



# Environment Hamilton Internal Evaluation of Climate Justice Principles and Best Practices

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Environment Hamilton

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# Executive Summary

Environment Hamilton has lead climate action work in the Hamilton community over the past 20 years. Environment Hamilton approached the McMaster Research Shop seeking support with an internal evaluation to determine the extent to which the organization reflects climate justice principles and practices through its governance and community projects.

This investigation was conducted in two parts:

- Part 1: Research and development of a framework on the principles and best practices of climate justice in the context of non-profit organizations (September 2021 to January 2022).
- Part 2: Application of the framework to guide discussions with Environment Hamilton board and staff on how well the organization embodies these principles and practices in their governance and community projects (January 2022 to April 2022).

For Part 1, our research findings yielded 6 climate justice principles: Anti-oppression and Equity Approach, Anti-Colonial Approach, Community Engagement and Empowerment, Effective Local Leadership, Actionably Tending to Community Needs, and Supporting Diversity within the Organization.

For Part 2, interview participants reflected on their understanding of climate justice, provided feedback on the framework, gave examples of Environment Hamilton's strengths at applying the principles we researched, and identified opportunities for improvement in their application of these principles. While Environment Hamilton reflects many of the principles in its work, participants also identified a variety of activities that Environment Hamilton could take on to better incorporate a climate justice approach into their work:

- *Anti-oppression and Equity Approach:* Environment Hamilton could benefit from defining their anti-oppressive values to support implementation within the organization and reducing barriers to participation in their programs.
- *Anti-Colonial Approach:* Environment Hamilton could also focus on incorporating an anti-colonial approach as participants did not identify strong examples of how this principle is currently upheld within the organization.
- *Community Engagement and Empowerment:* Environment Hamilton could engage more with communities of different cultures and identities and encourage involvement in program development from community members from vulnerable neighbourhoods.
- *Effective Local Leadership:* Environment Hamilton could provide additional opportunities for community members to take leadership in advocacy and policy

development, communicate more transparently about their goals, and show greater commitment to relationship building with partner organizations.

- *Actionably Tending to Community Needs:* Environment Hamilton could go beyond advocacy work by supporting issues regarding infrastructure, affordable housing, tenant displacement, and gentrification.
- *Supporting Diversity within the Organization:* Environment Hamilton could reflect on the turnover of staff and board members, particularly those who are racialized and to beware of tokenism within the organization.

These findings are intended to onboard future strategic discussions about climate justice and opportunities for organizational growth. Future investigations could seek to incorporate the community's perspective on Environment Hamilton's climate justice work, particularly Indigenous peoples and organizations.

# Introduction

Climate Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in the development and implementation of environmental policies/regulations, projects, and programs in the context of climate change. The concept acknowledges present and historical inequities in the distribution of environmental benefits and harms due to climate change, as well as a failure to include marginalized communities in decision-making. To address these inequities, many mainstream environmental organizations are focusing their work on advancing climate justice.

After 20 years of climate action work within the Hamilton community, Environment Hamilton's current leadership would like to know if and how it is currently embodying the principles of climate justice. In particular, the organization seeks to ensure it is taking a social justice lens to its work and engaging marginalized communities. In the summer of 2021, a board member from Environment Hamilton (the community partner) approached the McMaster Research Shop on behalf of the board's equity and inclusion committee seeking help with an internal evaluation to determine the extent to which the organization reflects climate justice principles and practices through its governance and community projects. The goal of this exploratory investigation would be to identify areas where climate justice principles are well-reflected in the organization, as well as opportunities to improve policy and practice.

The McMaster Research Shop agreed to take on the project and commenced work in September 2021. The project was conducted in two parts:

1. Research and development of a framework on the principles and best practices of climate justice in the context of non-profit organizations (September 2021 to January 2022).
2. Application of the framework to guide discussions with Environment Hamilton board and staff on how well the organization embodies these principles and practices in their governance and community projects.

This report provides a summary of our approach to the above objectives as well as our findings.

## Methods

### Part 1: Evaluation Framework

To develop the evaluation framework, we conducted a literature review to gather evidence on climate justice values and best practices. We searched for peer-reviewed papers on Web of Science using a search string consisting of key terms such as "climate justice", "environmental justice", "environmental equity", "principles and best practices" (see Appendix 1 for the complete search strategy used). We also searched

for grey literature published online by governmental and environmental non-profit organizations.

The following inclusion criteria were applied to both our academic and grey literature searches:

- Text in English
- Full Text Available
- Focus on social/economic/policy approach to environmental justice
- Explicit mention of environmental justice
- Focus on practical applications of environmental justice
- Community/urban focus
- 1980-present
- Focus on organization-level practices

In total, we included 16 articles in our literature review.

To supplement our literature review findings, we conducted key-informant interviews with climate justice experts from other environmental organizations to understand their approach to climate justice (see Appendix 2 for the interview guide). The community partner provided a list of organizations to approach for interviews. Key-informants were invited to participate in a 20 to 30-minute Zoom interview that was recorded and transcribed.

We extracted key themes from the literature review and key-informant interviews, integrated the findings, and developed narrative summaries of the findings which were then used to develop the evaluation framework.

## Part 2: Internal Evaluation of Environment Hamilton

Using the evaluation framework we developed, our team conducted an internal qualitative evaluation using interviews with Environment Hamilton board and staff members. The community partner provided us with a list of 14 board and staff members to invite for interviews (see Appendix 3 for the interview guide). Participants were invited to participate in a 30 to 45-minute Zoom interview that was recorded and transcribed. In total, we conducted 10 interviews with 4 staff, 4 current board members, and 2 former board members.

Our aim was to take an exploratory approach to the evaluation to understand how climate justice is viewed within the organization, to obtain feedback on the framework, to identify ways that the organization currently embodies climate justice principles, and to identify opportunities to improve implementation of these principles.

## Limitations

It was challenging to recruit key-informants from other organizations to provide insights on our evaluation framework. While our original goal was to conduct 5 such interviews, we only managed to recruit two key-informants. Also, we were not able to recruit key-informants from any Indigenous-led organizations. Therefore, it was challenging for us to gain a comprehensive understanding of Indigenous climate justice principles that are especially important to include in a Canadian settler-colonial context.

## Findings

### Climate Justice Principles and Practices

Our findings yielded six key climate justice principles: anti-oppression and equity approach, anti-colonial approach, community engagement and empowerment, effective local leadership, actionably tending to community needs, and supporting diversity within the organization. These six principles are summarized in the visual depiction of our framework (Figure 1) below, and we elaborate on our findings from the literature review and key informant interviews for each of these principles in the following sections.

