Welcome everyone to the Summer 2021 Climate and Health Internship Colloquium. We’re so glad to have this great group together, and we have a packed agenda from our fantastic students. First, I’ll just take a minute to tell you that we’re recording, and that this will be available afterwards, especially to give a welcome to preceptors who are here, who hosted our students over the summer. A couple of session rules. Please place yourself on mute while the panelists are presenting. You can enter your questions into the chat box. There will be a Q&A session at the end. Our agenda is a quick introduction to our center, and then we have three panels, and then the Q&A session. So first I’ll just tell you, the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health is a center that’s based at the Yale School of Public Health. We work through research education on public health practice to effect and address the health impacts of climate change, as well as identify the health co-benefits of climate action and push for addressing climate change, which we consider to be perhaps the greatest public health threat.
We sponsored this internship program, and we also have a new concentration in climate change and health that I want to especially make first year MPH students aware of. So MPH students from any of the departments are eligible to apply. So you would add it on top of your department. You’ll be getting more information in mid-October.

So about the application process, it’s quite straightforward. And we have a number of the current concentration students as part of this internship cohort.

With that, we’re gonna turn to our first panel. This is climate and health on an international scale, and we have three students who are kind of stepping up to the virtual podium.

Weixi Wu, Erika-ann Kim, and Rebecca Gillman. So each student will give a kind of a very quick couple of minutes summary of their project and their organization, and then we’ll shift to a panel discussion. So first, we have Weixi.

Hi everyone. So you guys can hear me okay? Okay, good. Hi everyone. I’m Weixi. I’m a joint-master degree student from the Department of Environmental Health Sciences and School of Public Health,
and master of environment science in School of Environment.

I’m on the concentration in global health, but I’m working as a student associate coordinator in Center on Climate Change and Health. So in the past summer, I worked with Dejusticia Climate Change Litigation to identify the interlinkages between climate change, air quality, and human health from the human rights perspective. As shown on my presentation slide, Dejusticia is a Columbia-based research and advocacy organization that uses law to promote social justice and human rights in Columbia and the Global South.

Columbia is at high risk for climate change impacts. In urban areas, people are suffering water shortages and land instability, and the rise in temperature and changes in rainfall patterns can also have an impact on respiratory, cardiovascular, and waterborne diseases. And apart from urban areas, climate change has become a threat to Columbia’s rich biodiversity.

Equal says the natural resources depletion and violates the basic human rights of indigenous populations to a healthy environment. In Colombian legal system, individuals are allowed to bring claims before local courts.
against the government, public entities, or private sectors for not complying with national laws or international obligations related to climate change matters. So during this internship, we analyzed the legal channels and different case studies, both in Colombia and in other countries, and we’re still in the process of completing the literature review. And for Columbia, the preliminary result we got from the internship is, for Columbia, it is necessary to continue adopting preventative measures to anticipate further climate change impacts since up to now, all these measures they have taken, it’s not sufficient to tackle this problem in the country. Thank you, Weixi. Next is Erika. Hi everyone. My name is Erika. I am a second year MPH student in the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Department and I’m also getting a concentration in the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Department, and I’m also getting a concentration at Yale School of Public Health.
So this past summer, I interned for the Eastern Caribbean Health Outcomes Network or ECHORN. My preceptor was Dr. Saria Hassan from Emory Rollins School of Public Health, and I worked on a qualitative study that aimed to assess the feasibility and acceptability of WHO NCD kids that are meant to be implemented after natural disasters in the Caribbean. Although the summer is over, I'm continuing to work on this project. We are actually still working on collecting more data and putting together a manuscript of our findings, which is really exciting. And so a little bit about how this project pertains to comment you need help, I mean, it's extremely pertinent to this field for one, the Caribbean is a region that's especially prone to natural disasters, which will continue to get worse in severity due to climate change, and which is a huge public health threat. I'm not sure we all know. And second, in the past, a lot of emphasis has been put on addressing more immediate health consequences of disasters, such as like injuries that occur or trauma that occurs after disaster hits or maybe like diseases that come about from the immediate impact of like a disaster,
but there are other health consequences that play out in the longer term such as complications from noncommunicable diseases and also mental health outcomes. And these long-term consequences are responsible for a significant percentage of disaster-related mortality. And so a strength of our project is that we are helping to fill the gaps in understanding of what the experiences of people living with noncommunicable diseases are during and following disasters. Thank you.

Great. Thanks, Erika.

Next is Rebecca.

Hello everyone. Can you all hear me okay? Cool. Very cool work that everyone's doing. Very nice to meet everyone. I am a second-year MPH candidate at the Yale School of Public Health. I’m studying health policy with a concentration in climate change and health. This past summer, I worked with the NGO EarthMedic. I’m gonna give a bit of background about the NGO ‘cause it will make sense in context, I promise. So the NGO is very, very new. It was founded officially in April, 2020, which as you guys can imagine from a public health perspective, not a great time really to be starting anything.
certainly not public health projects, but onward they go. So basically going into this internship, they didn’t really have the capacity and still don’t really have the capacity to do any of the work that they want to do. So it’s sort of like, so I guess that’s all to say my internship really focused on seeing what possible opportunities they had for participation in order for them to put their very limited resources to best use possible. So in particular, the director, the CEO, Dr. Hospitalist was really interested in looking at how climate NGOs like EarthMedic like others could possibly get involved in UN initiatives as one possible way of influencing decisions and making sure that everything is more sustainable and more climate-oriented. So the final product that we ended up coming up with is this project presentation here that will be presented actually in a couple of weeks, that’s a little terrifying, at Yale’s Climate Change and Health in Small Island Developing States conference, and the presentation title is there, but I will just read it. Climate and Health Initiatives in Small Island Developing States Overview and Potential of NGO Participation in UN Processes.
So essentially, I did a giant literature view all summer, but it’s all very interesting to me 'cause it very much relates to what I want to go into. I’m very much interested in going into environmental law and policy and really looking at the types of enforcement mechanisms that are possible. How can we really force all of these promises that these governments are making to actually go green? How can we actually make them follow through with these promises, 'cause they’re great promises, but they’re not really happening? So anyway, all this to say, I know my time’s up, I’m sorry. It was a very interesting internship, and I was very glad that I was able to kind of mesh it with my future career goals.

Great, and good plug for the conference that’s coming up. Hope folks can attend, if they are available. Great, so I’m just gonna go back to this and welcome all the participants back for some discussion questions. So one thing I’m interested in, I think almost everyone was virtual, but some were virtual in a place that they knew. You were virtual with an international organization, perhaps a place that you’d never been. So tell me a little bit
about how did you learn about that place and about that particular context in order to do this work.

Were there some strategies or particular maybe things that you learned along the way that were helpful to give context to your research?

So for me, I’ve never been to Columbia, and I did my internship virtually. And before starting the internship, I had to write a research proposal. So I looked up a lot of studies and papers that they conducted in Columbia, and then I think it really helped me a lot to understand the situations in Columbia, and also because I have no law background or any litigation background. And I did also research, a lot of legal documents, and then like the legal system in Columbia to give myself a context, like what Columbia legal system is like.

