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 of the 21st century.

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. 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. So 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.

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 on 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 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 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 this measures they have taken, it’s not sufficient to tackle this problem in the country.

Yeah. Great.

Thank you, Weixi.

Next is Erika.
Hi. Thank you.<nHi everyone. My name is Erika. I am a second year MPH student at Yale School of Public Health in the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Department, and I’m also getting a concentration in climate change and 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. And 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

Hi. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Bozzi, and also thank you to everyone else. at the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health for organizing this and as usual, just doing amazing work. Hi everyone. My name is Erika. I am a second year MPH student at Yale School of Public Health in the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Department, and I’m also getting a concentration in climate change and 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. And 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 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.
151 00:07:11.330 --> 00:07:12.163 Thank you.
152 00:07:13.180 --> 00:07:14.543 <v ->Great. Thanks, Erika.</v>
153 00:07:17.210 --> 00:07:18.263 Next is Rebecca.
154 00:07:19.640 --> 00:07:20.700 <v ->Hello everyone.</v>
155 00:07:20.700 --> 00:07:21.950 Can you all hear me okay?
156 00:07:22.830 --> 00:07:24.426 Cool.
157 00:07:24.426 --> 00:07:28.300 Very cool work that everyone’s doing.
158 00:07:28.300 --> 00:07:29.393 Very nice to meet everyone.
159 00:07:29.393 --> 00:07:31.540 I am a second-year MPH candidate
160 00:07:31.540 --> 00:07:33.380 at the Yale School of Public Health.
161 00:07:33.380 --> 00:07:34.730 I’m studying health policy
162 00:07:34.730 --> 00:07:37.710 with a concentration in climate change and health.
163 00:07:37.710 --> 00:07:41.330 This past summer, I worked with the NGO EarthMedic.
164 00:07:41.330 --> 00:07:43.730 I’m gonna give a bit of background about the NGO
165 00:07:43.730 --> 00:07:47.250 just ’cause it will make sense in context, I promise.
166 00:07:47.250 --> 00:07:49.670 So the NGO is very, very new.
167 00:07:49.670 --> 00:07:53.120 It was founded officially in April, 2020,
168 00:07:53.120 --> 00:07:54.500 which as you guys can imagine
169 00:07:54.500 --> 00:07:55.760 from a public health perspective,
170 00:07:55.760 --> 00:07:57.710 not a great time really to be starting anything,
171 00:07:57.710 --> 00:08:00.330 certainly not public health projects,
172 00:08:00.330 --> 00:08:03.410 but onward they go.
173 00:08:03.410 --> 00:08:06.870 So basically going into this internship,
174 00:08:06.870 --> 00:08:09.230 they didn’t really have the capacity
175 00:08:09.230 --> 00:08:10.900 and still don’t really have the capacity
176 00:08:10.900 --> 00:08:14.400 to do any of the work that they want to do.
177 00:08:14.400 --> 00:08:15.870 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 Earth-Medic 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 at 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.

Yes, 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, 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. And then 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.
Okay.
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, 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.

Laura: 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 of it
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 I have actually done the work and I've done these things.

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 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
329 00:15:43.630 --> 00:15:46.650 into what are we going to do with this knowledge.
330 00:15:46.650 --> 00:15:48.010 So I’m glad that you were able
331 00:15:48.010 --> 00:15:50.370 to have that experience in your internship.
332 00:15:50.370 --> 00:15:53.130 I’m curious also about the partners
333 00:15:53.130 --> 00:15:56.850 and stakeholders that were engaged in your project.
334 00:15:56.850 --> 00:16:01.430 What did that engagement look like, and what was the...
335 00:16:02.350 --> 00:16:04.240 Maybe tell us some of the benefits
336 00:16:04.240 --> 00:16:07.593 of stakeholder engagement in your projects,
337 00:16:10.820 --> 00:16:11.983 or limitations.
338 00:16:15.250 --> 00:16:20.250 <v ->Yeah, so the partners and stakehold-
339 00:16:20.770 --> 00:16:25.430 ers</v> engaged with the work was Dejusticia,
340 00:16:26.430 --> 00:16:29.647 the government and local communities
341 00:16:29.647 --> 00:16:32.233 and some private sectors.
342 00:16:34.590 --> 00:16:39.590 So because I’m in the environmental justice team,
343 00:16:40.850 --> 00:16:43.460 and then my preceptor is...
344 00:16:43.460 --> 00:16:44.610 I have two preceptors.
345 00:16:44.610 --> 00:16:47.540 One, she’s a lawyer,
346 00:16:47.540 --> 00:16:51.629 and the other one, she’s a political scientist.
347 00:16:51.629 --> 00:16:56.629 So they work mostly with other lawyers
348 00:16:57.330 --> 00:17:02.330 and also with people from the Colombian legal system,
349 00:17:03.970 --> 00:17:08.970 and I’m working more with like university professors
350 00:17:12.220 --> 00:17:14.825 in getting the data and getting
351 00:17:14.825 --> 00:17:19.770 like understanding their research
352 00:17:19.770 --> 00:17:23.760 and kind of like translating and collecting them
353 00:17:23.760 --> 00:17:28.200 and then translating into practice.
Yeah, so yeah. So I didn’t get to work too much with the government is also 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, and 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 mWHO 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 like 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. 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 that 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.

