



eco-internships

2017-2024



**SUSTAINABLE
CAPACITY
SOLUTIONS**

CLIMATE IMPACT

REPORT





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Introduction to the **CLIMATE IMPACT REPORT**

Eco-Internships is an environmental nonprofit organization based out of Ottawa. Our mission is to support environmental organizations across Canada by connecting nonprofits to funding opportunities to hire interns through wage subsidy grants and other funding.

This report will analyze and provide insight into the climate impact of the organizations and interns that have participated in our Intern Support Program (ISP). This will cover projects they have worked on and how they have impacted their communities, in order to promote transparency of climate impact within the sector. This report will also enable organizations like ourselves to learn from one another and determine ways in which we can collectively increase our climate impact initiatives.





UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE IMPACT

What is Climate Impact?

When looking at an individual's or organization's climate impact, we are analyzing in what ways they have worked to fight against climate change. This can be seen in many ways and in many different forms, such as:

- Reducing Carbon Footprint
- Implementing Sustainable Initiatives/Projects
- Using Renewable Energy
- Sustainable Transportation
- Providing Environmental Education

Why is it Important?

It is of high priority that our Intern Support Program (ISP), promotes and encourages climate action. Climate action is important for a multitude of reasons, here are a few:

- Mitigating Climate Change
- Protecting the Environment
- Resilience to Climate Impacts
- International Cooperation
- Health of all Living Being
- Preserving a Liveable and Sustainable Planet for Future Generations
- Environmental Justice





Measuring CLIMATE IMPACT

In order to assess the climate action impact of the organizations and interns that participate in our Intern Support Program (ISP), it is essential that we analyze and measure in an effective manner. We have utilized the following evaluation framework in order to assess the impactful work of our ISP participants working on diverse environmental projects over the past seven years.

Data Collection Methods	Outcomes
Climate Impact Interview and Surveys	SDG Alignment Analysis
	Barriers to Climate Action Assessment
Evaluation Surveys & Feedback	Intern Role and Contribution Evaluation
	Internship Impact Analysis
Organization Research	Capacity Growth Assessment
	Qualitative Analysis
Program /Action Impact Research	Comparison Over Time
	Organizational Case Studies





General Statistics: ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Client Growth

Eco-Internships has supported over

69

Environmental organizations with

186

Internships

Organizational Expansion



Eco-Internship has supported organizations from 5 different provinces and provided internships for youth located in 6 different provinces, operating in a total of 7 provinces to date.

ISP Organization SDGs

According to 22 organizations who have responded to our surveys and evaluations, Eco-Internships has supported in the continuation and expansion of over 14 SDGs.

The number in the yellow box below represents the number of organizations that stated to be committed for the following SDG.





General Statistics: ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Scope

For the 55 organizations who secured interns through the Intern Support Program (ISP), the organizational scope was:

National

28

Provincial /
Regional

6

Community

21

Barriers to Climate Action

- Staffing Challenges
 - Lack of qualified personnel
 - Volunteer-driven organizations
 - Insufficient staff for capacity growth
 - Time constraints
- Funding Hurdles
 - Financial constraints
 - Fundraising challenges
 - Self-sustainability navigation
- Resource Limitation
 - Operational constraints
 - Event restrictions
- COVID-19 Impact
 - Program disruptions & capacity restrictions
- Navigating Early Years as a Non-Profit
 - Organizational learning curve



As a result of participating in our Intern Support Program (ISP) ...

100%

OF ORGANIZATIONS HAD INCREASED CAPACITY TO RECRUIT AND HIRE INTERNS (28 RESPONSES)

98%

OF ORGANIZATIONS WERE ABLE TO ADVANCE THE DIGITALIZATION OF THEIR ORGANIZATION OR ADVANCE A DIGITAL PROJECT (47 RESPONSES)

96%

OF THE ORGANIZATIONS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE WORK DONE BY THE INTERN DURING THEIR INTERNSHIP (67 RESPONSES)



General Statistics: ISP IMPACT

Intern Contribution to Environmental Organizations

Intern Contribution / Tasks	# of Interns	Intern Contribution / Tasks	# of Interns
Communication	53	Project implementation / management	15
Project development / planning / coordination	31	Fundraising	14
Report & recommendation generation	29	Technological development	11
Education	29	Mapping	10
Resource creation	29	Policy creation / expansion	7
Data collection & analysis	27	Tree & shrub planting	5
Research	25	Video production	5
Partnership creation / promotion	23	Forestry	3
Monitoring / tracking	21	Plant harvest / production	2
Administration	17	Auditing	2