Yeah, so it’s mainly through reading. Also like my preceptors from NGO also helped me a lot and answered a lot of my questions, and they also connected me with as many professors in universities in Columbia, and then they’re also very helpful in answering all my questions, yeah.
Yeah, I can also kind of talk to this. I found my internship, in general, really transformative in building my understanding of climate change and health in the Caribbean, and so like in the region that this project is based in. When I first applied for this internship last winter, I came into the position with like three kind of scattered interests, one in noncommunicable disease, two in climate change, and three, I had like a small existing interest in small island states because I was born and raised and educated up until college on an island myself, but I’m from the Pacific, not from the Caribbean. And so these projects seem really fitting. And now that I’ve been working on it for all this time, what’s was something I guess I didn’t really see coming and I have really learned along the way is that through our qualitative findings, there are some very interesting similarities to me, I think, between the health problems that people in small island states face due to climate change, and going forward, it’s part of my intellectual agenda to kind of bridge how islands across the globe kind of have similarities, as different and diverse as they are in this problem that climate change poses and the health implications of that,
and then creating solutions that maybe work for everyone.

Okay.

I would say mine is sort of a mixture of both Weixi and Erika’s answers.

EarthMedic is based in Trinidad as its main headquarters, but the entire project was just about very general UN, Caribbean, NGO processes.

So a lot of it, very similar to Weixi,

was very much just reading,

asking lots of questions to my preceptor.

My preceptor, Natasha, is just super wonderful.

She’s really well-educated and was definitely able to fill in the gaps knowledge that I didn’t have.

So I think that at least from a professional perspective, we definitely complemented each other well,

’cause I come more from the public health perspective and was kind of almost thinking of things like a research paper almost.

And she would say, "Oh, well, yes, yes, this and yes, like these things are very cool, but like from a legal perspective and like I have actually done the work and I’ve done these things, like you actually don’t have unlimited time.

For example, like you have to actually stick to the schedule and kind of more refine the research in order to like get the finished product at the end
that’s actually feasible within that time period.”
So getting that experience was definitely how I learned about the area is kind of being able to go to someone to be like, hey, focus.
Like you need to actually just look at this one thing.
So that was really helpful.
I mean, it’s interesting to see to it for all.
I think particularly, then Weixi and Rebecca, you were taking your public health skillset, and then applying it to a really different context of this kind of policy or legal context.
And Erika, maybe yours was a little bit more within sort of public health, but like very applied into what are we going to do with this knowledge.
So I’m glad that you were able to have that experience in your internship.
I’m curious also about the partners and stakeholders that were engaged in your project. What did that engagement look like, and what was the...
Maybe tell us some of the benefits.
0:16:04.24 –> 0:16:07.593 of stakeholder engagement in your projects,
or limitations.
Yeah, so the partners and stakeholders engaged with the work was Dejusticia,
the government and local communities and some private sectors.
So because I’m in the environmental justice team,
and then my preceptor is...
I have two preceptors.
One, she’s a lawyer, and the other one, she’s a political scientist. So they work mostly with other lawyers and also with people from the Colombian legal system, and I’m working more with like university professors in getting the data and getting like understanding their research and kind of like translating and collecting them and then translating into practice. Yeah, so yeah. So I didn’t get to work too much with the government because I wasn’t in the country at that time, and also not too much with the local communities. Me myself, I just, yeah, I connected mostly with the university professors, yeah.

So for our project, well, I was tasked with basically analyzing the transcripts of a number of interviews conducted with various stakeholders in the Caribbean region. So these were all interviews held with public health stakeholders, disaster response stakeholders, people who worked for like ministries of health in Barbados and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and places like that, and also people who are living with non-communicable diseases and kind of talking about their experiences during disasters,
managing their health conditions.

I think maybe like a limitation of my project was that I came onto the project after interviews were conducted. And so like, it was my job to just analyze the data. However, we’re still collecting data, and I hope to maybe hold some interviews myself soon. So that’s really exciting, but yeah. But I still think I benefited from just being able to analyze this data and like seeing the responses that the stakeholders are giving and sharing their experiences. Like I think there’s a massive strength in just seeing it, even though it’s just on paper and not holding the interview myself. So because my internship was so unique in that it still doesn’t really have a set structure, the task that I originally had started with this is relevant because I was also hired as an associate with the NGO, which I’m very excited about, but so that meant that my internship project kind of changed halfway through the semester, which was totally okay. But the original task that I was given was to basically create a taxonomy and like list of all of the rules and rules of procedure in different NGOs, or no, sorry for NGOs
for how they could participate in different UN processes.

And that can be the big ones, like WHO or even like some of the smaller subsidiary organs. But basically, this document does not exist. Like there’s no such thing as a big list of all of the ways that the NGOs, especially like climate NGOs could get involved in UN processes. So my particular internship didn’t have stakeholder involvement because it couldn’t. It was really just literature review and reading a lot of legal documents and putting a lot of lists together and making sure that all of the words and facts that I was pulling are correct, ’cause that’s all very important, because I wouldn’t want to put something in this big document would be like, actually, no. You actually can’t go vote in these meetings. Like that’s actually not okay. Like you need to be able to actually make those differences ’cause there’s a nuance to that. So it was interesting, but did not really have any stakeholder involvement. With just a minute and a half to go in the session, just any last reflections, especially on this comparative perspective.
You’re now kind of centered back in the US. Do you see differences in how climate change and climate change in health are treated in the country where you were virtually working compared to here?

It’s definitely a more imminent threat in Trinidad and Tobago, and we think that those island countries definitely are experiencing the more immediate effects of climate change, sea level rise, extreme heat, all of those things, definitely more of an immediate threat and definitely puts in perspective how privileged we are to not necessarily be living in an area that is that imminently close to really bad harm.

