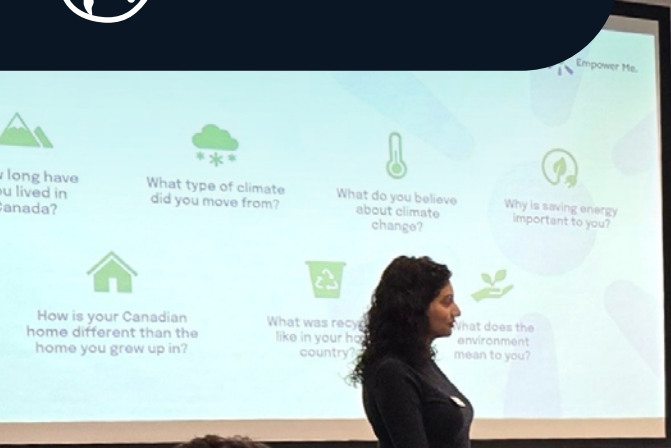




CreateClimateEquity



Create Climate Equity **Annual Report 2025**



Land Acknowledgment

We honour the rich histories, cultures, and traditions of all the Indigenous communities across Turtle Island, on whose lands we gather, and whose stories, insights, perspectives, and partnerships deepen our impact.

We are grateful to the First Peoples who have stewarded these lands since time immemorial and continue to protect the land, water, and communities where we live and work.



About Create Climate Equity

Create Climate Equity (CCE) is a not-for-profit committed to advancing just, equitable, and effective climate policies and programs. Through advocacy, research, and project innovation, we bring an equity-lens to climate and energy efficiency initiatives.

Since inception, CCE has supported community-focused climate and education initiatives across Canada. We believe everyone should have an opportunity to participate in the transition to a sustainable future.

Board of Directors



Areef Abraham



Yasmin Abraham



Karim Abraham



Cassandra Lammarino



Allison Jaquish

Creating Change in 2025

In 2025, Create Climate Equity advanced its mission through three interconnected initiatives that demonstrate how research, community engagement, and practical program delivery can work together to make climate action more equitable.

Through the **Clean Mobility Project**, CCE helped bring cleaner transportation options closer to Indigenous and low-income residents by supporting community-led education, transit access, and the development of an electric vehicle pilot.

Through **Closing the Gap in the GTHA**, CCE worked with community organizations across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area to better understand why immigrant and newcomer households remain underrepresented in energy efficiency and home retrofit programs. The resulting research identified barriers related to language, trust, affordability, program complexity, digital access, and housing, while outlining practical recommendations for more inclusive program design.

Building on those findings, CCE supported the **launch of Empower Me in Ontario**, helping translate community insight into action through multilingual, culturally relevant energy education and trusted local partnerships. Early implementation included the recruitment and training of three Energy Mentors, capacity to deliver programming in eight languages, and the first local workshop in partnership with the University of Toronto's IMPACT Lab.

Together, these projects reflect CCE's approach to climate equity: **listen first, design with communities, build trusted partnerships, and create practical pathways for people who have too often been left out of climate and energy programs.**

Clean Mobility Project



In 2025, Create Climate Equity partnered with Kambo Energy Group to advance the **Clean Mobility Pilot**, an initiative designed to improve access to sustainable transportation for Indigenous and low-income residents in Vancouver. Working alongside the BC Indigenous Housing Society and Aboriginal Housing Management Association, the project built on community-led engagement initiated in 2024 and focused on ensuring that residents who have historically faced barriers to clean transportation could participate in, and benefit from, the transition to more sustainable mobility.

The pilot combines hands-on electric vehicle education, a resident-led EV ride-share, Ride & Drive Days, information booths, workshops, and subsidized public transit. Rather than approaching clean transportation solely as a technology or infrastructure challenge, the project centred affordability, access, trust, and community participation.

On-site outreach and education helped build relationships with residents across two social housing buildings and created opportunities for community members to ask questions, experience clean transportation options firsthand, and identify solutions relevant to their daily lives.

The pilot demonstrates the value of combining climate action with practical measures that respond to household affordability and mobility needs. With support from delivery and sector partners including Kambo Energy Group, Modo, TransLink, and the Fraser Basin Council, CCE is helping create a community-informed model for increasing awareness of and participation in cleaner transportation options.

