Casting Pebbles in a Pond: A Study of Opinion Leader Training to Reduce Carbon Footprints in Social Networks

by

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Abstract

Although we know what actions are required to reduce our fossil fuel dependency, climate change campaigns have generally been unable to narrow the value-action gap between knowledge and political efficacy. The literature indicates that social justice organizations are well positioned to train opinion leaders to deliver climate change messaging to their social networks, however, little research has been conducted on whether this two-step model of communication is effective in climate change campaigns. I sought to address this gap through a case study of the pilot Climate Leadership Project run by the social justice organization Next Up. I explored and assessed the project's training of climate change ambassadors based on interviews with the project's director and participants. Among my conclusions is that such a movement may well be grounded in the most prosaic of actions: People talking with one another through their social networks, either one-on-one or in small groups; the realization of the paramount importance that emotions play in climate change campaigns; the significance of social norms as they relate to our response on climate change; how the two-step model of communication could improve the uptake of political efficacy; and the value of reframing climate change as a social justice issue.

Keywords: climate change communication; political efficacy; social justice; training opinion leaders; social norms; social networks

Dedication

To Sharon, Skye and Zoë whose support and patience have been unwavering. Thank you for everything.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

I became interested in climate change efficacy during my employment as the Communications Manager for Living Oceans Society, a small but influential environmental organization dedicated to healthy oceans and healthy communities. My decade with Living Oceans (November 2006–January 2016) overlapped that of Stephen Harper's tenure as prime minister of Canada. Harper was a strong advocate of the Alberta tar sands and a staunch ally of Big Oil. He championed four proposed pipeline projects: Enbridge's Northern Gateway, Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Expansion, and TransCanada's Keystone XL and Energy East. The former two pipelines were to carry diluted bitumen from the tar sands to marine terminals at Pacific ports where bitumen would be loaded on supertankers—as many as 600 to 700 each year—that would ply British Columbia's coast bound primarily for Asian markets. Alberta's oil and bitumen producers stated that the pipelines would allow their product to garner a higher price if it could be exported beyond its current primary market: the United States.

Increased pipeline capacity would also allow for expansion of the tar sands, which the Harper government saw as crucial to Canada's economic well-being. To smooth the path for approval of the pipelines, the government passed omnibus budgets in 2012 and 2013 that weakened environmental protections (particularly the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the Fisheries Act), stripped the National Energy Board of its decision-making authority while "streamlining" the environmental review process, silenced federal scientists, and demonized environmentalists (Galloway & LeBlanc, 2012; Russell, 2013). According to Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Harper government was a monkey wrench in the gears of national and international efforts and accords to reduce carbon emissions and was negligent in monitoring pollution in the tar sands, having adopted a laissez-faire approach that essentially gave the oil and gas industry carte blanche to operate in the most profitable manner, and damn the cost to the environment and to First Nations people living nearby (Wingrove, 2014).

In 2007, Living Oceans became involved in the campaign to stop Northern Gateway and then, a few years later, to stop the Trans Mountain project. The organization had intervenor status in Northern Gateway's Joint Review Panel and in the

National Energy Board's review panel for Trans Mountain. Living Oceans also launched court cases against the federal government to protect endangered species (humpback whales and orcas) from the threat of increased tanker traffic. In my role, I worked with an alliance of environmentalists, First Nations, organized labour, and others to develop and disseminate messaging to inform Canadians how these two megaprojects would pose a substantial threat of bitumen spills that would harm coastal communities and marine life and, ultimately, exacerbate climate change. We were pitted against Hill + Knowlton Strategies, the heavyweight public relations firm hired by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers to convince Canadians of the benefits of the tar sands and by Enbridge to sell Canadians on the necessity of Northern Gateway. Even though the anti–pipeline coalition managed to keep its messages prominently featured in Canada's mainstream media and to make pipelines a salient issue in provincial and federal elections, simply presenting the cold, hard facts of anthropogenic climate change was insufficient to convince all Canadians that it was time to reduce our collective carbon footprint.

I was puzzled. How could anyone ignore the reality that untold millions of barrels of diluted bitumen sent to Asia to be burned into CO_2 would speed up the rate of global warming? How could citizens allow their government to blatantly rewrite legislation that favoured transnational resource extraction industries to their detriment? What would it take to get Canadians to wake up and smell the carbon? In hopes of finding answers to those questions, in 2014 I returned to university to study communication because I realized I had a lot to learn about convincing people to take action on climate change. I wanted to learn how climate change practitioners could develop and deliver messaging to inspire people to become politically engaged enough to keep the Earth's temperature from rising beyond the point of no return. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Politics can be a nasty business, as was evinced in 2012, when the day before the Northern Gateway Joint Review Panel began, then natural resources minister Joe Oliver launched an attack against "foreign funded radicals" that were campaigning against the tar sands (Peyton, 2012). The charge of foreign funding was somewhat ironic as over 70% of investment in the tar sands was foreign, the result of the Harper government's vigorous international lobbying and marketing campaign (De Souza, 2012). Although my salary and most of Living Oceans' funding came from philanthropic foundations in the United States, the radical designation was off base; we were a

committed but staid bunch who were bound by our employment contracts to stay within the parameters of the law. Our staff worked with all levels of government to provide science-based input on ocean-related conservation policies, including the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA), a marine planning process that was led by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other federal ministries. Also at the planning table sat the B.C. provincial government, regional districts, First Nations, and industry stakeholders, among them Enbridge. PNCIMA was the unwieldy acronym for the plan as well as for the 88,000 km^2 area of ocean stretching from the northern end of Vancouver Island to the Alaska border and around Haida Gwaii. The PNCIMA plan would designate where activities such as shipping, fishing, conservation, and recreation could take place. Some areas, referred to as Marine Protected Areas, would be set aside like parks and protected from industrial activity. The federal government's involvement in the planning process, which it was required to conduct under the Oceans Act of 1996, cost taxpayers nothing; it was funded by a U.S.-based philanthropic organization, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, which was also funding the environmental sector's participation in PNCIMA (O'Neil, 2011).

Enbridge, however, realized that creating Marine Protected Areas on British Columbia's North Coast could imperil Northern Gateway by making the pipeline's western terminus in Kitimat off limits to tanker traffic (O'Neil, 2012). In September 2011, just before the Labour Day weekend, the federal government quietly pulled out of PNCIMA after months of being lobbied by Enbridge to do so (Canadian Press, 2012; O'Neil, 2012). Perhaps because of Living Ocean's size (around 20 people at the time), we were not among the anti-pipeline not-for-profits and charities (including churches) that the government had the Canada Revenue Agency audit for political activities in 2012. Nonetheless, funding—always an issue—began to dissipate as the foundations shifted their support to regions of the globe where governments were less antagonistic.

When the 2015 federal election rolled around, Canadians had had enough of a divisive government that was beholden to Big Oil and voted the Liberal Party into power. Its leader, Justin Trudeau, had campaigned on planks that tried to please all of the people all of the time by balancing a national carbon pricing plan to fight climate change with simultaneous support of pipelines and tar sands expansion (McCarthy, 2015). Shortly after winning power, Trudeau travelled to the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), in Paris, where he

announced that the fight against climate change was a top priority and reassured delegates that “Canada is back, my good friends. We are here to help. To build an agreement that will do our children and grandchildren proud” (Trudeau, 2015). Canada would invest in a green economy, Trudeau said, and the government would come up with a national climate change plan while making a $2.65 billion commitment to help developing nations adapt to climate change. Many people around the world heaved sighs of relief with the signing of a nonbinding draft agreement to limit global warming below 1.5 ^{o}C at COP21. Catherine McKenna, Canada’s minister of environment and climate change, said optimistically, “It’s just such a thrill to be part of it” (Reguly & McCarthy, 2015). Some climate change pundits, however, were not as enthusiastic about the accord. Environmental activist George Monbiot (2015) called the Paris agreement a “disaster,” while former NASA scientist James Hansen criticized the document as “worthless words” (Milman, 2015). Whether you choose to paint the COP21 accord in rosy or in dismal hues, and no matter how many of the 195 signatory nations ultimately ratify it, there is an urgent need to develop and implement successful campaigns to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

In early 2016, I was one of the last staffers to leave Living Oceans, which exists as a shadow of its former self. Decreased funding, founder’s syndrome, and some regrettable human resources decisions were the primary nails in the coffin. I take solace from knowing that Living Oceans outlasted Northern Gateway, which was axed late in 2016 when the Liberal government decreed that no pipeline would run through the Great Bear Rainforest. The same day, however, the Trans Mountain Expansion received the approval of the federal and Alberta governments (with 157 conditions), and then a few months later approval from British Columbia’s Liberal government. The future of the project, however, is still uncertain as a new NDP/Green coalition government in British Columbia has decided to join existing legal challenges against Trans Mountain that were launched by Living Oceans and others. During the federal election, Trudeau stated that while governments can give permits, only communities can give permission. And, thus far, both the settler and First Nations communities of Metro Vancouver have clearly not given permission to the Trans Mountain Expansion (Kane, 2016). Keystone XL, after being scuttled by President Obama, was resurrected in 2017 by his successor, Donald Trump, a turn of events that was welcomed by Trudeau, who could not afford to risk alienating Alberta’s voters by ignoring the province’s ongoing recession. Trudeau’s

relationship with Albertans was strained, though, when TransCanada pulled the plug on Energy East in October 2017, a move that Trudeau attributed to market forces and a supply glut. Alberta premier Rachel Notley agreed with Trudeau on both counts; however, she also blamed the federal government's environmental assessment process for making Energy East unfeasible (Bennett, 2017).

One thing is certain about the demise of Northern Gateway and Energy East projects: They were not approved because a significant number of Canadians made it clear that they did not want the projects to proceed. In about a decade, opposition to pipelines from the tar sands grew from a handful of activists and environmentalists to encompass people of all demographics from across the country (Davison, 2017; Markusoff & Patriquin, 2016). I believe that this example of pipeline politics shows that it is possible to successfully challenge government and corporate power, but in the battle to reduce our carbon footprint, it is a small victory. Furthermore, it speaks to the need for communication that can motivate and engage a critical mass of people on climate change so that resistance to their call for action becomes politically unrealistic for governments. The question is what form that communication should take.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Everybody complains about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.

—Charles Dudley Warner

Countless luminaries in the fields of science, politics, business, and entertainment have awarded climate change the dubious honour of being the greatest challenge of our time. Action on the part of every nation is essential to respond to the warning from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that if nothing is done to reverse the increasing temperature of Earth's ocean and atmosphere then the future for humans and many other species will likely veer towards the dystopian (Pachauri et al., 2014). Decades before these statements were issued, a staggering number of nongovernmental organizations were already banging the drum about the threat of anthropogenic climate change. Increased awareness of the problem, however, has not resulted in a reduction of greenhouse gases being spewed into the atmosphere. Although 70% of Americans (Anthony Leiserowitz, Maibach, Roser-Renouf, Rosenthal, & Cutler, 2017) and 79% of Canadians (CBC, 2016) believe climate change exists, the value-action gap remains vast (Hards, 2012; Whitmarsh, Seyfang, & O'Neill, 2011). In a book critical of the media's coverage of climate change, Gunster argues that the crisis is not ecological but, rather, is political in nature (2017). Individual efficacy such as switching to fluorescent light bulbs, commuter cycling, or installing solar panels on homes may contribute to lowering energy consumption, but such efforts are not sufficient to slow the rise of the planet's temperature. Individual efficacy is a piecemeal approach that allows governments and the fossil fuel industry to fob off their responsibility by turning climate change into a consumer problem rather than a producer problem (Corner & Randall, 2011; Marshall, 2014). The enormity of the challenge requires political solutions to spur developed nations into accelerating the reduction of fossil fuel emissions, the transition to alternate forms of energy, and the pursuit of mitigations to protect against sea level rise, drought, severe weather events, and other climate change impacts. This may come about if governments are compelled to provide incentives for green technology development and to legislate energy and emission regimes that discourage the use of fossil fuels. There is also the scenario of the hydrocarbon industries shifting to more sustainable forms of energy of their own accord for business reasons as successful climate litigation against them becomes an increasingly likely

prospect (Dembecki, 2017). Regardless, whether we act as consumers, citizens, stakeholders, or investors, climate change mitigation writ large will be driven by collective political efficacy. In a report titled *News Media and Climate Politics,* the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives describes political efficacy as individual actions, "(e.g. voting, joining an organization, participating in a campaign) [which] can, together with the single actions of other individuals, create a collective political force with transformative consequences" (Cross, Gunster, Piotrowski, & Daub, 2015, p. 5). As Hestres notes, "The larger the issue public is, the greater the likelihood that its policy preferences will be adopted" (2014, p. 327).

Societies, though, are like oil tankers; they take a long time to turn around. It has been difficult to persuade individuals to change their apolitical behaviour and call on government and industry to relinquish fossil fuels. According to the research study of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, people who are well informed about climate change and are concerned about its impacts tend not to be politically engaged due to cynicism surrounding the political process (Cross et al., 2015). Participants in the study were skeptical of government, industry, and individual desire to take action, which sapped their own motivation to get involved (Cross et al., 2015). The report's authors state that for people to change their behaviour and become politically active, they must first believe in "their own ability to influence the political process and the responsiveness of government to citizen concerns" (Cross et al., 2015, p. 4). Citizen inaction brought on by apathy is similar in the United States. According to research conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, even those who are highly aware of the causes and effects of climate change are reluctant to get politically involved, even to the point of writing an elected official, the lowest rung on the ladder of political engagement (Roser-Renouf, Stenhouse, Rolfe-Redding, Maibach, & Leiserowitz, 2015).

This thesis will not deal with theories of ideology that situate the impasse around energy and climate in the broader context of structures of power and systems of ideas that legitimate the political economy of extractivism. Rather, it will focus on the interpersonal dynamics of conversation and social change. In this chapter, I will review the literature on the psychological and sociological barriers to climate change efficacy. I will then explore some of the reasons that climate change campaign messaging fails and why traditional climate change messengers are not getting the job done. I will then discuss which people may have a better chance of delivering climate change messaging

and how those messages might best be framed and delivered in order to improve audience acceptance and increase political efficacy.

2.1. Psychosocial barriers to efficacy

If you want to understand the workings of the human mind and how people function, psychological and sociological theories are a good place to begin, though there are many conceptual frameworks jockeying for prominence. It is worth noting that much of the research that forms the basis of climate change campaign messaging has been borrowed from the fields of health education and social marketing and been conducted in laboratory-like settings (Weber & Stern, 2011). Consider this caveat by long-time British environmental campaigner George Marshall in his book *Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change* (2014): He describes a critique of socio-psychological research studies by anthropologists at the University of British Columbia who have coined the marvellous acronym WEIRD to describe a bias in participant selection for much of this research. WEIRD stands for people who are Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic, also known as university students. Basing research findings on the reactions of the WEIRD means that results may be skewed, as participants are drawn from a sample that is not representative of any society or culture.

It is also worthwhile pointing out that messaging effective in motivating behavioural changes in human health may not be suitable in the case of increasing climate change efficacy. Lorenzoni et al. (2007) note that climate change is a *wicked problem* that defies the typical tenets of communications plans designed to incite engagement. Studies and methods geared to motivate people to drop a few pounds, quit smoking, or switch deodorant brands are not readily applicable to solving a problem as complex as climate change (Corner & Randall, 2011). Issues involving personal health are immediate—one's own body—but for many, climate change is a distant problem in both time and space. Furthermore, health problems often involve addiction; it has been said that we are addicted to fossil fuels, but no commuter obliged to carpool or ride public transit suffers actual withdrawal symptoms. Fear-laden facts that can improve health outcomes (cigarette-induced lung disease, sclerosis of the liver, or body odour), when applied to climate warnings can serve to alienate audiences (O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009). Gunster questions whether the real problem with communicating

> the truly horrifying consequences of climate change…[lies with] the absence of solutions commensurate with the scale of the threat. The problem is not too much fear, but too little capacity to respond to that fear in any meaningful way (2011, p. 497).

With these misgivings out on the table, I can move on to how people deal with information surrounding the risks and threats of climate change and the implications for audiences' reception of campaign messages.

One might imagine that if people were presented with clear and accessible information about the threat of climate change, they would be keen for humanity to reduce the risks by transitioning away from fossil fuels. One might also imagine that they would want to take action in order to feel that they were gaining some measure of control over climate change impacts. But the way we people perceive and respond to uncertain threats and risks, such as those associated with a warming planet, is not a straightforward matter (Hornsey et al., 2015). Increased information and knowledge about climate change do not result in greater levels of efficacy (Gunster, 2017). Each of us is limited to a finite pool of worry about climate change (and other pressing issues), and we cannot keep all of our worries at the forefront of our consciousness (Weber, 2010). Due to the constraints of time, energy, and processing power that bind us all, when making decisions on complex issues we adopt cognitive efficiency whereby we consider only a limited amount of the information that is available to us (Levine, Chan, & Satterfield, 2015). Rather than analyzing the plethora of climate change facts available to us, we fall back on *confirmation bias*, whereby we cherry-pick the facts that support our pre-existing beliefs, assumptions, and intuitions (Marshall, 2014).

Climate change, Marshall says, is a problem that is too distant and abstract. It is multivalent with "no deadlines, no geographic location, no single cause, solution or enemy" (2014, p. 94). Humans tend to disregard problems we cannot see or feel (Stoknes, 2015). For many people living in the developed nations of the northern hemisphere, this issue of invisibility neatly sums up one of the main reasons people are not taking action on climate change: It is geographically and temporally distant (Lorenzoni et al., 2007). Distance is a barrier to efficacy because it makes climate change hard to perceive and possible to ignore. When climate change is not considered an imminent threat, many are not interested in sacrificing peace of mind or money today to ward off an abstract problem that is hard to understand.

Humanity is an extremely successful species. Much of that success can be attributed to our evolved brains that have played such a large role in allowing us to adapt to our surroundings and the situations with which we are presented. Climate change, though, is a threat that has crept up on us rather suddenly in terms of our existence as a species. Marshall argues that according to theories of evolutionary psychology, the human brain may not be up to the task of coping with the enormity of this new challenge. This is due to our sometimes conflicting, sometimes harmonious, dual modes of thinking: rapid-fire, emotionally driven processes on the one hand, and a slower, more deliberative analytic mode on the other. Simply put, when confronted with an immediate threat, the former springs into action and directs our reaction based on past experiences, while the latter is best suited to analyzing risk over the long term so as to determine the optimum response strategy (Marshall, 2014). “When uncertainties complicate the analytic process and cloud perception, the emotional mode of thinking can rise to the fore” (Morton, Rabinovich, Marshall, & Bretschneider, 2011, p. 104). The uncertainties surrounding climate change are many, including our incomplete knowledge of climate systems, their natural variance, and the extent of the change in climate. To this must be added the unpredictable impact of human behaviour: How much we will need to reduce our emissions to avert irreparable damage; which adaptation and mitigation measures will be effective and at what cost; who will pay the price and when; where those measures will be implemented; and who will decide the answers are but a few questions (Patt & Weber, 2014; Segnit & Ereaut, 2007; Shome & Marx, 2009).

It seems then, like it or not, that promoters of climate change campaigns must factor in dealing with our more primitive thought processes as well as our more evolved analytic minds, something that Marshall argues has yet to happen (2014). Likely this is owing to the traditional belief that it is irrational to base a decision on an emotional reaction. Ethicist and philosopher Sabine Roeser, however, cites studies by neuroscientist Antonio Damasio to support her argument that “purely rational beings without emotions cannot make proper practical judgements” (2012, p. 1035). Wenstøp and Wenstøp agree: “Without emotions, a decision-maker has no way to connect reason to action and is liable to make detrimental actions” (2016). Markowitz and Sharif (2012, p. 243) state “that an important barrier to public action on climate change may be that it often fails to activate our moral intuitions,” which are driven by emotional responses. According to Roeser, though, emotional appeals “can enable moral reflection and

deliberation" (2012, p. 1037) and could pierce the cocoon that the unconvinced and unconcerned have woven to insulate themselves from the realities of climate change.