Oh, I was going to say, for me, it was, for example, in Columbia, like the coach can make a decision, but then the effectiveness of the decision remains the problem. It really it’s limited by administrative difficulties of the respondent authorities and also lack of governance in some regions, and also there is some continuing armed conflict or just like some like crime, high rates of crime in certain regions, and also illegal money activities and also some wastewater treatment, all kinds of different problems is kind of limiting the effectiveness
0:23:10.9 –> 0:23:14.08 of the decision that the court makes.
0:23:14.08 –> 0:23:15.26 So yeah.
0:23:15.26 –> 0:23:20.26 So I think it’s quite complicated and difficult in Columbia.
0:23:26.01 –> 0:23:28.71 <v ->Yeah, I would really just second everything
0:23:28.71 –> 0:23:29.65 that Rebecca said.
0:23:29.65 –> 0:23:32.27 I mean, we did our internships in similar regions.
0:23:32.27 –> 0:23:36.18 So I’m really just seconding everything that she said,
0:23:36.18 –> 0:23:41.18 and yeah, the area that I did my internship in
0:23:42.67 –> 0:23:43.73 is so much more prone
0:23:43.73 –> 0:23:47.97 to really like immediate severe threats of climate change,
0:23:47.97 –> 0:23:51.73 and I think there’s just, because of that,
0:23:51.73 –> 0:23:55.67 there’s a bit of frustration in terms of policy action
0:23:55.67 –> 0:23:57.51 or just any kind of action
0:23:57.51 –> 0:24:01.393 in order to either mitigate or adapt to these effects,
0:24:02.65 –> 0:24:06.15 and I don’t have like a solution or anything to present.
0:24:06.15 –> 0:24:09.44 It’s just something that we should really be,
0:24:09.44 –> 0:24:11.27 there needs to be a really concerted effort,
0:24:11.27 –> 0:24:13.88 I think, globally, to tackle this issue.
0:24:13.88 –> 0:24:16.693 But I’m sure I’m just preaching to the choir by saying that.
0:24:18.35 –> 0:24:20.9 <v ->It’s always good to have the reminder.
0:24:21.733 –> 0:24:24.44 Thank you so much, Rebecca, Erika, Weixi.
0:24:24.44 –> 0:24:25.96 Great job.
0:24:25.96 –> 0:24:30.96 We’re gonna shift over now to our next panel
0:24:32.03 –> 0:24:35.72 on communicating climate and health issues.
0:24:35.72 –> 0:24:39.07 We have Caroline Erickson, Natalie Henning,
0:24:39.07 –> 0:24:43.563 Nora Massie, Ian Reilly, and Adriana Ballenger.
0:24:49.073 –> 0:24:49.906 Yeah. Hi.
0:24:49.906 –> 0:24:51.021 I’m really excited
0:24:51.021 –> 0:24:53.82 to be kicking off this section of the talk.
0:24:53.82 –> 0:24:54.9 So I’m Caroline.
0:24:54.9 –> 0:24:56.88 I’m a senior in Yale College,
0:24:56.88 –> 0:24:58.59 majoring in environmental studies,
0:24:58.59 –> 0:25:01.17 concentrating in human health and the environment,
0:25:01.17 –> 0:25:06.17 and I’m also in the five-year BA BS MPH program.
0:25:06.61 –> 0:25:09.27 So I was really fortunate this summer
0:25:09.27 –> 0:25:13.43 that I joined my project right at its beginning,
0:25:13.43 –> 0:25:15.4 and this was kind of an idea
0:25:15.4 –> 0:25:18.86 that the health department decided to address
0:25:18.86 –> 0:25:23.153 just because they found essentially a gap in the knowledge
0:25:23.153 –> 0:25:25.9 of what they were finding, what they were reading,
0:25:25.9 –> 0:25:28.77 the research that was coming out, and what residents
0:25:28.77 –> 0:25:31.443 of like shoreline communities were believing.
0:25:32.41 –> 0:25:33.97 So despite all the great research,
0:25:33.97 –> 0:25:36.05 people are still in Connecticut,
0:25:36.05 –> 0:25:37.72 especially along the shoreline,
0:25:37.72 –> 0:25:40.92 a little hesitant to believe the science.
0:25:40.92 –> 0:25:43.79 So we wanted to develop a project
0:25:43.79 –> 0:25:48.73 that addressed this in a way that was a little less scary
0:25:48.73 –> 0:25:52.63 than just jumping head first into a bunch of literature.
0:25:52.63 –> 0:25:54.73 So the main goal of this project
0:25:54.73 –> 0:25:59.48 was to interview people in the community,
0:25:59.48 –> 0:26:02.07 get their human stories with climate change,
0:26:02.07 –> 0:26:05.44 and then disseminate that into the wider public
0:26:05.44 –> 0:26:06.72 to kind of show people
0:26:06.72 –> 0:26:09.55 that this is not necessarily something
0:26:09.55 –> 0:26:12.4 that is super out of touch, but it is right now
and it is affecting our community presently, but yeah.
So we spent a lot of time interviewing towards the end of the project or towards the end of the summer.
We started having communication or talks with BCTV, which is our local like television station to hopefully get this information out there a little bit more, and this project is still going on. So we’re still running interviews and kind of collecting data in that sense and working to disseminate it. But yeah, this is a super exciting project and I had a great time this summer. So thank you.
Thanks, Caroline. Natalie.
Awesome. Hi, thank you, Laura.
And again, thank you to the center for putting this together. It’s so great to hear what everyone else was working on the summer. But high out, so I’m Natalie, I’m a second year in the MPH program in the Department of Chronic Disease Epidemiology and concentrating in data modeling. I interned with Montana Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate this summer. They’re a very small non-profit organization, and their team is led by doctors, Laurie and Rob Brian, who unfortunately, I don’t think are here, but they’re completely phenomenal and inspiring.
and are doing so much to move the needle in their state, and I could go on and on about them.

But their organization’s mission and their goal is really to use the voice of health professionals in the state to push for climate action.

So it was really interesting to see how they’re doing that in a more conservative environment or climate change can still be a very challenging conversation to have.

So I was helping them in a variety of capacities, but I guess the largest projects that I did for them was a video project.

So I also conducted interviews similar to Caroline with health professionals, students, and members of other Montana climate organizations on different climate topics such as climate communication, climate action during COVID, how to get involved in the climate movement, a number of topics, and edited and produced six videos and trailers.

So I was really excited about that because I guess in my experience, and some people might be able to relate to this, working in the climate space can sometimes feel very slow and frustrating.

And so hopefully by producing these videos, I was able to provide a way for Montana Health Professionals to easily communicate important information about climate
that’s coming from members of the community who are highly respected and well-versed in this area.
So that was a really exciting project to work on, and I’ll stop there and pass it along.
Thanks, Natalie.
And I think at least one of the videos is already up on the website.
So if you want, feel free to drop the link in the chat for folks to take a look at.
Yeah, sure.
And Nora.
Can everyone hear me?
Great. Okay.
My computer is having sound problems.
I use she, her pronouns.
I am in Yale College.
I’m a senior double majoring in English and environmental studies.
And I had a really wonderful opportunity this summer to work with really like two organizations at the same time.
So I was working with Save the Sound, which does a lot of like regional action on climate.
They take multiple angles.
They have sort of like an environmental law angle, a kind of environmental justice community organizing angle,
and then they also do like more scientific research around the Long Island sound.
and water quality and land quality.

But I also got to work with Health Equity Solutions, which is a Connecticut nonprofit seeking to close health gaps in Connecticut. So Connecticut has among the largest health gaps in the United States, health disparities. And so my main project was really working with these two organizations as well as I got amazing and incredible feedback as well as I got amazing and incredible feedback from the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health.

Health Equity Solutions has a curriculum that they can adapt to any particular sort of business or community organization that might want it that gives basics on like what health equity is and how it relates to their lives, and they wanted to have a sort of climate justice module.

And so I spent the summer developing that with them, and I also helped Save the Sound’s climate advocacy team on projects like when I first joined, the last couple of weeks, I joined in late May and June were the last few weeks of the Connecticut legislative session. And so I really dived into a lot of bill tracking and advocacy, right at the end of the session when there was a big push to get things done before everyone went on a break.
And then throughout the rest of the summer, I was working on more like local initiatives in Connecticut, such as helping cities in Connecticut declare climate emergencies and stuff like that. And so I, yeah. It was really a wonderful experience being able to work kind of at the intersection of this issue with so many different organizations and so many different wonderful people.

Great. Thanks Nora.

Hey everybody.

So yeah, my name is Ian. I worked this summer, sorry. I am at the Yale School of Public Health. I'm a second year in the public health health policy department. I concentrate in climate change and health. I spent the summer working with the Connecticut governor’s council on climate change or GC3. And I was with the equity and environmental justice working group. I was their Connecticut climate justice intern. So throughout the summer, I did several projects, small and large projects that are related to building climate justice, either in Connecticut and actually one project in Mississippi.
that was for a civic engagement engagement group built around democratizing the energy sector in Mississippi, which was pretty interesting. But the main point of my project was basically finding a way to help build climate change resiliency at a community level, and by doing so, giving more power to community members and community leaders in the climate change building process. And the point of that is to help promote building climate justice and understanding that climate change will affect, you know, does now and will affect, especially marginalized populations more severely. And so the point of the project was to find ways to kind of address this. And one of the ways we found is that when we give power at the community level, instead of like from, like instead of like the top-down approach, kind of working from like the grassroots bottom up approach, a lot of communities, they already like understand a lot of the issues they’re dealing with, and sometimes they just need some of the tools to address those. So what we did was we made the main project was what I have listed here on the left.
This is my cover page.

This is my photo.

So this is something I’m proud of.

This is actually from when Hurricane Henri almost hit New Haven.

But this is so the Connecticut Community-Level Climate Change Resiliency Assessment and Prioritization Plan.

So the way we saw it, there was already several climate change resiliency guidelines and guidances that you can find or that exists.

So what we went for instead was a way that communities can assess their own vulnerability to climate change.