Examples of projects developed and implemented:

- Climate change, conservation, and energy related activities and events
- SDG events
- Enhancing business sustainability
- Indigenous environmental protection events
- NSEN Caucuses
- Sustainability Start Awards
- National Capital Environmental NonProfit Network (NCENN)
- Forest regeneration plans & reforestation activities
- EV charging stations
- Energy Cube project
 - Green building retrofit showcase

Examples of reports & resources generated:

- Lake Stewardship Plan
- Capacity Check-Ups
- Climate Action Engagement Impact Report
- Impact measurement framework and reporting tool
- Tools & resources to promote sustainable forestry
- Best practices for organization sustainability
- Bilingual materials for programs and education
- communication tools
- Posters for plastic reduction

Examples of research conducted:

- Factors related to the causes of climate change
- Educational content for environmental themes and sustainability
- Solutions to environmental problems
- Clean technology





General Statistics: ISP IMPACT

Impact of Internship

Impact Summary	# of Interns
Conservation	46
Raised awareness	32
Sustainability	29
Climate change action / mitigation / adaptation	27
Capacity building (of employer organization)	25
Network maintenance / expansion / creation	18
Increase SDG engagement	18
Capacity building (of other organizations / public)	16
Raised funds for environmental programs	11
Environmental DEI	10
Shift thinking & behaviour	7
Clean technology	7
Wildlife protection	5
Habitat / land restoration	5
Waste reduction	5
Sustainable forestry	4
Environmental protection	3
Wildlife corridor connectivity	2
Trail construction & maintenance	2

Conservation:

- Energy conservation (#: 16)
 - E.g. clean energy, energy efficiency, green building, energy retrofits, and renewable energy
- Biodiversity conservation / enhancement (#: 11)
- Water conservation (#: 5)
- Wildlife conservation / protection (#: 5)
- Ecosystem / habitat conservation & protection (#: 4)
- General conservation (#: 10)
 - E.g. land & resource conservation

Climate change action / mitigation / adaptation:

- E.g. GHG reduction and carbon mitigation

Increase SDG engagement:

- E.g. Financial valuation and assessing opportunities to improve SDG activities

Capacity building (of other organizations / public):

- E.g. Increasing business sustainability

Environmental DEI:

- E.g. Engaging under-represented communities in environmental work

Habitat / land restoration:

- E.g. Coastal restoration & shoreline naturalization





General Statistics: CAPACITY GROWTH

Throughout Canada, non-profits are facing increased challenges to meet their fiscal needs due to interest rate hikes and inflation, and an imminent recession anticipated by economists in 2023 (Jensen, 2023). In addition, according to Statistics Canada (2022), over 50% of nonprofits experienced struggling with volunteer recruitment and retention. This is detrimental to non-profits, as research shows that 58% of charities and nonprofits have no paid staff, and many tend to heavily rely on volunteers to carry out their projects and sustain their organizations, leading to increased working hours for paid staff and a reduction of programs and services (Jensen, 2023).

98%

of the organizations stated that the interns have contributed in a meaningful way to their mission. (47 responses)

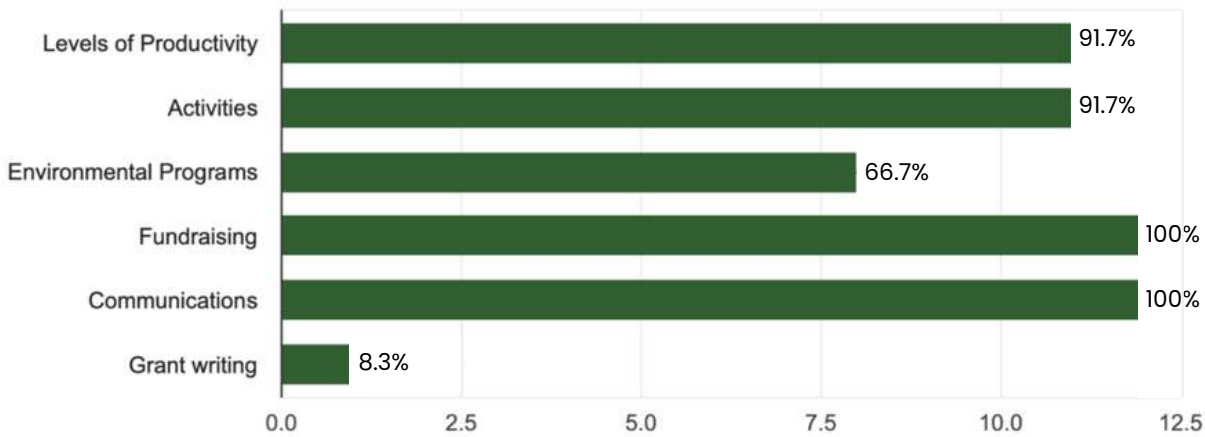
100%

of the organizations mentioned that the outcomes of the internship will be continued benefit to their organization. (49 responses)