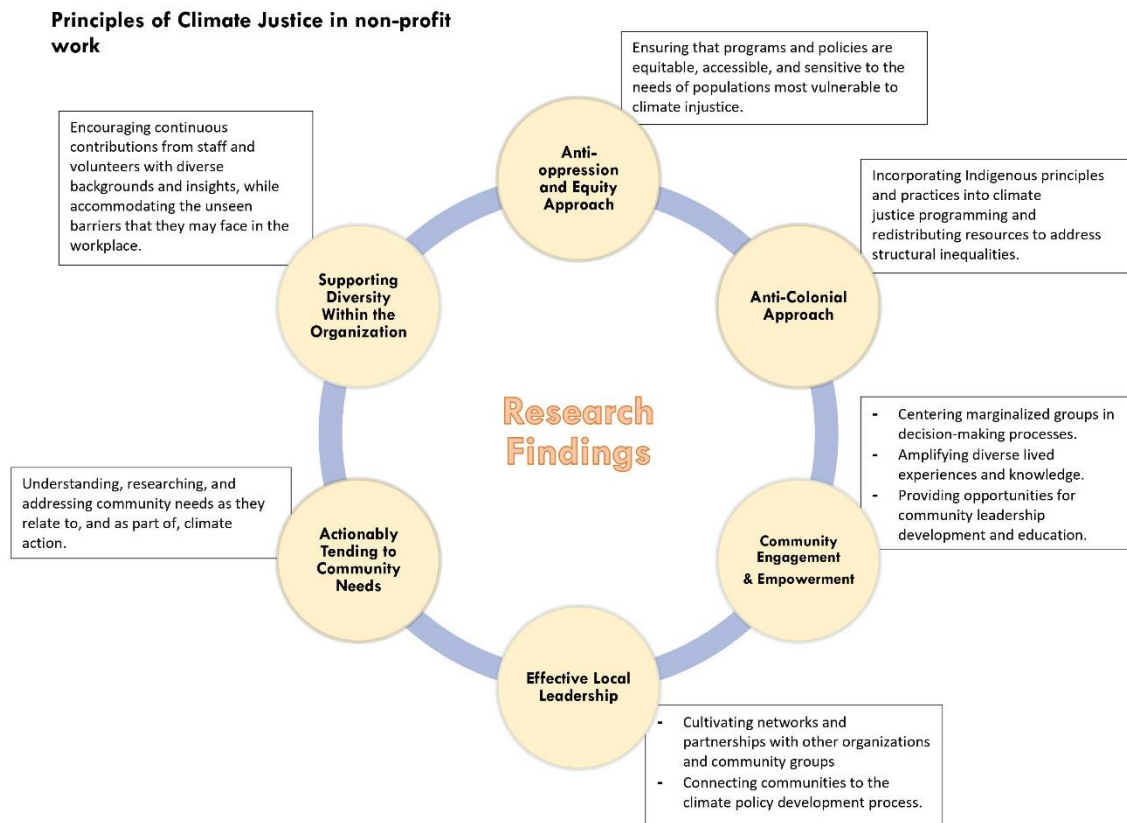


Figure 1. Climate justice principles for non-profit environmental organizations.

## 1. Anti-Oppression and Equity Approach

Anti-oppression involves developing strategies and taking action to challenge systems of oppression that create inequities in society and working to address power imbalances (*Anti-oppression*, n.d.). As noted by a key informant, climate justice requires addressing the root systemic causes of climate change, including colonization and white supremacy, while simultaneously refraining from perpetuating them. As a result of these systems, some populations are disproportionately susceptible to the effects of climate change and environmental injustice. These populations can include minority racial and ethnic groups, recent immigrants, Indigenous people, individuals with disabilities, poor income, marginalized communities, and individuals with poor socioeconomic status (Klinsky & Mavrogianni, 2020; San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission [SF BCDC], 2018; Teelucksingh et al., 2016). A key informant provided an example of disproportionate environmental impacts on a local Indigenous community due to stormwater and an overflowing sewer system from their local municipality: “Usually, like millions and millions of cubic liters of raw sewage... goes down river to the Oneida Nation of the Thames.” This community retrieves their drinking water from the river, unlike the rest of the municipality who receives it from a lake. The city unjustly dumps raw sewage impacting their Indigenous neighbours. Their access to water has been on a boil advisory for years, partially due to the E. coli in the river because of the sewage.

A key informant stated that climate justice should involve individuals using privilege to intercede for vulnerable populations, and that organizations focused on climate justice should be aiming to execute this on a larger scale. Addressing the needs of vulnerable populations can involve advocating for private and public institutions to transition power from those benefiting from injustice to the general population (Xie, n.d.). For example, organizations can advocate for corporations to foot the bill for any environmental harm they cause as a result of their activities and compensate communities for past injustices.

Equity involves protecting populations from environmental harms while also ensuring access to environmental benefits for all, regardless of identity (“Climate Equity,” n.d.). To be equitable, climate justice organizations should consider the needs of vulnerable populations in its strategy and decision-making processes (Klinsky & Mavrogianni, 2020; McBeath et al., 2019). For instance, organizations with social programs should consider how race, immigration status, class and gender, rural status and age can affect an individual’s ability to access their programs (Teelucksingh et al., 2016). For example, a key-informant described how current programs offering energy audits and retrofitting are often only beneficial to those who can afford the initial fees, which excludes people who are not able to afford upfront costs. Similarly, another key-informant described how many campaigns to address climate justice benefit those who are most privileged:

“[Considering] the ratio of campaigns that cater to Canadians as a whole, [versus those that work for marginalized communities]. Like big climate campaigns that (...) focus on divesting pension plans, you could make it like about environmental



justice, but by default, it's more for all Canadians. So how many campaigns are [of this] general type, benefitting all, which is then [benefitting] mostly more privileged folks? (...) Versus how often are campaigns dedicated to [marginalized people]? How often are the campaigns more about like justice specifically?"

In sum, climate justice organizations can support marginalized people by reducing barriers to participation and targeting campaigns towards the populations most affected by climate change.

## 2. Anti-Colonial Approach

Climate justice involves recognizing Indigenous people's sovereignty, rights, and relationship to the land ("Principles of Environmental Justice," 1991). Taking an anti-colonial approach to climate justice involves resisting exploitation of land, humans, and other living beings. Indigenous peoples can identify their own priorities based on their needs and climate justice requires these communities to lead this movement (Hernandez, 2019).

Non-Indigenous-led organizations can support climate justice for Indigenous peoples. A key-informant described how their organization had received funding to work with a local First Nations community that they had an existing relationship with. The funding was used to support a pilot project retrofitting homes on the First Nations reserves to help their homes reach net zero in an affordable and sustainable way, and to support homes to move away from propane for heating to a clean energy source.

A key-informant also described embedding Indigenous practices and perspectives into their climate justice programs. They described attempting to decolonize their programs by working with Indigenous groups and learning about climate justice practices from them:

"So for programs, we're looking at ways to decolonize them, but also work more closely with Indigenous groups, recognizing that they, you know, survived for millennia, using really quality and sound practices that did not negatively harm the planet. So, if we can work with some of those groups and learn from what practices they used to do environmental restoration and adaptations, so that it's kind of embedded throughout all our programs."

## 3. Community Engagement and Empowerment

The environmental justice (EJ) movement was founded on a grassroots, democratic, representative approach that centers the community in decision-making (Clark & Miles, 2021; Pellow & Brulle, 2005, Chapter 13). Our findings revealed that one of the core tenets of EJ is community engagement and empowerment, which consists of "giving agency to all people in political, economic, cultural and environmental interests [and] ensuring equal participation at all stages of EJ practice," especially to those that are most impacted by the threat of environmental destruction ("Principles of Environmental Justice," 1991).

The inclusion of community voices in decision-making requires a conscious assessment of who gets to hold leadership power within the community (George & Reed, 2017). Local organizations must therefore rethink their role in the community with the intention of allowing marginalized community groups to set their own agendas and dictate their own solutions to what they believe to be the important challenges the community is facing (Haluza-DeLay & Fernhout, 2011; Hernandez, 2019). The goal is to get a diverse set of voices who have a direct stake in project outcomes, and who represent the community not only in demographics (age, gender, ethnicity), but also in values and interests (George & Reed, 2017).