What happens when our emotional reactions to the realities and uncertainties of climate change are unpleasant? In such cases it seems that we throw up cognitive barriers to shield ourselves even as we are sapped of any motivation to proceed efficaciously (Norgaard, 2006; Patt & Weber, 2014; Weber & Stern, 2011). Sociologist Kari Norgaard interviewed the residents of a Norwegian town during the winter of 2000–2001 to study their reactions to the local effects of climate change. What she discovered about how the townspeople dealt with negative emotions revealed much about how we deal with the gap between knowledge and efficacy. In the decade before Norgaard arrived, the winters had been warming noticeably. This impacted skiing and ice fishing, activities that were intrinsic to the Norwegians' self-image. Although the townspeople had a very strong grasp of why warming was occurring, feelings of helplessness, guilt, despair, and fear prevented them from taking meaningful political action to address climate change (Norgaard, 2011). Their feelings of discomfort arose from the challenge that grappling with climate change (and their collective responsibility for it) posed to their individual and national identities: After all, Norway's booming oil and gas sector had brought great wealth to the country. At a personal level, per-capita levels of emissions reached an all-time high during Norgaard's study (Knoema, n.d.). Much of Norway's fossil fuels were exported and, of course, contributed to global greenhouse gas emission. Accordingly, feelings of guilt and shame were aroused by the conflict between their nation's good (oil and gas) fortune and their "deeply ingrained Norwegian values of equality and egalitarianism" (Norgaard, 2011, p. 86). They were aware that people in the southern hemisphere were suffering from the impacts of climate change, impacts that had been created, in part, by the fossil fuel-funded bonanza that benefited everyone in their socially progressive nation.

Norgaard states that if we don't like a particular message, we will modify our thinking rather than change our behaviour in order to resolve the cognitive dissonance. In the case of her study participants, modifying their thinking meant ignoring the rising temperature. Although she reports that she was well integrated with and accepted by the community, she found that whenever she brought up the topic of climate change the conversation died. The people in Norgaard's study were decent, caring, intelligent, and well educated. People played down their country's culpability in creating CO_2 emissions

with the phrase "Norway is a little land," deflecting criticism to George W. Bush and his government in "Amerika." Norgaard claimed that the entire community was caught up in a case of unconscious socially organized denial of climate change (2011). For many people, guilt can be assuaged by talking about their feelings with friends and confidants. What Norgaard found, however, was that because Norwegians placed such a high value on stoicism, "there were few social or political spaces in which [climate change—an emotionally laden subject] was considered a relevant or appropriate topic for serious discussion" (2011, p. 98). Discussing the fear and helplessness they felt about this wicked problem, or the guilt they experienced from benefiting from fossil fuel extraction, flew in the face of social norms around the collective conversational management (or repression) of emotions. Emotional management became "a central mechanism in the production of denial" (2011, p. 135). "Just as social norms of attention, conversation, and emotion create the sense of what is real, they also work to produce the sense of what is not real, what is excluded from the immediate experience of normal reality" (Norgaard, 2011, p. 133). Norgaard pokes holes in the knowledge deficit hypothesis that posits peoples' inaction on climate change is due to their lack of understanding of the issues or because they do not care. Apathy, brought on by helplessness, was caused by a perceived lack of solutions; problems that cannot be solved are deemed less important (Norgaard, 2011). And so the townspeople deliberately failed to notice the effects of climate change. They did nothing and said nothing about it despite having a high level of political involvement when it came to other issues impacting their community. Of course, it is not just Norwegians who put their heads in the sand. Accepting the threats of climate change can be difficult when you are aware that you are contributing to the problem. Swedish psychologist and economist Per Epsen Stoknes says that "weakening the climate message makes us feel better about ourselves and the high-carbon lifestyles we all have" (Stoknes, 2015, p. 61). Dodging responsibility goes hand in hand with rejecting efficacy.

Marshall agrees with Norgaard that climate change denial is primarily cultural rather than owing to a lack of understanding or information (2014). We look for social cues on how to react, Marshall argues, so that our beliefs and actions adhere to social norms. According to psychologist Dan Kahan, climate change beliefs are polarized by ideologically motivated cognition whereby individuals base their reasoning on "conveying their membership in and loyalty to affinity groups central to their personal wellbeing"

(2012, p. 418). Our actions are influenced by those around us who are most like us, especially when we are uncertain how to act in a given situation (Griskevicius, Cialdini, & Goldstein, 2008; Weber & Stern, 2011). This is exemplified in status consumption. Stoknes (2015) states that some of the hesitancy to reduce our fossil fuel footprint can be attributed to our natural inclination to compete for resources and to display our success at attaining them with status symbols. Throughout the entirety of human existence, our station in the group has mattered. Today, it is possible to display that station through consumerism, winning relative status by the car we drive, the vacation destinations we visit, or the amount of meat on our plate. For many, such consumption-mediated status displays feel more urgent and important than acting on climate change; indeed, reducing carbon emissions through voluntary sacrifice is perceived as compromising one's social status (Lorenzoni et al., 2007; Stoknes, 2015). Futerra, which bills itself as a combined logical sustainability consultancy and magical creative agency, admits this problem of perceived status loss is a major stumbling block for audiences that have already made up their minds not to change (2009). For those with strong materialistic values and who subscribe to a conservative ideology, messages telling them that they must reduce their carbon footprint are not well received because they fly in the face of the peer group's social norm (Corner, 2013).

But the flip side of the cognitive coin presents a path forward on collective climate change efficacy. Audiences may be persuaded to change their behaviour if they are shown that their peers have adopted pro-environmental activities (Griskevicius et al., 2008). This is especially true when people are presented with others' cooperation in the collective action for public good (Bolsen, Leeper, & Shapiro, 2014; Koletsou & Mancy, 2011). In what Marshall terms *conditional cooperation*, "people will willingly shoulder a burden—even one that requires short-term sacrifice against uncertain long-term threats—provided they share a common purpose and are rewarded with a greater sense of social belonging" (2014, p. 71). For evidence that social norms are not static we need only look at how our society's attitudes towards cigarette smoking, littering, drinking and driving, and disciplining children have changed significantly over the past forty years. Those changes were propelled by advocacy from special interest groups with effective messengers. Could it be, then, that part of the climate change efficacy shortfall lies with the shortcomings of its messengers?

2.2. Messenger barriers to efficacy

Traditionally, the spokespeople for climate change action have been environmentalists and scientists. Despite their efforts, it would be fair to say that those two groups have not met with success in generating enough political efficacy to halt the rise in atmospheric and oceanic temperature and that having them pile on more of the same song and dance will not work (Johnson, 2012; Marshall, 2014). Shellenberger and Nordhaus (2004) argue that environmentalists and scientists have not been effective messengers because their reach is too narrow and their message is one-dimensional.

Although scientists are considered to be the most credible sources of information on climate change (Marshall, 2014), “only about one in eight Americans understand that almost all climate scientists have concluded human-caused global warming is happening” (Anthony Leiserowitz et al., 2017, p. 8). A 2012 Gallup poll reported that 41% of Americans believed that changes in mean global temperatures were caused by natural events (Jones, 2014). In Canada, the numbers were strikingly similar. According to a survey conducted between 2011 and 2015, although 79% of Canadians believed that climate change was occurring, 39% did not believe it was caused by human activities (CBC, 2016). Correcting this misconception is important because it undermines the potential for citizen support for government carbon reduction policies (Maibach, Myers, & Leiserowitz, 2014). Clearly, there is a communications breakdown somewhere between scientists and audiences. A significant portion of people from across the entire spectrum of the Six Americas of Global Warming (see Table 1) established by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication “say they have difficulty understanding global warming news” (Roser-Renouf et al., 2015, p. 379).

Table 1 Ability Barriers Among the Six Americas of Global Warming

	Percent of U.S. population	Self-reported difficulty understanding news reports about global warming
Alarmed (%)	16	23
Concerned (%)	26	39
Cautious (%)	25	44
Disengaged (%)	5	77
Doubtful (%)	15	35
Dismissive (%)	13	19

Note. Reproduced from Roser-Renouf et al., (2015), p. 379.

In part, this gap in understanding may be traced to the mass media upon whom scientists are dependent to deliver their research findings. Uncertainty is inherent in all scientific endeavours. The uncertainties of climate science, however, have been misrepresented—at times deliberately—by media who serve as intermediaries for scientists (Morton et al., 2011; Patt & Weber, 2014; Weber & Stern, 2011). Reporters distill the complexities of climate science into a form that is accessible to a lay audience. During the editorial process, intentional and unintentional biases—as well as institutional forces—can conspire to distort scientific research (M. T. Boykoff, 2007; M. T. Boykoff & Boykoff, 2004; Good, 2008; Goodyear-Grant, 2013; N. Young & Dugas, 2011). The journalistic practice of granting climate change deniers equal column inches with climatologists in the name of balance has been credited as a key factor in sowing doubt in the minds of some members of the public about the veracity of climate change science (M. T. Boykoff, 2007; M. T. Boykoff & Boykoff, 2004; Good, 2008; N. Young & Dugas, 2011). Today, media outlets are no longer obliged to offer unqualified skeptics equal credibility (M. T. Boykoff, 2008). This trend, though, has been slower to establish itself in the United States, where government and media remain more polarized on climate change issues than elsewhere (Stoddart & Tindall, 2015; N. Young & Dugas, 2011).

Media play a significant role in setting the agenda and in moulding public perception (Reynolds & McCombs, 2002). How (and how often) media report on climate politics shapes the public discourse (Ford & King, 2015; Gunster, 2017). Stories that present adaptation and mitigation policies as untenable or too expensive to warrant consideration can result in media-induced pessimism that renders people inactive rather than civically engaged (Gunster, 2011, 2017; Hackett, Wylie, & Gurleyen, 2013). In U.S. news broadcasts, positively framed messages of efficacy are infrequently presented in tandem with, or as often as, threats of climate change that tend to induce fear and entrench denial (Hart & Feldman, 2014). In the Canadian media, that distortion may be found in the short shrift the media have given to climate politics (Gunster, 2011; N. Young & Dugas, 2011). Journalists are trained to report the facts; they do not perceive their job to include advocating or mobilizing (Gunster, 2017). In an analysis of the British Columbia media's reporting of the 2009 climate change summit in Copenhagen, Gunster argues that providing audiences with information on climate politics played a more important role in motivating civic engagement with than did information about climate

science (2011). Gunster also states that the Fourth Estate has a responsibility to move "beyond the provision of information to exploring the social, cultural and political conditions which affect *how* people understand and engage with different types of information" (2017, p. 53). That responsibility, Gunster says, should extend to journalists motivating and inspiring political efficacy though reports "about actions and, in particular, information about political actions and policy-making (rather than consumer or lifestyle change)" (2017, p. 57). Such alternative narratives serve to erode cynicism and encourage efficacy (Cross et al., 2015).

Another reason that scientists may not be the best people to pitch climate change efficacy is that they are trained to deal analytically and systematically with data. They are sometimes accused of presenting scientific facts swaddled in jargon that is inaccessible to lay audiences (Hassol, 2008). Scientists who have not received communications or media training often deliver their findings in a detached and dispassionate manner that misses the emotional mark necessary to inspire action among those who are not already receptive to their message (Roeser, 2012; Weber & Stern, 2011). Science historian and co-author of *Merchants of Doubt* Naomi Oreskes agrees: "If you want people to believe that climate change is a problem, you have to make them feel that it's a problem. You have to make them experience your concern or your anxiety" (personal interview, May 2, 2016). She is, however, skeptical, stating that "the scientific culture is a culture that is suspicious of emotion and that falsely equates reason with lack of affect" (personal interview, May 2, 2016). A more emotional presentation could help scientists make their case to lay audiences who, as previously described, process information based upon emotion, personal experience and observation (Weber, 2010).

The other prominent group of climate change messengers is environmentalists. Most climate change campaigns have been run by environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOs) that have framed climate change as an environmental issue. This has to change (Taylor, 2000). It may have made sense in the 1990s that environmentalists should take the lead in spreading awareness about an excess of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The environmental movement had mounted successful campaigns against acid rain, air pollution, and depletion of the ozone layer, and thus another threat related to Earth's atmosphere seemed to fall within their self-appointed mandate (Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2004). Tactics and strategies that

worked in previous environmental campaigns, however, proved less successful at building a united front among industry, government, and consumers against the wicked problem. As Canadian journalist and federal Green Party candidate Chris Turner wrote in *The Geography of Hope*, “Environmentalism’s rhetoric proved incapable of recalibrating itself to address the harrowing scope of anthropogenic climate change” (2010, p. 20). Today, as a result, many people have tuned environmentalists out. One reason may be “the fact that global warming is associated with environmentalists who are seen as either rich white urbanities or as extremists who are out of touch with the needs and interests of mainstream Americans” (Pike, Doppelt, Herr, & Climate Leadership Initiative, 2010, p. 23). Environmentalists may offend their intended audiences by proselytizing with prescriptive norms meant to spur people into action. This tactic, however, may backfire as they “risk amplifying feelings of guilt and frustration as people experience and feel pressured to participate in activities that are unfamiliar to them or which they perceive will set them apart from their peers” (Cross et al., 2015, p. 32). Another reason for the disengagement may be attributed to the fact that so many people are concerned with more immediate problems than the environment, such as surviving until the next paycheque (Marshall, 2014). Polling by Ipsos found that only 13% of Canadians placed climate change among their top three concerns, far below health care, unemployment, and taxes (L. Young, 2015).

There is also the distinct possibility that the green movement has done itself a disservice by relying heavily on fear-based messaging, particularly in the early days of climate change campaigns. Scaring people into efficacy has not been an effective tactic and has likely created a backlash against environmentalists that has damaged their credibility (Corner, 2013; Marshall, 2014; O’Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009). Marshall says the reason that doomsday messaging will not work is people have mental libraries of failed prophesies of collapse (2014). Turner recalls that “the alarms grew so frequent and so awesome in scope as to defy the boundaries even of our nightmares” (2010, p. 15). For example, in 1994, Greenpeace, always adept at using imagery in its campaigns, linked climate change with nuclear Armageddon on the cover of its *Climate Time Bomb: Signs of Climate Change from the Greenpeace Database* through the artful use of a setting sun photo styled to look like a mushroom cloud (Doyle, 2007). The trailer for Al Gore’s 2006 documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth,* boasted that it was “by far, the most terrifying film you will ever see” (Guggenheim, 2006). The film itself aimed to shock

viewers into action with photos and video of climate refugees, droughts, floods, hurricanes, and other forms of climate chaos. Fear-based messaging makes for good media fodder, but news cycles revolve quickly, and it is difficult to maintain a constant state of fear when many consider climate change to be a distant problem (O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009).

In an attempt to cut through the media clutter, over the past decade climate change campaigns have enlisted celebrities as advocates for the cause (Anderson, 2011; M. Boykoff, Goodman, & Littler, 2010). Using star athletes, musicians, actors, and other pop culture heroes to get the message across is no guarantee of changing public opinion and can backfire by muting the message of the environmental organization employing them (Anderson, 2011). While it is true that high profile spokespeople may generate media attention, if the goal is to create political efficacy it cannot be attained through "highly individualised campaigns which do little to threaten those vested power dynamics and corporate interests which need substantial overhauling and regulation to be able to effectively combat climate chaos" (M. Boykoff et al., 2010, p. 10).

2.3. Better messengers

If climate change campaigns are to increase the level of collective political efficacy, audience receptivity may be improved by adopting the two-step model of communication. In his seminal exploration of the two-step flow of communication theory, sociologist Elihu Katz noted the important role that *opinion leaders* play in filtering and passing on mass media messages to their social networks (1957). Opinion leaders were found to influence people "more frequently and more effectively than any of the mass media" (Katz, 1957, p. 71). Katz asserts that opinion leaders "are very much like the people whom they influence" (1957, p. 63). He observed that opinion leadership is not a trait, but rather is bestowed on individuals by social networks depending on how certain situations impact social relations within the network. Keys, Thomsen, and Smith posit that opinion leaders are known in their communities "as being influential through their knowledge and action on issues they are involved in, and their interpersonal skills in communicating information about those issues" (2014, p. 437). Nisbet and Kotcher have studied how the two-step flow of influence could be applied to climate change communication campaigns, which, they say, have generally overlooked the value of tapping into opinion leaders in our current era, when audiences are fragmented and

many people are disengaged from the issue (2009). Opinion leaders should already be interested in climate change issues and possess sufficient social capital and natural leadership abilities so that they can reshape social norms while delivering campaign messages to their friends, coworkers, and other peers (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). Cognitive engagement by opinion leaders can promote collective efficacy by increasing

> knowledge of the scientific and policy details; promoting mobilizing information on how to get involved; generating greater public attention to news coverage and other available information sources; increasing the frequency of public discussion; and altering the perception of climate change as a political priority (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009, p. 331).

Marshall argues that the people best suited to deliver climate change messages should be “ordinary people who might not be fluent speakers or skilled orators but can bring an authenticity and genuine sense of common ownership to the issue” (2014, p. 119). Audiences are more likely to be receptive towards messengers that they view as trusted and familiar (Marshall, 2014). Possessing credibility is crucial for climate change communicators as it helps to promote action and “may also influence individuals’ attitudes about the existence and anthropogenic causes of global warming” (Bolsen et al., 2014, p. 69).

Campaigns will need to locate and train these opinion leaders. Valente and Pumpuang (2008) list ten techniques employed in the health field to identify opinion leaders: celebrity recruitment, self-selection, self-identification, staff selection, positional approach, judge’s rankings, expert identification, snowball method, sample sociometric, and sociometric. The selection method will have implications for training, with the self-selected likely being the most motivated (Valente & Pumpuang, 2008). Nisbet and Kotcher describe self-designated opinion leaders as socially and politically active volunteers who personify peer-to-peer communication and who play an important role in shaping social norms (2009). These people may come forward of their own volition, be selected by their peers, or be recruited by communicators after observing or mapping group interaction (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). Once the opinion leaders are identified, campaigners need to work with them on message framing and delivery. To determine the correct frames, “campaign organizers need to draw on focus groups, in-depth interviews, experiments, and surveys to identify and test different frames across population segments or relative to a targeted specialized audience” (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009, p. 338). Training can include reflexive role-play conversations in which opinion

leaders can then review and reflect upon video recordings of their discussions. After training, and in the course of a campaign, incentives should be provided to retain opinion leaders.

The most effective and efficient way to increase the spread of climate change efficacy is to target pre-existing social networks that can facilitate participation on a broad scale (Corner & Randall, 2011; Taylor, 2000). “Congregational networks such as schools, nurseries, residents and tenants associations, churches, mosques, temples, amenity groups and sports clubs could all provide vital local leadership and action” (Hale, 2010, p. 269). Tapping into such social networks would allow for a wider choice of messengers to reach a larger number of target audiences with peer-to-peer messaging so that efficacy spreads through society like ripples spreading across the surface of a pond. Taylor, drawing upon work in sociology, argues that it is the well-connected, not the marginalized, who tend to play the most prominent roles in movement politics (2000, p. 518). Katz notes that “the most integrated persons within a group are also likely to have more contacts outside the group than others” (1957, p. 75). Having opinion leaders spread the message within their social networks would make the task of crafting audience-appropriate messages easier, as within social networks there exists a “homogeneity of opinions and actions” (Katz, 1957, p. 71). Uniting a greater number of people through interconnected values and concerns about climate change will oblige governments to take meaningful action on climate policy (Corner & Randall, 2011; Hale, 2010).

2.4. Better messages

The context in which a message is delivered influences its reception. Optimally, opinion leaders will share their stories of a carbon-free future with their social networks, in person to small groups of people. In *The Tipping Point*, journalist and author Malcolm Gladwell explores the conditions under which social norms can be shifted. Gladwell emphasizes the importance of context, pointing out that our decision-making process works differently when we are alone compared to when we are in a group, where we are more susceptible to social norms and peer pressure (2000). Likening the spread of new ideas, messages, and behaviours to contagion, Gladwell outlines how innovators introduce new concepts to communities where, if they are seen to have value, the concepts spread to early adopters before diffusing to the rest of a social group. Word of

mouth, he says, is the most important form of communication. Small, close-knit groups discussing new concepts in a social setting make for the rapid diffusion of messages and ideas (2000). Norgaard also stresses the importance of conversation “for exchange of information and ideas, for human contact, and for the building of community” (2011, p. 52). Decisions made by individuals as part of a group may benefit the group’s goals “rather than promoting outcomes that are good for only themselves as individuals” (Markowitz, Hodge, & Harp, 2014, p. 16). Deliberation in small groups can work to create a common vision that “potentially allows people to take part in decisions about their own communities, identities, and futures, and thus in climate change solutions” (Johnson, 2012, p. 984). Group discussions allow for participants’ experience and analysis to be part of the decision-making process, and when people contribute to a process there is a better chance of buy-in to the resulting plan of action (Shome & Marx, 2009). In addition, probabilities of climate science can be better understood when they are presented to a group that can then discuss and process the information (Binder, 2009; Shome & Marx, 2009).

