate Smart](#) offers Climate Smart Training & Certification Scholarships and a Spring Activator Series Module.
- The [Home Performance Stakeholder Council](#) created a network of contractors who help residents save energy and emissions and improve the durability and efficiency of buildings.

To support a just, circular recovery and transition, we:

- Funded the [BC Federation of Labour](#) to conduct foundational research into a Just Transition.
- Supported eco-employment for vulnerable youth through the [CEED Centre Society](#).
- Invested through [CityHive](#) in capacity building and leadership skills for youth ages 18-30.

"Don't give up. Just focus on you, what you want and your apprenticeship, and you're going to get through it and be super successful." - **Clarissa, Red Seal electrician, International Brotherhood of Electric Workers (IBEW) Local 213**



87%

credit: Vancity

increase in green jobs since 2010

Vancouver Economic Commission ([2021](#))

2 Lighter living is **inclusive** and appeals to a wide range of people.

Rather than being “one-size-fits-all,” lighter living **can be tailored to our motivations and contexts**, making it attractive to a wide range of people across regions, income levels, gender, age and ethnicity.

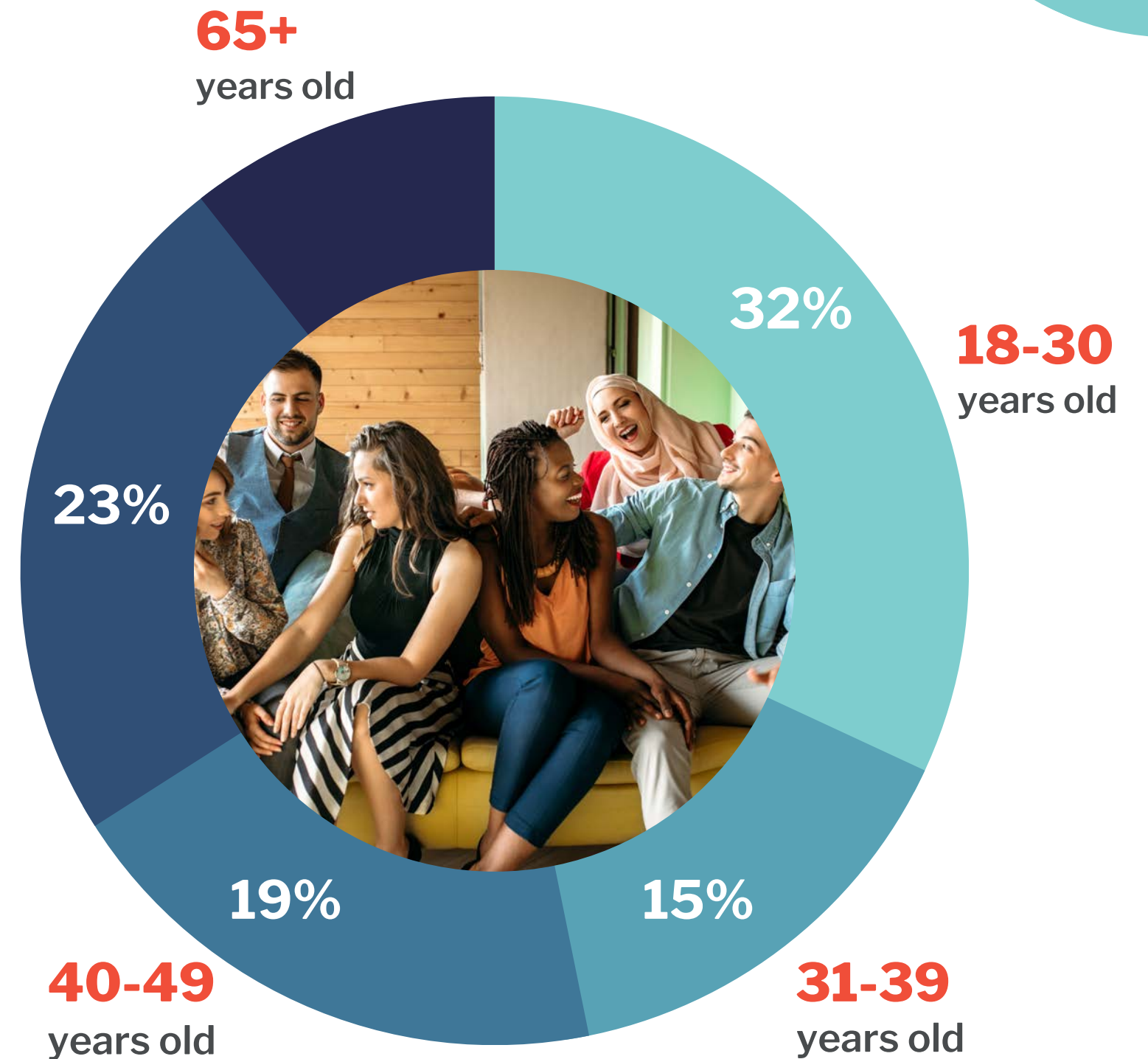
By removing barriers to involvement and adoption for vulnerable populations, lighter living reflects an **inclusive and socially equitable approach**.