So the climate change resiliency assessment portion is mostly a vulnerability assessment that allows communities to look at their critical infrastructure, their vulnerable infrastructure, things like daycare schools, hospitals, their vulnerable populations, and also their environmentally-exposed populations.

So these would be exposed populations that might not be necessarily vulnerable populations, but they maybe are located closer to like the seaside, and so they’re vulnerable for different reasons.

So basically, it allows communities individually to look at their specific vulnerabilities of climate change and then gives them a list of steps on how they can engage with their community members.
and how the city plan companies can engage with those community members, identify leaders in the community, and kind of build this trust and network of knowledge within the community to come up with the second part of this, which is the prioritization plan. So to come up with a list of ideas that they think would be useful in addressing climate change, and that should be prioritized based off of their community knowledge and the knowledge of climate change that we kind of gave guidelines on how to build in the community. Great.

And so the final result would be... Finish your sentence. Go ahead.

Oops, and then the final result would just be a list of priorities that we put forward to the planning committee. Great. Thanks, Ian.

Hi, my name’s Adriana, and I’m a Yale College sophomore. Should be a junior, but I took a year off during the pandemic. I will be an environmental studies major this year, and I’m also a Yale Center
So my project title was municipal tools for extreme heat, and the two organizations that I was interning for were the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health, and UConn’s Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation. So I was working with Dr. Bozzi and also Dr. Wozniak Brown from CIRCA, and they were both fantastic preceptors. I want to start with that. So I was very glad to have the opportunity to work with them and their team and just to learn from their projects and past experiences.

So I think it’s very important to start with the fact that in the US, extreme heat kills more people per year than any other weather-related event. And many Connecticut municipalities are not adapted to extreme heat. So there are many vulnerable populations at risk during these extreme heat events. So our project’s goal was to determine the climate adaptation needs of Connecticut municipalities related to extreme heat, and also to provide municipal leaders with tools that address extreme heat vulnerability at the local level.

So my main project was to develop an extreme heat toolkit for Connecticut’s municipal decision makers,
mainly local public health and emergency management officials. So I did this by researching existing extreme heat response plans from other states, recommending short and long-term policy and planning actions and adapting the most relevant heat response resources. And I also acted as a research assistant for qualitative interviews we conducted with Connecticut municipal leaders, such as the emergency management directors I mentioned. So we were just learning about the existing strategies for responding to the extreme heat. And the project is still ongoing. Dr. Bozzi and Wozniak Brown are still conducting interviews and the toolkit is still in development. But I just want to say that through this process, I became much more familiar with Connecticut’s municipalities, towns, and generally government structures, and also gained knowledge about qualitative research design and methods, climate health, of course, and the relationship between urban planning and public health and also environmental justice. Great. Thanks, Adriana. Okay, so shift back to our panel cover
0:39:38.1 –> 0:39:40.933 and invite you for a discussion.
0:39:42.17 –> 0:39:47.17 So first, climate communication is hard,
0:39:48.26 –> 0:39:52.11 and many of the scientists don’t do it very well.
0:39:52.11 –> 0:39:53.03 It’s not.
0:39:53.03 –> 0:39:57.36 So through your internships and various ways,
0:39:57.36 –> 0:39:58.64 you were able to dig into this.
0:39:58.64 –> 0:40:00.593 So what advice do you have?
0:40:02.97 –> 0:40:04.77 Have you gleaned some best practices
0:40:04.77 –> 0:40:08.552 around communicating around climate change and health
0:40:08.552 –> 0:40:12.24 and what are the qualities
0:40:12.24 –> 0:40:15.353 that make that best practice effective, do you think?
0:40:22.11 –> 0:40:24.7 <v -> Yeah, I can... <v -> Yeah.
0:40:24.7 –> 0:40:27.08 <v -> Okay, I can kick it off, yeah.
0:40:27.08 –> 0:40:29.23 Well, like I mentioned in my intro,
0:40:29.23 –> 0:40:30.18 it was really interesting
0:40:30.18 –> 0:40:33.03 to see how my organization operated
0:40:33.97 –> 0:40:36.7 in an environment that tends to be more conservative
0:40:36.7 –> 0:40:40.68 and has unique subpopulations that have legitimate concerns
0:40:40.68 –> 0:40:44.76 about what it means to transition to renewables
0:40:44.76 –> 0:40:48.32 or change agricultural practices, et cetera.
0:40:48.32 –> 0:40:52.33 And so in terms of being an effective communicator,
0:40:52.33 –> 0:40:55.05 I think what I learned and what I heard over and over
0:40:55.05 –> 0:40:58.42 in interviews that I conducted is first,
0:40:58.42 –> 0:41:00.55 that when you’re having a conversation with someone,
0:41:00.55 –> 0:41:04.75 the goal shouldn’t be to convince them of anything,
0:41:04.75 –> 0:41:08.1 It’s really, the goal should be to establish a connection
0:41:08.1 –> 0:41:11.903 with that person, and to establish some level of trust.
0:41:13.33 –> 0:41:16.12 And second, that it’s very important to listen,
0:41:16.12 –> 0:41:17.37 which sounds so obvious,
but like what I found and kind of to my surprise was that almost no one that I spoke with was on the end of the spectrum that is climate deniers and that most people did acknowledge, at least to some extent, that this happening and we can see it happening. And the point though was like, then where the conflict came in is how do we handle it? And so it was really important to listen to the communities, for example, like ranchers, who their livelihood by and large depend on the climate, and for whom climate action is in their best interest. And so sometimes, we wouldn’t even use the words climate change in a conversation because the point was really not to get everyone to agree that climate change was happening, but it was finding commonalities and finding how we can incorporate all of the economic concerns that people have into finding solutions. Yeah, my project was a little bit different, but I think some of the same things really applied, I think, in trying to communicate sort of like climate change in the health intersection. Something I really worked on this summer was looking at like local examples of ways that like either initiatives that people who, you know, the ordinary person in Connecticut might have noticed.
For example, they might have noticed that the bus they take every day now says it’s an electric bus, and talking about the way that like climate and health is a problem in their everyday lives as it is now, and ways that it can be implemented as solutions that can be implemented into their everyday lives to kind of concretize what seems like to a lot of people, I think, a really big abstract and like not urgent or not immediate issue that’s right in front of them.

Yeah, I’d say one of the biggest things that I found to be effective that I found to be effective is don’t make assumptions when you’re starting to talk to people. Unlike Natalie, we did run into a couple people who told us we were wasting our time and money. So it was really important to go into those conversations with the super like level head, and also with the body language and phrasing of questions that makes it sound like you have something just because that makes them feel more a part of the conversation and I found that to be a lot more productive on the whole.