54%

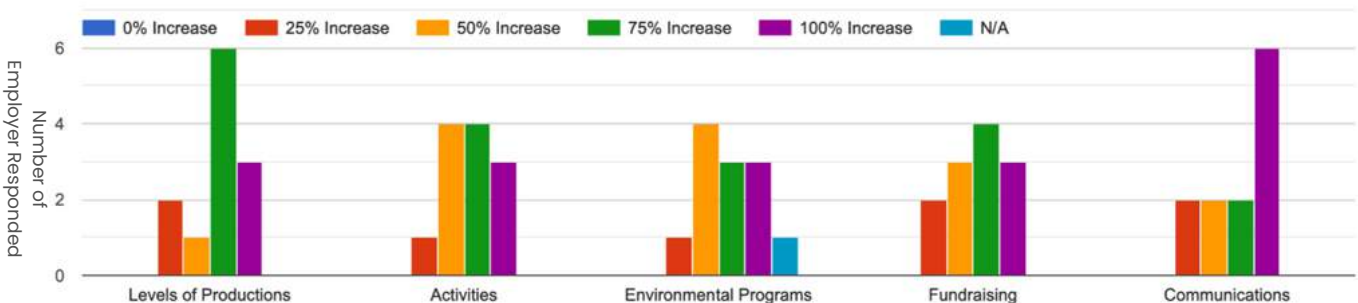
of interns secured full-time employment in the environmental sector within three months of completing their placement. (2022 statistics)

Areas where interns built capacity for environmental organizations:



Source: 2023 Employer Evaluation Survey

Increase in Capacity per Category:



Source: 2023 Employer Evaluation Survey





Organization HIGHLIGHTS



Faith & the Common Good (FCG)

Main SDG



Additional SDGs depending on program



FCG is a national, interfaith charitable network dedicated to assisting and inspiring religious congregations and spiritual groups of all backgrounds to take collective action in creating more sustainable communities.

Vision

Working together for the common good to build a more resilient and sustainable Canada.

Mission

We harness the power of diverse faith and spiritual groups through education, capacity building, and collective action to build more resilient and sustainable communities.

Climate Action Categories

- Emission Reduction
- Green Infrastructure
- Climate Education
- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Capacity Building
- Research / Knowledge Building & Sharing



Photo of Emily Sayadi presenting for Greening Sacred Spaces.

Program Highlights

Faithful Footprints:

Through a partnership with FCG, the United Church of Canada is offering grants and support for churches to measure their energy use and upgrade infrastructure to reduce their climate pollution

Energy Benchmarking Program:

Supporting practical and economical climate action through measuring and reporting the impact faith communities have around emissions & reductions

Greening Sacred Spaces:

Assists faith communities with both the educational and spiritual dimensions of greening as well as the "how to" side of audits, retrofits, and generally reducing a faith community's footprint.



Faith & the Common Good (FCG)

Barriers Prior to ISP

Smaller programs, such as the Toronto Chapter's Energy Benchmarking Program, were wrapped up due to COVID-19 and insufficient funding, even when they were producing significant results.

Capacity Growth

Outreach Expansion

- Through interns, FCG was able to target various geographic locations for targeted messaging, especially in Nova Scotia.

Tool development

- FCG has been benefiting from the internal tools developed by interns, including:
 - Project management tools
 - Outlines & framework for webinars

Impact Summary

Environmental Impact

- FCG's program, Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS), has various chapters doing environmental work throughout Canada.
- Involved in working with faith communities, installing EV charging stations, energy benchmarking program, etc.
- Environmental program examples:
 - Tree planting, gardening, pollinator gardens, and food security programs

Social Impact

- Community building:
 - People getting to know each other without stereotypes, and collaborate on projects.
- People were able to learn about how different communities and religions are committed to the environment, and the impact they have.