Weixi. 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.
and also illegal money activities
and also some wastewater treatment,
all kinds of different problems
is kind of limiting the effectiveness
of the decision that the court makes.
So yeah.
So I think it’s quite complicated and difficult
in Columbia.
Thanks. Erika.</v>
Yeah, I would really just second everything</v>
that Rebecca said.
I mean, we did our internships in similar
regions.
So I’m really just seconding everything that
she said,
and yeah, the area that I did my internship in
is so much more prone
to really like immediate severe threats of climate change,
and I think there’s just, because of that,
there’s a bit of frustration in terms of policy action
or just any kind of action
in order to either mitigate or adapt to these effects,
and I don’t have like a solution or anything
to present.
It’s just something that we should really be,
there needs to be a really concerted effort,
I think, globally, to tackle this issue.
But I’m sure I’m just preaching to the choir
by saying that.
It’s always good to have the reminder.

Great.

Thank you so much, Rebecca, Erika, Weixi.

Great job.

We’re gonna shift over now to our next panel on communicating climate and health issues.

We have Caroline Erickson, Natalie Henning, Nora Massie, Ian Reilly, and Adriana Ballenger.

Caroline

Hi everyone.

I’m really excited to be kicking off this section of the talk.

So I’m Caroline.

I’m a senior in Yale College, majoring in environmental studies, concentrating in human health and the environment, and I’m also in the five-year BA BS MPH program.

So I was really fortunate this summer that I joined my project right at its beginning, and this was kind of an idea that the health department decided to address just because they found essentially a gap in the knowledge of what they were finding, what they were reading, the research that was coming out, and what residents of like shoreline communities were believing.