Once organizations have re-envisioned who their relevant stakeholders are, their next step is to develop mechanisms to consult with community members during their strategy-making and program planning processes (George & Reed, 2017; Teelucksingh et al., 2016). If the organization has done past projects in the community, it could start by inviting feedback on previous projects to gauge where it has historically failed to meet environmental justice outcomes and make amendments to its approaches. Methods that can be employed to gather feedback include meetings, interviews, surveys, and listening sessions (SF BCDC, 2018).

To help proactively guide programs and projects, the organization can create an advisory board made up of representatives or ambassadors from impacted communities (SF BCDC, 2018). In such an arrangement, it is important to ensure that community representatives feel comfortable voicing their concerns alongside other representatives who have historically held more power (George & Reed, 2017). This may be achieved through a formal election process coordinated by the organization through which these community members are nominated to speak on behalf of the community, and thus feel empowered to do so (George & Reed, 2017).

To foster a continuous and strong presence in the community, the organization must offer diverse opportunities for members to participate in decision making, program planning and implementation. This includes hiring volunteers from the community to help with initiatives, holding regular events and meetings, providing opportunities for donating funds, and supporting petitions and local grassroots groups using institutional power (e.g., funding) (George & Reed, 2017). To maintain the community's engagement, the organization must make sure to keep reporting on climate risk exposures and vulnerabilities, which serve as reminder of the relevance and importance of community involvement and show evidence of the community voice being represented in successful and effective solutions through community programs and outcomes (George & Reed, 2017; Klinsky & Mavrogianni, 2020).

Part of establishing and maintaining a sustainable relationship with the community is actively learning about and amplifying the lived experiences, traditional knowledge, expertise, and values of the communities most impacted by climate justice (Seattle Foundation, 2019; SF BCDC, 2018). A creative way to learn about the authentic voices of marginalized community members is to facilitate opportunities for storytelling through

social media, and organizing public art projects (e.g., building a public mural). These kinds of projects also help promote meaningful involvement and enhance community members' interest in the organization's cause (Xie, n.d.). Other examples of effective amplification of community voices include prioritizing individuals from marginalized communities for speaking opportunities and composing statements of solidarity to take a more formal stance in supporting community members (Key informant Interview; Pennington 2016). When well-established and reputable organizations legitimize the stories and experiences of communities who have been historically excluded, they effectively garner stronger community support and put more pressure on decision makers to answer the community's demands (Pennington, 2016).

A robust community engagement process can also involve providing educational opportunities to marginalized communities in order to develop their leadership and expertise in actively tackling environmental issues (Pellow & Brulle, 2005; SF BCDC, 2018). Examples of educational activities include training events, workshops, book clubs and film screenings designed to provide accessible information about the structural causes of climate change, climate injustice, sustainable lifestyle, and environmental health (National Institutes of Health, n.d.; "Principles of Environmental Justice," 1991). They could also be geared towards technical knowledge on subjects such as installing solar panels or cultivating a garden (Pennington, 2016). Self-education resources, like books, webinars and podcasts can also be made publicly available on online platforms to community members looking for a place to start learning (Xie, n.d.)

One important benefit of providing educational opportunities is positioning marginalized populations as beneficiaries of green employment opportunities, making the field more inclusive and representative, and ensuring equitable distribution of "green wealth" (Hajer 1995, as cited by Teelucksingh et al, 2016). Educational and cultural programs should focus on youth in view of preventing future environmental injustice and ensuring equitable outcomes (Clark & Miles, 2021).

#### 4. Effective Local Leadership

We identified three practices that embody the principle of effective local leadership: (1) communication and transparency regarding goals; (2) cultivating networks and partnerships with other organizations and community groups; and (3) connecting communities to the policy development process.

##### *Communication and transparency*

A key aspect of effective local leadership is organizational transparency. Organizational transparency refers to the ability of organizations to effectively communicate the goals and outcomes of projects with community members (George & Reed, 2017). For example, it is important that organizations regularly update community members regarding the status of projects and provide the opportunity for feedback and deliberation throughout the implementation phase (George & Reed, 2017; National Institutes of Health, n.d.; Teelucksingh et al., 2016). If a certain program or activity

requires organizations to collect data from community members, organizations must be clear about what information they are seeking from the community and how it will be used (SF BCDC, 2018). Transparency regarding data collection promotes shared decision-making and fosters long-term, sustainable relationships with community groups and members (George & Reed, 2017; National Institutes of Health, n.d.; SF BCDC, 2018).

Having an effective communication strategy is frequently cited as an important dimension of organizational transparency. Communication with community members regarding current programs and outcomes of previous projects should be clear, straightforward, and consistent. Communications should also be accessible to diverse audiences using various media (e.g., community newspaper, social media, website, digital newsletter etc.) and published in multiple languages (George & Reed, 2017; SF BCDC, 2018). One interview participant shared that their organization's communication strategy involves fostering conversations surrounding climate change to encourage community engagement:

“So we’ve run a series called green in the city. And a couple of those sessions talks about climate change and like building emissions (...). So throughout the year, we run events and promotions and communications regarding climate change and climate action and activities.”

Interview findings also revealed that regular engagement with the media helped to increase awareness surrounding climate injustices: “Because I’ve talked to media probably 10 times. Every time there’s a raw sewage overflow, they call me and I’ve gotten to a point now where I talk about the impacts... and then I encourage them to call like an Indigenous contact”. The key-informant also demonstrated the importance of featuring diverse perspectives related to climate injustice: “there’s like a specific day of the week that’s like share content that is from a like Equity, Diversity, Inclusion lens, within the environmental sector. ... And then in our newsletter, we don’t really track it, but we do try to like, feature various perspectives.”

### *Networks and partnerships*

Our interview findings revealed the different ways that organizations can cultivate a network with community groups. An explicit partnership could involve showing up to local social movements and other organizations' events. Partnerships can also exist in the form of backbone support, for example by promoting and sharing content on social media platforms, or in the form of meaningful solidarity with marginalized community groups and their causes. For example, in their study of the environmental non-governmental organization (ENGO) landscape of Toronto, Teelucksingh et al. (2016) suggest that ENGOs with an explicit environmental justice approach actively sought to foster diverse networks with specific racial and ethnic communities in the Greater Toronto Area on a project-to-project basis.

A benefit of establishing linkages with diverse community organizations and causes is that organizations can incorporate their unique perspectives, goals and values into their governance and operations (Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, 1996; Pennington, 2016; Haluza-DeLay & Fernhout, 2011). Knowledge-sharing can allow organizations to develop a common understanding of community issues and promote collaborative and innovative strategies to address these problems (George & Reed, 2017; McBeath et al., 2019). Ideally, these connections should be reached with all levels of leadership and should bring together the public with important figures who have the power to bring about change (George & Reed, 2017).

### *Community-involved policy development*

Lastly, our findings revealed that effective leadership of environmental non-governmental organizations involves connecting communities to the democratic process. As articulated by Teelucksingh et al. (2016), “ENGOS have a bridging role between the state and communities” by strengthening the capacities of marginalized individuals and communities to engage in political advocacy (Seattle Foundation, 2019; McBeath 2019). This role includes providing marginalized communities with education regarding policy options, acting as funding partners for tailored programs, supporting grant-writing, or simply offering clarifications on complex policies and concepts (SF BCDC, 2018; Teelucksingh et al., 2016). A key informant reported working with local neighbourhood associations from low-income areas to provide funding for programs aimed at alleviating energy poverty. Our interview findings also revealed the importance of advocating for the municipality to distribute funding equitably so that the city budget is reflective of community needs — especially the needs of low-income and racialized groups who are not afforded the same capacity to participate in the city budget planning:

“I also asked them (city budget) to use an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion lens when reviewing one of the programs that they’ve been doing because they’ve been giving a lot of money to really wealthy neighbourhoods to do parks. And a lot of the low-income neighbourhoods don’t get any money to do the parks, because you have to get people to vote for your project. And like low-income folks just don’t have the time and the capacity, usually, or even know about the program”.