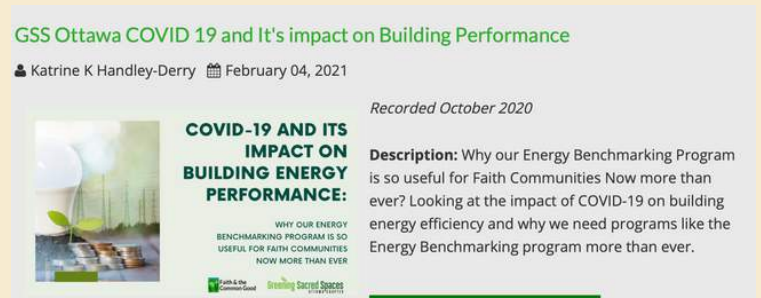
Intern Contribution

All interns work were related to climate change, specifically working with faith communities.

Katrine Handley-Derry, FCG 2019 intern:

- Supported the communications of various projects, including managing social media, organizing webinars, writing newsletters, and working with database
- Enhanced already established programs.

The photo below showcases Katrine's contribution to the the Energy Benchmarking Program, which can be found in the FCG website.



Chaneet Sidhu, FCG 2021 intern:

- Supported the communications of various projects, including climate education programming and facilitating webinars.
- Came up with an idea for new webinars, and executed the project.

The photo below is captured from a webinar about climate action that Chaneet facilitated, which can be found in FCG's YouTube Chanel.





Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) Ottawa

FCG's Longest Running Program

Main SDG



Program Summary

GSS assists faith communities (FCs) with both the educational and spiritual dimensions of greening as well as the “how to” side of audits, retrofits, and generally reducing a faith community’s footprint.

Climate Action Categories

- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Research / Knowledge Building & Sharing

Community Impact

Environmental:

- The participating Faith Communities (FC) have taken action and/or gained knowledge on how they can become more sustainable by reducing their energy usage.
- Reducing FC’s energy usage will also reduce their fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Social:

- At events, people can come together under the collective goal of becoming more environmentally sustainable.

Economic:

- The participating FC are able to save money by reducing their energy usage, resulting in paying less in energy bills.

Intern Contribution

Emily Sayadi, GSS 2023 intern:

- Strengthened the Energy Benchmarking Program:
 - Recruited participants and collected energy information for the Energy Star Portfolio.
 - Updated GSS’s website and streamlined the participation sign up process.
 - Resulted in 7 new faith communities participating in the program.
- New Climate Education Project:
 - Supported the program planning and grant writing process to deliver Extreme Weather Resiliency workshops to faith communities.

The photo below shows Emily and the GSS team at the European Buckthorn Removal Event..



Past Intern Contribution Summary:

- Networking:
 - Connected with target audiences & faith communities to bring them programs to green their spaces
 - Rebuilt lost/inactive relationships with GSS’s network of faith communities
 - Built connections with contractors, which helped GSS to support FC to complete their energy retrofits.
- Resource Creation:
 - GSS is continuously benefiting from materials & case studies created by interns.
- Program development & fundraising



Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (FABR)

Main SDG



Vision

To strengthen sustainable community development, celebrate the interconnectedness of nature, livelihood, well-being and culture, for this and future generations.

Mission

To implement the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme to improve relationships between people and their environments.

Barriers Prior to ISP

- Challenges in funding
- Limited staff
 - only paid staff was part time

Program Highlights

Youth Climate Action Summit

- A for youth, by youth summit conducted to support youth climate action.
- Provides networking opportunities and education about climate change and its effects.
 - Provides interactive workshops with keynote speakers
- FABR challenges teams in various schools and community groups to come up with a climate action plan. Example plans include:
 - Pollinator gardens with proper signage, sustainable wrapping initiatives, reducing reliance on plastic water bottles, and starting a thrift store in school
- The youth committee selects a couple of projects to offer funding
 - FABR also has connections with school boards to support projects

Other Effective Area-Base Conservation Measures (OECM) Program

- To support the Government of Canada's 30 by 30 nature conservation goals
- Cataloguing areas that are being conserved under traditional means

Climate Action Categories

- Conservation / Restoration
- Emission Reduction
- Green Infrastructure
- Climate Justice
- Climate Education
- Climate Activism



Above is a photo of FABR's Youth Climate Action Summit. (Photo credit: Aquarium)



Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (FABR)

Youth Education

FABR focuses on educating secondary school aged youth. Topics include:

- Conservation / Restoration: E.g. wildlife corridors
 - encouraging people to think about where wildlife are moving
- Emission Reduction: E.g. walkable communities
- Green Infrastructure
- Climate Justice: E.g. Talk about how marginalized communities are more effected