Although transmitting a message face to face is preferable with the two-step model, online campaigns have become increasingly attractive to campaigners since Web 2.0 blossomed into a social media oasis where practically everyone has a smartphone. In this communications paradise, digital campaigns allow small teams to reach large numbers of people across vast geographic spaces for a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising campaigns. With fewer requirements for bricks and mortar structures than traditional campaigns have, digital campaigners have little overhead, and there is a constant influx of cleverly designed apps to attract the attention of new and already existing online communities (Hestres, 2015). Compared to face-to-face interactions, though, digital campaigns are less effective at changing behaviour because they reduce the influence of opinion leaders on their peers (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009; Stoknes, 2015). Digital campaigns can also lead to the trap of single action bias whereby people adopt one simple action and then do nothing else to ‘climb the ladder’ and reduce their emissions. A prime example is those who sign up for e-newsletters or who sign e-petitions, gaining a false sense of efficacy while having a limited impact (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). This false sense of effectiveness may carry over to the communicators as well. Digital campaigns allow for the collection of easy-to-measure metrics using tools such as Google Analytics and Facebook Insights, but these tools

cannot measure peoples' political engagement (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). Lastly, as with the selectivity bias prevalent in the choice of media outlets people make to consume their news, "digital interaction might simply result in ideological reinforcement and intensification of beliefs about climate change" (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009, p. 346).

There are some aspects of online campaigning that can be useful when it comes to building, mobilizing, and communicating with a support base, but using digital tactics cannot be an end in itself. Digital campaigns must serve a larger strategy in order to be effective. Cox (2010) provides an example of how a standalone online campaign can fall short. The Step It Up initiative used the typical tools—mass emails, blogs, social media, and a website—to organize people across the United States to take part in a one-day protest aimed at convincing members of Congress to legislate policies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The initiative drew tens of thousands of people to protests in 1,400 communities, but the organization planned no subsequent action or activities to take advantage of any momentum that the day of action may have generated (Cox, 2010). According to the theory of change adopted by online climate organizations, people will "rise up and demand change from people in positions of power" (Hestres, 2015, p. 201). However, critics of the campaign accused Step It Up of magical thinking for assuming that assembling a critical mass of people for a single day could pressure politicians to act (Cox, 2010; Johnson, 2012). Due to the limited time span of the protest, members of Congress were able to ignore the public call with no consequences, and the media cycle moved on. Interestingly, among the participants in the Step It Up initiative, more people learned about the event from social networks (48.4%) than from the internet (37.7%) (Fisher & Boekkooi, 2010). Step It Up either ignored or did not realize how lonely it can be out there in cyberspace:

> Almost three-quarters (73.9 per cent) of the participants who heard about the event through their social networks came to the event with others, in significant contrast to the almost 40 per cent of those who heard about the event through the internet who came with others (Fisher & Boekkooi, 2010, p. 202).

The organizers made no subsequent effort to pull these disconnected people together into local groups and to transition them from digital to social networks (Fisher & Boekkooi, 2010).

2.4.1. The importance of stories

Gladwell asks in *The Tipping Point*, when trying to get a message across to an audience, "how much easier is it to hang the hooks of knowledge on a story?" (2000, p. 255). Futerra (2009), Jones (2014), Pike et al. (2010), and Stoknes (2015) agree that campaign messages should be delivered in the form of a story with a plot, moral, and heroes, and be dramatic, yet witty, and humorous. Campaign stories should "use the present and future tenses to frame positive climate-friendly activity as already happening, or about to happen. Campaigners' approach [should be] pragmatic, descriptive and inviting (we are doing this—come and join in!), rather than hectoring or rhetorical" (Segnit & Ereaut, 2007, p. 35). Futerra (2009) and Hale (2010) recommend not dwelling on facts and figures in the early part of the story; after presenting your vision, explain where the money for the plan will come from and show how the plan is fair—it will not work unless there is buy-in from everyone. Although this advice is intended to be delivered to practitioners campaigning to change consumer or lifestyle behaviour by persuading individuals to ride public transit or to insulate their homes, the tactics are equally applicable for boosting levels of political efficacy.

The message should culminate with "the ask", a call for specific political acts that will deliver us to a future free of fossil fuels (Futerra, 2009; Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2004). It is crucial that the ask be appealing and possible to carry out, both in terms of peoples' abilities and of institutional or systemic support available (Stoknes, 2015; Whitmarsh et al., 2011). It is also important that the steps the campaigners ask people to take are effective enough to make an impact. Too simple an ask, and the audience may feel it is a waste of their time and dismiss the action and the message (Hestres, 2014; Marshall, 2014; Segnit & Ereaut, 2007). Overly simple asks may involve liking a Facebook page, signing up for an e-newsletter, unplugging a phone charger when not in use, or some other relatively ineffectual action. Although there is a school of thought that recommends asking people to adopt simple pro-environmental behaviours to get them started on the ladder of engagement to more effective actions, this spillover effect has not been proven to work (Corner & Randall, 2011). That one simple task, such as changing standard light bulbs to fluorescents or eschewing plastic cutlery when picnicking, may be used to justify actions that produce harmful effects, such as keeping a gas-guzzling car on the road rather than taking transit or commuting by bicycle (Corner

& Randall, 2011; Marshall, 2014). Single action bias, however, may be countered by making people aware of it (Shome & Marx, 2009).

2.4.2. The importance of hope

In *Don't Even Think About It*, Marshall interviews Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman, who says that for climate change advocates to mobilize people, the messaging must be emotional and create a sense of immediacy (2014). Roeser (2012) argues that positive messages of hope are perhaps the best basis for effective appeals, as hope has the power to break the paralysis brought on by fearful emotions; climate change should be presented as a solvable challenge rather than as an indomitable dragon. Avoiding fear messaging entirely may be impossible when laying out the threats caused by a changing climate, but fear can be tempered with hope in the form of the messengers' proposed solutions. A great generator of hope will be tales of progress in the battle on climate change; messengers should report on other groups' successful examples of actions and policies that have worked elsewhere to reduce emissions (Pike et al., 2010; Stoknes, 2015). Part of portraying a positive vision of the future includes reinforcing peoples' positive perceptions of themselves. They must believe that becoming politically involved is possible, that their efforts will make a worthwhile contribution, that their lives have meaning, that they are part of something bigger than themselves, and that governments will listen and respond (Cross et al., 2015; Koletsou & Mancy, 2011; Pike et al., 2010). Building self-confidence is important because a great "influence on the motivation to adapt appears to be people's belief in their own ability to alter their future and to imagine positive results from self-protective behavior" (Patt & Weber, 2014, p. 221). If people believe in the message and feel empowered to take action, then threat and uncertainty are reduced, as is the denial response (Morton et al., 2011).

2.5. Reframing climate change

For audiences who have not responded to the threat of climate change as a looming environmental disaster, it will be necessary for messengers to take other approaches. Hale (2010) contends that in order "to succeed, we must establish a widespread

understanding of the connections between climate change and issues of poverty, housing, health, security and well-being that are of concern to so many" (p. 264).

2.5.1. Climate justice

An offshoot of the environmental movement, the climate or environmental justice paradigm has replaced the voice of privileged Caucasians with a chorus comprising people of many colours, causes, and creeds (Taylor, 2000). Gunster states that

> a climate justice frame insists that the most important thing to know about the problem is the highly unequal and grossly unfair distribution of risks, responsibility and benefits: simply put, those who are least responsible for causing climate change will suffer the most harm from its impacts, while those who bear the most responsibility will not only suffer the least but also are, in fact, the principal beneficiaries of fossil fuel use (Gunster, 2017, p. 62).

If climate change is a political issue rather than an environmental one, as Gunster (2017) argues, then the climate justice frame is surely applicable.

Climate change coalitions have been forming around the idea of climate justice, allowing groups to match trusted spokespeople with relevant audiences. In the United Kingdom, the Stop Climate Chaos network encompasses trade unions, faith organizations, and women's groups alongside traditional multi-issue environmental organizations (Hall & Taplin, 2007). In Canada, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union framed climate change within the environmental justice paradigm when it led the rank and file's support of the Kyoto Protocol (Daub, 2010). The union used strategic counterframing to fight energy industry claims that international agreements to cut greenhouse gas emissions would hinder economic growth and that the terms of the protocol were unacceptable because they would result in job losses. As the union grappled with the implications of Canada's move away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy, it was able to find benefits and goals that aligned with those of the environmental movement (Daub, 2010). Such (re)alignment is essential if we are to bring diverse networks together under the umbrella of the climate change movement. Social and environmental justice movements could well prove our best chance to make climate change efficacy a cohesive global effort (Johnson, 2012).

2.5.2. Localism

Localism is a key reframing theme that can help people overcome the idea that climate change is a distant problem, and localism appeals to people from across the political spectrum (Corner, 2013; Segnit & Ereaut, 2007; Stoknes, 2015). Referring to local impacts and solutions resonates with audiences because it creates a sense of urgency that makes the threat of a changing climate more real and more personal (Futerra, 2009; Lorenzoni et al., 2007; Shome & Marx, 2009).

> Furthermore, addressing people as members of a located community…positions them as having more power to act. They are big fish in a small pond, not relatively powerless members of an unmanageably large group (the nation, for example, or the human race) (Segnit & Ereaut, 2007, p. 34).

Communicators can employ localism to make the connection between what people care about and climate change. For example, the American environmental advocacy organization the Natural Resources Defense Council reaches out to "people that don't necessarily talk about climate change in their everyday lives, but maybe when they're going out skiing and there's no snow on the slopes, there's a person that we can target and say: this should be important to you because it's affecting your life" (Hestres, 2015, p. 203). Another approach could target people doing their grocery shopping by pointing out that "buying food grown locally cuts down on fossil fuels used for transportation and helps bring down our overall carbon emissions that create global warming" (Pike & Herr, 2010, p. 43). Giving preference to the local also comes into play when selecting campaign imagery. Starving polar bears suffering on Arctic ice floes not only reinforce the impression of distance, but they can also make people feel helpless and overwhelmed and can trigger barriers to engagement because people don't want to cope with the unpleasant feelings the images evoke (Marshall, 2014; O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009). Preferable images would involve "local or regional places that individuals care about and empathize with" (O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009, p. 375).

Climate change can also be reframed around questions of economy, industrial policy, disaster preparedness, and health care, among other issues (Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2004). A perceived detriment preventing some from advocating for a transition from fossil fuel is the notion that lowering our carbon consumption means returning to the Dark Ages. This bleak theme is a well-used arrow in the quiver of climate

change skeptics and deniers, but it need not be the reality. Although it is true that some sacrifice is involved in forgoing a high carbon lifestyle, there is much to gain as well. Benefits of a low carbon lifestyle can include “more time with family and friends, an increased sense of security, [and] access to clean and healthy environments” (Pike et al., 2010, p. 24). It is possible to portray a low carbon future as an era where we experience better health outcomes, stronger communities, reduced waste, and greater efficiency (Stoknes, 2015). And let us not forget that reducing emissions should stop the planet from heating up, which will make life miserable for billions of people.

2.5.3. Green technology

Transitioning from fossil fuels to greener alternatives is not a sacrifice; it is smart business. Shellenberger and Nordhaus counsel using the promise of “millions of jobs that will be created by accelerating our transition to a clean energy economy” (2004, p. 30) to build support among labour and counter industry criticism of the expense of mitigation and adaptation. The green economy will grow through the development and increased use of technologies that are not powered by fossil fuels or that offer energy savings: electric trains and buses, wind and tide turbines, solar power, improved building insulation, and other gadgets. In many cases, the research and development of these technologies has already been done (Corner, 2013; Hall & Taplin, 2010; Marshall, 2014; Pike & Herr, 2010; Segnit & Ereaut, 2007). Manufacturers and investors are awaiting more favourable government tax incentives and policies that will make viable the mass production and implementation of green technologies. There is, however, a need to guard against an overreliance on technological solutions to climate change. “Bright siding”, a condition prevalent among politicians and businesspeople, is a term coined to describe the overly optimistic hope that technology will help us dodge the threats (Marshall, 2014). Bright siding can hamper efficacy because it reduces the motivation to be proactive and sidesteps the opportunity to build support for a discussion on climate change (Pike & Herr, 2010). Additionally, relying on technology to save us from climate change is problematic because some of the proposed technological solutions, such as orbiting sunshades, geoengineering, and subterranean carbon storage, are somewhat farfetched and still well within the realm of science fiction (Segnit & Ereaut, 2007).

2.5.4. Insurance

Stoknes (2015) suggests reframing climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in terms of insurance to incite preparedness, prevention, and protection against an uncertain future. Energy security fits into this rubric, as reducing or eliminating energy dependency on imported fossil fuels is appealing to conservative audiences in developed nations. Frank Luntz, the U.S. Republican communications strategist, stated, “It doesn’t matter if there is or isn’t climate change. It is still in America’s best interest to develop new sources of energy that are clean, reliable, efficient and safe” (Corner, 2013, p. 18). Using a prevention frame can appeal to people who want to maintain the status quo but also want to act responsibly so as to decrease any potential losses (Shome & Marx, 2009). Similarly, the responsibility frame can be invoked in defence of national security. The UN Security Council has warned that climate change could trigger conflicts as resources become scarce and populations look to greener pastures (Corner, 2013; Marshall, 2014; Pike & Herr, 2010; Segnit & Ereaut, 2007; Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2004; Shome & Marx, 2009). For example, retired U.S. Marine General Anthony C. Zinni stated

> We will pay for this [climate change] one way or another. We will pay to reduce greenhouse gas emissions today and we’ll have to take an economic hit of some kind. Or we will pay the price later in military terms. And that will involve human lives (Shome & Marx, 2009, p. 12).

When offering new frames for climate change, communicators must bear in mind that finding common values among audiences is essential if we are to wean ourselves from fossil fuels by mid-century, as agreed at COP21. It is impossible to put up a firewall between audiences so a message intended for one is not heard by another. Segmenting audiences is a social marketing approach whereby messages are crafted to target various values, “but there are limits to the extent that a message can be tailored before its purpose is entirely subverted” (Corner & Randall, 2011, p. 1009). Segmentation overlooks the fact that people in different circumstances and with different attitudes can still have much in common, whereas emphasizing differences can exacerbate those dissimilarities and undermine efforts to build public support for behaviour changes (Corner & Randall, 2011). Communicators should be aware that using nonenvironmental frames to appeal to new audiences can have unintended and unwanted consequences (Johnson, 2012). The national security frame, for example, has been found to backfire

and arouse anger among the Six America's Dismissive audiences (Roser-Renouf et al., 2015, p. 28). And employing the energy security frame can open the door to an expansion of fracking and nuclear power, both of which come with their own set of problems (Corner, 2013; Segnit & Ereaut, 2007). The energy security frame also "promotes strongly self-enhancing, nationalistic values, and research shows that people who endorse this type of self-serving security as a value tend to be prejudiced towards people unlike themselves, and be less politically engaged" (Corner, 2013, p. 19).

Communicators must bear in mind, however, that appealing to the possibility of financial gain as a way to persuade nonenvironmentally minded people to lower their carbon emissions could prove counterproductive (Corner & Randall, 2011). This is because we have deeply embedded personal values, known as *deep frames,* which "constitute a moral world view or a political philosophy…[and] define one's overall 'common sense'" (George Lakoff as cited in (Crompton, 2014, p. 42). According to Lakoff's theory, people who identify with self-enhancing values do not identify with self-transcending values, making them disinclined to work collectively for a common good (Corner, 2013). Additionally, once financial incentives to go green are removed, so is the motivation, and the previous behaviour will likely resume (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007; Markowitz & Shariff, 2012).

Summary

In summation of the literature, communicators aiming to increase political efficacy to combat climate change may achieve success by employing certain principles in their campaign plans. Although there are several prominent sociopsychological theories that seek to explain why people may be either willing or resistant to adopting climate change efficacy, our natural inclination to conform to social norms presents the strongest motivation for people to change their behaviour—or not. It is essential that campaign messages appeal to our emotional as well as to our rational selves, as emotions can be a barrier to efficacy. Traditional climate change messengers—scientists and environmentalists—have not proven entirely effective. Instead, climate campaigns will need to find and train new messengers who are capable of convincing individuals and policy-makers that it is imperative we reduce our levels of fossil fuel consumption. Opinion leaders who are trusted by their peers can deliver the message to established social networks, which offers the most effective and efficient way to build the collective

efficacy necessary to bring about a low carbon future. Climate change should be freed from its environmental ghetto and reframed to appeal to audiences with other concerns and ideologies. Lastly, the best way to formulate and deliver campaign messages is in story form using positive themes. In terms of transmitting the message, it is better to deliver climate change stories face to face in small groups, rather than via digital campaigns.

Chapter 3. Training Opinion Leaders

Although the literature indicates that a promising path to climate change efficacy lies in training opinion leaders to spread the word face to face through their social networks, there are few groups actually prioritizing the two-step model. In fact, I was able to find only two in Canada: The Climate Reality Project Canada and Next Up. I chose not to reach out to the former, an organization that trains volunteers to deliver Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* presentation, as the organization has been the subject of similar research by Frank (2011). Additionally, given that the focus of my research is efficacy, I felt that The Climate Reality Project would not be a good fit as the organization prioritizes communicating climate science rather than changing social norms surrounding climate and energy policies. Accordingly, I decided to focus upon Next Up, a social justice organization based in Vancouver, British Columbia. In March 2016, Next Up launched the Climate Leadership Project (CLP), a pilot program that trained 26 Alberta residents to "support climate action within their workplaces and organizations" (Next Up, 2017). With the pilot program of CLP, Next Up was trying to implement what much of my review of the literature suggests climate change campaigns should aspire to. Additionally, the literature suggests that the climate or social justice paradigm could be a particularly suitable method to see this through, given that it has the ability to bring together a broad and diverse assortment of social networks and interests. The CLP aimed to train and support a network of people from different areas of Alberta who were concerned about climate change and were trying to figure out how they could be a part of moving the dial on climate efficacy. Next Up's theory of change called for sending out self-identified opinion leaders to bring climate thinking and conversation into their workplaces and communities. The opinion leaders would serve as ambassadors for climate action and would empower others who feel daunted by the magnitude of the challenge.

Little research has been conducted on whether this approach is actually effective in the real world of climate change campaigning (Froome, Keys, Thomsen, & Smith, 2010; Keys et al., 2014; Valente & Pumpuang, 2008). I aim to address this gap through a case study employing qualitative research methods to explore how communications practitioners can train new messengers to promote climate change efficacy.

Hence, my research questions:

1. What training methods are used by social justice organizations to assist opinion leaders to improve climate change efficacy within social networks?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of influencing climate change efficacy with this method of communication?

In this chapter I describe my methodology, briefly discuss Next Up's goals for the CLP and its recruitment process, and then explore its training. Chapter 4 is devoted to the experience of CLP graduates engaging with their social networks and to the graduates' subsequent reflection upon the strengths and weaknesses of the CLP training.

3.1. Research Procedures

3.1.1. Participant recruitment

In June and July of 2016, I contacted several environmental and social justice organizations enquiring as to whether they engaged in any training around climate efficacy. I reached out to the following organizations: Greenpeace, the David Suzuki Foundation, Living Oceans Society, 350.org, UBCC350, the Dogwood Initiative, Leadnow, the Great Climate Race, Sierra Club B.C., Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Idle No More, and Next Up. Among those organizations that responded to my inquiry, only Next Up fit the parameters of my research. Next Up is a social and environmental justice organization that was founded in Vancouver, in 2006, by Kevin Millsip and Seth Klein to develop leadership abilities in politically progressive young adults who want to apply themselves to social change (Kevin Millsip, 2011; Next Up, 2016b). It has since expanded to include the Prairie provinces and Ontario (Global Youth Education Network Society, 2017b; Next Up, 2016b). The Next Up program is run under the umbrella of the Global Youth Education Network Society (also known as genius), a Canadian-registered charity that draws support from organized labour, Tides Canada, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Vancouver City Savings Credit Union

(Chimp, 2017; Global Youth Education Network Society, 2017a; Stanford, 2011)[1]. Next Up is organized into regional partnerships headed by advisory committees comprised of volunteers. The organization's main thrust has been its eight-month social justice leadership program, which is offered annually in seven Canadian cities. As of 2016, the program had graduated 534 young people (Next Up, 2016a). Next Up's Climate Leadership Project is funded through the Sisu Institute and Alberta Ecotrust.

