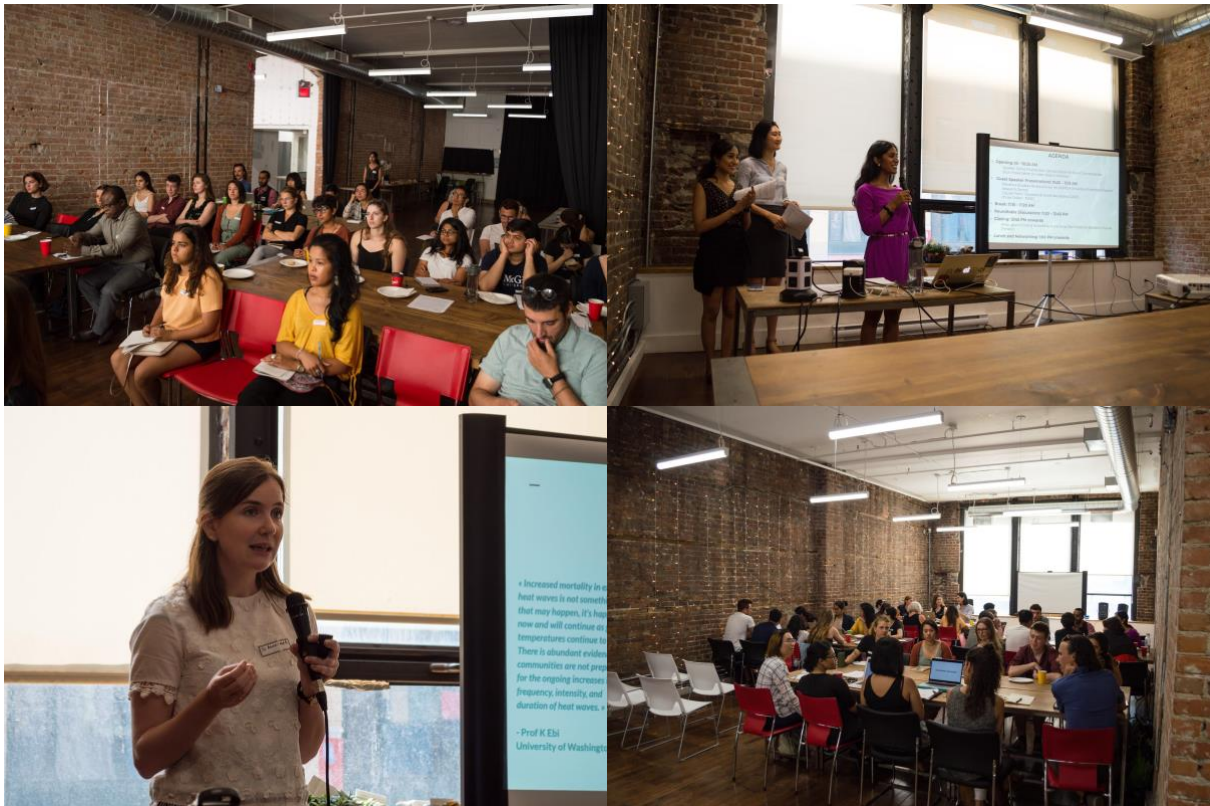




## Community Engagement Initiative - Urban Heat in Montréal: Environment, Social Connectedness, and Health Implications

*A workshop run by Lavanya Virmani and Claire Suh, Social Connectedness Fellows 2019, in collaboration with PARDEC, Net Impact, Partners in Health, and Data-Driven Lab.*



Facebook Event link: <https://www.facebook.com/events/387249238574938/>

We ran a half-day urban heat workshop on the 3rd of August 2019 consisting of presentations from guest speakers, four roundtable group discussions, and a networking lunch. This workshop addressed the issue of urban heat from the overlapping perspectives of environment, health, and social connectedness. It initiated a discussion to co-create policy recommendations to tackle this pressing issue and created a space to exchange knowledge and networks between different stakeholders.

We decided on having guest speaker presentations first in order to get all of the attendees, who varied in familiarity with the topic, on the same page. These presentations also highlighted the importance of approaching the urban heat issue in an interdisciplinary manner. Guest speakers who attended were affiliated with SCSC, the *Institut National de Santé Publique du Quebec* (INSPQ), The Nature of Cities (TNO), Health Canada, and the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE).

After the guest presentations, we broke out into four separate roundtable discussion groups. The roundtable format, limited to a maximum of 10 per group, ensured that everyone's voice was heard irrespective of their level of expertise on the subject matter.

Attendees varied from researchers, policymakers, government officials, community organizations, and the general public. In total, 31 people were in attendance not including the volunteers and organizers. However, the impact of this workshop will reach far beyond, as we will be sharing the resulting policy recommendations with the networks of our partner organizations, and the dozens of stakeholders and interested parties who could not attend that we are in contact with. The networking aspect of the event brought together many stakeholders who shared contact information in hopes of future collaboration. These interdisciplinary connections will help us address urban heat in a more effective manner, expanding the impact of the event even further. Addressing the concerns of rising heat through a multi-disciplinary lens allows for policy solutions to be considered from different sectors simultaneously, enabling them to be more innovative, impactful, and wide-reaching.

We had an extensive network of support in executing this workshop. Not only was it more impactful to collaborate as two fellows, but we were also lucky enough to have the other research fellows and friends volunteer at our event as note takers, facilitators, photographers and overseers. In addition, we had lots of aid from the community organizations that we partnered with, *Partenariat pour le développement des communautés* (PARDEC) and Net Impact Montreal. They were instrumental in shaping our ideas into a realistic plan, landing us a venue, helping us reach a wider audience and connecting us to networks. Other organizations like Climatable and the Centre for Clinical Research in Health (CCRH) were gracious enough to share the event on their networks as well. Last but not least, we could not have had this event without the experts who came to speak at our event

We succeeded in raising awareness about the interdisciplinary nature of addressing urban heat and informing our audience on important information about the social, environmental, and health impacts of urban heat. We also succeeded in collecting key policy recommendations through roundtable discussions that can be put into action after the event.

Our biggest success was bringing together stakeholders from different sectors and fields to come up with solutions together. Increasing interdisciplinary connections is an important part of addressing modern problems like urban heat so connecting these stakeholders at the event and for posterity is a major accomplishment for us. Another accomplishment was building partnerships with local organizations. It was through these partnerships that we succeeded in accessing a subsidized venue space with all technological equipment and other miscellaneous material such as coffee. Our partners also helped in reaching a wider audience and expanding our networks. Our biggest learning, was the importance of building value added partnerships and relationships that helped us in fulfilling our goal.