Community Impact

- Talk with secondary school students, including topics about climate anxiety and species loss
- Offers an event that is factual but not doom & gloom, to ensure the focus is on making an impact for a better future.
 - Important as many students knows more about the problem and not so much the diverse actions being taken.
- Work with local community groups to highlight the people that are taking action & draw specialists from further field
- People can get involved as a volunteer and complete a climate action project
- The climate action plans generated also provides a broader impact in schools and the community:
 - E.g. creating a pollinator garden in school is not only beneficial for biodiversity, but also provides a space for students to have a nature break.
- FABN works to learn about what youths are passionate about, and finds ways to get their voices heard



Invasive Species and the Frontenac Arch

FABN Seminar March 5

11 a.m.-1 p.m.

By Dana Stephenson

with them plants, animals, seeds, and insects. However new species come to the region even now, especially as climate change alters the landscape and weather patterns.

Some invasive species are well known such as

Above is a article written by FABN's 2021 intern Dana, which was published on Our Lakes e-magazine.

Intern Contribution

FABR had a total of three interns in 2021, who contributed to boosting the organization's internal operations.

Nicholas Hyacinthe, Sustainability Intern:

- Contributed to policies for governance of a not for profit; FABR GIS data inventory and organization; participation in marcom committee, fundraising strategy, branding strategy; ongoing participation in board meetings; Youth Climate Action Summit liaising and planning.



Above is a photo Nicholas working with FABR.

Noah Giles, Sustainability Intern:

- Contributed to publishing invasive species information for FABR website; planning of invasive species workshop; summary of partner Conservation Action Plan; participation in marcom committee.
- Also worked on fundraising strategy, branding strategy; ongoing maintenance of FABN website and Youth Climate Action Summit website; and researching potential grants for projects.

Dana Stephenson, Sustainability Intern:

- Dana wrote project proposals and sought project funding to grow organization capacity, wrote communications such as blogs and social media posts, and managed the social media platforms.
- She also worked on acquiring and developing a CRM for the organization, as well as online registration forms for our Nature Camp program.
- Dana created a natural history of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere presentation, and organized and run an invasive species awareness webinar.



Ottawa South Eco-Action Network (OSEAN)

Main SDGs

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



- Encouraging public transit & cycling
- Decreasing GHG emissions

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



- Changing habits & product usage

13 CLIMATE ACTION



- Encouraging to take dedicated action
- Nature Based Solutions

15 LIFE ON LAND



- Protecting & expanding biodiversity

About OSEAN

As a group of volunteer environmental activists working in Ottawa South, OSEAN encourage and empower people in Ottawa to think more sustainably and environmentally friendly, and to enable them to take action.

Climate Action Categories

- Nature Based Solutions
- Conservation/Restoration
- Emission Reduction
- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Knowledge Sharing
- Climate Activism.

Barriers Prior to ISP

OSEAN is a volunteer run organization, without paid staff that could dedicate time.

- The only paid staff they had was the ISP Intern.

Program Highlights

Pumpkins for the Planet:

- Call to attention of pumpkins being wasted during halloween and how we don't really think about it.
- Collection of pumpkins to bring them to local farms so that they can be reused.

Education & Events

- Topics include plastic reduction and heat pumps.



The photo above shows the pumpkins collected during OSEAN's 2021 Pumpkins for the Planet.



Ottawa South Eco-Action Network (OSEAN)

Intern Contribution

OSEAN had a total of one intern in 2021. Bryony Wharfe, the Sustainability Intern, has contributed to increasing organization's capacity and implementing new climate related initiatives including:

Invasive Species Removal:

- Bryony wrote a grant to remove invasive species, which was approved and resulted in 4 invasive species in-person weeding events
- She also helped organize and facilitated webinars on invasive species and how to remove them in Ottawa

Pollinator Patches

- Bryony successfully launched the program of promoting pollinator patches in Ottawa South
- Her role involved finding participants, emailing them, coordinating the pollinator patches
 - She also supported designing yard signs that educates the public about planting native species in the yard and converting it into a habitat
 - Used for education & minor fundraiser
- The program has been recreated in at least 2 other communities in Ottawa due to increased capacity.



The photo above is OSEAN's 2021 pollinator garden contest winner.

Launching the Emotion to Change By-Laws

- Bryony helped set up the initial meetings with the city to implement the Use and Care of Roads By-law 2003-498, which allows people to plant in boulevards to reduce the amount of grass
 - By-law was approved after internship

In addition, Bryony has helped OSEAN become more administratively efficient by standardizing the usage of google forms for the Pumpkins for The Planet Program



Pigs at Arc Acres eating the pumpkins collected.