Adriana or Ian, any thoughts? Yeah, I can go.
0:44:25.79 –> 0:44:29.92 the municipal emergency management directors
0:44:29.92 –> 0:44:31.653 and other officials,
0:44:34.71 –> 0:44:39.37 what we found was helpful was to reference
0:44:41.4 –> 0:44:43.87 like the heat waves that had been occurring that sum-
0:44:43.87 –> 0:44:48.87 mer,
0:44:48.87 –> 0:44:48.87 because that was extremely relevant to obviously our
project
0:44:48.97 –> 0:44:52.33 and also helped us frame the questions
0:44:52.33 –> 0:44:57.33 in a way that made it very relevant to them as well.
0:45:00.67 –> 0:45:05.67 And we also realized, as we were conducting our inter-
views,
0:45:06.02 –> 0:45:09.75 that many of the emergency management directors
0:45:09.75 –> 0:45:14.75 were not familiar with the language of climate adapta-
tion
0:45:14.99 –> 0:45:18.2 that we had included in several of our questions.
0:45:18.2 –> 0:45:21.78 So something important that we ended up discussing
0:45:21.78 –> 0:45:26.78 was how we could better adapt our questions and our
language
0:45:28.14 –> 0:45:31.25 to their experiences,
0:45:31.25 –> 0:45:33.34 because we went in sort of assuming
0:45:33.34 –> 0:45:35.82 that they would know what this means
0:45:37.21 –> 0:45:40.75 and that we wouldn’t need to provide a lot of explana-
tion.
0:45:40.75 –> 0:45:45.75 But I think that really helped us recalibrate and make
sure
0:45:48.92 –> 0:45:53.537 that the way we were communicating our questions
0:45:59.38 –> 0:46:00.913 helped them and helped us.
0:46:05.87 –> 0:46:07.49 <v ->And I would just probably follow up,
0:46:07.49 –> 0:46:09.6 pretty similar to what Adriana said,
0:46:09.6 –> 0:46:12.98 which is that one of the things that we found
0:46:12.98 –> 0:46:14.477 in the whole point of our assessment
0:46:14.477 –> 0:46:16.35 was that like community engagement
0:46:16.35 –> 0:46:17.98 was trying to make the language
and the scenarios as relevant to the people in the communities as possible. So things like we talked about maybe adding crowdsourced mapping so that we can see, okay, well, these are the roads that flood when there's heavy rains, this is only gonna get worse, who are the people that are gonna be affected by these, who's already affected by them. So it was really just like part of like the communicating is just listening, and I think that's a big thing that policy makers and climate change scientists can really take away from resiliency efforts and from climate change awareness.

Okay, I'm hearing listening to people, meeting people where they're at, some basic, as you all said, maybe some basic sort of human lessons, but sometimes you forget them in the moment. Thanks. That was great. I'm also curious if any of you thought more particularly about different strategies for different target audiences. We know we need to segment our messages for different audiences. Did you learn anything about different audiences through your work and make any adjustments to accommodate these different audiences? So I can think of two brief examples.
One of them was I ghost-wrote a op-ed for my preceptor off my supervisor and we just... I think a big part of it was just tailoring the language of it, 'cause we put it in a local newspaper. There was the Hartford News. And so it was tailoring the language so that it was like a language that was easily digestible to the general community. And also a big part of that was like I was ghost-writing, so using like kind of his perspective and his voice as kind of an existing community member and a trusted community member. But I think a big part of it was just like tailoring it to the audience like who’s going to be listening, and making sure the language and the vocabulary you’re using is digestible regardless of who you expect might be consuming. Anyone else?

So a lot of our project or my project was focusing on people who may be resistant to listening to climate change science. So a lot of the work we did, in general, I would say, was tailoring to people who might not believe in it. So therefore like we tried, like Ian was saying, to use a lot of like digestible material, like videos, stuff like that, keeping the language simple. But yeah, I wouldn’t necessarily say
we were targeting many different populations because I think the whole point was to meet people where they were at and target those people who may not be as willing to buy in to the fact that climate change is going on. Yeah, and I can, going off that, I think definitely talking to different groups of people, you find that individuals are certainly moved by different things. And for me, I think different from Caroline, we were targeting a less hesitant population. And so I think on a more emotional level, I found that a lot of people relate really well to the nostalgia and the sense of loss that is experienced, especially for people who have maybe spent their whole life in the same place. I talked to people who would reminisce about their favorite ski slope as kids that no longer gets snow, and not to mention people who have lost their homes in wildfires or suffer health consequences from smoky air, or are literally like moved to tears just by the thought of their children growing up in a world that potentially looks very different. And so I think those kinds of stories are very powerful and were successful for us when we were targeting a more, I guess, moderate population.
I mean, I can just jump in quickly. I think my project was significantly different in that like the populations that we were kind of hoping to engage like were not particularly like challenging of like a narrative of climate you didn’t have. But I think one thing that I really learned, and obviously this was not really possible in the pandemic, but I helped a lot with like the youth advocacy core, which Save the Sound has. And I think first of all, like for meetings, for encouraging people to come to meetings and actually engaging people in conversation, I think what Caroline said about like meeting people where they’re at and that often means geographically, like going to particular locations. Unfortunately, I was all remote all summer, but my supervisor, Alex Rodriguez, who kind of works a lot on the climate advocacy was driving all over Connecticut to have different meetings with young people and with like different representatives everywhere. And so I guess not asking people to travel large distances or take up large amounts of their time because people are busy and we want to meet them where we’re at, yeah. Yeah, and I can just add quickly that since during our interviews, we were speaking to municipal leaders
from all across Connecticut, we had to consider that we would be speaking to some people who were not comfortable with the idea of climate change and would see the language that we used in our interviews as off-putting, if we really emphasized climate change. So we decided to really focus more on using language that emphasizes extreme heat, which is obviously part of climate change, but focusing on that one aspect. We believed we would be more... I said it was all-encompassing for the different types of leaders or the perspectives of the different leaders that we interviewed. That we interviewed. Great. Thanks. So last question. Some of you touched on this, but tell us what will happen with the product that you were working on? How might your host organization use the work that you contributed toward? And maybe is it part of some kind of campaign or other kind of goal for the organization? Sure. I can start that off. So kind of like I mentioned, there's a hope that this project is kind of more long-lasting and living and breathing, and so the interviews will continue hopefully. We are still in communication with BCTV.
to try to get more of this broadcasted on the local level.
And also we just kind of have the hope that in addition to targeting people who may not be super believing in the science, we’re hoping that continuously making this information available, these human stories available, that others in the community will also be motivated to like make efforts towards improving the carbon footprints or just living a life that’s a little bit more like cognizant of climate change.
I can say that my project is kind of an ongoing project between Health Equity Solutions and Save the Sound and the Yale Center for Climate Change and Health, because the curriculum that Health Equity Solutions developed is so dependent on what the actual organization is, who they’re gonna work with. So like an organization like a company or a community organization, or even a school can request particular parts of their curriculum, and obviously, every group has different time constraints.
And so it continues to be an ongoing project. Yeah, so I produced six videos that are about 12 minutes each and I also produced trailers for each of those videos. So my organization is posting these
0:55:50.38 -> 0:55:52.14 on their website and YouTube channel,
0:55:52.14 -> 0:55:54.95 and because I interviewed members
0:55:54.95 -> 0:55:56.92 of other climate organizations
0:55:57.78 -> 0:55:59.84 and also students who are advocating
0:55:59.84 -> 0:56:03.3 for institutional change at their schools.
0:56:03.3 -> 0:56:06.453 The videos will also be used for those other organizations.
0:56:07.86 -> 0:56:09.75 And then Montana Health Professionals
0:56:09.75 -> 0:56:13.423 may also incorporate them in grant applications.
0:56:17.01 -> 0:56:21.42 <v -> I left off my internship with the idea
0:56:21.42 -> 0:56:23.34 that the final project was going to shared
0:56:23.34 -> 0:56:25.47 with my supervisor’s team
0:56:25.47 -> 0:56:30.28 with the rest of the environmental, sorry,
0:56:30.28 -> 0:56:33.1 the climate justice adaptation working group,
0:56:33.1 -> 0:56:35.82 and then so hopefully, that’ll maybe get used
0:56:35.82 -> 0:56:40.02 into some kind of state-level policy or planning policy,
0:56:40.02 -> 0:56:44.28 and then that it could potentially be used in other states
0:56:44.28 -> 0:56:45.113 because a big part of it
0:56:45.113 -> 0:56:48.59 was listing Connecticut specific resources
0:56:48.59 -> 0:56:50.38 to help identify vulnerable populations
0:56:50.38 -> 0:56:53.9 and to kind of help address some of the resiliency issues.
0:56:53.9 -> 0:56:56.449 So yeah, the hope is that it can be used
0:56:56.449 -> 0:56:58.853 to some level at state-level planning scenario.
0:57:02.26 -> 0:57:06.01 <v -> And my project is still ongoing,
0:57:06.01 -> 0:57:09.35 but once it’s completed,
0:57:09.35 -> 0:57:13.98 the municipal toolkit for extreme heat that I was working on
0:57:15.22 -> 0:57:19.087 will be distributed to municipal leaders around the state
0:57:22.46 -> 0:57:24.25 so that they can have those resources
0:57:24.25 -> 0:57:29.25 for helping their residents and infrastructure
and other parts of their municipalities adapt to extreme heat. And during our interviews, the leaders that we were speaking to actually seemed eager to see what we had developed. So hopefully, it’s helpful to those leaders. Great.