I spoke with Next Up director Kevin Millsip and CLP coordinator Mike Byerly, who provided me with contact information for the CLP cohort in order for me to recruit participants for my study. I emailed the 26 CLP participants, informing them about the nature of my research and to request their participation (see Appendix A). Candidates were informed of the goals, potential benefits, and risks of the study. The initial appeal, combined with subsequent snowball sampling, netted a sample of eight participants. They were offered the option of remaining anonymous, and half of them opted to do so. Participants were not remunerated, and they were required to sign a consent form or provide verbal consent (see Appendix B).

Table 2 Study Participants

Name[a]	Occupation	Social Network/Target Audience
Emily	Program director with Ceiba Association	Readers of a climate blog
Stan	Spiritual retreat employee	Guests and coworkers at a spiritual retreat
Dave	Commercial analyst at the Alberta Electric System Operator	Upper level management and coworkers at the Alberta Electric System Operator
Alison	Analyst with the Pembina Institute	Pembina Institute audiences
Janet	Business developer for an oilfield service company	Coworkers at oilfield service company
Becky	Social worker at the Women's Centre of Calgary	Coworkers and users of the Women's Centre
Karen	[b]	[b]
Tara	[b]	[b]

[a] All names are pseudonyms.
[b] Details omitted to protect anonymity.

3.1.2. Data collection and analysis

During the fall of 2016 I conducted in-depth structured interviews with the eight participants by telephone and recorded the conversations. Each participant was

[1] In Alberta Next Up has received funding from the Parkland Institute, the Alberta Federation of Labour, the Health Sciences Association of Alberta, labour councils in Edmonton and Calgary, and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 401.

interviewed once, in a session that lasted between 30 minutes to one hour in length. The main themes of discussion involved the participant's experience in the program (impressions of the training, which methods proved effective, and what seemed to be missing or underemphasized), the nature of the participant's social networks, and how action plans were received and subsequently modified (see Appendix C). Whenever the interview schedule permitted, I transcribed the recording and thematically coded the transcript with qualitative data management software NVivo before conducting the next interview. By alternating data collection and analysis in this manner, I honed my interviewing technique and expanded upon and refined my initial coding categories as the interviews progressed. After the interviews were completed, I coded them a second and third time for consistency and to more deeply engage with the material.

3.2. Next Up's goals

I interviewed Next Up director Kevin Millsip to explore the organization's goals in establishing the CLP and to learn more about how the curriculum was created, about the guest experts that were involved, and how the program was evaluated (see Appendix D and Appendix E). Initially there had been some trepidation within Next Up about taking on a climate change program, an area in which the organization had minimal experience. However, after a period of internal debate the organization's leaders decided that given their focus upon social justice issues, it was imperative to conduct a climate justice program. With the recent changes in federal and Alberta governments, the timing seemed to be right. The 2015 Alberta election marked a sea change in a province that had, for decades, relied on the revenues generated by the fossil fuel industry. For a similar length of time, right wing parties had governed the province: The Social Credit party took over from the United Farmers of Alberta in 1935 and held the reins until 1971, when the Progressive Conservatives formed a government that lasted for 44 years. In 2014, however, the price of crude oil collapsed on the world market, dropping from $115 (US) per barrel to around $30 (US) per barrel by the beginning of 2016 (Oil Voice, 2017; The Economist, 2016). Oil and gas companies slashed spending in Alberta by billions of dollars, and the province lost at least 37,000 jobs in the oil patch (Giovannetti & Jones, 2015). Albertans were suffering and scared. Many were angry with the government's tone deaf statements during the 2015 election campaign, and the voters took it out on the Progressive Conservatives where it hurt the most, at the polls.

Alberta elected a New Democratic Party (NDP) government, led by Rachel Notley, which campaigned on a message of hope over fear against a party that had grown complacent and over which hung clouds of corruption (Kleiss, 2015). The NDP ran on a platform that included diversification away from an “over-dependence on raw bitumen exports” and that would “phase out coal-fired electricity generation…and expand cleaner, greener sources,” “strengthen environmental standards,” and “take leadership on the issue of climate change” (Alberta New Democratic Party, 2015).

For Next Up it was like the old Elvis song, “It’s Now or Never.” As Kevin Millsip explained

> We decided to go to the core of the issue and roll out a program that would focus on delivering climate leadership skills to a base of people who live in the province where some of the hardest conversations have to happen, a place that has, at some level, been the barrier to this country taking bolder climate action.

3.3. Cohort recruitment

Next Up wanted to attract people to the CLP who did not work for groups that were already involved in climate or environmental issues. They sought people who were passionate about the issue and in a position to influence conversations, programming, or workplace policies, that is, those who were already on a leadership pathway. That meant people who were on the board of an organization, held senior staff positions, or were well respected in their community. As well as seeking applicants with capacity, Next Up also wanted to draw people from a diversity of sectors, places, orientations, cultures, and ethnicities. Next Up’s previous programs had been delivered to groups of up to 18 people, primarily youth aged 18 to 32 years. Admission guidelines for the CLP raised the age floor to 25 with no upper age limit. Two people in their mid-fifties were admitted to the program, as were two applicants who were aged 18 years. Twenty-eight people applied to the program. By the end of the application process, everyone who applied was accepted except for two people who were unable to attend the training. Some applicants, including the 18 year olds, were interviewed by telephone to ensure they were suited to the program. The CLP cohort consisted of citizens “from across the province representing people working in the public service, municipalities, First Nations, education, healthcare, energy and power industries, faith groups and labour” (Next Up,

2017). The cost of enrolment was $300; 60% of the cohort paid the fee, and the remainder were provided with scholarships to cover the cost.

Two members of my eight-person sample (Emily and Karen) were previously affiliated with Next Up, having taken its social justice and environmental leadership program. They had learned about the CLP from Next Up newsletters. For the other six participants in my sample, the CLP was their first involvement with Next Up. They had heard about the CLP through word of mouth, and in some cases had been urged to apply by friends or family who were part of Next Up's network. For some, their motivation was both professional and personal, and often the line between the two was somewhat blurred. Alison, who parlayed her CLP training into a job with the Pembina Institute, wanted to learn more about the theoretical side of climate action. Stan, who has a Master's degree in Disaster and Emergency Management, was attracted in part by his professional interest and in part by his Christian values and a strong visceral feeling about the need for action:

> But also maybe even more pertinent is on the emotional level of lying awake at night and worrying in fear of these massive issues, massive problems that are facing us on a global level and not having any idea how to process that or even begin to take steps towards mitigating it. A little bit of feeling helpless or overwhelmed. Wanting to get some movement rather than feeling paralyzed by it.

Dave, who is working on a Master's degree in Environment and Management, joined the CLP because he wanted to see how some of the theories he had been exposed to in academia would play out in the real world. Beyond the intellectual stimulus, as with Stan, Dave's reasoning spoke to the very heart of my first research question: conversations about climate change efficacy in social networks.

> It's difficult to have conversations [in Alberta], whether it's the family or friends or work colleagues, about what's required of us to transition to a world that's more sustainable. So what I was really looking for within this program was how do you connect with people without bringing up these issues and making them polarizing? How do we connect and get past that to hopefully help people to change?

Climate change is a divisive topic in Alberta. Consider those who defend the source of Alberta's wealth with the I Love Oil Sands campaign that offers the false dichotomy of an "If you're not with us, you're against us" message ("Support Canada's

Oil Sands," 2017). Interestingly, the campaign's adherents include both Conservative *and* NDP members of Alberta's legislature (Wilt, 2016).

For those with a background in social justice, such as Emily, it was appealing to apply that lens to climate issues.

> It seemed like [the CLP] was one of the only opportunities that was available for in-person climate engagement where I was located. But also, the Next Up philosophy was really appealing to me, and it's probably why it stuck out was just within my own network, which tends to be activist oriented and people who are interested in leadership more for social justice perspectives and whatnot. But also what really appealed to me about the program is that Next Up is known for including a lot of justice-focused work in the way it goes about things.

Becky, a social worker, found that the CLP training meshed with her personal and workplace goals:

> One of the things we talked about at the Women's Centre was how gender and climate change are intersecting and the impact on women, as well as what women can bring to the issue. I've been looking to build my own capacity around climate issues because it's something that I didn't know very much about. It sort of coincided with my own personal interest but also where we were at with my job or at my workplace.

3.4. Training

The CLP training was carried out over a five-month period at five weekend-long retreats that began Friday evenings and wrapped up at noon on Sundays. The retreats took place in locations around Alberta: Kananaskis (two sessions), Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer. The retreats were structured so that each weekend involved some theory as well as practical lessons that the participants could begin to apply to their action plans. Team building was stressed throughout the program, and the participants were urged to be accountable to their peers. The retreats were led by four core staff members of Next Up's program team who planned the curriculum: Kevin Millsip (Director), Mike Byerley (CLP Coordinator), Tracey Mitchell (Saskatchewan Coordinator), and Aisha Zaman (CLP Program Assistant). There were always three Next Up staff people in the room during the sessions to help with facilitation.

Childcare support was offered for participants with children. In one case, Next Up paid a participant's partner the equivalent of the wages he lost while attending the retreat

to look after their children. Separate lodging was provided for the family. Holding the training at retreats on weekends brought the group together in a way that workshops conducted during the work week in participants' hometowns could not. Leaving town for a retreat is a different experience than showing up in a classroom in your city, where you leave after the session and go home at the end of the day. Bonding was quicker because the participants, for the most part, stayed for two nights in dormitories and ate together. Sharing downtime facilitated getting to know each other faster than in the regular program, where the social aspect is often left up to the participants to organize. Arranging rides to the retreats and travelling together provided opportunities for the participants to get to know each other and fed into the sense that they were part of something special. Participant, Tara, explains:

> Well, I think it was unique in being a retreat style. It was a really good balance of the emotional and rational, if you will. And by that I mean you have the complexity of an issue, and it's not just the technical aspects in and of itself, but there are complexities associated with how we're feeling towards that topic. How others feel towards that topic, etc. So when I say in the retreat format, it was a really neat way to build relationships around the complexity and, really, the emotional part was like building capacity around the complexity of the issue.

Given that the CLP was a pilot program, the retreat leaders were careful to solicit feedback throughout the retreats. Before the program began, a curriculum (see Curriculum section below) was planned, and agendas were drawn up for the first retreat and for part of the second, but the program team waited to see how the first two weekends went before they planned the remainder of the sessions (see Table 3). Next Up director Kevin Millsip admitted that he was not sure what to expect:

> Up until we met the group—we knew about seven of them already—we had an outline, but we were ready to toss it based on how the meeting on Friday night went. Would they get along? Was it going to be tense? We had a couple of scenarios we could go with. I was anxious. I think we all were. But I knew very quickly that we were going to be able to do what we wanted to do with this group.

At the first retreat, the leaders sounded out the group to determine what skills and lessons they wanted to learn that would enable them to bring climate efficacy into their workplace or project, as well as to determine barriers they anticipated facing when carrying out their action plans. At the second and subsequent retreats, the Friday evening meeting began with a check-in that took the pulse of the group and reviewed the

previous retreat. This allowed the structure and content of the sessions to be modified as training progressed to suit the needs of the participants. On weekend three, the staff did a prioritization process that allowed them to shift programming in the last two retreats. Every weekend there was material that was not covered; sometimes it was moved to another weekend or dropped altogether.

Table 3 Climate Leadership Project Agendas and Guest Experts

Weekend 1. March 4 – 6, 2016, Kananaskis	
Guest experts	• Ben Thibault, Alberta Energy, Government of Alberta Area of expertise: Renewable energy, electric policy design, and analysis • Gwendolyn Blue, Associate professor, University of Calgary Area of expertise: Geography, climate change
Theme	• Introduction to climate change and group building • Discover what trainees want out of the program
Weekend 2. April 1 – 3, 2016, Edmonton	
Guest experts	• Nathan Lemphers, former policy analyst with Pembina Institute/PhD candidate, University of Toronto Area of expertise: Political science, impact of fossil fuel industry on climate change policy • Andrew Leach, Associate professor, University of Alberta Area of expertise: Environmental, resource, and energy economics
Theme	• Leadership work, social change theories, behaviour change, and psychology • Social change frameworks • Tools to think about action project
Weekend 3. May 29 – April 30, 2016, Calgary	
Guest experts	• Olive Dempsey, Facilitator, coach, and engagement strategist Area of expertise: Leadership and engagement for social and environmental resilience • Amber Bennett, Principle, Upaya Consulting Area of expertise: Environmental communications and engagement • Bill Phipps, Minister, United Church of Canada Area of expertise: Ministry, law, and social activism
Theme	• Social change frameworks • Tools to think about take away action project • Marketplace of ideas
Weekend 4. May 27 – 29, Kananaskis	
Guest experts	• None
Theme	• Action planning tools and strategies • Personal stories of concern about climate change and why it matters to their network
Weekend 5. June 17 – 19, 2016, Red Deer	
Guest experts	• Michelle Robinson, Chair, Liberal Party of Canada Indigenous Peoples' Commission (Alberta) Area of expertise: Social activism • Matt Hammer, 350.org/PowerShift Area of expertise: Climate change activism • Joe Bascu, Director, Iron & Earth Area of expertise: Oil and gas labour sector • Robyn Webb, City of Edmonton Area of expertise: Environmental engagement
Theme	• Anti-oppression • Fossil fuel transition strategy • Work on action projects

3.5. Guest experts

Although it was possible for Next Up to build flexibility into the programming, some structure was necessary because guest experts that provided important segments of the programming needed to be booked in advance. Next Up added the guests to supplement areas in which the organization lacked expertise (see Table 4). They sought speakers who knew and could communicate the science of climate change and the policy surrounding it as it pertained to Canada. Almost all the guest experts were working in climate or environmental issues and were from Alberta; they understood the context and the framing that Next Up was using. The guests came from organized labour, the media, nongovernment organizations, the social justice movement, academia, organized religion, and included First Nations elders and a leadership consultant. As the curriculum shifted, the program staff could not be sure that the guest experts' topics would be right for a given weekend's theme. Next Up hoped to bring in Alberta premier Rachel Notley and her minister of environment, but their schedules did not permit them to appear.

3.6. Curriculum

The CLP curriculum was geared towards capacity building with the goal of having each member of the cohort develop an action plan that they would deploy in their social networks. Much of the content focused on the strategies and skills each participant would need to put together an action plan tailored to best influence his or her social network. "Messages need to be tailored to core ideas and values that resonate with the social background of the opinion leader. Moreover, the opinion leader needs to be trained in how to deliver these messages to their social network" (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009, pp. 337–338). The key points of the curriculum dealt with instruction on climate science and climate politics, with the emotions of the people in the cohort and in their social networks, and with strategies for engagement and social change theory.

3.6.1. Climate science/Climate politics

As you might expect in a program that trains people how to deliver messaging on climate change, there was necessarily some attention paid to climate science. Given the varying backgrounds of the trainees and their differing levels of knowledge on the wicked problem, how much is enough? was the question. And which aspects of climate science would be most valuable? With only five weekends to train climate messengers, this was the balance that Next Up had to strike. After all, it has been argued that an imperfect understanding of climate science is not an impediment to those who understand that a threat exists and have already decided to act (Bulkeley, 2000; Whitmarsh et al., 2011). At the first retreat, the cohort received an introduction to climate science which provided a common baseline. Karen, who had already worked on climate change issues, found the climate science instruction helpful, as did Emily, who explained that the sessions provided her with a good foundational knowledge.

Next Up also provided a primer on Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan from guest expert Andrew Leach, an economist who played a leading role in developing the plan. The Alberta NDP government developed the plan early in its mandate: It called for an end to coal-generated electricity by 2030, the development of renewable energy, a $20 per tonne tax on carbon dioxide emissions, and a 100 megatonne cap on emissions from the tar sands to be imposed in 2017 ("Climate Leadership Plan," 2017). The plan led some in the province to channel their frustration and anger at the downturn in Alberta's oil industry (precipitated by global economic forces) towards the NDP and the introduction of climate policy. As of September 2016, 63% of Albertans were opposed to the province's impending carbon tax, with 53% opposed to the plan itself (Dormer, 2016). Accordingly, the CLP sessions on the Climate Leadership Plan prepared the cohort for discussions they could expect within their social networks, given that the climate plan was high on the public agenda. Janet, a participant who worked for an oil field service company, recounted:

> I think I was more comfortable with certain terminology and had a better grasp, not only the science but also a lot of the changes that are happening with the Alberta government and the regulatory process. I think I was well versed to speak on it. I had a little bit more credibility because it's always easy to talk about something when you know what you're talking about. And there was a bit of power there because I probably knew a lot more about that than [the people I spoke with].

3.6.2. Emotions

As evidenced in the literature, comprehending the spectrum of emotional responses evoked by climate change is key to understanding how and why people respond to its threats and challenges. In fact, Next Up implemented the CLP to counter the tendency of negative emotions to stifle efficacy. Millsip explained how dealing with the emotions of climate change played a part in Next Up's theory of change:

> A lot of people are so daunted by the seeming magnitude of the climate crisis that most people look at it and don't know what they can do. How can one person impact it, especially if you're not a climate activist or working with a group that's not connected to climate change? We wanted to build a base of folks who do have a better sense of that, who are experimenting with these project plans and supporting each other.

In Alberta, the conflicting emotions surrounding the disavowal of fossil fuel's role in climate change is reminiscent of the behaviour of the inhabitants of the small Norwegian town as depicted by Norgaard, although the Nordic nation has been far shrewder than the Prairie province in the royalty deals it has struck with the oil industry. As with the Norwegians, Albertans share cognitive traditions such as a sense of gratitude for the prosperity provided by oil and gas. Norgaard defines shared cognitive traditions as "shared notions of what to think and talk about, what to feel—in short, all that is involved in the collective maintenance of reality" (2011, p. 23). In Alberta, the reality for several decades is that oil and gas extraction has provided many people with a high standard of living. And as with Norgaard's Norwegians, accepting the threats of climate change can be difficult when you are aware that you are not only contributing to, but are also benefitting from the problem. Given Alberta's history of fossil fuel extraction, the wealth it has generated, and the socioeconomic landscape in 2016, it was inevitable that the CLP participants would come up against climate change deniers and skeptics—as well as against fearful defenders of the status quo—when they carried out their action plans.

Next Up aimed to prepare the cohort by introducing effective strategies to engage people in difficult conversations. This included skill-building exercises related to challenging conversations, understanding how people react psychologically and emotionally to complex problems, and managing those different reactions. Stan, who worked at a spiritual retreat in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, noted that "one of the things we talked about in the course of the program was, as human beings, the size and

complexity of climate change is more than we can really grasp or fathom, so there's an emotional inability to really fully process the implications of climate change." In order that campaigners might help people sort through their emotions, the cohort was advised to "pivot" the frame during difficult discussions to find a common ground for understanding. Empathizing with people whose psychological and emotional responses to climate change are shaped by the overwhelming nature of the problem requires being emotionally aware of the different ways that people internalize complex issues. As Dave, an employee of Alberta Electric Systems Operator, said, "It was about understanding where they're coming from and how you connect with people. It's about building trust and building bridges, right?" Tara found that "it really was a way for a person who endeavours to be in a leadership position to be emotionally aware and emotionally intelligent of the different ways of knowing and understanding and internalizing complex issues." For Stan, it was a question of

> helping the people we love and care about to even just ask the question, how does climate change make you feel? And following that really complex thread that's almost like a grief process that you have to go through and chase all those emotions in order to kind of move out in a healthier way.