The work also established a foundation for the next phase of the project. Following the launch of the transit pilot, partners began planning for implementation of the EV stream in 2026, creating an opportunity to continue testing how community-led approaches can make emerging clean transportation solutions more accessible and equitable.

"The Clean Mobility Project demonstrates how innovative, community-led approaches can raise awareness of clean transportation options for everyone."

THE HONOURABLE TIM HODGSON

Minister of Energy and Natural Resources | Government of Canada

FUNDING PARTNERS:



Natural Resources
Canada

Ressources naturelles
Canada





Impact in Action

90+ resident outreach conversations

312 free transit trips (December 2025)

\$2,900 saved on transit by participants



Read More:

Advancing Equitable Clean Mobility for Urban Indigenous Residents in Vancouver



On-site lobby information booths and workshops, supported by posters, brochures, and a dedicated webpage, helped the Clean Mobility team introduce the pilot, answer resident questions, and build awareness of available transportation options.

Closing the Gap in the GTHA

In 2025, Create Climate Equity undertook **Closing the Gap in the GTHA: On-the-Ground Insights into Participation Barriers to Energy Efficiency and Home Retrofit Programs**, with support from the Toronto Atmospheric Fund and in partnership with Kambo Energy Group. The research explored why immigrant and newcomer households across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area remain underrepresented in energy efficiency and home retrofit programs, and what needs to change to make these programs more accessible, inclusive, and effective.

CCE and Kambo engaged **17 community leaders from 14 community-based organizations** through Listening Sessions held in July and August 2025. Collectively, these organizations reach nearly **350,000 residents annually**, providing a powerful window into the experiences of immigrant, newcomer, refugee and other underserved households across the region.

The research identified recurring barriers including limited program awareness, language and digital literacy challenges, complex application processes and eligibility requirements, lack of trust, affordability pressures, and housing structures that leave renters with limited ability to make improvements.

Importantly, the research also found significant untapped demand: **93% of participating CBOs viewed existing energy efficiency and retrofit programs as very or extremely beneficial**, while 71% expressed definite interest in partnering with a community-centred program such as Empower Me.

For CCE, the project reinforced a central principle of climate equity: programs cannot be considered fully accessible simply because they are available. Effective climate and energy programming must reflect how people receive information, whom they trust, the languages they speak, their housing circumstances, and the competing financial and settlement pressures they face.

The resulting report translates community experience into practical recommendations for governments, utilities, funders, and program administrators, including simpler application processes, clearer multilingual communication, improved access for renters and vulnerable residents, and equity embedded into program design from the outset. The findings also created an evidence base for moving from research into implementation through the expansion of Empower Me in Ontario.

"We can't go into communities and start talking about climate action. We need to actually do community building, or if the community is already well-established and tightly knit, we need to offer opportunities to celebrate what is happening in community, and then begin to talk about how much we could benefit if we worked on some of these issues together."

ANJUM CHAGPAR
Founder | Good Futures Collective

FUNDING PARTNERS:





Impact in Action

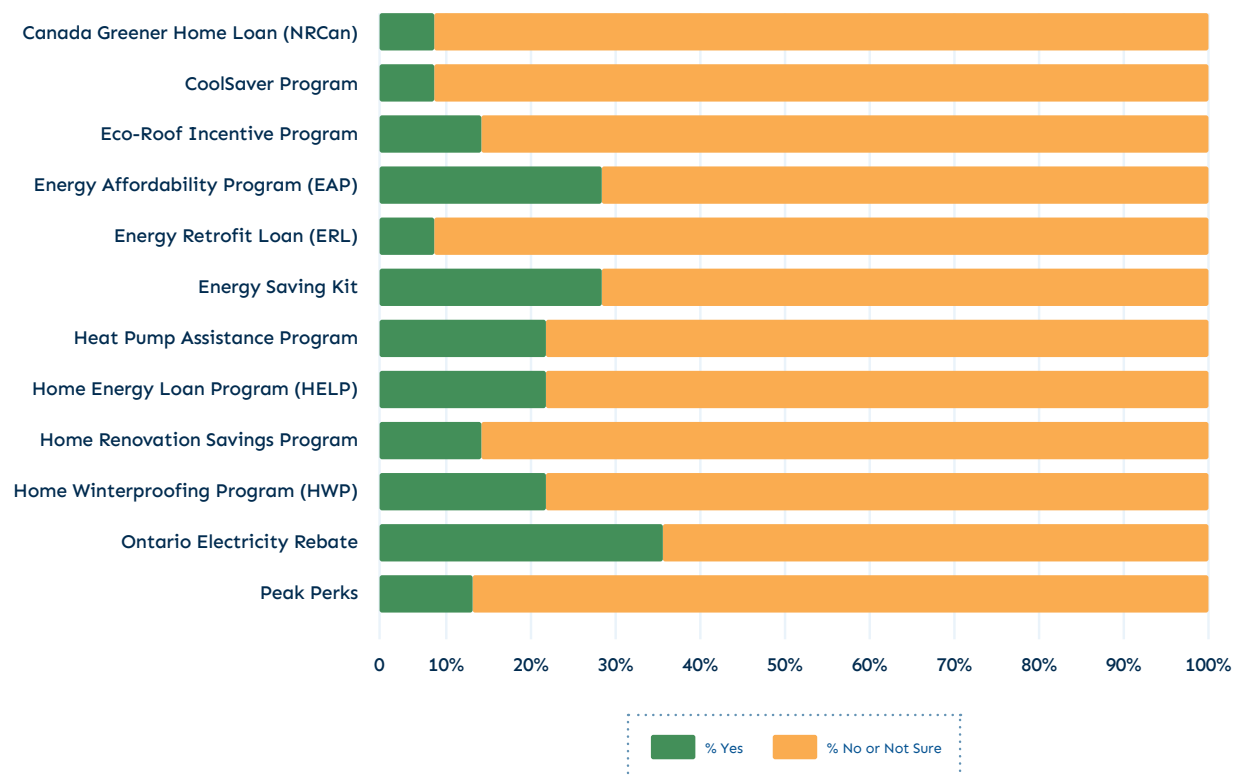
17 community leaders engaged

14 community organizations consulted

71% of CBOs interested in partnering

CBO Awareness of Energy Efficiency and Retrofit Programs in the GTHA

"Do you have any awareness or knowledge of energy efficiency or utility programming available?"



Read the Full Report:

Closing the Gap in the GTHA: On-the-Ground Insights into Participation Barriers to Energy Efficiency and Home Retrofit Programs

Launching Empower Me in Ontario



In 2025, Create Climate Equity supported the expansion of **Empower Me into Ontario**, creating a new pathway for immigrant, newcomer, and multilingual communities across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area to access practical energy education and connect with existing efficiency, affordability, and home retrofit programs.

The expansion was deliberately grounded in community research rather than simply replicating a program from another jurisdiction. Findings from CCE's Closing the Gap in the GTHA research informed the program's early engagement strategy and workshop development, helping ensure delivery reflected the barriers, priorities, languages, and lived experiences identified by community organizations across the region.

Empower Me uses multilingual workshops, in-language support, trusted community relationships, and locally recruited **Energy Mentors** to translate complex energy information into practical actions households can understand and use.

In Ontario, early investment enabled the development of a local network and delivery capacity. Three Energy Mentors were recruited and trained, creating capacity to deliver programming in **eight languages**, while relationships were developed with community organizations interested in bringing energy education directly to the residents they serve.

The first local Empower Me workshop was delivered in November 2025 in partnership with the University of Toronto's IMPACT Lab, demonstrating an early transition from community research and relationship-building into on-the-ground programming.

The Ontario expansion illustrates how CCE can help connect **research, equity-focused program design, community partnerships, and implementation**. With this foundation established, Empower Me is positioned to deepen its presence in Ontario and demonstrate how trusted, culturally relevant engagement can help close the gap between climate and energy programs and communities that have historically been underserved by them.



Multilingual support in: Arabic, English, Hindi, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu

"We thought it was an excellent session, packed with lots of tips and practical insights on home energy saving, especially going by the positive comments made by participants during and after the session."

EMMANUEL TAIWO

Doctoral Researcher at the IMPACT Lab | University of Toronto

FUNDING PARTNERS:



Impact in Action

Engaged **20** community partners

Hired **3** new Energy Mentors

Support offered in **8** languages



About Empower Me®

Empower Me is Canada's leading community-led outreach and engagement program, designed to increase participation in energy and climate initiatives among traditionally underserved communities. Established in 2012 by Kambo Energy Group, Empower Me delivers in-language education, trusted guidance, and concierge services to help households navigate energy bills, rebates, and upgrades. Through a relationship-based, community-driven model, Empower Me hires and trains trusted messengers and works with local partners to deliver workshops, one-on-one concierge support, and culturally relevant programming in 18 languages. Grounded in long-standing relationships with community organizations and cultural networks, the program reaches households often excluded from conventional outreach approaches.