We offered peer-support and coaching to people of different ages and stages during our month-long lighter living challenges.

Through 5 different Lighter Living Action Groups, people from across BC came together online to share their experiences taking daily lighter living actions in their personal lives and communities.

OneEarth Living ran the groups during 2022-23 with partners CityHive and the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC).

The **age range** of Lighter Living Group participants in 2022-2023.



We explored the **role that our parks and recreation system can play** in climate and health solutions.

The BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is well positioned to leverage “the power of parks” to **be a major force in climate mitigation** while building overall resilience and support for the process of decolonisation in BC.

- The association covers **95% of communities across BC**, reaching 5 million residents through its community spaces and programs. Members include local governments, community organizations (including universities), citizens and others.
- With our support, BCRPA engaged its members to understand the current state of climate action and to create joint priority actions to work toward collectively.

For example:

- **Recreation facilities** - specifically pools and arenas - are the highest emitters of CO2 among all municipal settings. New Westminster, a BCRPA member community, is in the process of building the **first net zero pool in Canada**.
- **Park spaces** also can provide a respite against climate anxiety and future heat and air quality challenges. They support equitable and inclusive access to nature and act as a land-based place for the process of reconciliation and healing.



credit: BCRPA

We supported opportunities for **people with physical disabilities to garden.**

The Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA) offers accessible garden plots, provides assistive devices for gardening, and creates a supportive community space to engage in a love of gardening.



credit: Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA)



credit: Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA)

We helped newcomers create energy-efficient homes.

Through their flagship program Empower Me[®], [Kambo Energy Group](#) delivered energy literacy education and coaching services to multicultural and multilingual households across the Lower Mainland to build equity in the climate sector and include households that traditionally have lower uptake in climate programming.

[Empower Me[®]](#) is Canada's only energy conservation and behaviour change program designed for and delivered by members of diverse, multicultural and multilingual communities.

In the project:

- Through **29 multilingual workshops**, the Empower Me team supported **107 Chinese-speaking seniors and 167 Farsi- and Tagalog-speaking households** to learn about energy-saving practices and habits to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their everyday lives.
- This helped avoid **426+ tonnes of CO₂**, equivalent to the emissions of **51 homes** in one year.
- **100,000+ social media impressions** were registered.



credit: Empower Me[®]

We supported knowledge-sharing, community and work towards Indigenous Food Sovereignty.

GIFTS - Gathering of Indigenous Food Trading and Sharing - supports the wider promotion and application of Indigenous food-related knowledge, wisdom and values in conservation of biodiversity for the benefit of all.

This work:

- Increases local capacities to grow, harvest, process and share Indigenous foods across Coast and Interior Salish communities.
- Includes developing protocols for sharing and trading food, knowledge and labour.
- Is led by the **Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty**, with a mission of decolonising land and food systems policy, planning and governance towards deeper, more meaningful truth and reconciliation.



credit: [National Observer](#) - photo by Billie Jean Gabriel

3 **Groups** are a great way to spread lighter living.