Good. Thanks so much, everybody. Thanks to panel two, and we’ll move on to our final panel. Oops. All right.

So I bring up panel three, collecting and operationalizing climate and health data. We have Gwen Oliver, Max Teirstein, Trinidad Kechkian, and Katie Schlick. So I’m Gwen Oliver. Thank you again to Laura and Mauro and everyone at the Yale Center for Climate Change and Health for giving us this platform to talk about what we did, and also for organizing the program, which was really excellent. So I’m at the Yale School of Public Health. I’m a master of public health student in my second year, and I specifically worked this summer, and I specifically worked
for the Climate Change and Health Equity Section, and I worked with their epidemiologist. So although a lot of the people on my team worked in policy, I actually did a lot of data work for them, which is also why I’m on this section of the event. So the main thing that I worked on over the summer was this biannual update of the climate change and health vulnerability indicator data and narratives. And so essentially, one thing that the climate change and health equity section does is they keep up to date these data sets that are used by municipal planners, health organizations, local health departments, and also just community members, in order to create data that's in an accessible form for them to do vulnerability assessments, especially for climate change. So for example, like poverty by census tract, or like linguistically-isolated populations. And I also updated narratives that were associated with these datasets so that people knew what they were looking at. And I think that the other panelists will get into this as well, but this is really critical because people need information to make decisions. And so especially at the local health department level, people really depend on these datasets and on the California Department of Public Health.
1:00:03.54 –> 1:00:06.21 to provide them with this information for planning purposes.
1:00:06.21 –> 1:00:09.94 So it was a really incredible experience, and yeah.
1:00:09.94 –> 1:00:10.773 Thank you.
1:00:14.04 –> 1:00:14.983 <v ->Thanks, Gwen.
1:00:16.517 –> 1:00:17.533 Oops, here we go.
1:00:19.7 –> 1:00:21.03 Max.
1:00:21.03 –> 1:00:22.123 <v ->Hi everybody.
1:00:22.96 –> 1:00:24.21 Thank you so much for coming today.
1:00:24.21 –> 1:00:26.283 It’s so nice to see some of your faces.
1:00:27.348 –> 1:00:30.04 I’m just gonna jump right in because I only have two minutes
1:00:30.04 –> 1:00:32.47 and I had a lot of projects I was put on.
1:00:32.47 –> 1:00:33.33 I worked this summer
1:00:33.33 –> 1:00:35.25 for the Center for Community Engagement,
1:00:35.25 –> 1:00:37.01 Environmental Justice, and Health.
1:00:37.01 –> 1:00:38.23 It’s a mouthful.
1:00:38.23 –> 1:00:40.01 We call it CEEJH for short.
1:00:40.01 –> 1:00:42.41 And all of my projects
1:00:42.41 –> 1:00:46.01 had something to do with environmental justice mapping.
1:00:46.01 –> 1:00:49.09 So just like Gwen just said,
1:00:49.09 –> 1:00:51.14 it looked a lot like layering data
1:00:51.14 –> 1:00:54.887 from the realms of public health and environmental data
1:00:54.887 –> 1:00:57.04 and climate data and socioeconomic data
1:00:57.04 –> 1:00:59.7 to identify where the most vulnerable communities
1:00:59.7 –> 1:01:01.15 in an area are.
1:01:01.15 –> 1:01:02.99 And there are lots of different indicators
1:01:02.99 –> 1:01:06.34 for capturing that kind of vulnerability,
1:01:06.34 –> 1:01:09.74 and part of my work, especially one of my projects
1:01:09.74 –> 1:01:12.75 was putting together a white paper that surveyed
sort of current environmental justice mapping tools that are available that layer these kinds of data and identifying gaps, indicators of vulnerability that should be included, but maybe aren’t right now. And that white paper will be published soon on the National Wildlife Federation’s website. It’s going to be presented to the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and that was just a really awesome project that I worked on. I also participated in a project for a publication called Consumer Reports that I’m sure some of you have heard of, and that project was mapping out where Amazon warehouses were located across the country and sort of trying to make an argument that Amazon disproportionally sites its warehouses and facilities, and areas that are primarily black and brown and low income and have low educational attainment. So particularly vulnerable areas. And we were able to find that that actually is true based on the data. So I worked on a host of other projects, including updating Maryland statewide environmental justice mapping tool and their park equity mapping tool. I did some community engagement in North and South Carolina,
1:02:28.63 → 1:02:30.423 which is also mapping tool related.
1:02:31.56 → 1:02:33.67 But yeah, I’m excited to answer any questions
1:02:33.67 → 1:02:36.52 and talk a little bit more about that in the Q&A portion.
1:02:39.6 → 1:02:42.533 <v ->Thanks. And Trini.
1:02:43.71 → 1:02:45.46 <v -->Hi everyone. I’m Trini.
1:02:45.46 → 1:02:47.1 I use she, her pronouns,
1:02:47.1 → 1:02:51.84 and I am a fifth year student
1:02:51.84 → 1:02:53.31 at the School of the Environment.
1:02:53.31 → 1:02:56.11 I’m pursuing a master of environmental management.
1:02:56.11 → 1:03:00.263 I was a Yale College undergrad before that.
1:03:02.22 → 1:03:03.91 So I graduated in May
1:03:03.91 → 1:03:07.35 and I studied environmental studies and global affairs
1:03:07.35 → 1:03:09.36 during my time on Yale College.
1:03:09.36 → 1:03:14.15 This summer I interned with WE ACT for Environmental Justice
1:03:14.15 → 1:03:17 on their cooling center audit project.
1:03:17 → 1:03:20.72 So WE ACT is a membership-based organization
1:03:20.72 → 1:03:24.16 that has been fighting for the health and wellbeing
1:03:24.16 → 1:03:26.74 of low-income communities and communities of color
1:03:26.74 → 1:03:27.94 in Northern Manhattan.
1:03:27.94 → 1:03:31.34 So that’s Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood
1:03:31.34 → 1:03:33.76 for the past 30 years.
1:03:33.76 → 1:03:35.31 And the project that I was working on
1:03:35.31 → 1:03:38.9 was about adaptation strategies for extreme heat events,
1:03:38.9 → 1:03:42.063 which are a pressing public health issue in New York City.
1:03:43.16 → 1:03:45.88 The New York City Cooling Center Program
1:03:45.88 → 1:03:50.88 provides public spaces for residents to go and cool down
1:03:51.1 → 1:03:53.63 during extreme heat events.
1:03:53.63 → 1:03:58.39 And in the summer of 2019, WE ACT conducted an audit
of about 50 cooling centers across Northern Manhattan to assess our effectiveness, and they found that they were underutilized, lacks sufficient way-finding, didn’t consistently offer amenities or activities. It didn’t have food or water, and sometimes even lacked a working AC. And so they compiled all of this into a report that they’ve used to organize and advocate for the improvement of these cooling centers. So during the summer of 2021, WE ACT wanted to conduct a second audit of the cooling centers across Northern Manhattan using an improved auditing form developed by a team of students during the spring 2021 clinic in climate justice and climate policy law and public health. And so my job was to coordinate the audit project and actually make it happen this summer. So that included training and coordinating volunteers, fine-tuning the auditing form, and collecting and analyzing the data. And so my job was to coordinate the audit project and actually make it happen this summer. So that included training and coordinating volunteers, fine-tuning the auditing form, and collecting and analyzing the data. And so my job was to coordinate the audit project and actually make it happen this summer. So that included training and coordinating volunteers, fine-tuning the auditing form, and collecting and analyzing the data. Great. Thanks Trini. And Katie. Hi everybody. My name is Katie Schlick. I use she, her pronouns, and I am a senior in Yale College, majoring in environmental studies. This summer, I was really excited to work for the New Haven City Plan Department,
and I was supporting, in general,
their initiatives planning for climate and health
and building back after COVID-19 and then also,
just really supporting their community outreach.
So I had kind of two or three main focuses.
The first one was the city plan department.
First off, just as a little background,
the city plan department,
it’s an amazing office that works closely
with economic development
and a bunch of other city departments,
some different boards and commissions
like planning commission, the zoning commission,
the historic society, and then community management teams,
elders, and residents to facilitate
the meaningful physical development of the city
alongside sustainable land use
and economic and social policy.
So I supported the City Plan Commission
and its public outreach efforts,
and it’s kind of as they transitioned
into doing them over Zoom this whole year.
I also reformatted and updated the zoning code
so it’s more accessible online for people,
and then I also helped out
with framing the Long Wharf Responsible Growth Plan
in the context of community engagement needs
as they’ve changed a lot since the plan,
which you can see in that,
like on the right side of the slide.
That’s kind of the vision for redeveloping a Long Wharf area and revitalizing it, and that plan was like many, many years in the making. But I think a lot of, as we know, like a lot of community needs and just the physical environment has changed since the pandemic too. So I was kind of reassessing that in all those contexts. So a couple of my key takeaways from the summer were first, just, it was an amazing experience to understand how government operates and how many openings there are at such a local level to create real tangible change, and I saw that firsthand in like the four or five-hour long city plan commission meetings and hearing the public testimony, anywhere from that to when people would submit other forms of testimony or show up to neighborhood walks that we did as we were looking at the neighborhoods and thinking about how plans could adjust to fit the needs that we’re seeing on the ground.