At one CLP retreat, a guest expert spoke about how some people may deny climate change not necessarily because they lack an understanding of the science, but rather because they are ideologically indisposed to accepting its reality. For example, people working in the oil and gas sector may feel conflicted when they are confronted with how the industry that puts bread on their table is also negatively impacting the planet's climate systems. Many of those working in the sector must deal with psychological struggles from the contradictions and tensions between the reality of their jobs at the wellhead and their identities and values (Daub, 2010). Understanding the psychological and emotional roadblocks these people face can help climate change messengers frame the discussion to ensure their message is not accusatory. Learning that denial was based on more than just a lack of information was eye opening for Emily. She explained how she discovered that dwelling on climate science with oil patch workers could prove unproductive:

> And in most cases, if that's going on, just giving people more education and more information on climate change can be a little less effective because it's just further playing into those reasons why they're already choosing to deny climate change instead of working with people to uncover some of those webs and more entangled things that are going on in their lives.

A view into the world of the people who work in the industry was provided by guest expert Joe Bascu, the director of Iron and Earth, an organization that represents oil patch workers who are calling for a just transition to safeguard their livelihoods and communities as Canada transitions from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources (Iron and Earth, 2017). A just transition would provide the support necessary to allow energy workers to become leaders in the climate change movement rather than barriers. Ideally the shift to renewable energy will be "as equitable, inclusive, and productive as possible" (Mertins-Kirkwood, 2017, p. 3). Given that oil and gas workers have paid untold millions of dollars of income tax and employment insurance premiums into government coffers—not to mention the billions in royalties the industry has contributed to government revenue—it is not unrealistic for the labour movement to call on the federal and Alberta governments to subsidize training and assistance with placement in the emerging green economy, as the Liberals promised in the 2015 election campaign (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). As of late 2016, that support was not forthcoming from Ottawa, although the Alberta government has earmarked funding that might help cushion the blow for energy workers (Mertins-Kirkwood, 2017). Iron and Earth has sided with the environmental justice movement to prevent the divide and conquer wedge that Big Oil and other resource extraction industries typically drive between workers and conservationists with jobs vs. environment fear mongering (Daub, 2010).

Self-protection and self-care were also featured aspects of the training, as Next Up was well aware that activists, too, can be affected by a sense of hopelessness and helplessness in the face of a seemingly overwhelming problem. As Norgaard notes, "Emotions are tied to the moral values that are part of a social movement framing process, shape social movement goals, provide motivation for potential participants to enter movements, and form the basis of solidarity among movement participants" (2011, p. 9). Among the people I interviewed, some admitted to carrying an overwhelming, self-imposed burden of responsibility to combat climate change that was so great it was almost paralyzing. A significant portion of the CLP training was devoted to dealing with the dark emotions spawned by the possibly disastrous impacts of climate change, as well as by the challenges the cohort might experience when carrying out their action plans. To counter any feelings of inadequacy among the cohort, the Next Up staff drove home the reality that each person should concern themselves only with what they could realistically influence or change. The CLP cohort were told that they were now part of a

community of change, and the challenge need not be borne on an individual's shoulders alone. That understanding relieved some of the frustration and despair they felt and freed them to take on manageable goals as they created their action plans. "You don't have to fix everything," Stan recounted. "But what do you have influence over? And that's a much more helpful way of approaching it." Tara recalled,

> One piece that was really valuable that stuck with me, I guess, both from a self-care perspective as well as just the work that you're pursuing is to be confident and trusting, that you're working on your piece of the pie but remembering that's only one piece in the whole of all the other actions that are happening as well.

Next Up program staff succeeded in creating an environment where conversations could take place concerning the climate-grieving process, and they could come to terms with what has been lost due to climate change and what will change in the years ahead. During the first weekend retreat, the participants were given opportunities to tell their stories and place them into the climate context, tell why they signed up for the CLP, and name a place in Alberta that was special to them and that they wanted to protect. Their slice of the pie.

3.6.3. Social change theory

Three approaches to social change were emphasized in the CLP training: Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan model, Marshall Ganz's model of storytelling, and the spectrum of allies concept. Not all of the cohort had a background in social or environmental justice issues, so Next Up delivered some of the leadership training from its seven-month core program and adapted other lessons to bring social justice into the climate discussion. According to research by Howell (2013), social justice, equality, and other altruistic values ranked as the main motivations for early adopters of low carbon lifestyles in the United Kingdom, over and above environmental values. Howell's study participants were particularly concerned about "the negative impacts of climate change on poor people (in developing countries)" (2013, p. 285) since climate change exacts an inequitable and inordinately harsh toll on the poor and disadvantaged. They do not benefit from consumption of fossil fuels and other resources in the northern hemisphere, yet they suffer more from the effects of anthropogenic climate change. Emily, who worked with the Ceiba Association, a not-for-profit that "ignites activism through global education, cultural exchange and community-led development" (Ceiba, 2017), noted:

> A lot of participants were coming into this program from a different perspective that hadn't really worked in some of those grassroots activist areas. They were really grappling with what climate justice really was and how that related to their day to day life. They could maybe understand it in a broader context, like, if a population is impacted because of climate change or something and they're primarily agricultural or something like that, but when it came to their day to day life and their workplace or something like that they found they just really couldn't quite translate that sort of understanding.

Dave, who did not have an activist background, seemed unfazed at exploring climate change from a social justice perspective and claimed to benefit from it:

> So being that most of the cohort was from the social justice side there was more discourse on—and it was incredibly enlightening for me—about challenges with the education system or women's issues or challenges in the indigenous communities, which is a world I'm frankly not exposed to. It was empowering to work with those people.

Movement Action Plan model

Maintaining a positive attitude is crucial for activists who are campaigning for a better future because it is easier to win people over when speaking with optimism rather than from a place of despondency. The CLP wove self-care together with social change theory by incorporating Moyer's Movement Action Plan (MAP) that lays out the eight stages that successful social movements might expect to experience over the course of a lengthy campaign, as the drive for climate change efficacy is proving to be. Moyer is an activist who cut his teeth in the antinuclear movement of the 1970s. MAP arose from that movement, as Moyer aspired to "give activists hope and empowerment, increase the effectiveness of social movements, and reduce the discouragement that often contributes to individual burnout, dropout, and the winding down of social movements" (Moyer, 1987, p. 5). MAP serves as a step-by-step guide to organizing nonviolent, grassroots "people power" to challenge society's power elites in order to gain a voice in the decision-making process. The MAP theory of change calls for connecting local elements to form the basis of a cohesive national social movement. MAP also lays out the elements of the powerholders' strategy, a great many of which were adopted by the Harper government in its efforts to expand the tar sands and downplay climate change: demonizing and repressing the opposition, attempting to control the flow of information, denying a problem exists, spreading justification myths, appointing commissions so as to appear involved in a resolution process, and adopting official versus operative policies

(Moyer, 1987). Moyer states that social movements can counter such strategies and win public opinion if they show how powerholders' policies violate the public interest and if they can keep the issue in the public eye, mobilize protesters, and empower grassroots activism.

Moyer (1987) argues that successful social movements move through eight stages over the course of their lifetimes, although not in a linear way:

1. Normal times
2. Prove the failure of institutions
3. Ripening conditions
4. Social movement take-off
5. Identity crisis of the powerless
6. Majority public support
7. Success
8. Continuing the struggle

In my estimation, the climate efficacy movement in Canada is hovering somewhere between the fifth and sixth of Moyer's eight stages, as it has not yet reached majority public support but is moving beyond wallowing in an identity crisis of the powerless. The overlap of these two stages is to be expected as Moyer says they tend to occur simultaneously (1987). With the recent demise of the Northern Gateway and Energy East pipeline proposals, the movement cannot be deemed powerless. According to Moyer, the sense of failure some groups experience usually occurs when it has achieved many of its goals during its first two years of operation. The antipipeline faction of the climate change movement is at least a decade old, and its effectiveness was far from immediate; growth in terms of grassroots and media support have been steady. Success has helped to ward off the personal crisis and burnout that can afflict campaigners and will hopefully reinforce Moyer's message of total nonviolence (1987). This is essential as the movement makes the slow transformation to the majority opinion stage where the nonpolitical are encouraged to become active.

> The key to Stage Six success ultimately is the ongoing, day-in and day-out basic efforts of grassroots local activists—public speaking, information

> tables at supermarkets, leafletting, yard sales, and so on—all involving face-to-face education of citizens by their peers and keeping the issue before the public (Moyer, 1987).

This requires a national "grand strategy," which the powerholders will attempt to counter until

> splits begin happening within the power structure, as over time pressure from the new social and political consensus force increasing portions of the mainstream political, economic and social elites to switch their position, even openly oppose the policies of the central powerholders in order to protect their own self-interests (Moyer, 1987).

Storytelling model

At the fourth retreat, the cohort was taught the value of storytelling as a component of social change. Next Up's instruction was based on the teachings of Marshall Ganz, a veteran of the U.S. civil rights movement who played a part in building the United Farm Workers and created the grassroots-organizing model of Obama's first presidential campaign. Ganz emphasizes the importance of crafting a compelling narrative. Narrative, however, is distinct from framing, as it has the power to turn values into action, even in the face of fear (Ganz, 2011; Ganz & McKenna, 2017). In order for campaigners to get people to listen to their messages, the first step is to move the people to action (2009). And the best way to do that, says Ganz, is by mobilizing hope (2011). Not only does hope gain listeners' attention, it also trumps fear (Ganz, 2011). Ganz counsels leaders to tell their own stories in order to explain, clarify, and justify their goals (Wherry, 2015). "Stories teach" (Ganz, 2011, p. 281). Ganz argues that leadership storytelling mobilizes hope through the narrative techniques of plot, protagonist, and moral whereby campaigners tell a story of self (their values), a story of us (what they share with their audience), and a story of now (the tension between the way it is and the way we want it to be) (Ganz, 2009). "Narrative can enable the empathetic experience to link leaders with participants, participants with each another, and both with broader public values at stake" (Ganz & McKenna, 2017). And not just any narrative. It must be personal and experiential, says Ganz, because personalizing the story provides the essential rhetorical element of ethos, "the credibility of the person who makes the argument" (2011, p. 284). The story of us distinguishes community and builds collective identity which "give[s] us greater safety" (Ganz, 2011, p. 285). Laying out the way things are and the way they should be identifies the challenge to be overcome and the specific

choices to be made to achieve the desired outcome (Ganz, 2011). It is a narrative of risk, hope, and strategy that draws from the past, present, and future. When the CLP participants wrote their narratives, per Ganz's model of leadership storytelling, they were told to consider the community they want to engage and the values they want to share with the members of that community, keeping in mind how their feelings about climate change related to the values they shared with their audiences.

Spectrum of allies concept

It is important for social movements to know who is on their side, who is not, and who can be swayed to support their cause. At the second retreat, the cohort was introduced to the spectrum of allies concept as an effective strategy to engage people in climate dialogue. The spectrum of allies theory of change espouses that environmental- or faith-based groups should strategically move their climate change agendas forward by building relationships with different actors based on their levels of support or opposition to a group's goals (Lysack, 2012). This requires adopting different frames depending on the audience. Rather than expending energy trying to turn opponents into allies, the cohort was taught that it could be more productive to shift a passive opponent into neutrality or shift a neutral party into a becoming a passive ally. Consider how this would play out with the Six Americas of Global Warming segments: The Alarmed, the Concerned, the Cautious, the Disengaged, the Doubtful, and the Dismissive (Roser-Renouf, Maibach, Leiserowitz, & Rosenthal, 2016). Using the spectrum of allies concept, campaigners need not move the Dismissive all the way to the Alarmed segment at the opposite end of the spectrum—which would likely be unrealistic, short of a mass epiphany—but only to the adjacent Doubtful segment. The spectrum of allies approach prevents campaigners from wasting their efforts trying to convince staunch deniers to see the light, focusing campaigners instead on those who are still exploring the issue and who may more likely be swayed if presented with convincing arguments. "When I chat with people I use that spectrum to lay the foundation for the way I talk to them about what's going on," Karen said.

> So if someone's very stuck in actively opposing climate change and that's going to be a much, much, much lower percentage than the people who are kind of exploring the issue, I spend less time on them than I used to, and I work more in the middle.

Targeting those most concerned about climate change should reap the largest rewards in terms of efficacy (Hestres, 2015). Cross et al. (2015) coined the term *reluctant cynicism* to describe the attitude of the Alarmed and Concerned segments, who could be swayed to optimism when provided with evidence of the effectiveness of political efficacy on climate change. Additionally, applying the spectrum of allies theory prevents campaigners from sinking into despair brought on by arguing with opponents whose opinions they may never change (350.org, 2017).

Summary

In this chapter I have dealt with the first of my two research questions: What training methods are used by social justice organizations to assist opinion leaders to improve climate change efficacy within social networks? I described my research procedures to find such an organization and my interviews with a sample of participants who have undertaken training. I then provided an overview of the CLP training methods based on the interviews and background material provided by Next Up. This included a brief overview of the socioeconomic and political landscapes of Alberta in regards to climate change and energy policies in order to sketch the scene in which the CLP was formed and its first cohort trained. The goal of the training was to provide the skills and support for each member of the cohort to develop an action plan that would spark climate change conversations in their social networks. In the next chapter, I will explore how my participants' training helped them engage their communities and social networks about climate change, and I will discuss potential improvements in the CLP training.

Chapter 4. Opinion Leaders in Action

This chapter addresses the second of my two research questions: What are the strengths and weaknesses of influencing climate change efficacy through the two-step model of communication? To answer that question, I will explore the experiences of my eight study participants when they used their training to carry out their action plans among their social networks. After recounting and analyzing the participants' experiences, I will discuss their reflections on their CLP training with an eye to determining its effectiveness in preparing them to carry out their plans. This includes aspects of the training that participants felt was lacking or should have received more emphasis, as well as the lessons that were deemed to be useful or particularly worthwhile. I will also discuss Next Up's evaluation of the CLP. The CLP cohort reconvened in September 2016 so that the members could report on their progress. This reunion provided Next Up with an opportunity to evaluate the programming.

One noteworthy aspect of the training was the free rein that participants were given in developing their action plans. The plans covered how each member of the cohort would encourage collective action within their social network, the manageable "piece of the pie" that they would handle. In the environmental/climate change movement there has often been a tendency for top-down control of campaigners and volunteers to ensure that they stay on message (Frank, 2011; Hestres, 2015; Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). Next Up encouraged the CLP cohort to develop action plans that were personalized and thereby spoke more effectively to the particular concerns of their communities. This freedom, I expect, enabled campaigners to speak from the heart, allowing their messages to ring true. It also facilitated the ongoing modification or adjustment of messaging strategies as required, whether in response to the reactions of their audiences or to hone their delivery as they became more proficient. Most often this meant reframing their messages to better appeal to their social networks but could also involve changing where and when they attempted to engage in climate change conversations.

At the time of my interviews for this case study (October and November 2016), six of the eight participants that comprised my sample had launched their action plans within their social networks:

1. Stan (social network: guests and coworkers at a spiritual retreat)
2. Dave (social network: upper level management and coworkers at the Alberta Electric System Operator)
3. Janet (social network: coworkers at an oil and gas service company)
4. Alison (social network: Pembina Institute partners including not-for-profit organizations and organized labour)
5. Karen*
6. Tara*

*I cannot reveal the Karen's or Tara's social networks for reasons of anonymity.

Emily intends to write a climate blog but had not posted at the time of the interviews. Becky, a social worker at the Women's Centre of Calgary, launched her action plan in January 2017, after the interviews were completed.

4.1. Plans in action

4.1.1. Stan

Stan rolled out his action plan at a spiritual retreat centre in the foothills west of Calgary, where he lived and worked as a facilitator. Most of the people that access the retreat or work there are evangelical Christians who Stan portrays as "more pro-oil, anti-NDP" with a politically conservative world view. Though "they may not be out and out climate deniers," they prioritize getting the economy back on track. Stan finds it "a point of personal grief that this tradition that I come out of has been in some ways so culpable in contributing to climate change and also contributing to a lack of meaningful action on climate change." Insight into the values and motivations of this group of people may be gained through the experiences of Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist at Texas Tech University who is also an evangelical Christian. She found that evangelicals often adopt a dismissive or skeptical stance towards climate science as part of their "tribal belief" or social norm (Hynes, 2016). Hayhoe states that science and faith should never be in conflict. "If they appear to be it's because we don't fully understand one or the other—or both" (Hynes, 2016, radio interview). She adopts two principles when speaking with evangelicals: approach them with a respectful attitude, and never start the conversation with scientific facts (Hynes, 2016; Remnick, 2017). Instead, she begins by connecting

through a shared value or concern that both parties can agree upon before moving on to explain how global warming affects that value or shared concern (Remnick, 2017). Hayhoe suggests that when speaking with evangelical Christians (or anyone for that matter), it is important to listen to them to learn what they care about as a first step to building bridges (Remnick, 2017).

Stan recalled one conversation with a guest at the spiritual centre for whom the pressing issues were jobs and the economy rather than the harm done to nature. This is a common theme in resource-based Alberta. Stan, to his credit, was able to see both sides of the argument:

> In some ways it's a good question, and I think it's something that I need to wrestle through. Like, how do we have a just transition from a carbon-based economy? How do we take care of people when we say that we want to slow and stop the development of carbon-based industry?

Perhaps this open-mindedness was due to the presentation from the director of Iron and Earth during his training. "I think she was able to hear it as a compassion-based approach and also help me to learn what that means, a compassion-based approach," said Stan. This speaks to Hayhoe's point about listening and underscores the adaptation that is required of campaigners. Even as they are teaching they must pay attention to what others are saying during conversations to find out what resonates with their audiences and then respond to the points and arguments that are raised. Stan's conversation may also have presented an opportunity to frame climate change as an economic opportunity that, if not seized, would create an ongoing economic hardship for Albertans.

Compassion for others is a central pillar of Christianity, a point Stan raised in his action plan as he sought common ground when broaching the tender topics of flooding in southern Alberta during the summer of 2013 and the Fort McMurray wildfires of 2016. While the floods and fires were not directly caused by climate change, they provide a glimpse into the future and provoke conversation about what a changing climate will bring. In June 2013, thunderstorms created by a convergence of two massive, complex weather systems brought heavy rain to the Rocky Mountains, which resulted in the banks of the Bow and Elbow rivers overflowing. The two rivers descend from the Rockies and converge in Calgary, which along with other southern Alberta communities, suffered a torrent of water that forced almost 90,000 people from their homes. Five

people were killed. Dozens of bridges and highways were washed out, and thousands of basements flooded. The repair bill ran to $6 billion. “It was the largest natural disaster in Canadian history” (Derworiz, 2016). Three years later, during an unusually hot, dry spell after a warm, dry winter, raging wildfires swept through Fort McMurray in northern Alberta. The fires drove 88,000 people from their homes, torched homes and businesses, and shut down production at several nearby tar sands operations. Damages were estimated at $4.7 billion (“2016 Fort McMurray Wildfire,” n.d.). Elizabeth May, leader of Canada’s federal Green party, said that climate change was partly to blame for the wildfire, although she later retracted her statement (Tasker, 2016). Controversy arose when others noted the irony of a town that practically exists to service the tar sands being ravaged by wildfire, prompting Prime Minister Trudeau to state, “Any time we try to make a political argument out of one particular disaster, I think there’s a bit of a shortcut that can sometimes not have the desired outcome” (Kolbert, 2016). At the spiritual retreat shortly after the Fort McMurray fire, Stan asked,

> “Since one of the core tenets of Christianity is compassion and care for your neighbour, doesn’t it behoove us as compassionate people to talk about climate change, because these sorts of events are going to keep happening? It’s one thing to react and give a blanket or give some food when somebody needs their help, but wouldn’t it be better to act compassionately to stop climate change from continuing?

In selecting his social network, there is no doubt that Stan chose a tough row to hoe. Yet his CLP training stood him in good stead. The skills and drills around difficult conversations that were practiced at the retreats boosted Stan’s confidence. He rationalized, what’s the worst that can happen when talking about climate change? “Because there’s a little bit of—in terms of my personality—there’s fear that I’ll cause interpersonal conflict or relational disharmony, and so I tend to be the kind of person who doesn’t want to rock the boat,” he said. According to Lorenzen (2014), the disinclination to discuss contentious issues is common among informants attempting to persuade others to lower their carbon consumption. Overcoming resistance, she argues, requires quickly sizing up the person you’re speaking to and carefully framing the message in nonconfrontational terms to avoid making people feel uncomfortable. It also requires practice. At the retreats, Stan went over the conversations he intended to have in his social network with the CLP cohort and Next Up staff. “And I think that that’s probably in some ways better than having eight talking points that you can take in—you know what I mean, like having a scripted conversation with someone about climate

change," he said. Talking points can be useful for making speeches and lectures but are not as appropriate for conversing with people. Stan realized when preparing his action plan that his goal was not to change peoples' minds and get them to see the climate change problem the same way he did, but rather to help create or allow for alternative narratives. "I guess what I would hope has happened is I've been able to talk about climate change without it being a dirty word or even a political word," he said.