Mainstreaming lighter living requires taking **collective action within our communities**, including in our neighbourhoods and workplaces as well as in group spaces such as sports clubs, faith groups and more.

By supporting lighter living action at the group level and providing opportunities for people to inspire and connect with others with shared purpose and values, we can **do more together and normalise lighter living**.

We provided opportunities for people to **experience a car-free culture.**

We co-sponsored [Car Free Day Vancouver](#), which has hosted Car Free Days along various main streets since 2018, blocking off major thoroughfares. People came together to celebrate and experience what cities could be like with more space for communities instead of motor vehicles.



credit: CarFreeVancouver.org

We trained **neighbourhood climate resiliency champions.**

- Participants in [Cool 'Hood Champs](#) workshops learned how to become climate action champions in their own neighbourhoods.
 - They were inspired to work with neighbours to identify climate impacts and community assets, envision climate-resilient neighbourhoods and create a local climate action plan.
 - These workshops were hosted by the Kitsilano Community Centre Association. The program was developed by the UBC Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning (CALP).

credit: Cool 'Hood Champs

Closer look: Neighbourhoods

We supported **place-based community action in neighbourhoods**.

Helping everyone have a positive impact on the environment while getting to know their neighbours.

We developed a guide for neighbourhood action, with advice from changemakers across BC and around the world:

Lighter Living Action Pack for Neighbourhoods in BC

OneEarth Living's guide has **7 action packs** with 100s of fun and inspiring actions you can take on your own, with a few others, or with your whole neighbourhood. You can take on a specific theme like food, energy, or waste – or tackle several at once!



“The Lighter Living Guide is a practical tool for our members to **engage with and create stronger, more viable projects that support community building and climate action.**”

Blanca Salvatierra
Neighbourhood Small Grants Regional Lead
Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC

The 7 action packages are:



1

BUILDING ON THE BLOCK PARTY

Have fun hosting your neighbours, with a lasting impact on everyone's lighter living practices.

2

GOOD STUFF

Extend the lives of everyday things and enjoy less waste, more sharing and more meaningful experiences.

3

BIG WINS

Support long-term choices that have the greatest impact in reducing our ecological and climate footprints.

4

NEXT-LEVEL FOOD

Fuel healthy eating practices that are better for the planet through plant-rich meals and less food waste.

5

LIFE CHANGES

Foster new habits and traditions during periods of big life transition, from moving to retiring to having kids.

6

CULTIVATING CONNECTION

Build a fairer, more inclusive community, inspired by both new and traditional living practices.

7

LIGHTER LIVING SUPER CHALLENGE

Be bold!
Commit to sustained, multi-year, lighter living action in your neighbourhood.

We launched the Lighter Living Neighbourhood Small Grants in 2022.

These small grants support BCers taking action for the wellbeing of the planet and community – inspired by actions in the guide.

- **22 x \$500 grants** were distributed to a diverse group of project leaders, approved by community-based volunteer grant committees.
- **One-third of project leaders** were new to neighbourhood small grants.
- \$11,000 in grants reached up to **1,500 people in 3 communities** - New Westminster, North Surrey, Sea-to-Sky Region - with expansion to 2 more communities - Richmond and the Fraser Valley - in 2023.

Projects included a plant-based community cookbook for neighbours, a trash run in Pemberton, a sewing workshop, a baby shower for HIV-positive women (sharing food, clothes and goods), a butterfly festival, and a book and clothes exchange for the community.

These grants are a new stream of the BC's Neighbourhood Small Grants program, in place since 1999. Together with the Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC and partners, we'll grow our impact in the years to come!

How will you take action?

Will you hold a neighbourhood-wide garage sale? Or plan to share food, tools or toys?
Use the guide and these grants to make a difference where you live.



credit: North Surrey
Plant-Based Vegan Party

4 **context** shapes lighter living.

