



# YOUTH CLIMATE AMBASSADOR PROJECT (YCAP) COHORT

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## Introduction

As youth enter a world increasingly shaped by the **climate crisis**, they face heightened vulnerability to its severe and long-lasting consequences. Importantly, however, youth simultaneously hold the power to forge a more just and sustainable path forward. Ensuring that the **next generation** is prepared to effectively respond to this emergency requires **climate education** that prioritizes **emotional resilience** and **justice-informed, community-based approaches**. Framing climate action collectively, by “making it feel **personal and urgent** by centering it around friends and community,” is essential for mobilizing youth (Stoknes, 2023). Additionally, research suggests that such collective approaches support youth by helping them mitigate negative feelings of climate anxiety (Schwartz et al., 2022). Drawing from these findings, it is clear that climate education requires frameworks that prioritize building **hopeful communities** and countering **climate anxiety and apathy**.

The Youth Climate Ambassador Project (YCAP) Cohort **empowers K–12 students** to step into roles as **climate leaders** in their communities. With support from Be The Change Earth Alliance (BTCEA), YCAP provides **accessible educational workshops** to students across the Metro Vancouver area, supporting BTCEA’s mission of encouraging youth to take meaningful action toward a just, resilient, and sustainable future. Addressing emotional resilience, climate justice, and the importance of community-based efforts, YCAP aims to provide students with the necessary tools to face the future of the climate crisis. YCAP ambassadors will contribute to **climate change mitigation and adaptation** efforts by inspiring students and their peers to envision themselves as active participants and leaders in local sustainability efforts.

## UBC Context

YCAP supports the values advanced in UBC’s 2030 Climate Action Plan and advances UBC’s central goal of climate change mitigation through collective efforts on and off campus. This cohort’s ambassadors will specifically reinforce the university’s commitment to advancing environments of transformative learning and addressing the climate emergency. The following section outlines how this cohort aligns with local, provincial, and international priorities.





## UBC Climate Action Plan 2030

### 2.1: Beyond Mitigation: Increasing Adaptation and Resiliency

The development of just, equitable and accessible adaptation strategies to reduce the impacts associated with the increasing frequency and severity of climate change events.

### 2.4: A Climate Justice Lens

The application of a climate justice lens will ensure equity, inclusion, diversity, and accountability are upheld and advanced while accelerating climate action as marginalized and vulnerable populations are often disproportionately impacted by climate change.

## UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan

### Goal 4: Indigenizing our curriculum

Include Indigenous ways of knowing, culture, histories, worldviews in curriculum delivered across faculties, programs, and campuses.

- Action 18: Partner with Indigenous communities locally and globally to develop accredited post-secondary Indigenous knowledge programs that can be delivered in communities and on campus.

## Sustainability Hub Strategic Plan

**Goal 4:** Build understanding and capacity to implement principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) in the Sustainability Hub's culture, policies, and work.

**Goal 6:** Evaluate and streamline our educational programs, activities, and resources to enhance impact.

**Goal 7:** Cultivate the use of transformative pedagogies, including a variety of enriched, experiential, and applied learning approaches, for sustainability education across UBC and beyond.

**Goal 11:** Amplify climate change and sustainability research, learning and outcomes through a variety of knowledge translation and dissemination strategies.

**Goal 15:** Foster engagement that invites courageous dialogue and motivates urgent and intentional action to address pressing sustainability challenges.

## Be The Change Earth Alliance

**Mission:** To educate and empower youth and educators to take positive personal and collective action for a just, sustainable, connected, resilient, and thriving world.

**Purpose:** To create empowering education opportunities for all learners, including equity-deserving groups. BTCEA's work aims to help participants:

- Take personal and collective action at multiple scales
- Build emotional resilience in the face of ecological and climate breakdown
- Think critically, act locally, and embody their values to "be the change"

**Mandate:** Deliver eco-social education initiatives that engage youth and educators in meaningful learning and action on environmental, social and climate justice.



## British Columbia's Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy

Climate Awareness for Educators, Students and Communities:

Ensure K-12 education supports educators, students, families, and communities in understanding climate change, identifying actions to respond, and building long-term climate resilience.

### Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

- Target 4.7: Education to promote the knowledge and skills needed for sustainable development efforts.

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

- Target 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related impacts

### Learning Objectives

The YCAP cohort is a space for ambassadors to grow as climate leaders, developing skills to lead change in their communities informed by principles of community and justice. Upon completion of the YCAP curriculum, ambassadors are expected to be able to:

1. Apply their own lived experiences and values to improve their understanding of climate change and encourage others to do so as well.
2. Confidently lead and participate in meaningful dialogues about climate justice, emotional resilience, and collective sustainability solutions.
3. Fostering respectful and inclusive learning spaces for groups with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
4. Develop an understanding of the importance of community-based and justice-informed approaches to climate education and action.
5. Equip communication, leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills to effectively co-create and co-deliver lessons with peers to groups of various ages.



## Ambassador Projects

### 1. YCAP Workshop Facilitation

The primary project of the YCAP cohort will be the delivery of workshops to K-12 students across the Metro Vancouver area. This year, the cohort will deliver two workshops: Original YCAP and Climate Justice, both utilizing personal narratives and reflective discussions to encourage community-based and justice-informed approaches to climate education. Ambassadors will travel within the Metro Vancouver area for in-person workshops; workshops requested from schools outside of a 1-hour radius from UBC will be facilitated online.

Ambassadors will develop an ability to effectively present and collaborate in group settings to inform and uplift others. The YCAP cohort's central goal is to empower the next generation of climate leaders, equipping them with the necessary resources and confidence to meaningfully understand climate change and navigate their future.

### 2. Logistical Coordination and Support for Workshop Facilitation

Ambassadors will support YCAP workshop facilitation by managing booking requests and carrying out various logistical tasks. Such responsibilities will include reaching out to teachers who submit booking requests, informing other ambassadors of their upcoming workshop shifts, and sending out surveys to participants and teachers. Strengthening their collaboration and coordination skills, ambassadors will work as a team to complete these tasks, ensuring workshops can be facilitated smoothly and efficiently.

### 3. Assessment and Improvement of M&E

Ambassadors will improve YCAP's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework by critically assessing current data collection methods using principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization, and Inclusion (JEDDI). Upon this assessment, ambassadors will identify gaps in how workshops' impact and reach are measured. In improving current M&E processes, this team will contribute to improving YCAP's climate education efforts.

### 3. Recruitment and Training of YCAP Volunteers

Through this project, ambassadors will design and carry out the recruitment and training processes for incoming YCAP volunteers. The recruitment process will include exploring creative strategies to reach potential volunteers, reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, and onboarding those selected. Drawing from central themes of community-based and justice-informed approaches, ambassadors will co-create and co-facilitate training frameworks that ensure volunteers have both the pedagogical skills and confidence necessary for leading workshops for K-12 students. By stepping into leadership roles alongside their peers, this project highlights the YCAP cohort's commitment to collective approaches to climate education and action.

**DISCLAIMER:** The projects undertaken by this cohort may change in response to shifting partner interests and evolving goals.



## References

*Be The Change Earth Alliance*. (2003). Retrieved June 3, 2025, from <https://www.bethechangeearthalliance.org/>.

Schwartz, S. E. O., Benoit, L., Clayton, S., Parnes, M. F., Swenson, L., & Lowe, S. R. (2022). Climate change anxiety and mental health: Environmental activism as buffer. *Current Psychology*, 42(20), 16708–16721. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-02735-6>.

Stoknes, P. E. (2023). Overcoming Climate Apathy. In *The Climate Book*. essay, Greta Thunberg.