> In those conversations I tried quite hard just to talk in a general way about the climate science and not say, so, we need to dismantle the oil sands and shut it all down tonight. But I also understand that people are suffering because the oil economy is shut down. And so how do we take care of people too, right?

4.1.2. Janet

Janet, who is a manager in a small oilfield service company, described her comanagers as men with high school educations who are 55 years old or more and who have been in the oil and gas sector all of their working lives. Janet was able to have climate change conversations both in meetings and in informal one-on-one chats on the shop floor.

> Bringing some of my ideas or my project back to them was quite challenging to say the least. It's pretty emotionally charged. It's a direct threat to their livelihood or what they've been doing for the past, in some cases, 40 years.

Still, they listened:

> I don't know this for a fact, but if the energy industry wasn't hurting we'd be flat out busy, and I don't think I would have had the attention to have the conversation to begin with because it just wouldn't have seemed very much within the realm of possibility to them. But I think because of the downturn and because so many people are out of work and they kind of did have to listen. And whether they admit it or not, I guess I just had a better audience versus as if the price of oil was $100 a barrel.

Was the willingness of Janet's coworkers to hear her out indicative that economic realities may be shifting the social norms regarding fossil fuels in Alberta? As noted by Valente and Pumpuang (2008, p. 882), "Opinion leaders tend to monitor the climate of opinion and exercise their influence when the advantages of the new ideas are apparent or when it is clear that norms will change." Janet appraised her effectiveness realistically: "I would never be foolish enough to think that I could change anyone's

opinion." While she may not have changed her coworkers views about climate change, Janet figured that she was able to normalize the conversation. In part this was due to her framing, which emphasized the need for the industry to change due to the upcoming implementation of Alberta's carbon tax, and which she presented as an opportunity for the company. "So that made the conversations more productive versus challenging them directly what they think about climate change," she said. This is a good example of how the two-step flow of communication can be effective: The opinion leader is aware of the context of the audience, which allows her to identify key openings and frame the discussion accordingly. It also offers a glimpse into how emotions come into play with climate change discourse. Janet offered her social network hope in the form of economic opportunities presented by changes to Alberta's energy policy.

4.1.3. Karen

The facts we choose to consider are filtered through our immediate goals, which are dependent upon positive emotional motivations that trump rational decision making. Negative emotions, of course, similarly impact the decision-making process. As with Stan and Janet, Karen's project was influenced by emotions surrounding the downturn in Alberta's economy and how they affected her audience's reception of climate change messaging. Initially, Karen assumed that the tough times would inspire the possibility of change. For many, however, the prospect of an uncertain future that is less dependent upon fossil fuels appears as a greater threat than the known (if cyclical) dependence on oil and gas. Although the economic downturn is disrupting the livelihoods of many people in Alberta, a slump is a familiar prospect in a region where many vehicles sport bumper stickers that read "Please God, give us another oil boom and we promise not to piss it away this time." Karen questioned her timing.

> Is it actually better to work on climate at a time like this? Will people actually listen because they're desperate for other options? They're desperate for a new way forward? They're more open to it because they're financially struggling? Or is it better when people are more comfortable and happy and rolling in the dough? For some reason I assumed it would be better during this sort of a period, and the further I get into it I don't know for sure. There's too much fear right now. Too much fear and anger to make much progress, I'm finding.

I asked Karen if she thought the NDP's Climate Leadership Plan had helped her efforts. She responded,

> Absolutely. Yeah, anyone who said different would be kidding themselves. I think sometimes it's like 98% of what they've done has been helpful for that. But of course there's the fact that some of the actions they've taken are coming off as quite prescriptive. They've really angered a lot of organizations and the leadership in these organizations, and sometimes that pushes progress back a little bit as well. I'm surprised by the amount of anger some of my colleagues and friends and family feel about being forced, where at the same time I'm so grateful because you know what it did, it opened up so much permission space for us to go further and be bolder.

Karen had previously taken Next Up's seven-month social justice training course and felt that she already had a good sense of how to conduct challenging conversations. She found, though, that the CLP training helped her better understand how people react to complex problems both psychologically and emotionally and how to manage those reactions. In particular, Karen said that the training gave her more patience for peoples' fears and ignorance about climate change. She admitted that she was still learning to read her audience, but her ability to quickly gauge others' emotions helped guide her approach with audiences that often contained an element of the Dismissive segment. The spectrum of allies lessons proved useful for dealing with this group:

> So if someone's very stuck in actively opposing climate change—and that's going to be a much, much, much lower percentage than the people who are kind of exploring the issue—I spend less time on them than I used to, and I work more in the middle.

She also raised the 2013 Alberta floods during her conversations in what she felt was an inoffensive manner, as a way to discuss the need for climate change efficacy. Karen found that "most people are pretty open to this conversation. I find that the people I have to be a bit more cautious with or thoughtful are people who are in my personal life." Of course, this tack did not work for everyone. Some were immediately alienated and completely rejected the idea that the flood had anything to do with climate change. Referring to the floods, however, can be a good conversational ploy because, as Roeser argues, "By providing people with concrete narratives, distant others who can otherwise easily be neglected come uncomfortably close by and force oneself to critically assess one's own behavior" (2012, p. 1057). And in this case, the others were not so distant, making the argument that much more compelling.

4.1.4. Dave

Dave works in the energy sector as an employee of the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO), which uses coal, natural gas, and, to a lesser extent, wind and hydro power to manage and operate the province's power grid (Alberta Electric System Operator, 2017). As part of the Alberta Climate Leadership Plan, AESO was directed to retire all coal facilities by 2030 and integrate significant amounts of renewable energy sources to the grid. Based on this directive and a subsequent reorganization of AESO, Dave was optimistic about his action plan. He set himself a formidable task by proposing to AESO's upper level management, which he characterized as very conservative and risk averse, that he develop a course to promote awareness and education on climate change and sustainability in the organization. Unfortunately, the proposal was rejected as too controversial.

> A quote has stuck with me from a senior executive telling me some things like religion just shouldn't be talked about, essentially grouping climate change issues in the same bucket as religion, which is a little bit troubling. So that kind of put the brakes on things.

Dave's experience at AESO paralleled that of Norgaard's: Raising climate change invariably killed the conversation because it was an uncomfortable, inappropriate topic, and discussing it was outside of social norms (2011). The lack of receptivity may also have been due to the inverse relationship between the wealth bestowed by fossil fuels and concern about its effects: Nations that emit more carbon dioxide are less concerned about climate change (Norgaard, 2011). Dave thinks that the response he received may have been the result, in part, of his approach.

> I just went head on first. In hindsight I look back and think of all the skills and the tools that [the CLP] provided us, and they were there. I guess I got a little nervous when I had a room full of executives looking at me, probably questioning a little bit what I was doing. Maybe I wasn't tactful enough on how I approached this and probably should have started smaller. Maybe instead of developing a whole course curriculum, I could do a lunch and learn or something.

It may be that informal conversations would have been more effective. Sparking conversations on a controversial subject with a conservative audience requires tact and the ability to determine which way the wind blows. A prime example is Turner's (2007) account of a social transformation strategy that successfully implemented renewable

energy projects on the Danish island of Samso. The key to acceptance was a subtle long-term, soft sell campaign that inspired villagers to take ownership of the process on a local level. Wind farm proponents introduced their project informally at the end of meetings held to deal with other "more important" issues, even offering free beer to those on hand to make the conversations more social. Gradually the proponents' social capital with the islanders grew over the course of several meetings that were incorporated into social events before they presented the details of their ask. Dave realized how he needs to modify his action plan along similar lines: "Build a little more equity within the organization by going for coffees with certain people and developing those relationships for pitching an idea on we're going to talk about climate change." Having learned this valuable lesson the hard way, Dave changed tack and is now working with AESO's human resources group and learning department to refine the course.

4.1.5. Becky

Becky's workplace is far more supportive of her climate change messaging than are the workplaces of Janet, Karen, Dave, and Stan. The Women's Centre of Calgary, where Becky is employed, paid for her to take the CLP training, as well as part of her salary while she was at the retreats. Becky's action plan called for the implementation of a pilot program that would run at the centre throughout 2017. The Women's Centre hosts weekly or monthly discussions where women can engage in learning about social issues and creating social change ("Work for Change," 2017). Women constitute 57% of the Alarmed segment of the Six Americas of Global Warming and 61% of the Concerned, so directing messaging to this audience (particularly those aged 30 to 64) is crucial for any climate change campaign (A. Leiserowitz, Maibach, & Roser-Renouf, 2009). Becky's plan involved having the centre add conversations on climate change to the calendar and connecting her coworkers to climate issues and climate leadership people. In October 2016, this led to the Women's Centre collaborating with Alberta Ecotrust, the Pembina Institute, and the Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations to find ways to engage nonenvironmental NGOs in discussions around climate change and find linkages between the organizations. In January 2017, the Women's Centre launched its Environmental Issues Discussion Series, which featured "Climate Change 101," a discussion led by CLP alumnus Alison, who is a campaigner with the Pembina Institute.

The workshop also covered the gender lens and how to use it as a tool to understand the gendered impacts of climate change" ("Environmental Workshop: Gender and Climate Change," 2017).

4.1.6. Alison

Alison had planned to put together a structured network of organizations to promote climate action to the public as part of her work with Alberta Ecotrust, but shortly after she completed the CLP training she was headhunted by the Pembina Institute, where she is now employed as a senior analyst. Her plan emulated Next Up's goal of bringing people from different work areas and backgrounds together to work on climate change. "I didn't continue my project. I kind of live it now through my new job," Alison explained. At Pembina she works on corporate, government, and community-based sustainability projects in Alberta and recently started developing a plan with a labour union to help its 40,000 members transition to a clean economy. The partnership was instigated by another CLP alumnus who works for the union.

4.2. Evaluation

In assessing how well the CLP cohort was prepared for the task at hand, I relied almost entirely on the reports of my study participants. Their thoughts about the success of the program were invariably influenced by how they were received by their social networks when they rolled out their action plans. This likely influenced their judgements of how effective the training was; from the accounts of my participants, challenging Albertans' social norms in face-to-face conversations was often difficult. For that reason, it is important to restate that Next Up's goal in launching the CLP pilot project was to bring climate thinking and conversation into workplaces and communities. This is more a job of planting seeds than of reaping harvests. Still, when the conditions are right, one follows the other. Difficult conversations about climate change are crucial in building efficacy and mitigation. Norgaard argues that conversation has the power to combat socially organized denial and shift anthropogenic climate change from an abstract construct to a risk worthy of response (2006). The subjective reports of the CLP trainees do suggest the feasibility of making climate change part of normal—albeit tough—conversations in their communities, thereby indicating some level of the program's

effectiveness. It is very likely that the CLP campaigners will never know the real impact of their efforts. As Janet said of the people in her oilfield service company, “It would take time to let these ideas and ideals sit with this group of people that just really had no experience or comfortableness with a lot of the terminology I was using.” Those who are frustrated by the slow uptake of climate change efficacy may take heart, however, in Malcolm Gladwell’s assertion in *The Tipping Point* that “change happens not gradually but at one dramatic moment” (2000, p. 9).

A significant portion of the CLP curriculum was devoted to dealing with the psychological and emotional reactions that the cohort would face as they carried out their action plans. The training covered three levels of emotions: the cohort’s fears and concerns surrounding the magnitude of climate change threats; fearful and/or angry people in their social networks; and the cohort’s own emotions as they delivered their messages to sometimes indifferent, sometimes hostile audiences. Tara found that the emotional intelligence training helped her to nuance her messaging, in that it gave her a better understanding of how her audience interpreted what she said. A high level of emotional intelligence is an important trait for campaigners, “especially that part of empathy having to do with recognizing others’ feelings” (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008, p. 519). Empathy, however, cannot be taught, at least not over the course of five weekends. Next Up director Kevin Millsip credits the members of the CLP cohort with a high degree of emotional intelligence, which aided not only their understanding of what they might face in the field, but also helped to form a supportive atmosphere during the retreats. In future CLP training, the emotional intelligence training will be modified, as Millsip felt the facilitators devoted too much time to covering the research methodology that supported the social/emotional component of behaviour change, in particular convincing others to get engaged in climate efficacy. More time will be spent on the core content, and the focus upon methodology will be scaled back. This should help the campaigners since, presumably, they are more interested in this information from a practitioner’s perspective than from that of a researcher.

There were often discussions at the retreats about the enormity of the wicked problem. Alison related how the atmosphere at the retreats made

> it possible to acknowledge that sometimes you feel helpless, and you feel overwhelmed, and you feel useless, and all the stuff you are doing is not enough. We always had room to let these emotions come up. To do that

> with 26 people you didn't even know two months earlier is something like—yeah, they did a great job.

Stan found that talking about the enormity of the challenge removed the despair he felt and gave him "the confidence to move forward anyway and, I think, maybe even more important, some people to do it with." It is worth emphasizing the value the participants placed on being part of a group that was able to establish strong, trusting relationships during the retreats. Given that Next Up sought to establish a network of like-minded individuals intent on moving the dial on climate change efficacy, the level of bonding that occurred during the training is an important yardstick upon which to gauge the success of the program. Stan may have best summed up its value when he said, "I think one of the most important pieces for me in the whole thing was just having a safe community of people."

Several participants noted that one of the most beneficial aspects of the training was interacting with people who had varied backgrounds and occupations. That diversity seems to have lent the cohort strength, allowing people to see the climate change challenge from multiple perspectives that they may not otherwise have been exposed to. As Janet said, "Some of the more important experiences I had were people you normally wouldn't approach. That was probably who I learned the most from." Dave concurred: "I think the biggest thing I learned and the most important training happened just from dialogue with my other cohorts." One shortcoming in the training that Next Up identified is that it failed to take advantage of the knowledge within the cohort. There was a lot of capacity within the group, and Millsip realized they needed to find a way for the participants to share their own skills at future retreats. As an example, Tara noted Dave's expertise as an employee with Alberta Electric Systems Operator and the knowledge he was able to share with the cohort about how the electricity grid worked and how Alberta was responding to the new climate policy.

Given that the CLP was a pilot course, there are invariably aspects of the training that can be improved. To make the curriculum more relevant and suitable for the next cohort, Next Up plans to canvas the CLP trainees before the first retreat to find out what issues they want to explore and plans to spend more time during the first weekend mapping out the skills the group has prioritized. Dave, for his part, would have appreciated the opportunity to work on building skills to communicate specifically with

people in the energy sector. If Next Up is to expand the CLP, perhaps it would be worthwhile considering specialized cohorts to deal with certain sectors.

In planning the pilot curriculum, Next Up determined that covering the basics of climate science should be an integral part of the CLP training. Given the diversity of the cohort, however, delivering the right amount of climate science at the retreats was difficult. Tara, for example, drew confidence from the climate science training and thought there could have been more of it. She also appreciated learning how climate change has affected Alberta both politically and economically. Emily, who did not have a strong understanding of climate science, said the lessons empowered her to better tailor her approach to suit the various situations that arose. She found that she was better able to guide climate change conversations compared to before the CLP training, when such discussions often left her feeling frustrated because they "didn't go the way she wanted them to and couldn't understand why." Becky, however, did not find that knowing the science helped her carry out her action plan.

> I think before I went into the program, I had this perception that if I could learn the facts and if I could communicate the facts, then that would be useful. Obviously science is important and having the facts is important—but you really have to connect with people on an emotional level and not intimidate them with all of these numbers and harrowing statistics....I don't think it's necessarily that important, to be honest. It's important, but not for everyone to know. I think some people need to know it in order to communicate the urgency, but I'm not convinced it's necessary for the people I work with [at the Calgary Women's Centre] to know that.

It is important to make the distinction between instruction on climate science and teaching campaigners how to best communicate climate science. Nisbet and Kotcher argue that "opinion leaders should be trained not as educators disseminating information about climate change, but as communication strategists initiating conversations with friends and acquaintances, deliberately framing messages in ways that make them more meaningful and persuasive to their recipients" (2009, p. 339). During an evaluation of the program when the cohort reconvened after carrying out their action plans, Kevin Millsip realized that in the future, CLP participants should be provided with more resources in advance of the retreats to "get their heads inside" the basics of climate science.

> A lot of them were really struggling with the science of climate change even though we came back to it in different ways. It was good learning for us. Next time we'll do a mapping out of what they feel like they want to learn.

That way the trainees will have a sufficient understanding and a common baseline, which will free up more time to focus on other aspects of the training. This could include providing information on the specific impacts of climate change on the province. Another feature that might resonate with Albertans is information on carbon budgets. Carbon has a market value "that reflects the anticipated financial liabilities from emissions related to climate change impacts" (Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development, 2005, p. 1). If CLP ambassadors can explain the connections between emissions and impacts to audiences that are concerned about the economic ramifications of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan (a carbon levy, phasing out coal-generated electricity and reducing oil and gas emissions while developing renewable energy sources), they will provide an understanding of what fossil fuels can and cannot be burned so that Alberta can achieve a carbon surplus.

As with climate science, delivering social justice and activism training was another aspect that proved difficult to supply in the right measure for each individual in the cohort. Emily had expected the CLP to provide more emphasis on the social justice issues of climate change and on how different groups of people are disproportionately impacted. Becky would have liked to learn more about holding discussions and taking action in ways that do not exclude marginalized people. She feels that the climate change movement in Calgary is not inclusive of women, people who are racialized, or those who are living in poverty. Becky pointed out that these people are often sidelined in the dialogue about reducing our consumption of fossil fuels. This is due to the fact that access to fossil fuels, as with all consumer goods, is limited by income; reducing your carbon footprint is not always a matter of choice. "Often the framing that we hear is like, oh, park your car and ride your bike today," said Becky. "A lot of the women that I work with would love to have a car and have to ride their bikes out of necessity."

Karen noted the problems that many in the cohort had with hierarchical challenges in their workplaces and other social networks.

> How do you work on transformational change when you don't have a voice? Or when the people that make the decisions are so protective of the status quo? I would have loved to go deeper into it from a climate change and a local perspective. What does that really look like in Calgary? Who are those people who require the status quo to remain the same so that they stay comfortable and happy? And what frames work for them? And be able to

> do some testing, even to make some progress there, would have been nice.

It may be inevitable that this gap in the training exists. Social justice is achieved by engaging with power to correct power imbalances; it requires struggle. Marshall Ganz, drawing from the lessons learned in the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1960s, questions the practicality of providing campaigners with a step-by-step guide on how to struggle against inequality:

> Learning skills and practices is not like learning a formula; it's more like learning how to ride a bicycle. You can read 10 books about it or listen to someone lecture about it all day, but how do you really start learning to ride a bicycle? You get on. And you fall (2009, p. 19).

He adds that "leadership is about enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty" (2009, p. 19). It may be that the best preparation activists can expect is knowing that others share their struggle against injustice. Janet, who also experienced problems with the status quo, seems to indicate that may be the case. "We all had similar problems, particularly around senior management that are very change averse," she said. "And so there was a comfort in that, to be with people with similar problems that I have been facing." Again, this speaks to the emotional resilience required of social activists.

Lack of time is inevitably an issue for any endeavour nowadays. Karen found that the key subjects were well covered, but that there was a lot of information to take in over the course of the training, with no opportunity to experiment with the knowledge she had gained:

> So more time would have allowed for, I think, a bit more discussion and reflection. And a bit more testing, trying, which would have been helpful. So that was a challenge that I still am struggling with, and I think a lot of my peers are as well, that we didn't necessarily find an answer to at CLP.

Karen was also of the opinion that Next Up should continue to offer support after the training and have more follow up meetings of the cohort on a consistent basis. "So it's sort of a constant build, measure, learn cycle that the participants get to do with support. Because it's just so exhausting. It's so scary." In September 2016, after the cohort had spent the summer putting their training to use, they came together with Next Up staff in Calgary to share their experiences and evaluate their success. It may be impractical, however, to hold ongoing meet ups as Karen suggests, given that the cohort members

live in different communities around the province, perhaps making it a hardship for working people to devote the time required to attend.