### **5. Actionably Tending to Community Needs**

It is important to research and understand community needs and trends as they relate to climate change. Data broken down by gender, race, socioeconomic status, or other potentially marginalizing identities can be used to identify patterns of injustice and rectify these injustices, in addition to supporting planning for climate action and reaching sustainability goals (Clark & Miles, 2021; Klinsky & Mavrogianni, 2020; SF BCDC, 2018). Organizations seeking to take a climate justice approach can use statistical data, local trends, and other knowledge across environmental, social, economic, and cultural domains to develop a shared understanding of the climate challenges that the community is facing and develop plans to address those needs (George & Reed, 2017).

Another way of actionably tending to community needs is to focus on human health as part of climate action. Climate action initiatives can support human health and wellbeing in a number of ways. Public health-focused climate action can include increasing the urban tree canopy and providing green spaces that encourage people to exercise and socialize, which translate to benefits such as improving mental health or lowering obesity and cardiovascular disease (Klinsky & Mavrogianni, 2020). A key-informant talked about their organization's initiative to increase greenery within their city to improve the quality of air: "Depave Paradise. We're gonna do two of those next year. That's where we take 100 meter squared, so six parking lots, and rip up asphalt, replace it with native plants and trees and pollinator plants." Climate action can also be incorporated into existing programs to address issues such as food security by providing access to low-cost and sustainably grown food for low-income individuals or families (Haluza-DeLay & Fernhout, 2011).

## 6. Supporting Diversity within the Organization

There are several ways to support diversity within the organization, beginning with prioritizing hiring a diverse staff with different backgrounds and interests (Teelucksingh et al., 2016). Issues of environmental justice can be quite complex, which makes the integration of diverse perspectives crucial (Teelucksingh et al., 2016). According to a key informant, organizations can practice climate justice by encouraging diversity within the organization to increase the range of perspectives used to make decisions. Diversity can build capacity and momentum, since those who are most impacted are likely to be eager to bring about change (George & Reed, 2017).

Several approaches to support diversity within an organization have been suggested in the literature and by key-informants. Training programs or workshops can be used to educate staff involved in climate action program development about injustices and inequities within the climate change context (Klinsky & Mavrogianni, 2020). A key-informant described how their organization required staff to take courses on climate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and Indigenous cultural safety. They also described using a 50 by 30 program to ensure diversity within the organization: "It's more of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion lens internally within your organization. And it's ensuring that your board and senior management levels have 50% gender parity, and 30% are recognized or equity-seeking community groups." Setting up an advisory board to manage diversity and anti-oppression training and implement regular check-ins after training can help to reinforce the concepts among organization members (Pennington, 2016).

While promoting diversity was generally encouraged, organizations are cautioned against tokenism. A key-informant suggested that it is important for the organization to reflect the make-up of the community being served: "But then if you are in a [smaller] community that is especially white, for example, or especially wealthy, then I'd say, don't beat yourself up for not actually having the diversity because it could almost be tokenistic to try and be like, we gotta get that diverse person on here." Beyond hiring practices, supporting diversity requires creating a workplace culture where marginalized employees and volunteers feel safe (Pennington, 2016).

## Evaluation Findings

The following section reports on our findings from the internal evaluation of Environment Hamilton (10 interviews with 4 staff, 4 current board members, and 2 former board members) regarding their understanding of climate justice and the extent to which the principles and practices identified in the previous section are reflected in the organization.

### Participants' Understanding of Climate Justice

To ground our discussion about climate justice principles and practices, we asked Environment Hamilton board and staff members to reflect on their current understanding of climate justice. Participants identified several important concepts that define climate justice. Participants discussed how climate justice involves having a complete understanding of how climate change affects not just the earth, but humans as well. Participants explained how climate justice should go beyond solely focusing on the environmental aspects of climate change:

"I think it's a noticeable shift from conservation efforts or environmental work that is focused on conservation or focused on things like the, you know, impacts to land wildlife ecology, a shift away from thinking that human beings aren't a part of that work. And really centering around I think, both the human and ecology experience together."

Some participants mentioned that climate justice involves recognizing how systems of oppression are implicated in the consequences of climate change, and cause disproportionate harms to marginalized communities:

"So climate justice, obviously, is much more focused on the impacts of the climate crisis...it does recognize that people are not equally impacted. And it also recognizes that the people who are impacted tend to be more vulnerable people within and I would say, in this case, within the global population, right, so women, people from racialized communities, Indigenous populations, especially Indigenous populations still living on the land."

Participants also mentioned how climate justice requires understanding how the struggles of marginalized communities are linked by climate change and the need to apply an intersectional lens:

"It links movements of I would guess, gender-based movements, poverty, capitalism, racial injustice, Indigenous issues, it sort of links them all together and understands that none of those movements is suffering independently of the other."

Staff and board members also provided feedback on ways to better understand and approach climate justice work. One key informant highlighted the importance of

questioning one's beliefs, actions, experiences, and intentions to foster a compassionate evolution of climate justice work:

"I find it helpful (...) [to question] one's senses, one's beliefs, one's actions and experiences of reality. Because I believe that with so many things, climate justice and many other ideas or concepts that we humans have, we can shape them and change them and twist them and discord them and grow them and you know, evolve them. And that sort of stuff, I think, leads to just kind of more, more compassionate evolution or growth of these concepts."

Another participant stressed the distinction between impact and intention when engaging in effective climate justice work. For example, there is a difference between work that is decolonizing (an action that will have an impact) versus anti-colonial (point-of-view that may lead to good intentions).

One participant emphasized that engaging in climate justice work requires a comprehensive understanding of justice, and how climate justice issues relate to the broader concept of justice and human rights: "For some people there's that idea of like, oh, this is about climate justice, but there's not a conception of justice backing that up. So I think it is really important to have a really good comprehensive idea of what justice means". Another participant further expressed that it is important to be fully committed to advancing justice within climate justice work: "Climate justice work to me is not making occasional attempts to dip your foot in the pool of justice-oriented work, it's committing to doing the work all the time. If you're not doing the work all the time, you're not doing the work."

### Feedback on Framework

We showed interview participants an image of the framework we developed (see Figure 1) and asked them to provide feedback on aspects of it that were unclear, missing, or that stood out to them.

Several participants felt that the framework was clear and fit with their understanding of climate justice. They highlighted some strengths of the framework:

"[the framework] feels consistent, especially when I look at centering marginalized groups in the decision making process and amplifying diverse lived experiences and knowledge. ... I think that when you seek a type of justice, you have to center the people most impacted and make sure they're at the table."

However, participants also noted some limitations to the framework. They found that the framework was subjective to interpretation of those using it to make decisions and that the number of principles would make priority-setting within the organization challenging in the absence of a clear hierarchy being defined. It was also noted that the principles were described superficially, without clear ties to climate action.



Some participants remarked that the framework could be expanded in several ways. It could have included justice, respect, and compassion for other living beings and focused on how humans can coexist with other forms of life. The framework could also have focused on community strengths, in addition to needs and barriers:

“I also think that there's something to be said about, like looking at community strengths, as well, not just like, where there's a need... Within every community, there are people who have different strengths and they fulfill different roles within a social movement for change or betterment of a community. And so I think that that could apply to a climate justice framework as well. And that it's not just about needs, but about recognizing and promoting strengths within a community as well.”