People's values and actions are **highly dependent on their context**, shaped by their cultural and belief systems and by infrastructure, policies, markets, technology and communities.

Enabling lighter living is a team effort that **requires action by everyone** – including government, businesses, community groups and citizens.

Closer look:

Share Reuse Repair Initiative

[Share Reuse Repair Initiative \(SRRI\)](#), a project on [MakeWay's](#) Shared Platform, was founded in 2018 to bring together community, business and government to foster a circular economy that is a waste and climate solution, enables everyone to “live circular,” and supports resilient local economies and communities. SRRI...

- Engages people, policy and producers to enable a **greater supply of circular goods and services**, enhance demand for them, and collaborate to develop a more holistic circular economy narrative.
- Has engaged **over 400 actors** in the development of and transition to a circular economy – including multinational businesses and nonprofits, regional small and medium-sized enterprises, and local municipalities.
- Has enabled the intersection of the social economy and the circular economy through its [Just Circular Recovery and Transition](#) program.
 - 130+ people participated in a public dialogue on this topic.
 - 50+ people were convened from across circular business, employment service providers, public sector and/or economic development backgrounds.
- Has educated hundreds of people across Canada in reuse and repair at home through workshops (e.g., on sustainable living and textile repair with [IKEA Canada](#)). The [Repair Working Group](#) convened over 30 people across the Lower Mainland to make repair more accessible regionally.



*If we **make the most of Things**, we can create shared and lasting prosperity.”*

- Rosemary Cooper, Project Director, SRRI

Closer look:**One Planet Saanich & One Planet BC**

One Planet Saanich addresses the need for place-based action in the face of the climate emergency – and there's interest in scaling this model across British Columbia.

- Through this community-wide approach, we engaged local institutions and groups across Saanich to create their own **One Planet Action Plans**.
- The plans provide a common language to drive change and are **shaped by 10 principles** – from health and happiness to sustainable food to zero carbon energy.
- The One Planet model started in 2018 as a Bioregional project with **4 global communities** – in Canada, Denmark, South Africa and the UK.
- By co-hosting this leadership group, the District of Saanich learns, shapes and supports its **award-winning Climate Plan** and commitment to 100% renewable energy.

We engaged 25+ schools, businesses and community groups

– including a college, a church, a local farm, development projects, an electric vehicle company... with more joining everyday.

We're driving down emissions and footprint numbers together.

- For example, to support more plant-based diets, **Reynolds School** built out its **salad bar program** by adding a market garden, and **Artemis Place** engages at-risk youth with its **food garden**.



credit: One Planet Saanich & One Planet BC



credit: Reynolds High School

5 **story and peer influence** are key to **advancing lighter living.**

Mainstreaming lighter living requires **motivating people from diverse political, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds** to take action.

We can effectively get people on board by sharing **compelling visions and stories** aligned with what people care about, their values and their needs. Tap into values like stewardship, belonging, community, equity, security and fulfillment.

It is powerful when our lighter living messengers are those we trust most: our **peers and mentors.**

We supported community-building around zero-waste and food.

Peace People Project hosted multiple Zero-Waste Vegan markets.

These connected people with upcycled fashions, zero-waste vegan food and beauty products, and other zero-waste products.

credit: Peaces.ca



Closer look:

Youth changemakers are central to lighter living.

Vancity enviroFund™ reached

10,000+ youth

between 2018 and 2022 in 25+ youth projects.



credit: CityHive

CityHive

140 Youth (ages 18–30) over 3 years

5 Envirolabs

15 Metro Vancouver municipalities

42 Projects tackling sustainability

Fresh Roots Sustainable Opportunities for Youth Leadership – SOYL

242 Youth participants

One Planet Student Challenge

62 Middle- and high-schoolers created videos and illustrations that help us with One Planet Living

Saturna Ecological Education Center – School District #64

Grades 10 and 11 students

dive deeper into the natural world with new digital sensors, to monitor Saturna’s vital signs.