Clearly, though, any program such as the CLP would benefit from ongoing support after the initial training. Nisbet and Kotcher recommend holding “regular reunions or booster sessions of opinion-leader cohorts…to reinforce training and to maintain volunteer enthusiasm” (2009, p. 339). Among the people trained by the Climate Project Canada to deliver Al Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth” presentation, attrition and burnout set in after a year or two, brought on by depression from the realities of climate change and a lack of ongoing support from the project (Frank, 2011). Post-training support can nurture camaraderie. Emily reported that she now feels part of a climate activist network and has attended organized events where members of the cohort have gotten together. She is also collaborating on writing projects with two people from the cohort. Booster sessions can also reinforce accountability. Janet would have liked a

> monthly or quarterly check in with the group, just to keep everyone on that path. Because I think it’s pretty easy to go back to your normal life and deviate, and it kind of loses the power that it once held.

She did, however, acknowledge that it might not be up to Next Up to maintain the bonds formed during the retreats, but more the responsibility of her and the others to stay in touch. While some members have stayed in touch as they carried out their action plans and remain connected, others have fallen by the wayside.

> There are some people who have dropped out of the group. Or not dropped out of it but don’t seem to be in contact. Which is interesting, just thinking about diversity and accessibility. They were people who came from nonwhite backgrounds, and I don’t know if there’s something to that, something we could have done better as a group. (Becky)

That is not to say that the CLP was entirely a settler-oriented program, although Next Up has determined that the next CLP curriculum will include land-based education provided by First Nation guests outside the classroom. These guests will also present talks on Treaties 6 and 7 (covering the boundaries of Edmonton and Calgary regions respectively), where the action plans will be carried out. These additions are expected to give the CLP participants a deeper understanding of how climate change is impacting Alberta. Beyond that, providing more input from First Nations’ perspectives would likely enhance the social justice aspect of the curriculum. Dave noted

> The significance of having the Indigenous community there is really, really important going forward, both as we transform our communities but also as we deal with reconciliation as well. I just thought it was a very powerful message about powerful moments that I'll take away with me forever."

Summary

In this chapter I have explored the experiences of eight CLP participants who used their training to become ambassadors for collective action on climate change in their communities. From the accounts of my study participants, the conversations they had within their social networks in Alberta, a province long dependent on the oil and gas industry, were often challenging. Nonetheless, it seems that the training they received on the emotional aspects surrounding climate change sufficiently developed their emotional intelligence, which enabled them to deal with negative reactions from their audiences. In addition, the training instilled in them sufficient resilience to ward off the frustration and depression that can often plague campaigners and activists. Next Up was fortunate that the CLP cohort managed to gel quickly and establish a sense of mutual trust among the members. This may be attributed to trust-building exercises or to the members uniting against the shared threat of climate change and sharing a strong desire to combat it. Among the participants of this study, bonds were formed that have lasted beyond the duration of the training period. Study participants and the Next Up executive reported varying levels of satisfaction with the training on climate science and policy, as well as on social activism. The Next Up executive determined from the pilot program that providing more resources before the retreats could better prepare the cohort on the basics of climate science and policy. It was not as clear from the interviews I conducted how to adjust the training on social justice to better suit a diverse cohort. In the future, it may be worthwhile establishing training programs for cohorts drawn from similar professions or sectors of society so that the curriculum can focus on issues that are germane to the entire group. Training could also benefit from drawing upon the knowledge, skills, and experience of members of the cohort; these could be determined during the recruitment process. Finally, it could be worthwhile for Next Up to consider building into the program a mechanism to provide long-term support for trainees when they are delivering their action plans. Perhaps this could take the form of mentorship by people who have already passed through the CLP. My interview protocol did not include questions about ongoing support or about bringing CLP graduates into the larger Next Up network of social activists.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Little research has been conducted on how to train opinion leaders to deliver peer to peer messaging so that collective climate change efficacy diffuses through society like ripples spreading across a pond (Keys, Thomsen & Smith, 2010, 2014; Valenti & Pumpuang, 2008). This is the knowledge gap that I explored with my study. When I began my research project the goal was to determine the best methods to train opinion leaders to reduce carbon footprints in their social networks. Through the course of my literature review I came to realize that teaching people how to promote individual climate change efficacy was not the question I needed to pursue. Instead, I came to understand that what is required to mitigate, and ultimately reverse, anthropogenic climate change is collective political efficacy whereby a majority of society demands effective and viable climate and energy policies from local, provincial and federal governments.

Among the many revelations along my research path, is that such a movement may well be grounded in the most prosaic of actions: People talking with one another through their social networks, either one-on-one or in small groups. My greatest surprise, however, was the realization of the paramount importance that emotions play in climate change campaigns. Other important findings include the significance of social norms as they relate to our response on climate change; how the two-step model of communication could improve the uptake of political efficacy; and the value of reframing climate change as a social justice issue. In order to shed light on how I arrived at these conclusions—and others—I will bring the literature back to bear upon Next Up's Climate Leadership Program (CLP) training to identify the strengths and weaknesses of its approach, and speculate how this model might be scaled up and applied to different contexts.

Literature discussing the psycho-social aspects of climate change indicates that although the human decision making process relies upon both facts and feelings, when we are confronted with evaluating and acting upon the risks and threats associated with complex and overwhelming challenges, the emotional mode will rise to the fore (Hornsey et al., 2015; Levine et al., 2015; Marshall, 2014). Furthermore, climate change campaign messages that appeal only to the intellect will likely fail to incite action (Markowitz & Shariff, 2012; Roeser, 2012; Wenstøp & Wenstøp, 2016). It would not be fair to say that

traditional climate campaigns have entirely overlooked the need to appeal to audiences' emotions. Unfortunately, though, too often the emotions that have been played upon are negative: Fear, guilt and shame (Corner, 2013; Cross et al., 2015; Marshall, 2014; O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009; Turner, 2010). Emotion was an aspect of the training to which Next Up devoted a considerable amount of attention, and as I progressed from my immersion in the literature to interviewing research participants, it became apparent that the emotions surrounding climate change encompass much more than crafting campaign messages.

First, several of my participants expressed concern and fear over the future impacts of climate change. They also reported a sense of being overwhelmed and frustrated by their perceived impotence to do anything about it. These emotions drove them to apply to the CLP pilot program. Norgaard notes how a sense of helplessness and hopelessness can lead people to join social movements (2011). Next Up dealt with the feelings of helplessness by lowering trainees' perceived level of responsibility for solving the climate change challenge from a global scale to having the them focus on their "piece of the pie"—their social network and locality. Concentrating on the local is a recommendation practitioners have made to reframe climate change in order to free it from the environmental ghetto, and involve and empower a broader range of people (Corner, 2013; Futerra, 2009; Lorenzoni et al., 2007; Segnit & Ereaut, 2007; Shome & Marx, 2009; Stoknes, 2015). Next Up provided the CLP participants with a sense of relief by giving them instruction or permission to make the task at hand more manageable, in effect, lifting the weight of the world from their shoulders.

Second, Next Up provided the participants with instruction in self-care to strengthen their resiliency when they engaged in conversations with the people in their social networks. Participants were introduced to the Movement Action Plan model which instills hope and empowerment to guard activists against depression and frustration that can lead to campaigner burn out (Moyer, 1987). Hope is the emotion most prominently offered through the literature as a key for climate change campaigners to win over new audiences (Pike & Herr, 2010; Roeser, 2012; Stoknes, 2015). Next Up reinforced the value of hope with campaigners by introducing them to the lessons of civil rights activist Marshall Ganz. Ganz counsels mobilizing hope in the vehicle of the story to win audiences' attention and dispel fear (2011). The importance of using stories to deliver climate change messaging is supported by Gladwell (2000), Futerra (2009), Jones

(2014), Pike et al. (2010), and Stoknes (2015). Another form of self-care was provided by the makeup of the CLP cohort who drew strength from each other and established a high level of trust. That, however, was due at least as much to serendipity as the recruitment process, although it was surely nurtured through team building exercises. Next Up created a favourable learning atmosphere by conducting the CLP training at a series of retreats that allowed for a sense of cohesion and common goals to form among the group more quickly than if the sessions had been held in their home communities where the participants dispersed after the day's events. During the retreats, trust was built among the cohort as the trainees were given time to compare and practice their action plans. Next Up made it possible for people with children to attend by subsidizing day care, and providing scholarships to those that could not afford the training fee.

The third aspect of emotions was how the training prepared the campaigners to deal with the angry, fearful feedback they expected to receive as they carried out their action plans. Fear can lead to the erection of cognitive barriers that create denial, apathy, and inaction (Norgaard, 2006; Patt & Weber, 2014; Weber & Stern, 2011). Lorenzen (2014) stresses that resistance can be overcome by framing messages non-confrontationally so as to create some level of comfort. The CLP cohort delivered their messages in a province where a defining feature of the culture is the oil and gas industry, at a time when it was experiencing the twin setbacks of an economic downturn coupled with a new regulatory regime that would curtail carbon emissions at the wellhead. Throughout the training, Next Up brought in guest experts to deal with specific areas where the staff lacked expertise. One such guest expert from the oil and gas industry's rank and file explained the workers' plight as the energy industry transitions to sustainable sources. Energy workers could feel conflicted as they balance the need to earn a livelihood with the knowledge (sometimes suppressed) that their work contributes to climate change (Daub, 2010). Another guest expert explained the need to channel the conversation in directions that did not shame or blame the energy workers. These sessions raised trainees' level of empathy for many of the people they would encounter.

Next Up's primary goal in launching the CLP was to create a network of climate change ambassadors that would provide hope and direction to people who were alarmed or concerned about climate change but did not know how to do anything about it. The pilot program represented the first stage in the formation of that network. If we do not talk about the problems that climate change is causing then we will not talk about

solutions and mitigation either. Normalizing climate change conversations is the first step in challenging and changing social norms (Gladwell, 2000; Norgaard, 2011). The formation of climate change beliefs is cultural (Kahan, 2012) and a position of denial may be adopted by members of a group to fall in line with its social norm (Hynes, 2016). Presumably, the same holds true for those in the Six Americas segments of the Disengaged, Cautious, Concerned, or Alarmed. CLP training introduced the cohort to effective strategies to engage people in difficult conversations. A key technique that was introduced during training was the spectrum of allies concept whereby a campaigner attempts to persuade those who are passive or indifferent about climate change to become more concerned or politically active. The cohort was taught that some people cannot be swayed and there was no point wasting time trying to convince them otherwise. On the other hand, by "moving the needle" in small but positive increments among more open minded audiences, such small victories contribute to campaigners' sense of success, thereby contributing to their well-being (350.org, 2017).

Another strength of Next Up's approach lay in its recruitment methods. It has been argued that environmentalists and scientists have not convinced a large and diverse enough segment of society to get involved in combatting climate change, and that new voices will be required to move more people to action (Marshall, 2014; Pike et al., 2010; Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2004; Taylor, 2000). In specifically seeking out applicants for CLP training that were not involved in the climate or environmental movements, Next Up appears to have addressed that concern. To carry the campaign forward, Next Up is relying on self-selected opinion leaders that are already on a leadership pathway and respected within their community. Valente and Pumpuang (2008) state that the self-selected are the most motivated among opinion leaders. Opinion leaders are the first step in the two-step model of communication which Nisbet and Kotcher argue has been overlooked by climate change campaigns (2009). By taking this approach to recruiting candidates for the CLP, Next Up gained access to several preexisting social networks that they could tap into, thereby extending its reach towards what Malcolm Gladwell refers to as the "tipping point" where new ideas are accepted by a critical mass of people and social norms change (2000).

The most effective and efficient way for collective political efficacy to take hold is by targeting pre-existing social networks that can facilitate participation on a broad scale (Corner & Randall, 2011; Taylor, 2000). Trust and familiarity between the opinion leader

and their audience are a vital asset (Marshall, 2014). During the CLP retreats, opinion leaders were coached to develop action plans where they developed their own messages and tactics to reach their audiences as opposed to being instructed to deliver and not deviate from an organization's predetermined speaking points. By being allowed to personalize their messages to a suitable local frame, the CLP ambassadors could speak in terms more likely to resonate within their social networks. It also gave them the freedom to modify their messages and delivery in response to the reactions they received. By training the CLP cohort to focus on face-to-face, one-on-one or small group conversations, Next Up avoided the arguably less effective approach of internet or social media campaigns (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009; Stoknes, 2015). Johnson (2012) and Shome and Marx (2009) state that it is through face-to-face meetings with small groups in their social networks that opinion leaders stand the best chance of creating and achieving buy in to mutually agreed upon plans of action to reduce carbon consumption.

Next Up is a social justice organization and that was the paradigm within which the CLP was conceived. Looking at climate change through a social justice lens and framing the issue as such should make for a more inclusive approach while freeing climate change from its environmental ghetto (Gunster, 2017; Hale, 2010; Taylor, 2000). In addition, social justice seems to be an effective paradigm with which to move people to climate change efficacy (Howell, 2013). Gunster argues that a climate justice frame is particularly effective in breaking down the barriers of indifference and cynicism (2017). CLP training included the fundamentals of social justice and activism, lessons that were distilled from Next Up's more extensive core programs. The social justice frame is applicable if collective efficacy is an issue argued not with the vocabulary of science but rather with that of politics.

In preparing people to initiate and respond to climate change discussions it is, of course, necessary to offer instruction in climate science. This particular aspect, however, may represent the main weak point of the CLP training. This is not because too little emphasis was placed upon how carbon emissions are affecting our atmosphere, but because there may have been too much time dedicated to the science. Somewhat surprisingly, presenting scientific facts about climate change will tend not to persuade nor dissuade audiences from becoming more or less efficacious (Bulkeley, 2000; Johnson, 2012; Marshall, 2014; Whitmarsh et al., 2011). Spending less time on climate science would allow for more time to be spent on role playing skills and drills and other

aspects of the training. Next Up director Kevin Millsip has stated that CLP trainees will be provided with climate science literature before the retreats begin. Might there be other content from the curriculum that could be given to the cohort before the training commences?

Given that the Alberta NDP government had recently introduced legislation that would affect the energy industry by curtailing its greenhouse gas emissions, I would suggest that a further strength of the CLP training was the inclusion of instruction in climate policy. This allowed the cohort to inform the curious and counter spurious arguments with facts. As the federal Liberal Party is preparing to roll out its National Energy Strategy aimed at meeting its commitment to COP21’s Paris Agreement, schooling CLP participants in the strategy should be added to the curriculum. The climate ambassadors must be prepared to discuss the benefits and shortcomings of the strategy, and how it is likely to impact people in their communities. A well-informed citizenry that is able to debate the merits and shortcomings of energy and climate change policies is essential for an effective political efficacy movement.

One perhaps unavoidable shortcoming of the CLP pilot program was a lack of post training support. Nisbett and Kotcher (2009) and Frank (2011) have identified the importance in long term programs of follow up sessions to maintain a good level of campaigner morale. Next Up did organize a reunion four months after the training wrapped up, but some of my research participants felt that a single meeting was insufficient. While the logistics and expense of arranging post training meetings may prove challenging to orchestrate, they are a crucial factor to ensure long term success of the program. Such sessions could prove invaluable for reinforcing the bonds that campaigners forged during the training, as well as providing peer support that should keep them accountable to each other and engaged in the mission. As such, the follow up sessions could be considered ongoing emotional and motivational support and a bulwark against burnout. Beyond emotional support, a structured process to record and analyse participants’ experiences as they carried out their action plans would enhance future training sessions and constitute a base of knowledge for other climate ambassadors. This knowledge base will improve not only CLP training, but assist active and future campaigners who may need to adapt their approach and shift tactics as they carry out their action plans. Next Up could store the knowledge base on its website, perhaps in a password protected section, that campaigners can access or contribute to as need be. If

Next Up or another organization working within the environmental/social justice paradigm intends to build upon the CLP pilot program to expand the network of climate ambassadors, it could be beneficial to have them converge at annual regional or national conferences. Such meet ups could allow CLP graduates to share stories of success and challenges that would allow them learn from each other's experiences. Conferences might also provide opportunities to identify or recruit potential trainees, and give them exposure to those who have gone through the program. As meetings and conferences are expensive to hold, Next Up should also consider some form of electronic polling and a regular series of telephone or Skype check ins with the CLP graduates to garner feedback and sustain the notion that each person is a valuable component of a strong network.

As the CLP network expands and more people are recruited for training, it may be efficient to assemble cohorts of people with similar occupations or from related walks of life. This would allow for training to focus more on framing climate change conversations with particular sectors of society or workplaces, and for the members of the cohort to draw upon each other's expertise and experience. The drawback of occupational cohorts, though, is that the members may not be sufficiently exposed to diverse perspectives of those from outside their fields of expertise or social stations. This could constrain their effectiveness although that would depend in part on the conversational skill and life experience of the campaigners and the makeup of their social networks. Expanding the CLP will also require the hiring and training of more support staff to handle the retreats. It will also mean creating a larger pool of guest experts from which to draw upon. All of this will require raising more funds.

5.1. Research limitations

With a cohort of 26 to draw from, my eight research participants comprised almost one-third of the sampling frame. Admittedly, that may be too small a sample size to draw adequate conclusions to my research questions. The possibility also exists that my participants may not be representative of the cohort as I do not know the mean age, education levels, or the ethnicities of the CLP graduates. In addition, although I am aware of where most of my research participants live and work, I lack that information about the remainder of the cohort. I expect that all of those factors would have had a bearing on the composition and success of the various action plans. All of my research

participants were positive about their CLP experience. Given that I did not interview members of the cohort that had lost interest in the program or chose not to be interviewed for other reasons, I believe that I was unable to fully determine the areas of the training that could stand improvement. In order to protect the identity of two of my participants, I could not disclose all of the information they provided during the interviews that would have painted a fuller picture of the resistance in certain power structures to climate change messaging. For that reason, as well as the varied loquaciousness of my participants and the length of time they chose to devote to interviews, the impressions and perspectives of some participants influence my findings more heavily than do others. If I had the interviews to conduct over again I would have asked more questions about the details of the participants' action plans, and about the composition of their social networks. Lastly, due to financial, geographic, and temporal limitations, I conducted my interviews by phone. Invariably, in person interviews would have garnered fuller responses and allowed for more incisive probes during questioning.

5.2. Future research

Given that it will likely be some time before we adequately respond to the challenges of climate change, there should be several opportunities for further research. To begin with, research on the effectiveness of training climate change ambassadors would benefit from a larger sample size drawn from a wider geographic area. Interviews could be expanded beyond the ambassadors to include the people in their social networks to determine whether or not they were compelled to become politically active. A comparison of training methods employed by different organizations or by different chapters of the same organization would also be valuable. Learning more about how organizations evaluate their training methods, and how that evaluation influences future training, would yield useful information. And, if it would not upset the bonding process, embedding a researcher among a cohort of trainees for the duration of a program would provide for an insightful study. It would also be valuable for a researcher to follow the progress of a program graduate as they work with their social network, although that may prove too intrusive and raise too many ethical concerns.

There are many unanswered questions about what Canada's new National Energy Strategy will look like: What methods will we use to reduce our carbon emissions and adapt to anticipated climate changes? Which threats should receive greater attention? Which risks are more likely to impact the country? What will work for Canada that dovetails with other nations' climate policies? Constant evaluation of our progress is crucial because there are certain to be missteps along the way. The current and subsequent governments will resist the inevitable push back from the fossil fuel industry only if it is convinced that a majority of voters support the pivot towards alternate forms energy and climate change mitigation. It is therefore crucial that climate change communicators deliver a hopeful, practical message: The effectiveness of collective political efficacy.

Based on my research it appears that social justice organizations are well positioned to train self-selected opinion leaders to deliver this message to their social networks. Campaigners who are familiar with, trusted by, and credible to particular audiences may generate greater engagement with the political process. The classic two-step model of communication will be most effective if the training prepares the messengers to make emotional appeals in their own words and deliver them face-to-face. This approach should prove the most effective way of normalizing the conversations that are a necessary first step to weaning our society off of fossil fuels while transitioning to alternate forms of energy.