I also have a huge appreciation for how influential a city plan department is in general and critical a city plan department is in general for tackling the climate crisis and building back from COVID-19 with equity and justice at the forefront of that conversation. It just the built environment so much reflects like how we’re able to build community and how we’re able to prioritize equity and justice.
And so it’s just like, it is a longer time scale, but it’s so meaningful and important. And then third, I would say, I really appreciated my preceptor, Jamie Stein, and the cohort of fellows. It was also affiliated with the Dwight Hall Summer Fellowship. And it was just amazing to be able to all work together, to go from this book, planning to stay, and think about how we can hear the voices of the people in the community on the ground, and then match that up right to what the plans were going to be. So thank you.

Great. Thanks, Katie. All right. So a few questions. So I think I’ll frame this out bigger, a little bit bigger than data and also say that it’s around kind of community planning and community engagement. You know, the way that you do it really matters. The way that you’re collecting and using the data and presenting the data or the way that you are making decisions for communities, like that process really matters, and we learned that through principles of environmental justice. So can you talk about observations.
that you saw about maybe ways that that went well or challenges that you saw in applying those principles and practice in your projects?

Anyone can jump in. I can talk a little bit. I didn’t have a lot of direct community engagement just because at the California Department of Public Health level, they’re almost like a federal government institution, because they’re so big, but something that I did see that was really successful was that a lot of the planning and work that the climate change and health equity section did involved community partners. And so that’s especially essential because it is an equity organization. And so it was really important for them to kind of go into communities and partner with community groups and say, like what do you need? Like what resources are lacking? Or like there’s been discussion of like weatherization of houses, and that is really critical, but like is that something that people are invested in? Is that like the primary thing that they need? And so I think that like a little bit less directly related to my project, but just in general, I think the team that I worked on was really excellent
at engaging with partners who were directly plugged into the community and knew what was needed.

Yeah, I would just add also, like I have found that when community partners play pivotal role in data collection and on the project, for example, I worked on a project, updating the CEEJH’s park equity mapper, which basically assesses community’s relative access to green space.

That was a much more successful endeavor ultimately, than was this kind of broader dataset work that I did for the Amazon project, which involved data from all over the country.

The data was drawn from the national environmental justice mapping tool the EPA has called EJSCREEN.

And a lot of that data is modeled but we worked with a group called The Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance in Baltimore to put together a different report that’ll get published soon on park equity and health outcomes.

And that data was really rich and the community partners could speak to its accuracy, whereas the national data, a lot of which was modeled and that data is all coming from kind of the Census Bureau, which is crucial, of course, but not a community-based organization.
It's a huge in scope. So that data had a lot more inaccuracies in it and it was a lot more difficult to work with ultimately. So I think that there's an important point to be made about how community groups actually can produce much more accurate data. And so they make for excellent partners in data analysis work.

There were kind of two levels of community engagement in my project. One was me working with volunteers who are members of the community, and the second level being the volunteers going out to conduct the surveys of the users of the cooling centers, who are like another level of community. So I didn’t really quite get to be communicating with the actual users of the cooling centers, but my strategy for working with the volunteers was to just make them feel heard and actually incorporate the comments that they had about the audit into the project. So the first training session that I had wasn’t the smoothest, but I think because of that, I was able to create a much better like process and a much better audit form to actually go out and get better data for the project, and so a lot of the comments were like, so because this project involved like human subjects who were the users of the cooling centers,
we had to do a consent form before doing any surveying. So the consent form originally was like two-pages long. It took like five minutes to read. It was really wordy and jargony. And when we were going through that during the first training session, I got many comments about its length and I managed to cut it down to one minute, a quick like consent form that still got all the information across that was necessary. And even some of the questions that were in the audit form, we got rid of or changed. We removed an entire section for the staff survey because we felt that, well, first of all, a lot of the locations, especially the public libraries didn’t allow us to even survey, and we also felt that surveying staff, we would encounter some obstacles in that because staff would be suspicious of like what we were gonna do with information, whether we were gonna attach a name to the form, or whether we were gonna get them in trouble, which was not like at all the purpose of our audits, and they were completely anonymous. But yeah, because of the feedback that I got during that first training session, I kind of treated that as like me talking to members of the community, which I was,
and incorporating their work, and I got some really great, like I got a nice email saying like thank you so much for like working so hard to incorporate our comments. Like you really made us feel heard. And that meant a lot to me.

But to kind of comment on what Max just said about communities developing more accurate data, I kind of encountered, not the opposite problem, but I think it depends what kind of data you’re really looking for. So for me, I think training, I think I had like 25 or 30 volunteers to go out and to do audits. There’s gonna be variability in that despite the trainings that I did. So that was one of the obstacles that I think I encountered.