So despite all the great research,
507 00:25:33.970 --> 00:25:36.050 people are still in Connecticut, especially along the shoreline,
509 00:25:37.720 --> 00:25:40.920 a little hesitant to believe the science.
510 00:25:40.920 --> 00:25:43.790 So we wanted to develop a project
511 00:25:43.790 --> 00:25:48.730 that addressed this in a way that was a little less scary
512 00:25:48.730 --> 00:25:52.630 than just jumping head first into a bunch of literature.
513 00:25:52.630 --> 00:25:54.730 So the main goal of this project
514 00:25:54.730 --> 00:25:59.480 was to interview people in the community,
515 00:25:59.480 --> 00:26:02.070 get their human stories with climate change,
516 00:26:02.070 --> 00:26:05.440 and then disseminate that into the wider public
517 00:26:05.440 --> 00:26:06.720 to kind of show people
518 00:26:06.720 --> 00:26:09.550 that this is not necessarily something
519 00:26:09.550 --> 00:26:12.400 that is super out of touch, but it is right now
520 00:26:12.400 --> 00:26:16.740 and it is affecting our community presently, but yeah.
521 00:26:16.740 --> 00:26:18.510 So we spent a lot of time interviewing
522 00:26:18.510 --> 00:26:20.050 towards the end of the project
523 00:26:20.050 --> 00:26:21.610 or towards the end of the summer.
524 00:26:21.610 --> 00:26:25.130 We started having communication or talks with BCTV,
525 00:26:25.130 --> 00:26:28.150 which is our local like television station
526 00:26:28.150 --> 00:26:31.170 to hopefully get this information out there
527 00:26:31.170 --> 00:26:35.180 a little bit more, and this project is still going on.
528 00:26:35.180 --> 00:26:36.700 So we’re still running interviews
529 00:26:36.700 --> 00:26:39.070 and kind of collecting data in that sense
530 00:26:39.070 --> 00:26:40.500 and working to disseminate it.
531 00:26:40.500 --> 00:26:42.727 But yeah, this is a super exciting project
532 00:26:42.727 --> 00:26:44.795 and I had a great time this summer.
533 00:26:44.795 --> 00:26:45.878 So thank you.
534 00:26:47.190 --> 00:26:50.763 <v->Thanks, Caroline. Natalie.</v>
535 00:26:51.780 --> 00:26:53.950 <v->Awesome. Hi, thank you, Laura.</v>
536 00:26:53.950 --> 00:26:55.860 And again, thank you to the center
537 00:26:55.860 --> 00:26:57.110 for putting this together.
538 00:26:57.110 --> 00:26:57.943 It’s so great to hear
539 00:26:57.943 --> 00:27:00.130 what everyone else was working on the sum-
540 00:27:01.370 --> 00:27:02.800 mer.
541 00:27:02.800 --> 00:27:05.840 But high out, so I’m Natalie,
542 00:27:05.840 --> 00:27:08.780 I’m a second year in the MPH program
543 00:27:08.780 --> 00:27:11.440 and concentrating in data modeling.
544 00:27:11.440 --> 00:27:13.900 I interned with Montana Health Professionals
545 00:27:13.900 --> 00:27:16.030 for a Healthy Climate this summer.
546 00:27:16.030 --> 00:27:19.192 They’re a very small non-profit organization,
547 00:27:19.192 --> 00:27:22.860 and their team is led by doctors, Laurie and
548 00:27:22.860 --> 00:27:25.280 Rob Brian,
549 00:27:25.280 --> 00:27:28.690 who unfortunately, I don’t think are here,
550 00:27:28.690 --> 00:27:32.580 and they’re completely phenomenal and in-
551 00:27:32.580 --> 00:27:34.610 spiring
552 00:27:34.610 --> 00:27:37.600 and I could go on and on about them.
553 00:27:37.600 --> 00:27:40.810 But their organization’s mission and their goal
554 00:27:40.810 --> 00:27:43.880 is really to use the voice of health professionals
555 00:27:43.880 --> 00:27:47.060 in the state to push for climate action.
556 00:27:47.060 --> 00:27:50.570 So it was really interesting to see how they’re doing that
557 00:27:50.570 --> 00:27:54.830 in a more conservative environment or climate
558 00:27:54.830 --> 00:27:58.290 change.
559 00:27:58.290 --> 00:27:58.290 So I was helping them in a variety of capaci-
560 00:27:58.290 --> 00:27:58.290 ties,
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, I think 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. Yeah. Hi.

Can everyone hear me?

Great. Okay.

My computer is having sound problems. But hi, I'm Nora.

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 and help from the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health on developing a climate and health module that I’ve shown a few slides from here. So basically, 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. 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 in the 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 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. 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 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 and this year, I’m also a Yale Center on Climate Change and Health student associate. 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, also UConn’s Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation. So I was working with Dr. Bozzi and 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 for heat-related illnesses and other adverse impacts. 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,

with the relationship between urban planning and public health and also environmental justice.

Great.

Thanks, Adriana.

Okay, so shift back to our panel cover and invite you for a discussion.

So first, climate communication is hard,

and many of the scientists don’t do it very well.

It’s not.

So through your internships and various ways,

you were able to dig into this.

So what advice do you have?

Have you gleaned some best practices
around communicating around climate change and health

and what are the qualities that make that best practice effective, do you think?

Yeah, I can... Yeah. Okay, I can kick it off, yeah.

Well, like I mentioned in my intro, it was really interesting
to see how my organization operated
in an environment that tends to be more conservative
and has unique subpopulations that have legitimate concerns
about what it means to transition to renewables
or change agricultural practices, et cetera.
And so in terms of being an effective communicator,
I think what I learned and what I heard over and over
in interviews that I conducted is first,
that when you’re having a conversation with someone,
the goal shouldn’t be to convince them of anything.
It’s really, the goal should be to establish a connection
with that person, and to establish some level of trust.
And second, that it’s very important to listen,
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
and health 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. Yeah, I’d say one of the biggest things. That I found to be effective and it also sounds pretty obvious 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
to learn from them as well, 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.