An exploration of the root causes of climate justice was missing, as well as an explanation of what makes climate justice work challenging. The framework could also have made explicit mention of socioeconomic status and race in the context of capitalism and colonialism:

“But we are talking about essentially more poor and racialized people being subjected to that. And with regards to climate justice and looking at the effect that colonialism and capitalism combined have created, I think that conceptions of climate justice have to strongly have integration with regards to acknowledging not just colonialism locally, and how that's played out with regards to climate impacts and climate injustice, but also globally as well.”

The anti-colonial principle was singled out by participants as being a fundamental part of climate justice. However, participants felt that the framework needed to be more specific about incorporating Indigenous principles and practices.

### Reflection on Climate Justice Principles

Using our framework to guide the discussion, we asked participants to 1) identify examples of how Environment Hamilton currently applies the principles of climate justice and 2) identify opportunities to strengthen their application of these principles.

#### *1. Anti-Oppression and Equity Approach*

At a strategic level, Environment Hamilton adopts an anti-oppressive and equity lens by recognizing that systems of oppression intersect, such that marginalized seniors and Indigenous, racialized, and lower-income community members are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis. For example, one participant explained that in neighbourhoods where air pollution is most significant, there are also a higher number of lower-income Hamiltonians and Indigenous community members. Therefore, when implementing projects, staff members have had to think critically about neighbourhood demographics to effectively reach out to systematically underserved community members: “Are we appropriately reaching out to all members of the community and not just, you know, the typical, middle class, white, you know, family of four?”

To advance the organization's anti-oppression strategies, board and staff members also create and release statements in solidarity with other social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter and Indigenous rights movements. Another way that Environment Hamilton advances the principle of anti-oppression at an organizational level is by forming partnerships with local organizations that also engage in anti-oppression work. For example, a participant shared how Environment Hamilton collaborated with the Hamilton Centre For Civic Inclusion and the Hamilton Anti-racism Resource Center to push for the City's Board of Health to be restructured to include people with lived experiences or with medical expertise, and acknowledge the connection between health and disease and climate injustice.

On a practical level, Environment Hamilton embodies the anti-oppression principle by working to ensure that its projects are created by and for marginalized community members. For example, as one participant explained, the Friendly Streets Project aims to create safer urban streets and improve access to public transit through a mobility justice lens that focuses on Black, Indigenous and Racialized communities. Environment Hamilton has also worked to ensure that the steering community for this project includes the voices of marginalized community members who depend on public transit: "we've engaged seniors at risk, you know, marginalized seniors who depend on transit so that we've got that voice at the table on the steering committee, low-income residents who are maybe dependent on ODSP, or other government supports, whose voices are at the table". Likewise, Environment Hamilton works to involve members of marginalized communities in projects that involve their own community: "we are trying to ensure that we're providing opportunities to a diversity of people from the community, but also making sure that we have someone in the position on a project, who was at the communities that we're reaching out to connect with". For example, one staff member discussed the Riverdale Bus Pilot project, in which Environment Hamilton helped facilitate meetings between leaders from newcomer communities and the city councillor to advance the bus pilot.

Recognizing the systemic barriers to participation and actively working to eliminate these barriers is another important aspect of Environment Hamilton's anti-oppression and equity approach. In terms of addressing financial barriers to participation, one staff member explained that it means meeting community members where they are: "if [community members] are worried about putting food on the table, they may not have time to come out and do a community tree planting with us. But they may well be really happy about someone knocking on their front door and saying, you know, we've got a free seedling for you, if you want to plant it in your backyard, you know, so it's, it's been a lot of that kind of work". In another case, a participant explained that prior to the pandemic, Environment Hamilton would host events at the Central Branch of the Hamilton Public Library because it is located on multiple bus routes and the building is accessible. However, staff and board members also recognize that accessibility and inclusion are not simply a checkbox and that every project requires its own considerations to eliminate barriers to participation. One staff member explained that improving accessibility is an ongoing and active process within the organization: "You

know, how do we take projects that maybe we had one sort of standard template approach to in the past, and weave into that work, considering all these other factors so that we're getting closer to a point where we're effectively engaging with those most vulnerable community members."

Participants also outlined opportunities for improving the organization's anti-oppression and equity approach. Opportunities for improvements focused on the following two main areas: (1) defining and upholding climate justice and anti-oppressive values at the organization level; and (2) addressing barriers to accessibility within Environment Hamilton's programming.

Participants expressed that Environmental Hamilton needs to clearly define its anti-oppressive values and express them more explicitly to foster organizational change: "So at some level, defining your values, and being unapologetic about these is at the heart of starting to have organizational change...I think Environment Hamilton needs unwavering tenants to live by." Similarly, one participant said that having transparent values as an organization ensures that staff members are on the same page when issues arise, such as whether to endorse debates during federal, provincial, or municipal elections. As expressed by another participant, a critical part of defining anti-oppressive and equity values as an organization is recognizing the difference between being "non" and "anti" towards systems of oppression: "I think a radical approach to equity is needed at this time. (...) And I think it starts with the awareness... I think inadvertently ... they're missing the difference between being non-racist and anti-racist, non-discriminative and anti-discriminative, you know, non-transphobic and anti-transphobic". Participants expressed the need for regular anti-oppression training for staff and board members. Finally, when setting such unwavering values, some existing programs and structures may be called into question. Environment Hamilton must be open to reflecting such values through structural changes to hold itself accountable to the community.

Several participants expressed the need to improve access to participation in Environment Hamilton's programs. More specifically, efforts are required to improve the physical accessibility of its spaces and the digital accessibility of its programs, as well as to offer a combination of virtual and in-person programming to connect to a wider audience and better accommodate the various needs and experiences of community members: "and just like being more accommodating to the different needs, because I think you just can't assume that everybody is like really comfortable with like Facebook, or Instagram or writing an email, but they're just as qualified through like you said, through their lived experience." Recognizing people's lived experiences can help increase access to participation because it ensures that the message is delivered in a way that reflects the distinct positions of community members. For example, for some community members, word of mouth may be a more effective form of communication and going to community gathering spaces, such as parks, ensures that the message gets out to the right people. One participant also described the challenges of determining whether volunteer opportunities are accessible to community members from target neighbourhoods: "And are we being mindful that, you know, we can get folks from the community in that specific neighbourhood that we're working in? And are we

being mindful of their needs?” Rather than assuming a general approach to accessibility, participants expressed the need for clearer guidance on identifying the various barriers to accessibility:

"Are we talking about physical accessibility? Are we talking about low vision? Folks with mental health issues, or challenges? Are we talking about people who have low hearing? Are we talking about, you know, what are we talking about? Barriers in terms of cost, because there's a price tag to being part of a fundraiser. (...) So I think that for me, I would prefer some, no, I need some more, training, workshops, resources”.

## *2. Anti-colonial Approach*

While there was some indication that Environment Hamilton tries to build relationships with Indigenous communities, participants generally struggled to identify examples of how the organization currently incorporates an anti-colonial approach in its work. Participants identified several opportunities for Environment Hamilton to improve in this area. A participant noted that climate justice work needs to be led by Indigenous people and requires decentering whiteness and decolonizing the work being done. A participant suggested Environment Hamilton should allocate time and resources towards building relationships with Indigenous communities, while being careful not to perpetuate colonial harms in their approach. Within the organization, it was suggested that Environment Hamilton could also do a better job of recruiting Indigenous community members to lead projects, while also building supportive relationships with Indigenous staff and board members to retain them.