I would add for the City Plan Department as well, I think there were a couple of different ways in which community engagement and collecting data from there was prioritized. So one project another one of the fellows was working on was the redevelopment of the strong school neighborhood. And so I kind of came in at a time when they had already worked with a consulting firm to develop a feedback survey.
But then in terms of distributing the survey, it’s a little tricky with COVID, but we decided that papering was the best way to do it, and then there was a QR code that people could scan. But yeah, we distributed that kind of pretty much by hands to the local public library in New Haven to the summer schools that were running, New Haven public schools. They went up and down the street at the main to like grand avenue to all the different local businesses, and they went with people from that neighborhood so that it was received well, and then there was like a couple, we drove the whole neighborhood and put it in all the mailboxes and stuff. So this idea of like data, not just being the statistics, but also like the lens experiences and then the open comments from people. And then in terms of the City Plan Commission, which I mentioned before too, one big thing that came up this summer was meeting over Zoom. And so we had to make sure that it was accessible for people. So people are able to send in public comment that way, and then also just there’s like public comment periods open at the meeting, and if we didn’t get to one at one meeting,
1:18:32.5 –> 1:18:34.94 it would open up for the following meeting.
1:18:34.94 –> 1:18:37.41 So there was a lot of opportunity for engagement there.
1:18:37.41 –> 1:18:40.45 And then with my project with Longworth,
1:18:40.45 –> 1:18:41.49 all the fellows were working
1:18:41.49 –> 1:18:43.221 on building out community profiles
1:18:43.221 –> 1:18:46.94 around these already established plans.
1:18:46.94 –> 1:18:51.94 So in theory, there was community input
1:18:52.7 –> 1:18:54.89 in the plans to begin with,
1:18:54.89 –> 1:18:59.17 but we were trying to situate that within more of the data
1:18:59.17 –> 1:19:00.87 that we have from DataHaven
1:19:00.87 –> 1:19:03.26 that we were pulling from community management team meetings
1:19:03.26 –> 1:19:06.03 from talking to the elders and talking to residents.
1:19:06.03 –> 1:19:07.84 And another huge piece of it
1:19:07.84 –> 1:19:09.85 was trying to then at the end of it,
1:19:09.85 –> 1:19:13.45 we’re packaging the profiles in a way that are useful
1:19:13.45 –> 1:19:15.35 for the community members themselves
1:19:15.35 –> 1:19:17.07 and for the neighborhoods themselves
1:19:17.07 –> 1:19:19.41 so that they can use that in future conversations
1:19:19.41 –> 1:19:21.97 or future planning commission meetings
1:19:21.97 –> 1:19:23.72 or whatever might be helpful there.
1:19:27.571 –> 1:19:28.84 Trini, do you want to jump in?
1:19:28.84 –> 1:19:31.12 <v ->Yeah, I wanted to comment on data
1:19:31.12 –> 1:19:33.51 not just being the actual survey
1:19:33.51 –> 1:19:35.75 or whatever you’re collecting,
1:19:35.75 –> 1:19:37.32 but also the lived experience.
1:19:37.32 –> 1:19:42.31 So after every heat wave,
1:19:42.31 –> 1:19:45.67 I would do a debrief with the volunteers,
1:19:45.67 –> 1:19:50.54 and I would say that their comments are even more valuable
1:19:50.54 –> 1:19:52.43 than the actual audits,
just because a lot of the audits, they weren’t able to conduct or they got lost and went to a different location, which is data in itself because then that means that they’re not easy to find, or they weren’t able to conduct it because there were no users there, or their interactions with the staff were a little bit hostile maybe and they wanted to talk about that. So I think even, yeah, I think that’s a great point, Katie. <v>Okay, with just a couple of minutes left, I’ll ask you of what Gwen kind of pointed to, which is, do you see ways that the work that you did or that this data will inform policy? Yeah, since you pointed to me, I can go first. Yeah, I think that it’s really, and I also just wanted to tie this back a little bit to the last question, which is about like community engagement and equity and tie it back to data, because I think that’s something that is overlooked sometimes is that data aggregation or desegregation can hide or highlight equity issues, and I think that that’s really what the team that I was on was specifically trying to do was to disaggregate data in a way that really allowed you to look at like who is most vulnerable. For example, I brought up earlier
like linguistically-isolated populations by census tract. So if you’re trying to implement like fire safety in a region, but there’s an entire like census tract that where like households don’t have someone who speaks English and like at a certain grade level, then they might not be able to read or understand the materials that you’re distributing. And so that’s something that’s really critical for the people who are doing work in that area to know. And that’s something that if you just looked at like linguistically-isolated populations in all California, you wouldn’t know. And so I think that we really aim to provide that desegregated data that allowed communities to make decisions based on the information in their region and in their community, done to a pretty narrow level. So I think that that’s how my work contributed to community decision-making. I can say for the New Haven City Plan Department, I think what I saw more this summer was less on the side of building new policy or plans since that’s such a long time scale. Again, like the plan department, for the most part, with the exception of like approving some zoning things, is operating on like a 20 or 30 plus year timescale. So like the vision that you saw of Long Wharf is absolutely beautiful and amazing and so exciting, but that will not be manifesting for a long time.
But I think just as important as the creation of policy or plans is the implementation of it. And so now, as we’re kind of past that bridge of, you know, they’ve developed the plan, making sure that we’re constantly keeping in check how times have changed, I mean, the plan was only like drafted and finalized a couple of years ago, but all of New Haven’s priorities situate everything has changed. So doing that constant like iterative process of reassessing and thinking about what are the new needs that have popped up and as we’re implementing it, is this feeling like can we go back to the drawing board? It’s just like the reiterative process, and I definitely think that like data, whether it be lived experiences or from the census tracts or stuff that we’re getting from DataHaven or from the city of New Haven GIS system, all of that is really important and critical in that assessment. So I think I’m gonna leave the last five minutes for any audience questions. So thank you, panel three, and maybe just give kind of the virtual thank you applause to all the panels and all of our great interns.
I’ll give a loud applause since I have the microphone, and open it up for questions. I don’t see any in the chat, but would welcome anyone to raise their hand and jump in or add it into the chat.

Anybody?

You’ve got one in the chat about tips for securing your internship.

Oh, that’s a good one. Well, it’s a good plug for our climate change and health internship program. So one thing that we actually... One of the reasons that we built out this program was that we realized that climate change and health is a fairly new field, and that sometimes it’s hard for students to find those projects. We’ve worked with partners of the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health and others in our network to identify these projects, and then we make them eligible now to all MPH students, environmental studies majors students, and our Yale Center student associates who then apply and go through kind of a matching process. So that’s one strategy is to work through our process. But if others have other advice for securing them through kind of traditional means, that’d be great to talk about. I feel like no one wants to hear this,
but networking is your friend,
and I would count this as networking.
Like being a student associate last year
is how I heard about this program,
and I doubt that I would have been able to find some-

that was as tailored to what I wanted to do
if I didn’t kind of have an existing network here at Yale
and the people that I know who found internships

that were more tailored to their wants and needs,
but most typically through advisers
or co-workers or other things like that.

So there’s a lot on indeed and stuff like that,
but I think it tends
to be more successful and more interesting
if you find something through someone else.
Yeah, I was in the clinic
for climate justice in public health last spring
and that’s how I heard about this internship.

So agreed on the networking and finding connections.
I will just second that course
for anybody who has not heard of it yet.
I’m sure that most of you have
and many of you probably are in it right now,
but it’s an amazing, amazing course,
and ended up actually really giving me kind of the framework
for what I would want to do
with like most of my or the next few years, I guess.
I had never heard of environmental justice mapping
before that class,
and now that's like what I am running my senior essay on.

and what I spent the summer working on and last summer too.

So would highly recommend that course.

Thanks. Great.

Well, I think we'll call it a night.

Thanks again to everybody for your great presentations,

and I look forward to chances to see you in person sometime

and learn more about it,

and I hope that others do that as well.

If you heard of something that you were interested in

and you want to learn more,

then reach out to your colleague here.

So thanks everybody and have a great night.