



# **Youth and Climate Change: Maximizing the impacts of research and action**

**Leah Fusco and Kate Reid-Shute  
October 18, 2008**



# Purpose



- **To gather youth (age 18-35) currently doing work or with a particular interest in climate change (students, NGOs, businesses, government, etc.) to discuss:**
  - promising practices in which youth are engaging to develop and transfer knowledge about climate change
  - strategies for addressing the needs and challenges youth face in their work
  - tangible, collaborative project ideas for moving forward in climate change work



# Values



**The session was about knowledge transfer but also was knowledge transfer in itself, thus we incorporated the following:**

- Food – local and vegetarian to avoid supporting industrial farming and reduce transportation emissions**
- Dishes – Used available dishes to avoid disposables**



# What we did

- Session broken into three discussions:**
- 1. Lessons learned from climate change work**
  - 2. Promising practices, gaps, and needs**
  - 3. Next steps**



# Lessons learned from NL climate change work



**What are researchers and organizations doing now?**

**What are their successes? What's working?**

**What are the processes that contributed to these successes?**



# What are youth doing?

## Some groups involved in the session:

- **Researchers – Geography, Earth Science, etc**
- **Engineers Without Borders – facilitates access to technology to promote human development**
- **BikeShare – collects used bikes and loans them to students for a semester**
- **FEAST – promotes awareness and builds skills around food production and security (community gardens, etc)**
- **Conservation Corps – provides youth with training and employment in environmental and cultural heritage conservation**
- **Oxfam – works with allies in Canada and around the world to change the policies and practices that perpetuate human suffering**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network - facilitates communication and action between groups and organizations on environment related issues**
- **Sierra Club – develops a diverse, well-trained grassroots network working to protect the integrity of our global ecosystems**



# Needs and gaps

- **Hard to communicate scientific knowledge to communities – message can be lost or distorted (e.g. through the media)**
- **Direct action – good for raising awareness among individuals, but does it reduce emissions (as influencing policy or targeting large corporations might)?**
- **Lack of government access to research**
- **NGOs lack funding**



# Promising practices

- **Encouraging an action by getting rid of barriers – BikeShare, FEAST**
- **Using stunts, skits, etc. to reach people and raise awareness - Oxfam**
- **Framing an issue so people see how it will impact them – e.g. Berries are very important to culture and economy of some Aboriginal communities; good health of children is important to parents; reducing health care costs is a major concern of governments**
- **Building knowledge transfer into grant proposals (providing alternatives to present focus on peer-review publishing)**
- **Engaging community - getting local people involved in research process**
- **Using NGOs to communicate research to community and media**
- **Interaction between hard and social sciences (holistic solutions require multi-disciplinary investigation)**
- **Connecting to emotions makes people more likely to act**
- **Returning to communities to share knowledge (more effective than releasing papers)**
- **Talking to businesses in terms of the ‘bottom line’ (i.e. \$\$\$)**



## Next steps

**This session was viewed as a first step to outline what people are doing, their strengths and weaknesses, and how to fill in gaps in order to move forward.**



# Moving forward

- **Collaboration! Gaps of one group can be filled by strengths of another**
- **Networking**
- **Creating a group compiled of experts from different areas including researchers, NGOs, business, government, to both provide information and work on specific issues.**