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Appendix A. Study details

Study title: Casting pebbles in a pond: A study of opinion leader training to reduce carbon footprints in social networks

Principal Investigator: Geoff Gilliard | @sfu.ca | (Masters Candidate, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University).

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Shane Gunster | @sfu.ca |

REB Application No.: 2016s0364

Background

Although we know what actions are required to reduce our fossil fuel dependency, climate change campaigns have generally been unable to narrow the 'value-action gap' between knowledge and efficacy (Hards, 2012; Whitmarsh, Seyfang, & O'Neill, 2011). Climate change efficacy can be grouped broadly in the following categories: "political and consumer activism; adoption of energy-efficient technologies; energy conservation at home and on the road; and [advocates] attempting to influence their friends and families of their views" (Maibach et al., 2009, p. 20). Part of the problem lies with the messengers; neither environmentalists, scientists nor politicians are particularly effective messengers of climate change efficacy because their reach is too narrow, their message too one-dimensional or they lack the trust of their intended audiences (Hale, 2010; Hall & Taplin, 2010a; Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2004). In contrast, campaigners who are familiar, trusted and credible to particular audiences may generate greater engagement with climate change messages (Bolsen, Leeper, & Shapiro, 2014; Marshall, 2014). Increasing large scale efficacy may require climate change campaigns to find and train "ordinary people who might not be fluent speakers or skilled orators but can bring an authenticity and genuine sense of common ownership to the issue" (Marshall, 2014, p. 119). These 'opinion leaders' will already be interested in climate change issues and possess sufficient social capital and natural leadership abilities so that they can reshape social norms while delivering the campaign messages to their social networks (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). For climate change efficacy to have the desired effect it must be adopted collectively, and the most effective and efficient way for that to occur is by targeting pre-existing social networks that can facilitate participation on a broad scale

(Corner & Randall, 2011; Taylor, 2000). Johnson (2012) and Shome & Marx (2009) state that it is through face-to-face meetings with small groups in their social networks that opinion leaders stand the best chance of creating and achieving buy in to mutually agreed upon plans of action to reduce carbon consumption. How best, then, to train the opinion leaders to deliver peer to peer messaging so that engagement and behavioural change diffuses through society like ripples spreading across a pond? Little research has been conducted on this matter in relation to climate change efficacy (Keys, Thomsen & Smith, 2010, 2014; Valenti & Pumpuang, 2008). This is the knowledge gap that I wish to explore.

Study Purpose

I suggest that evaluating how social justice organizations train opinion leaders is important; through evaluation comes improvement, and improved methods should increase the pace of climate change efficacy. During the course of my research I propose to focus on opinion leaders living in Alberta that have been trained by Next Up. The organization is a network of social change leaders across Canada. Its Climate Leadership Program is a pilot program that started in March 2016 when it trained 27 Alberta residents to “support climate action within their workplaces and organizations” (Next Up, 2016). Each participant developed a climate action plan and, in the fall of 2016, the cohort of trainees will reconvene to report on their progress.

Hypothesis (research question)

1. What training methods are used by environmental justice and social justice organizations to assist opinion leaders to improve climate change efficacy within social networks?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of influencing climate change efficacy with this method of communication?

Prospective Participant Information

The sample will include eight to twelve adults in Alberta who have received and put to use training by Next Up to influence climate change efficacy in their social networks. If possible, I will select participants who differ across the various markers of identity, such as gender, ethnicity, education and age. Ideally this will result in interviewing participants from a diverse range of social networks.

Detailed Research Procedures

Recruitment

I will approach the Director of Next Up and the Calgary Program Coordinator to request their assistance in identifying potential participants. I will email the people identified requesting their participation and attach the consent form document (see Invitation Message below). No remuneration will be offered.

After I have gained the consent of participants from my initial message, I will use snowball sampling to recruit additional subjects (see Snowball Message below). During the interviews or afterwards through email I will ask the initial participants if they would be willing to contact others among their cohort to consider participating in this study. Only if the third party is agreeable will I contact them.

Invitation Message

Subject: Research on climate change awareness training

Dear _____

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research project on climate change training. I'm a Masters student at Simon Fraser University and I'm writing my thesis on the training methods used by social justice organizations to prepare opinion leaders to increase the level of climate change awareness and action among the people in their social networks. I'm particularly interested in Next Up's training and how it's worked out for you.

If you'd like to take part in this project I will interview you by phone or Skype for 30-45 minutes and ask you questions regarding your training and about your experiences speaking about climate change issues with people. I'll also ask you about how you think the training you received might be improved.

I'm not affiliated with Next Up or any other organization and I want to assure you that your participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to be interviewed but then change your mind about being part of the study for any reason, you may withdraw from the project at any time.

Please find attached a consent form with more information about the project. If you have any questions about the form or any other aspects of my research I'd be glad to answer them. My email address is █████@sfu.ca If you'd like to take part, please sign the form, scan it and email it back to me.

Sincerely,
Geoff Gilliard

Snowball message

Dear ______,

I'm writing to ask if you would please consider helping me get more people from the Climate Leadership Program to take part in my research study. Would it be possible for you to reach out to anyone in the program that you've kept in touch with and tell them about the interview I did with you and ask if it's alright for you to pass their contact info along to me? I sent my initial message with a consent form to everyone who took the program, but perhaps if they hear from you they would be more willing to take part. I appreciate you considering this request.

Sincerely,
Geoff Gilliard

Consent

A consent form will be attached to the invitation email to potential interviewees whose contact information has been provided by Next Up. The potential participant be offered the chance to ask questions about any aspect of the research before signing the form and sending me a scanned copy. The consent form includes the goals of the project, the number of interviews (1) and its expected duration, and the intent to digitally audio record the interviews. Included in this form is reference to the potential use of written narrative for the purposes of this research project. Also emphasized in this form is the voluntary nature of the participation and the right to withdraw at any time. The participant is also informed and consents to being re-contacted by the researcher after the interview to discuss any elements of their interview for which the meaning is ambiguous to the researcher.

In the event that participants do not have access to a printer and scanner, once I have determined that they are able to provide informed consent, they may acknowledge consent by email.

Data collection methods

Data collection and analysis will take place from September 2016 to January 2017. I will conduct the interviews with the participants via mobile phone or Skype. Data collection will consist of in-depth interviews. Interviews are expected to be 30-45 minutes in length. All interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed by myself. I will be the only person with access to the recordings. I will download recordings from the digital interview-recording device (a mobile phone or Skype recording app) to an encrypted memory stick, which will be stored in a locked cabinet in my locked office at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of British Columbia. The recordings on my mobile phone or the computer with Skype will be deleted.

Potential Benefits

The expected outcomes and benefits of this study are as follows:

1. A portrayal of the training methods of opinion leaders by environmental and social justice organizations to improve climate change efficacy in Canada and beyond.
2. A better understanding of how those who undergo training assess those methods.
3. Suggestions for improvements to the existing training methods.
4. Ultimately, increased levels climate change efficacy throughout society.

Potential Risks

I believe this study to be of minimal risk to interview participants. Deception will not be used for this research project. It is possible that during the research process, participants may share unpleasant experiences from their efforts to inform their peers about climate science and methods to reduce their carbon footprints and/or become politically involved in the climate change movement. There also exists the possibility that participants' peers or Next Up staff and trainers could read my thesis or subsequent

articles. Therefore, the danger exists that any comments made during the interviews could be associated to participants. In the case of comments that are perceived to be negative by third parties, this could lead to an unpleasant situation. To guard against that event I will offer all participants the option of confidentiality.

The risks regarding emotional distress are minimal. In order to minimize the risk of emotional distress, participation in the project will be completely voluntary and I will adopt an ongoing consent strategy. This entails checking with the participants before and after the interview to ensure that they are able to withdraw without penalty or consequence at any point during the research process.

Maintenance of Confidentiality

Raw data (field notes, digital recordings, transcriptions) will only be accessible to me. Participants will be asked to indicate if they would like their identities to be kept confidential. If that is the case, confidentiality will be maintained through the replacement of their names and those of people they refer to with pseudonyms on all textual data from interviews (e.g., transcripts and analyses of the data, reflexive logs, coding sheets). Additionally, all other potential identifiers will be removed from the manuscript and either replaced with pseudonyms or general descriptors.

Most findings will be reported in aggregate, but selective quotes may be used to illustrate points made by several participants. In the case of those participants who have requested confidentiality, care will be taken to ensure that no identifying data is included in these direct quotes or that details that may identify participants are changed if their exclusion is impractical. A unique code will be assigned to study participants. In this way any quotes will be by unique code which would not disclose gender, age, etc. of the participants. Participants will specifically consent to having their quotes included.

Data Analysis Plan

I will undertake analysis in tandem with data collection. Interview transcripts will be thematically coded with qualitative data management software, NVivo.

Retention and Destruction of Data

Participant Identity-Pseudonym Linkage

One digital copy of a list of participants that links pseudonyms to the participants' real identity will be stored in a password-protected file on an encrypted memory stick in the locked desk of my locked office at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of British Columbia until 6 months after the expected completion of data collection (January 2017). Temporary retention of the identity linkage ensures that I can delete information from the interview if so requested by participants. After this period, the file will be permanently deleted. Note: the interview data will be stored separately from this list at my home.

Raw Data

During the data collection phase, I will download recordings from the digital interview-recording device (a mobile phone or Skype recording app) to an encrypted memory stick, which will be stored in a locked cabinet in my locked office at the University of British Columbia. The recordings on my phone or the computer with Skype will be deleted.

I will specify on the consent forms that the audio recordings will be destroyed within 6 months after completion of the project. This is to allow time for transcription; however, it is likely that this time period will be shorter.

No raw data (e.g., interview recordings, transcripts) will be sent by e-mail (or any other form of internet transmission), neither in the body of a message nor as attachments. Raw data will be stored on password-protected files on a memory stick or external hard drive that can be stored in the locked cabinet of my locked office. Any transcripts or data analysis documents shared with my senior supervisor, Dr. Shane Gunster, will first be cleaned of identifying information.

Transcripts, coding and interpretations

When coding on NVivo, I will use a password-protected file located on Dropbox on a password-protected computer. To allow time for ongoing analysis and publication of the findings, the NVivo file associated with the project as well as coding outputs will be retained (with password protection) for up to two years (until January 31, 2019). Similarly, any printed transcripts and coding outputs will be stored in a locked cabinet in

my locked office at UBC for up to two years (January 31, 2019). Participants may request a copy of their transcript.

Verbal discussions of data and/or my interpretations thereof between myself and my supervisors (Dr. Shane Gunster and Dr. Martin Laba) will be made via Skype to Skype which is deemed more secure than telephone or Skype to telephone.

Dissemination of Results

The results will be presented in the form of my Master's Thesis and will be available in print and electronic form through the SFU library. The possibility exists that I will publish one or two articles in relevant peer-reviewed journals and present at academic conferences targeting different audiences.

Anonymized text excerpts that will not facilitate identification of participants will be used to illustrate my interpretations of data in published articles and in conference slides and/or posters.

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Appendix B. Consent Form (CLP Cohort)

Study title: Casting pebbles in a pond: A study of opinion leader training to reduce carbon footprints in social networks

Who is conducting the study?

Principal Investigator: Geoff Gilliard | [redacted]@sfu.ca | [redacted] (Masters Candidate, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University).

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Shane Gunster | [redacted]@sfu.ca | [redacted]

REB Application No.: 2016s0364

Why are we doing this study?

The goal of this research project is to understand and evaluate the training methods of social justice organizations to prepare opinion leaders to increase the level of climate change awareness and action among the people in their social networks. You are being invited to participate in this project because you have completed this sort of training. Next Up has granted me permission to conduct this research study which is being conducted for a graduate degree and is part of a thesis (public document) and may also be published in journal articles and books.

How is the study done?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be interviewed by phone or Skype. The interview will take 30-45 minutes. You will be asked questions regarding your training with Next Up and about your experiences speaking about climate change issues with people in your social network. You will also be asked about how you think the training you received might be improved. All interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed.

Your participation is voluntary

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You will be asked before and after the interview if you are comfortable with proceeding. I do not work for or have any affiliation with any environmental or social justice organizations.

You can withdraw from the research project at any point without penalty or consequences, and without providing a reason. If you withdraw from the study, any data and recordings will be destroyed immediately. You are free to refuse to answer any questions during the interviews. You have up to six months after completion of your interview to request that I remove information that you have provided from the project.

How will your identity be protected?

You have the option of remaining anonymous if you would like to protect your identity. If you want your identity protected a pseudonym – “false name” – will be used for any quote or information attributed to you or the people in your network. The interview recording will be stored on a password protected memory stick in a locked drawer in a locked office at the University of British Columbia. The recording will be destroyed six months after completion of the project. Transcripts of the recording will be kept in password protected files on Dropbox on a password protected computer for up to two years following the study (January 31, 2019) to allow time for ongoing analysis for any potential follow-up publication in journals or books.

You can request a printed copy of your interview and the transcript will be emailed to you at an address you provide.

What are the potential benefits of the study?

The main benefit of this project should be its contribution to better understand how to improve training methods and support given to people who are trying to reduce fossil fuel use in their communities.

What are the potential risks of participating?

Even if you request to remain anonymous there is a minor risk that you could be identified by members of Next Up, others who have taken the training or by people you have spoken with about climate change in your community if they read the thesis. This may be a concern if you provide comments about the training you have received or

about people in your social network that could be perceived as negative. You may discuss any concerns that arise during the interviews or stop your participation at any point during the process.

Questions about the study?

If you have any questions about this project please contact Geoff Gilliard at [redacted]@sfu.ca or [redacted].

Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director of the Office of Research Ethics at SFU: jtoward@sfu.ca or 778-782-6593.

Your consent

You would like to remain anonymous.

YES __ NO __

OPTIONAL: You agree to be re-contacted by the researcher if questions about the interview arise.

YES __ NO __

If you agree to being re-contacted, please provide your contact information.

Email: ____________________________ and/or Phone: ____________________________

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study. Please keep a signed copy of this form for your records.

____

Participant signature Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

____

Printed name of the participant signing above

If you are unable to print and scan this form, please send me an email indicating that you consent to take part in this research project.

Appendix C Interview Guide (CLP Cohort)

Study title: Casting pebbles in a pond: A study of opinion leader training to reduce carbon footprints in social networks

Principal Investigator: Geoff Gilliard | [redacted]@sfu.ca | [redacted] (Masters Candidate, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University).

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Shane Gunster | [redacted]@sfu.ca | [redacted] (Associate Professor, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University).

REB Application No.: 2016s0364

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. My name is Geoff Gilliard and I'm studying the training you received to convince people to take action on climate change, and your experiences you've had talking about that with the people in your social network.

Please let me know if at any time you'd like to stop for a break. And I'd like to remind you that you don't have to answer a question if you'd prefer not to.

1. Can you please tell me how you got involved with Next Up?
2. Why did you decide to take the training?
3. Can you tell me what the training was like?

PROMPTS

a. Face to face or online?

b. Singly or as part of a group?

c. Did the training cover climate science?

d.Did it cover dealing with climate change deniers?

e. What did you think about the training overall and as an aid to engaging withothers about climate change or social justice issues more generally?

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4. Can you tell me a bit about the people that you talk to about climate change?

PROMPTS

a. Part of a club, association, choir, team, co-workers, etc.

b. Age group, background, education level, how long you've known them.

c. Do you modify your message depending on who you're speaking with?

5. What has it been like speaking with people about climate change?

PROMPTS

a. How many people do you usually speak to at the same time? Singly/a couple/a few/a group?

b. How many people would you estimate that you've spoken with?

c. What do you talk with people about?

d. Are different groups interested in different aspects of climate change?

e. What are your goals in talking with people?

f. What effects do you think your discussions have on people?

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6. Have you seen people change their behaviour after you've spoken with them?

7. Do you think that your training prepared you for what it's like to speak to people about climate change?

PROMPTS

a. How did your training help prepare you to talk with others?

b. Were any parts of your training particularly effective/helpful? Why?

c. Did you need to adapt your approach or messages?

d. Was there anything missing or underemphasized which would have been helpful?

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8. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell me that we haven't discussed today or that you'd like to add?

Thank you for your time today and for participating in this study. I want to check with you to make sure you're still okay with being involved in it.

You can get in touch with me if you'd like a printed copy of our conversation. Is it okay to get in touch with you if I have need to clarify anything from our conversation today?

Appendix D Interview Guide (Next Up Executive)

Study title: Casting pebbles in a pond: A study of opinion leader training to reduce carbon footprints in social networks

Principal Investigator: Geoff Gilliard | ██████@sfu.ca | ████████████ (Masters Candidate, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University).

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Shane Gunster | ███████@sfu.ca | ████████████ (Associate Professor, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University).

REB Application No.: 2016s0364

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. My name is Geoff Gilliard and I'm studying Next Up's Climate Leadership Program's training methods.

Please let me know if at any time you'd like to stop for a break. And I'd like to remind you that you don't have to answer a question if you'd prefer not to.

1. What were the goals of the Climate Leadership Program?
2. How did your goals influence the curriculum?
3. How did you select the workshop presenters?
4. How did you select the people who would be admitted to the program?
5. Did you modify the training program as it progressed?
6. This was a pilot program. Are you running the program again?
7. What changes have you made?
8. How have you evaluated the program?

Appendix E Consent Form (Next Up Executive)

Study title: Casting pebbles in a pond: A study of opinion leader training to reduce carbon footprints in social networks

Who is conducting the study?

Principal Investigator: Geoff Gilliard | [redacted]@sfu.ca | [redacted] (Masters Candidate, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University).

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Shane Gunster | [redacted]@sfu.ca | [redacted]

REB Application No.: 2016s0364

Why are we doing this study?

The goal of this research project is to understand and evaluate the training methods of social justice organizations to prepare opinion leaders to increase the level of climate change awareness and action among the people in their social networks. You are being invited to participate in this project because you planned the Climate Leadership Program and are the founder and director of Next Up. This research study is being conducted for a graduate degree and is part of a thesis (public document) and may also be published in journal articles and books.

How is the study done?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be interviewed by phone or in person. The interview will take approximately one hour. You will be asked questions regarding the goals of Next Up's Climate Leadership Program and the training program itself. The interview will be audio recorded and then transcribed.

Your participation is voluntary

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You will be asked before and after the interview if you are comfortable with proceeding. I do not work for or have any affiliation with any environmental or social justice organizations.

You can withdraw from the research project at any point without penalty or consequences, and without providing a reason. If you withdraw from the study, any data and recordings will be destroyed immediately. You are free to refuse to answer any questions during the interviews. You have up to six months after completion of your interview to request that I remove information that you have provided from the project.

How will your identity be protected?

You have the option of remaining anonymous if you would like to protect your identity. If you want your identity protected a pseudonym – “false name” – will be used for any quote or information attributed to you or the people in your network. The interview recording will be stored on a password protected memory stick in a locked drawer in a locked office at the University of British Columbia. The recording will be destroyed six months after completion of the project. Transcripts of the recording will be kept in password protected files on Dropbox on a password protected computer for up to two years following the study (January 31, 2019) to allow time for ongoing analysis for any potential follow-up publication in journals or books.

You can request a printed copy of your interview and the transcript will be emailed to you at an address you provide.

What are the potential benefits of the study?

The main benefit of this project should be its contribution to better understand how to improve training methods and support given to people who are trying to reduce fossil fuel use in their communities.

What are the potential risks of participating?

Even if you request to remain anonymous it is likely that you could be identified by members of Next Up and those who have taken the Climate Leadership Program. This may be a concern if you provide comments about the training or about people in Next Up or those who have been trained by the organization that could be perceived as negative. You may discuss any concerns that arise during the interviews or stop your participation at any point during the process.

Questions about the study?

If you have any questions about this project please contact Geoff Gilliard at [redacted]@sfu.ca or [redacted].

Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director of the Office of Research Ethics at SFU: jtoward@sfu.ca or 778-782-6593.

Your consent

You would like to remain anonymous.

YES __ NO __

OPTIONAL: You agree to be re-contacted by the researcher if questions about the interview arise.

YES __ NO __

If you agree to being re-contacted, please provide your contact information.

Email: ___________________________ and/or Phone: ___________________________

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study. Please keep a signed copy of this form for your records.

____

Participant signature   Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

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Printed name of the participant signing above

If you are unable to print and scan this form, please send me an email indicating that you consent to take part in this research project.