Youth-led **CityHive** is building the capacity of diverse young people for climate and lighter living action.

- CityHive ran five **EnviroLabs**, where youth from **15 Metro Vancouver municipalities** created 36 projects that tackle pressing sustainability challenges and opportunities in their communities.
- Over three years, EnviroLabs brought together **140 youth, ages 18-30**, from diverse backgrounds to deepen their sustainability knowledge and develop leadership and engagement skills.
- Youth **learned how to collaborate** in professional communities by working with each other and engaging guest speakers from government, business, nonprofits and academia.
- **Themes were:** Lighter Footprint, Climate Emergency, Zero Waste and The Circular Economy, Climate Adaptation, and Activating Our Climate Community.

As part of the steering committee, OneEarth Living and Vancity provided strategic support to CityHive and engaged with the cohorts themselves.

"I learned...that the best way to build climate hope is through action. Designing and enacting a community project gave me a sense of ownership of what is happening globally, and a sense that I could be an active participant in a future that looks different." – **Heather, participant in EnviroLab 5 on Climate Communications**



credit: CityHive



Environmental Youth Alliance

Nature Stewards

215 youth from equity-seeking communities
(24% indigenous)
26 Programs

Be the Change Earth Alliance

8,638 Young people
10 Climate youth-led projects

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

120 Youth
100 Preteens
32 Community Events

We supported Indigenous youth in nature stewardship and job training.

- [Environmental Youth Alliance Nature Stewards](#) delivered 26 programs to enable 215 youth from equity-seeking communities (24% Indigenous) to gain job skills in native plant horticulture, ecological restoration and plant medicine.

We helped students educate their peers and school staff on lighter living.

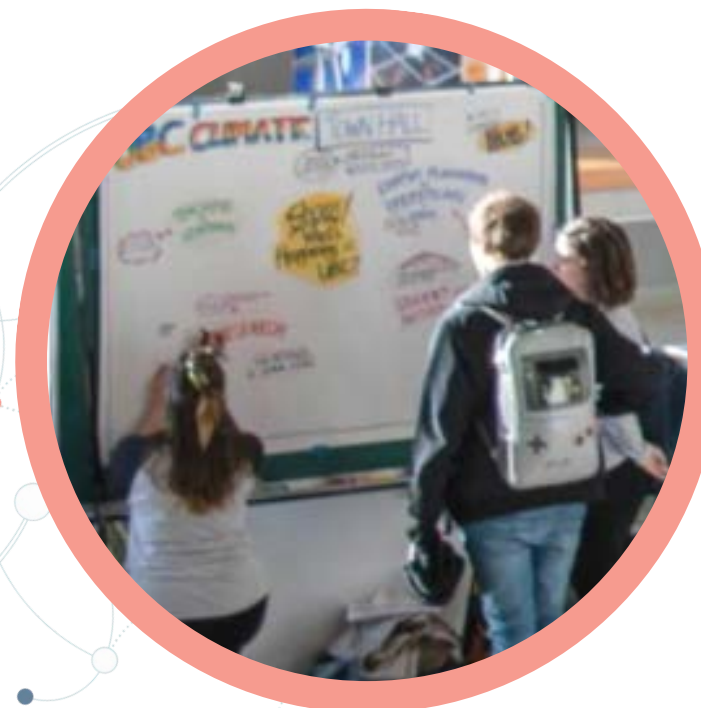
- [Be the Change Earth Alliance](#) changed the conversation around lighter living by engaging 8,638 young people, with 10 follow-on youth-led projects.
- Projects included climate justice professional development workshops for teachers, a public transportation education event, and a campaign to reduce waste and emissions in a school cafeteria.

We empowered students to lead climate action.