Community Impact

Environmental

- Increased biodiversity:
 - Built at least 20-30 pollinator patches at people's yards
 - Provided free plants to the community
- Diverted pumpkin waste every halloween:
 - Every halloween, divert between 1000-2000 pumpkin in their community
 - The Success encouraged other groups to do similar things
- Encouraged retrofits and heat pumps:
 - Provided related education & reduced barriers from education to action

Social

- Connect individuals together
 - E.g. neighbours have interacted together to plant pollinator patches
- Climate anxiety reduction:
 - Volunteer groups and people actively participating in environmental action had reduced climate anxiety

Economic

- Nature Based Solutions:
 - E.g. pollinator patches and by-law change
 - Planting native gardens and better utilizing grass leads to decreased economic burden on water infrastructure
 - Results are from the benefits of green infrastructure providing stormwater management & temperature regulation



SmartNet Coalition

Main SDG



Mission

To Accelerate the Transition to Canada's Sustainable Economy

Vision

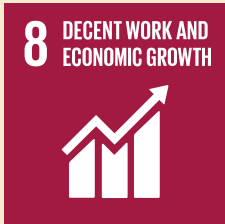
SmartNet Coalition's VISION for this sustainable economy is one that:

- Has environmental sustainability at its core
- Provides fair and well-paying jobs
- Is connected and community oriented

Barriers Prior to ISP

- Limited staff and capacity
 - Only 1 paid part time staff/consultant in organization
 - Enough for day to day activities but not limited for capacity growth
- Early year navigation as a non-profit incorporated in 2022
 - Figuring out how the organization looks like as a non-profit and how to be self-funded
 - Lots of space to grow

Additional SDGs



SmartNet Coalition's EV Exhibition

Climate Action Categories

- Emission Reduction
- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Climate Education
- Green Infrastructure
- Capacity Building
- Knowledge Building & Sharing

Program Highlights

Sustainability Showcase & EV Exhibition:

- An annual event that connects businesses working in sustainability and customers that wants to become more sustainable
- Introduces the public to sustainability – a way for people to come together, share ideas and get connections
 - The 2023 Event was held in an exhibition hall, where members and other sustainable businesses can show off their products and gain access to customers

Green Drinks – Ottawa:

- Sustainable networking events
 - A way for people to come together, share ideas, and get connections
- Introduces participants to sustainability



SmartNet Coalition

Intern Contribution

SmartNet Coalition had one intern in 2023. Anne Musene, the Outreach Coordinator, contributed to the SmartNet Sustainability Showcase & EV Exhibition held in September 2023. Her support includes:

Outreach & Communication:

- For the Sustainability Showcase to be better attended by both exhibitors & the general public
 - Created promotional materials to get more members
- Resulted in a successful showcase with growth in exhibitors and attendees, leading to higher climate impact
- Collected feedback from showcase audience and presenters

Report Generation:

- Showcase report - After the showcase, Anne created a report on what they did in 2023, how to improve for next year, and new things to incorporate based on feedback
 - Helped build capacity for next year
- Transition report - will be continued benefit and help next year's showcase.
 - If new intern will be helpful

The intern's support also helped SmartNet Coalition to be a better place financially.



Above is a photo of Sustainable Eastern Ontario presenting at a booth at the Sustainability Showcase.



The photo above shows Sustainable Capacity Solutions presenting at the Sustainability Showcase.

Impact Summary

Business Community Impact:

Influence the members who are all businesses, to get more clients, have access to a network to bounce ideas, and get expertise from other people.

Broader Community (Ottawa) Impact:

People in Ottawa are able to get access to vetted businesses working in sustainability that has the right values. They are also provided with:

- Fun event to connect with other people interested in sustainability
- Opportunities for electric vehicle (e.g. electric cars and bikes), which are rare to get

Sustainability Showcase & EV Exhibition Impact Statistics:

- 3500 outdoor attendees
- 160 E-bike test drives
- 101 E-car test drives
- 47 E-car test rides
 - Sitting in the passenger seat
- Test drives broke record
 - Had less than 100 last year



Acknowledgements

We want to express our gratitude to all the interns and employers who have participated in the Intern Support Program, as well as the funders who have enabled us to carry out our program.

As an organization dedicated to support non-profits to build their capacity by connecting them with competent youth, we aim to continue to expand our dedication for a sustainable future.

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