So when we were interviewing the municipal emergency management directors and other officials, what we found was helpful was to reference like the heat waves that had been occurring that summer, because that was extremely relevant to obviously our project and also helped us frame the questions in a way that made it very relevant to them as well.

And we also realized, as we were conducting our interviews, that many of the emergency management directors were not familiar with the language of climate adaptation that we had included in several of our questions. So something important that we ended up discussing was how we could better adapt our questions and our language to their experiences, because we went in sort of assuming that they would know what this means.
and that we wouldn’t need to provide a lot of explanation. But I think that really helped us recalibrate and make sure that the way we were communicating our questions helped them and helped us.

And I would just probably follow up, pretty similar to what Adriana said, which is that one of the things that we found in the whole point of our assessment was that like community engagement 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 crowdsource 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, making sure the language and the vocabulary you’re using is digestible regardless of who you expect might be consuming.

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.
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.

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. There’s a hope that this project is kind of more long-lasting and living and breathing, 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 on their website and YouTube channel, and because I interviewed members of other climate organizations and also students who are advocating for institutional change at their schools. The videos will also be used for those other organizations. And then Montana Health Professionals may also incorporate them in grant applications.

I left off my internship with the idea that the final project was going to shared with my supervisor’s team with the rest of the environmental, sorry, the climate justice adaptation working group, and then so hopefully, that’ll maybe get used into some kind of state-level policy or planning policy, and then that it could potentially be used in other states because a big part of it was listing Connecticut specific resources to help identify vulnerable populations and to kind of help address some of the resiliency issues. So yeah, the hope is that it can be used
to some level at state-level planning scenario.

And my project is still ongoing, but once it’s completed, the municipal toolkit for extreme heat that I was working on will be distributed to municipal leaders around the state so that they can have those resources for helping their residents and infrastructure and other parts of their municipalities. I was working on 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.

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 Keckian, and Katie Schlick. 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’m in the epidemiology of microbial disease. So I worked at the California Department of Public Health 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, and essentially, 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 to provide them with this information for planning purposes. So it was a really incredible experience, and yeah. Thank you. Thanks, Gwen. Hello everybody. Hi everybody. Thank you so much for coming today. It’s so nice to see some of your faces. I’m just gonna jump right in because I only have two minutes and I had a lot of projects I was put on. I worked this summer
for the Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health. It's a mouthful. We call it CEEJH for short. And all of my projects had something to do with environmental justice mapping. So just like Gwen just said, it looked a lot like layering data from the realms of public health and environmental data and climate data and socioeconomic data to identify where the most vulnerable communities in an area are. And there are lots of different indicators for capturing that kind of vulnerability, and part of my work, especially one of my projects 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 disproportionately 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, which is also mapping tool related. But yeah, I'm excited to answer any questions and talk a little bit more about that in the Q&A portion. Thanks. And Trini. Hi everyone. I'm Trini. I use she, her pronouns, and I am a fifth year student at the School of the Environment.
I’m pursuing a master of environmental management.
I was a Yale College undergrad before that.
So I graduated in May
and I studied environmental studies and global affairs
during my time on Yale College.
This summer I interned with WE ACT for Environmental Justice
on their cooling center audit project.
So WE ACT is a membership-based organization
that has been fighting for the health and wellbeing
of low-income communities and communities of color
in Northern Manhattan.
So that’s Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood
for the past 30 years.
And the project that I was working on
was about adaptation strategies for extreme heat events,
which are a pressing public health issue in New York City.
The New York City Cooling Center Program
provides public spaces for residents to go and cool down
during extreme heat events.
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,
1264 01:04:09.160 --> 01:04:11.540 lacks sufficient way-finding,
1265 01:04:11.540 --> 01:04:14.653 didn’t consistently offer amenities or activities.
1266 01:04:16.060 --> 01:04:18.000 It didn’t have food or water,
1267 01:04:18.000 --> 01:04:22.540 and sometimes even lacked a working AC.
1268 01:04:22.540 --> 01:04:25.410 And so they compiled all of this into a report
1269 01:04:25.410 --> 01:04:27.500 that they’ve used to organize
1270 01:04:27.500 --> 01:04:32.500 and advocate for the improvement of these
cooling centers.
1271 01:04:32.800 --> 01:04:34.600 So during the summer of 2021,
1272 01:04:36.190 --> 01:04:39.180 WE ACT wanted to conduct a second audit
1273 01:04:39.180 --> 01:04:42.980 of the cooling centers across Northern Man-
hattan
1274 01:04:42.980 --> 01:04:46.320 using an improved auditing form
1275 01:04:46.320 --> 01:04:48.320 developed by a team of students
1276 01:04:48.320 --> 01:04:53.320 during the spring 2021 clinic in climate justice
1277 01:04:53.376 --> 01:04:57.813 and climate policy law and public health.
1278 01:04:58.890 --> 01:05:03.270 And so my job was to coordinate the audit
project
1279 01:05:03.270 --> 01:05:05.430 and actually make it happen this summer.
1280 01:05:05.430 --> 01:05:10.430 So that included training and coordinating
volunteers,
1281 01:05:13.150 --> 01:05:15.800 fine-tuning the auditing form,
1282 01:05:15.800 --> 01:05:18.003 and collecting and analyzing the data.
1283 01:05:21.490 --> 01:05:22.953 <v ->Great. Thanks Trini.</v>
1284 01:05:24.520 --> 01:05:26.823 And Katie.
1285 01:05:27.980 --> 01:05:28.813 <v ->Hi everybody.</v>
1286 01:05:28.813 --> 01:05:29.900 My name is Katie Schlick.
1287 01:05:29.900 --> 01:05:33.550 I use she, her pronouns, and I am a senior
in Yale College,
1288 01:05:33.550 --> 01:05:35.790 majoring in environmental studies.
1289 01:05:35.790 --> 01:05:37.120 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, 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, it’s kind of as they transitioned into doing them over Zoom this whole year. I also reformatted and updated the zoning code so that 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, 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 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 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 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.
that we you’re creating and how they’re being implemented in the coming months and years ahead.