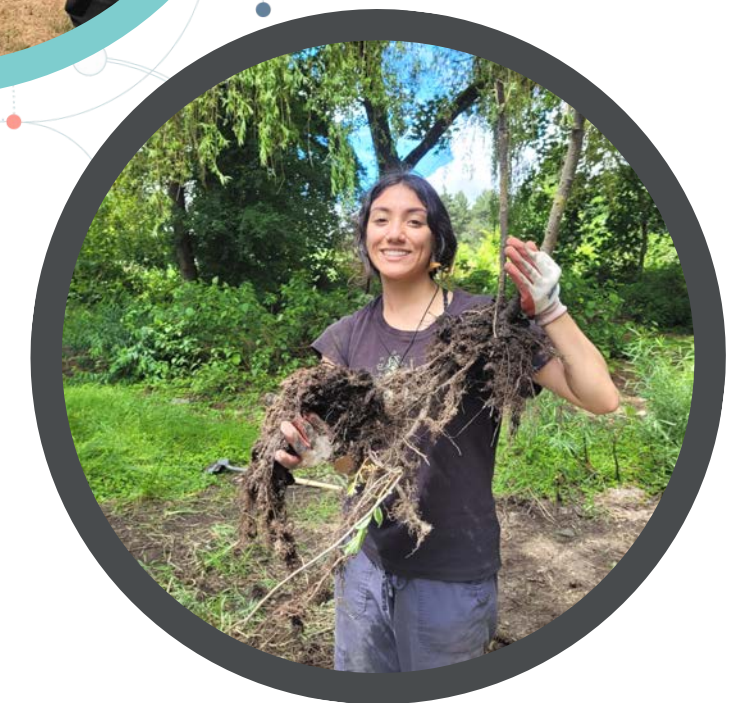
- The [University of BC Climate Hub](#) supports university and community stakeholders in climate research, provides peer support and advocacy training, and reports on intersectional issues connected to the climate emergency.



credit: Environmental Youth Alliance



credit: UBC Climate Hub



Next Level Impact: Join Us!



**Let's be bold
together.**

credit: Canva

We can take our solutions to **support low-carbon living** to the next level.

The potential impact is huge.