Since launching, Empower Me has delivered nearly 1,500 workshops and supported more than 100,000 households across Canada and the United States.



Empower Me British Columbia



In 2025, with funding from [The Houssian Foundation](#), Create Climate Equity supported the continued delivery and growth of [Empower Me in British Columbia](#), helping underserved and multilingual households access practical energy education, trusted guidance, and information about energy efficiency and climate programs.

Working with Kambo Energy Group as a delivery partner, CCE helped strengthen a well-established network of community organizations and trusted messengers across the Lower Mainland. This community-based approach brings energy education into familiar spaces and connects residents with information in the languages they speak, helping address barriers that can prevent households from participating in conventional energy and climate programming.

In 2025, Empower Me delivered [105 workshops and directly reached more than 2,000 households in British Columbia](#) — approximately 33% more households than the program's typical annual average. The community network also continued to grow, with six new organizations joining during the year and bringing the program's network to [150 community partners across B.C.](#)

A particular area of growth was engagement with seniors. Empower Me delivered [24 seniors-focused workshops in 2025, compared with three in 2024](#), reflecting both growing demand and stronger relationships with seniors-serving groups within immigrant-serving organizations.

Programming and support were available in [12 languages](#). Through workshops and ongoing community relationships, participants were supported in understanding their energy use and identifying opportunities to save energy, manage costs, and access available programs and resources.

CCE's support for Empower Me in British Columbia demonstrates how philanthropic investment can strengthen the community infrastructure required for equitable climate action, helping ensure that climate and energy opportunities reached households that conventional outreach approaches can miss.



Multilingual support in: Arabic, Cantonese, English, Hindi, Japanese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Tagalog, Taiwanese, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese

"I return to Empower Me because the clients consistently provide very positive feedback. The workshops are led by professional speakers who share informative content with patience and clarity. The facilitators follow up and maintain connections with the clients, which makes the experience supportive and impactful."

SUMMER ZHANG

Program Officer | S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

FUNDING PARTNERS:

THE
HOUSSIAN
FOUNDATION

Impact in Action

105 workshops delivered

2,000+ households reached

Support offered in **12** languages



Read More:

Peggy's Empower Me Story: Outreach enables in-language retrofit application support



Looking Ahead to 2026

In 2026, Create Climate Equity will build on the momentum of its research, community engagement, and pilot projects to **scale proven approaches while creating new partnerships that expand access to climate solutions.**

A key priority will be supporting the continued growth of initiatives such as Empower Me, using lessons from community engagement and research to strengthen culturally relevant energy education and help connect more underserved households with efficiency, affordability, retrofit, and climate programs. The Ontario experience has demonstrated how listening can lead directly to action: community insights informed program design, local partnerships created trusted pathways for engagement, and Energy Mentors established capacity within the communities the program is intended to serve. The GTHA rollout is positioned for 20–25 multilingual workshops reaching approximately 250–500 households by the end of 2026, with potential to scale further as additional support becomes available.

CCE will also continue exploring opportunities to apply its equity lens beyond household energy efficiency. The Clean Mobility Pilot demonstrates how the same principles — community leadership, trusted relationships, practical supports, and attention to affordability and access — can inform work in transportation and other areas of the climate transition.

Across these efforts, CCE will continue to seek new relationships with funders, community organizations, Indigenous partners, researchers, and delivery partners. Our goal is not simply to expand individual projects, but to help build a broader model for **equitable climate action in which communities traditionally excluded from climate and energy programs have a meaningful role in shaping and benefiting from them.**

As CCE grows, we will continue moving between research and action: listening to communities, identifying systemic barriers, testing practical solutions, building partnerships, and using what we learn to advocate for stronger and more equitable climate policies and programs.

Our vision for 2026 is to turn successful pilots and emerging partnerships into lasting pathways for participation, ensuring that the transition to a low-carbon future creates opportunities for everyone.



CreateClimateEquity

www.createclimateequity.org