In taking an anti-colonial approach, Environment Hamilton can also support and amplify traditional ecological knowledge:

“There's, I know that there's lots more potential for us to, as an organization, learn more about and support and amplify other forms of knowledge. You know, we've historically been an organization that depends on traditional as in western world science, where, you know, we've got an Indigenous population with traditional ecological knowledge that there's a richness there and how, you know, to me, I think there's lots more that we could be doing as an organization to embrace and amplify, and bring those perspectives into the work that we do and create room for those perspectives to even... set the direction of the work that we do and the approaches that we use”

Environment Hamilton could be explicit around advocating for programs to support Indigenous communities and for undoing the legacy of colonialism within the City of Hamilton:

“There is still some more work that we could do with regards to reminding the City of Hamilton and being that voice of addressing that and trying to, you know, ultimately, the work on more programming that is ... more integrated with

Indigenous communities, be them, you know, Six Nations or, you know, urban Native population, but I think that's something that we could do more of....”

A participant suggested that Environment Hamilton also needs to ensure that it does not inadvertently work against Indigenous cultural safety. For example, the participant noted how a site with “Catholic overtones” was considered for a new office location and that people within the organization may not have recognized how such a decision could be in contradiction to the values of a climate justice organization.

### *3. Community Engagement and Empowerment*

Participants reflected on Environment Hamilton’s current community engagement practices. Providing knowledge and skills to protect the environment was identified as a fundamental mandate for Environment Hamilton that enables them to empower Hamilton residents. Participants mentioned how Environment Hamilton regularly engages the community through monthly events focusing on education and activism. Environment Hamilton educates Hamilton residents on climate issues and opportunities to act.

Participants also talked about Environment Hamilton’s efforts to amplify voices of diverse populations through speaker selection for presentations:

“...I’d suggest that even ...if you look at the speakers and some of the presentations that EH has done over the last, I’d say, two to five years, there’s a great deal of input, there was maybe not enough, but there’s a great deal of input, which isn’t just some boring white guy talking about environmental impacts.”

Environment Hamilton has also tried to focus on engaging marginalized populations. For instance, a participant discussed how the organization has been developing a climate resilience hub by reaching out to community members and organizations to provide resources for vulnerable communities in support of neighbourhood-level climate action:

“So for a number of years, we've worked on building a climate resilience hub, in the Beasley neighborhood, and that has really involved pulling in community members pulling in other organizations, because I think, if anything, we've learned that on some of these issues around climate justice, you know, as an environmental organization ... sometimes you need the skill set and the support of a ...social service agency, who can provide the resources that vulnerable community members need.”

Environment Hamilton has created a dedicated staff position towards engaging and centering the experiences of black, Indigenous, and other racialized people in climate action work through the Friendly Streets program. Environment Hamilton has also tried to engage with diverse community members through the Just Recovery coalition and recognized the importance of working with other organizations and groups:

“I think we've consciously done a much better job engaging with a wider variety of the community than just ...white environmentalists, right, who are comfortable middle class, right. You know, it's, it's been encouraging to see for sure, over the last few years ... engaging with community and in formalizing, you know, relationships between organizations that work with other community members and community groups has also been extremely important for that effort.”

Participants suggested that EH could improve their community engagement efforts by connecting with “more communities from different...cultures and identities.” An interviewee recommended offering their programs in other languages to connect with non-English-speaking populations within Hamilton. EH should also encourage community involvement in project development and implementation to build climate resilience in vulnerable neighbourhoods: “...What more could we be doing to engage those vulnerable community members in dialogue around what the project looks like? You know, what their role could be?”

#### *4. Effective Local Leadership*

According to some participants, effective local leadership was at least in part achieved through Environment Hamilton’s meaningful inter-organizational partnerships. Working with local organizations on community wide projects like the Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition movement has been to several interviewees an “example of how organizations like [Environment Hamilton] can transition towards being far more impactful in terms of [the] ability to embrace climate injustice in a more effective way on the ground and show solidarity to other organizations in [the] community”. Environment Hamilton’s collaborations have consisted in promoting other organizations’ work, co-organizing events, and participating in important conversations. One interviewee expressed that they “find that we're just so much better together because you get all these important perspectives, and [appreciate] how everything intersects, especially as we try to think about getting to 2030 . . . in terms of impact”. Another echoed that “we have more power, to push for change, when we come together in that way”. Engaging in partnerships with other local organizations has therefore been a way for Environment Hamilton to expand its work to those areas that have historically been outside of its purview, such as health inequities, and “to realize that [they] have a place in those kinds of efforts”.

Along with cultivating synergistic partnerships that expand its areas of impact, Environment Hamilton has made a conscious effort to make space for community members to take positions of leadership. Showing up for conversations that are “centering the voices of those who are equity deserving and equity seeking in the city” particularly illustrates Environment Hamilton’s push in that direction. One participant mentioned that Environment Hamilton has had “individuals who started off as just individual community members who were concerned about a local issue, who then ended up joining [the] board”. Environment Hamilton’s effort in this area stems from a recognition that rather than speaking on their behalf, representative organizations must

empower community members and facilitate their advocacy efforts. With the Friendly Streets initiative as an example, Environment Hamilton has been “trying to really engage with community members who don't have the means or the time to advocate on these things” and helping “streamline the process and make it easier for people to get engaged on issues that actually matter to them in ways that are tangible, because, engaging with City Hall can be extremely dense and intimidating at first”.

Despite meaningful work in this area, participants suggested Environment Hamilton could benefit by more “explicitly [uplifting] individuals who are active in the community.” This echoes another participant’s suggestion to teach impacted community members to “delegate to City Hall, so that they can leverage our resources, and then we can use our resources to help center their voices”. In the future, Environment Hamilton may aim to provide more opportunities for community members to actively participate as leaders in advocacy and policy development. According to one participant, empowering community members to participate in advocacy work may require greater transparency in communicating goals. The participant cited Food Share Toronto’s approach as a great example of organizational transparency, which can facilitate community members’ active involvement in justice work:

“They have a food justice web page on their website that includes their commitment to improving food justice, ending anti black racism in their organization and addressing colonialism in their organization. So that's laid out and then there's even a timeline of, “this action will be done by this date, this action will be done by this date”, and it's right out there on their website for anybody to see. They're not afraid of judgment from the community. They understand that [...] this is work that nobody needs to be ashamed of, it's work that we should be talking about doing, including where we need to improve. And it's work that you can take pride in. They recognize that most organizations are struggling with how to do this well, but it will be a multi-iterative process where you know mistakes get made and corrections get made and many iterations of this work have to happen”.

From an organizational perspective, one participant suggested that Environment Hamilton would benefit from having a conversation about their definition of climate justice and explicitly applying this working definition of climate justice to the organization’s mission, vision and values.

Finally, one participant also suggested that Environment Hamilton show a greater commitment to maintaining its relationships with other organizations, despite the pressures of funding or any changes in the focus of the organization. Referring particularly to the newer relationships Environment Hamilton has invested in, they ask, “how do we ensure that we continue building these relationships up overtime”? This question may be especially critical in the transition to a post-pandemic normal, which may remove some of the common goals organizations may have shared in the past couple of years.

It was suggested that Environment Hamilton should strengthen its role as an allied organization to other local organizations that are better positioned to approach issues specific to low-income community members, or Indigenous peoples: “you know the situation facing low-income people in the community, Environment Hamilton is limited in terms of what it can do there because it’s not a low-income organization. We know of the assault on the Indigenous people. But we are not specifically an Indigenous organization. We welcome Indigenous voices within our organization and try to be good allies”.