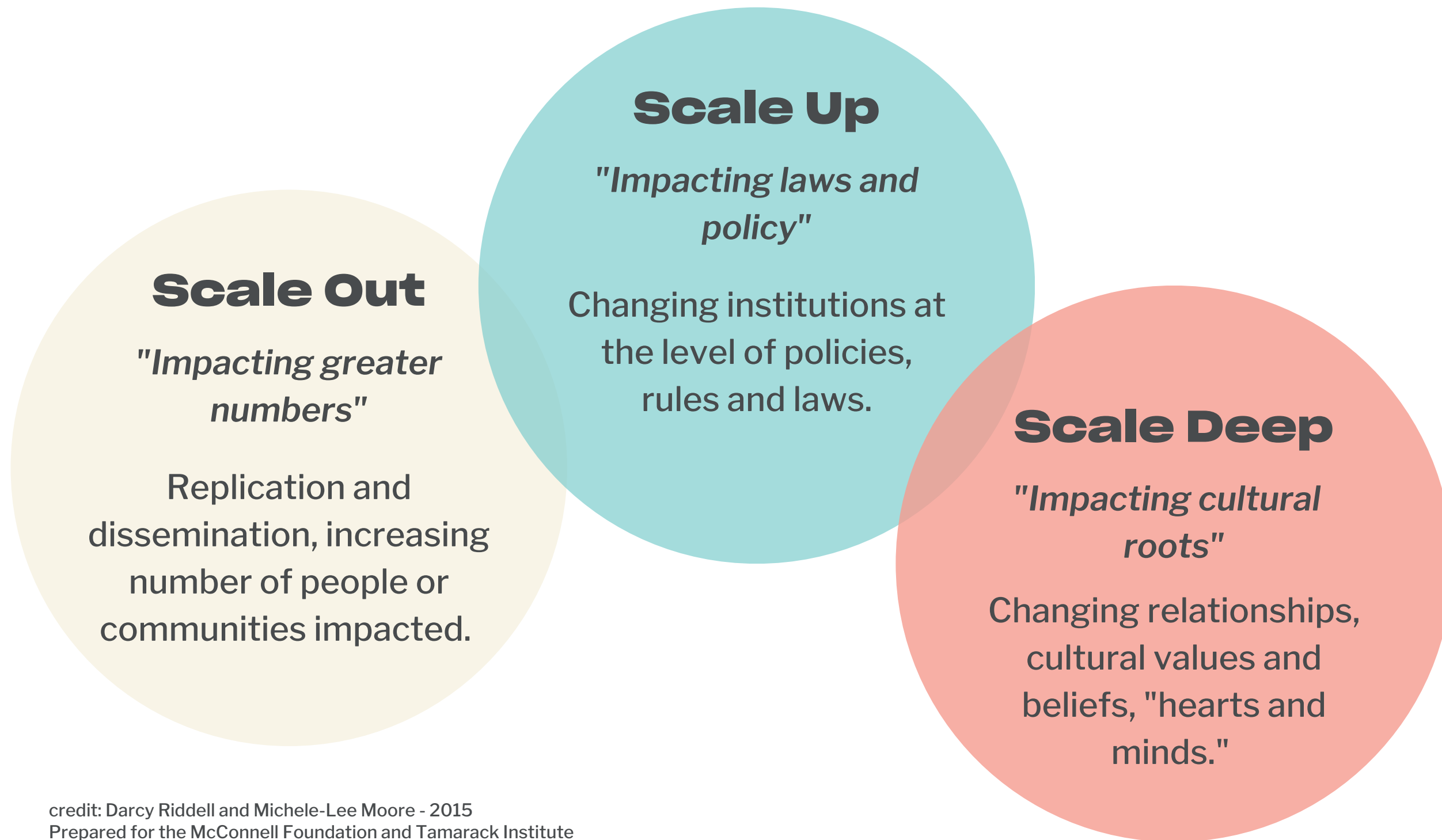
Leading climate scientists in the 2022 IPCC report emphasise that **up to 70% of the greenhouse gas emission reductions** by 2050 can come from lifestyles and behaviour changes.

This means action by people supported by the right policies, technologies and infrastructure, in ways that also improve our health and wellbeing.



credit: Canva

We need to **scale out, up and deep.**



credit: Darcy Riddell and Michele-Lee Moore - 2015
Prepared for the McConnell Foundation and Tamarack Institute

We are committed to continuing this climate action work into the future.

The climate emergency requires immediate action.

It also demands a bold vision for a resilient economy that works for more people, so nobody is left behind as we transition to a cleaner economy.



credit: Canva



Find out about our commitments - **click our logos**

[enviroFund and Lighter Living](#)

[Impact Stories 2018-2022](#)

[Five Lessons Learned](#)

Next Level Impact: Join Us!

Vancity **OneEarth**
LIVING

You can help make a difference.

The Vancity enviroFund™ exists because progressive ideas – the ones that we need – also need people who will give them a chance. When a "business-slash-sort-of-like-a-non-profit" doesn't fit the checkboxes on a form, or others that don't fit a mold, they can get ignored.

And we refuse to ignore real solutions.

What can **you** do?

Apply to the Vancity enviroFund™



Tap, swipe, pay

With every purchase you make on enviro Visa credit card, 5% of profits go to the enviroFund.



Fund Innovation

Innovative and climate-friendly businesses and organisations can apply for funds to help bring their community improvement ideas to life.



Enjoy a reimagined world

Enjoy the amazing solutions – initiatives that change how and what you consume, and how things are made.

Get in touch with OneEarth Living.

Explore ways to take action towards lighter living.

Check out resources for inspiration.

Sign up for our newsletter and updates.

**To the ones who
say change is
impossible, we say
just watch.**

**We are ready for
our next level impact.**

Vancity enviroFund™ welcomes you to apply for funding innovation on low carbon living, inclusion and community improvement.

Join Us!

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elevate low-carbon
ways of life.**

apply now



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