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 with 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?

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 like 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, I think, 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.

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,
it 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 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 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 and not everyone’s gonna conduct the survey the same way 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 that 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 like 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,
it would open up for the following meeting.
So there was a lot of opportunity for engagement there.
And then with my project with Longworth,
all the fellows were working
on building out community profiles
around these already established plans.
So in theory, there was community input
in the plans to begin with, but we were trying to situate that within more of the data that we have from DataHaven that we were pulling from community management team meetings from talking to the elders and talking to residents. And another huge piece of it was trying to then at the end of it, we’re packaging the profiles in a way that are useful for the community members themselves and for the neighborhoods themselves so that they can use that in future conversations or future planning commission meetings or whatever might be helpful there. Trini, do you want to jump in? Yeah, I wanted to comment on data not just being the actual survey or whatever you’re collecting, but also the lived experience. So after every heat wave, I would do a debrief with the volunteers, and I would say that their comments are even more valuable 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, 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.

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 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,
01:22:26.730 was less on the side of building new policy or plans
01:22:30.100 since that’s such a long time scale.
01:22:31.660 Again, like the plan department, for the most part,
01:22:34.820 with the exception of like approving some zoning things
01:22:38.220 is operating on like a 20 or 30 plus year timescale.
01:22:41.690 So like the vision that you saw of Long Wharf
01:22:43.980 is absolutely beautiful and amazing and so exciting,
01:22:46.240 but that will not be manifesting for a long time.
01:22:48.650 But I think just as important as the creation of policy
01:22:53.480 or plans is the implementation of it.
01:22:55.460 making sure that we’re constantly keeping in check
01:22:59.460 the plan was only like drafted and finalized a couple of years ago,
01:23:02.730 but all of New Haven’s priorities situate everything has changed.
01:23:05.330 how times have changed,
01:23:07.690 I mean, the plan was only like drafted
01:23:09.350 and finalized a couple of years ago,
01:23:11.900 but of New Haven’s priorities
01:23:13.980 situate everything has changed.
01:23:15.550 So doing that constant
01:23:18.220 like iterative process of reassessing
01:23:19.900 and then thinking about what are the new needs
01:23:22.150 that have popped up and as we’re implementing it,
01:23:24.650 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.

Great.

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. (Laura clapping)

I’ll give a loud applause since I have the microphone, 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.

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. So 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 on Climate Change and Health 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 something 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. Yeah, 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.