### *5. Actionably Tending to Community Needs*

Environment Hamilton currently tends to community needs in a few ways. They have worked with Hamilton Community Food Center to plant trees in areas where there is low tree coverage such as the Ralston neighbourhood and Ward 8 to increase the urban canopy. Recently, Environment Hamilton has shifted focus and broadened their social media activity to reflect a deeper understanding of environmental issues: “I think that it has been more so in the last year, just by the little bit I’ve been following on social media, it does seem like during the pandemic, and the just transition work that Environment Hamilton’s doing seems to be really, really thoughtful in its understanding that environmental issues are so much greater than planting trees.” On social media, Environment Hamilton has also made efforts to show support for other communities facing injustices. They have used their social media to advocate in support of housing encampments. Environment Hamilton has also started getting involved more directly in discussions around social housing and air quality. As an organization interested in climate justice, Environment Hamilton has started working on addressing these issues through collective efforts with municipal staff and public health.

Environment Hamilton is also involved in transitioning towards a low carbon future. This work has involved bringing forward community needs to the City of Hamilton. Participation in this transition has involved a greater focus on supporting vulnerable communities than Environment Hamilton has taken in most of its history.

Environment Hamilton has also engaged policy makers on issues such as inclusionary zoning and green development standards that aim to support community wellbeing in general:

“Through, you know, recommendations, talking with policymakers and engaging with them, trying to educate them and learn from them. ... There’s other things like around inclusionary zoning and green development standards, a lot of the policy recommendations that I see the organization putting forward to. ... I think that some of the policy recommendations that Environment Hamilton supports are the sorts of things that are in line with those base sort of supports the things that support broadly across society that support humanity and beyond.”

To take a climate justice approach to tend to community needs, participants suggested that Environment Hamilton needs to go beyond advocacy work: “Even if the outcomes [of going] ... to the municipality to advocate for our, you know, outcomes that are more



just for an intersectional, diverse group of people, it's still not a climate justice approach, even if it's climate justice advocacy." Participants have said that it is important to be involved in issues regarding infrastructure, affordable housing, tenant displacement, and gentrification.

One participant recommended that EH take a more focused approach to supporting the community: "I don't think the organization needs to do more. And I don't think they need to serve more people. I think they need to serve targeted groups of people better. A large population in Hamilton does not need to be served, they already enjoy privilege and organize on their own." While programs are believed to be well-intentioned, some interviewees felt the organization is not centering those most impacted by climate injustice. They suggested that climate justice needs to address the different cultural communities in the city, emphasize involving different voices and people from the community, recognize the changing demographics in the city, and recognize the displacement of racialized and marginalized communities. Environment Hamilton can ease climate injustice by forming connections with displaced communities relocating to new areas of the city and tending to their needs. To target these populations, an interviewee stated "through [social justice-oriented groups] partnerships Environment Hamilton has been making in the last little while...could help [Environment Hamilton] identify those more vulnerable populations in the city and connect directly with them."

## *6. Supporting Diversity within the Organization*

Participants discussed how Environment Hamilton has shown a commitment to supporting diversity within the organization in several ways, including "just in terms of [the] racial backgrounds of staff members". Recently, Environment Hamilton has opened a BIPOC position for a staff member to work on the Friendly Streets initiative. This was in view of ensuring that "they're centering and engaging folks in Hamilton who are black, Indigenous, or people of color, and centering their experiences around the climate action work that's happening". Environment Hamilton's volunteer base is also reportedly diverse. From a staffing perspective, several interviewees seemed to agree that "Environment Hamilton as an organization values the diversity of their staff" and is doing this work relatively successfully.

One participant observed that on the board of directors in particular, "there's a high turnover of folks who are from racialized backgrounds, or from equity deserving groups". The turnover may be due to power dynamics within the board, which may make it difficult for racialized board members to contribute without feeling tokenized and having their experiences diminished. The participant described the possible risks of this approach:

"I think that there's a lot of shoulder tapping that's happened previously, to invite people on the board. And I think there's a high risk of tokenizing certain people ... There are folks who have expressed to me that they were invited to be on the board, but they believe that once on the board, their experiences were diminished, and their ability to make contributions was diminished. Or it wasn't

easy to do that. And they feel as though that's because of some power dynamics and privilege”

This sentiment was echoed by another participant, who expressed that racialized members have felt tokenized “not through anyone’s direct treatment so much as the model in the implication”. In other words, some racialized folks on the board may have felt that they were inadvertently included for the purpose of checking the representation box, rather than meaningfully participating in the ongoing process of creating anti-oppressive spaces of collaboration. Referring to the process of improving diversity in the organization, one interviewee acknowledged that “there is a less clear idea of how to do that in ways that are anti-oppressive”, signalling that there may be some learning to be done in that area particularly. This issue is not limited to race, according to one interviewee, as there is also a lack of gender diversity at Environment Hamilton, which limits Environment Hamilton’s “capacity in how to leverage voices, bring in voices, and connect with people from [the] community”.

Future conversations around issues of representation must consider the appropriateness of terminology used to describe marginalized people to ensure the creation of an anti-oppressive space. A participant also mentioned that making small changes to seemingly innocuous details, such as conversation topics for small talk—which typically would primarily interest white folks—in meetings, can also go a long way in enhancing the inclusivity of the organization and creating a safe space for racialized folks to meaningfully contribute.

### Additional Resources

We asked participants to share additional resources that could help further develop understanding of climate justice. These can be found in Appendix 4.

## Key Takeaways and Next Steps

This research investigated key principles and practices of a climate justice approach to non-profit work, which were subsequently used to anchor discussions with Environment Hamilton board and staff members on organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement in applying these principles. Our findings identified 6 climate justice principles: Anti-oppression and Equity Approach, Anti-Colonial Approach, Community Engagement and Empowerment, Effective Local Leadership, Actionably Tending to Community Needs, and Supporting Diversity within the Organization. These principles were used to guide discussions with Environment Hamilton board and staff members on strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Overall, Environment Hamilton reflects many of the principles of climate justice, such as adopting an anti-oppression and equity lens, engaging local communities, and developing partnerships with social justice-oriented organizations across the city on key equity initiatives. Participants also identified several ways that Environment Hamilton

can improve to better foster a climate justice approach to its work. For instance, Environment Hamilton could benefit from defining their anti-oppressive values to support implementation within the organization and reducing barriers to participation in their programs. Environment Hamilton could also focus on incorporating an anti-colonial approach as participants did not identify many examples of how this principle is currently upheld within the organization.

Participants identified a need to engage with communities of different cultures and identifies, and to encourage involvement in program development from vulnerable neighbourhoods to build their climate resilience. Environment Hamilton can show more effective local leadership by providing additional opportunities for community members to take leadership in advocacy and policy development, by being more transparent with the community about their goals, and by showing greater commitment to relationship building with partner organizations. Environment Hamilton could also reflect on the turnover of staff and board members, particularly those who are racialized and to avoid tokenism within the organization.

These findings can be used by Environment Hamilton board and staff to onboard future discussions around opportunities to employ better climate justice practices and policies within the organization. This research, however, was intended to be exploratory and should not be considered exhaustive or definitive. There is room for additional research to further elaborate on and refine the principles identified in our findings. Due to time constraints, the evaluation was also conducted internally with board and staff members only. Additional evaluation work can be done to seek the perspectives of community members and partner organizations, which can be used to further identify strengths and opportunities for improvement within Environment Hamilton's practice of climate justice.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Literature Review Search Strategy

What key **principles** and **practices** might define a **climate justice** approach to Environment Hamilton's **governance** and **operations**?

Climate justice	AND	Principles and (best) practices
OR		OR
Environmental justice		Framework
OR		OR
<i>Just sustainability</i>		Program
OR		OR
<i>Planetary health</i>		Guid*(e/ing/ance/elines)
OR		OR
<i>Environmental racism</i>		Approach
OR		OR
Environmental equity		Polic*(ies/y)
OR		OR
Environmental disparities		<i>Recommendations</i>
OR		OR
Green Social Work		Interventions
environmental		

## Appendix 2: Key-Informant Interview Guide

### A. CONTEXT

1. Please tell me a bit about your organization.
  - a. (Prompt) What type of climate action work does your organization do?
2. Within your organization, what is your role/area of expertise?

### B. CLIMATE JUSTICE

1. From your perspective, what do you think are the main principles of climate justice?
  - [Prompt]: What does climate justice/awareness mean to you/your organization?
2. Does your organization follow any overarching frameworks/guidelines that guide your approach to climate justice? If so, what does your organization emphasize?
3. How, if at all, does your organization incorporate climate justice principles into its work? What types of climate justice practices/policies do you apply?
  - [Prompt]: Are there any specific climate justice policies or best practices that you feel are essential for an organization doing climate action work? If so, what are they?
  - [Prompt]: How, if at all, do you integrate social justice principles into your climate work?
  - [if not at all] Where do you feel your organization has more work to do?

### C. EVALUATION

1. How, if at all, does your organization measure whether it is successfully embodying a climate justice approach in its programs?
  - [if yes]: What indicators, if any, do you use to measure how well your organization embodies a climate justice approach?
  - [if no]: What indicators, if any, would you use to evaluate your organization on its climate justice approach if you were able to?

### D. WRAP UP

1. As mentioned, we're looking to develop a set of criteria to evaluate whether Environment Hamilton, a non-profit working on sustainability issues in the city, is embodying a climate justice approach. Do you have any other comments around what those criteria might include?
2. Do you have any final reflections or comments?

## Appendix 3: Environment Hamilton Evaluation Interview Guide

### CONTEXT

1. Climate justice - Have you heard of this term before? What is your understanding of the concept?

### CLIMATE JUSTICE PRINCIPLES

1. To reinforce our understanding of climate justice, our team researched the meaning of climate justice and some principles emerged. To ground our discussion, we'd like to share these principles with you to see how they fit, or don't fit, with your understanding of climate justice. [Share principles on screen. Give ~5-10 minutes for the participant to review them. Tell the participant to let you know when they've finished reviewing.]
2. Do the principles fit with your understanding of climate justice? Why or why not?
  - a. [Prompts] Do these principles make sense, or were any confusing/unclear? Are there key principles or practices that you believe are missing? Are there key principles or practices that stand out to you?

### EVALUATION - Reflection on Environment Hamilton's embodiment of climate justice principles

1. In what ways, if any, do you think Environment Hamilton takes a climate justice approach to its work? Please feel free to refer to the principles described earlier.
  - a. [Clarify which principle is being discussed, if it's not obvious.]
  - b. (Prompt) In what ways, if at all, is climate justice reflected in the programs EH operates?
  - c. (Prompt) In what ways, if at all, is climate justice reflected in the organization's leadership/governance processes?
  - d. (Prompt) We've discussed [principles that were mentioned] but I didn't hear any feedback on [principles not mentioned] – do you have anything to add?
2. In what ways, if any, do you believe Environment Hamilton has opportunities for improvement in implementing these principles in its work? Please feel free to refer to the principles described earlier.
  - a. [Clarify which principle is being discussed, if it's not obvious.]
  - b. (Prompt) In what ways, if at all, do you believe EH can improve its approach to climate justice in the programs EH operates?
  - c. (Prompt) In what ways, if at all, do you believe EH can improve its approach to climate justice in its leadership/governance processes?
  - d. (Prompt) We've discussed [principles that were mentioned] but I didn't hear any feedback on [principles not mentioned] – do you have anything to add?



## **WRAP-UP**

1. In order to develop a framework, we reviewed literature and conducted key-informant interviews to identify key principles and practices of climate justice. Do you have any recommended readings or resources that could further inform this framework?
2. Do you have any final reflections or comments?

## Appendix 4: Additional Resources

Resource	Type of Resource	Explanation
This book is Anti-racist, Tiffany Jewell	Book	Examines concepts of social identity, race, ethnicity, and racism. Provides examples of how people of different races have been historically oppressed. Explores how to challenge racism.
This book is feminist, Jamea Wilson	Book	Explores meaning of feminism and connections to race, class, gender, disability and economic justice
The Dawn of Everything, David Graeber and David Wengrow	Book	Challenges social evolution. Discusses theories revolving the origins of democracy, slavery, cities, farming and civilization by examining history.
On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal, Naomi Klein	Book	Explores how climate collapse and growing inequality can be addressed simultaneously
Towards Braiding	Book + Handouts	Resources on engaging with Indigenous peoples  <a href="https://decolonialfutures.net/toward-sbraiding/">https://decolonialfutures.net/toward-sbraiding/</a>
The Dancing Wu Li Masters, Gary Zukav	Book	Considers modern physics and energies relationship with ancient eastern spiritual movements

<p>Martinez, D., &amp; Irfan, A. (2021, November 4). <i>Colonialism, the climate crisis, and the need to center Indigenous voices</i>. Environmental Health News.</p>	<p>Online Article</p>	<p><a href="https://www.ehn.org/indigenous-people-and-climate-change-2655479728/colonialism-and-the-climate-crisis">https://www.ehn.org/indigenous-people-and-climate-change-2655479728/colonialism-and-the-climate-crisis</a></p> <p>The ramifications and contributions of colonialism to climate change and how to dismantle and fight against white supremacy</p>
<p>Whitaker, G. (2021, March 19). <i>Why climate justice is impossible without racial justice</i>. Greenpeace.</p>	<p>Online Article</p>	<p>Explains the impacts of colonialism on racialized and marginalized communities</p> <p><a href="https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/46927/why-climate-justice-is-impossible-without-racial-justice/">https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/46927/why-climate-justice-is-impossible-without-racial-justice/</a></p>
<p>Deranger, E. T. (2021, July 2). <i>The Climate Emergency &amp; The Colonial Response</i>. Yellowheadinstitute.</p>	<p>Online Article</p>	<p>Highlights unjust silencing of Indigenous voices in the fight against climate change. Spotlights systemic colonialism and necessary actions to incorporate Indigenous voices for effective climate justice</p> <p><a href="https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2021/07/02/climate-emergency-colonial-response/">https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2021/07/02/climate-emergency-colonial-response/</a></p>

Toronto Environmental Alliance	Organization	Non-profit organization advocating for a green, healthy and equitable Toronto  <a href="https://www.torontoenvironment.org/">https://www.torontoenvironment.org/</a>
Foodshare	Organization	Food justice organization advocating for the right to food, and working to challenge the systemic barriers that keep people from accessing food  <a href="https://foodshare.net/">https://foodshare.net/</a>
Thich Nhat Hanh	Monk, teacher, social activist, spiritual leader	Renowned for teaching on mindfulness, peace, and global ethics
Deborah McGregor (Associate Professor & Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Environmental Justice)	Faculty, York University's Osgoode Hall	Research focused on Indigenous knowledge systems and applications in water, environmental governance, sustainable development
Harriet Washington	American Author and Medical Ethicist	Published novels capturing racial injustice, some through an environmental lens