

## **New initiative aims to understand impacts of climate change on vulnerable groups in Canadian urban environments**

**October 12, 2023 (Cambridge, Toronto, Vancouver)** – To better understand the impacts of climate change on vulnerable Canadians in urban environments, Gore Mutual Foundation has partnered with Social Innovation Canada (SI Canada) and York University's Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change to launch The Climate and Equity Lab, a groundbreaking social innovation initiative.

In Canada, climate change is imposing an increasingly disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups, and factors such as poverty significantly impact the likelihood of recovering from extreme weather events.

"This year, Gore Mutual Foundation celebrated its 25th anniversary by introducing the Equity Acceleration Fund, a \$1M fund to support charitable organizations focusing on the inter-connection of poverty, equity, and climate change. We quickly identified a troubling lack of investment in the understanding of the impact climate change is having on vulnerable groups," said Gaby Polanco Sorto, VP & Head of Purpose and Sustainability at Gore Mutual Insurance Company. "Our partners in The Climate and Equity Lab share the same values, urgency, and vision to make our findings public and inspire others to take action alongside us. We are thrilled to embark on this journey together."

Gore Mutual Foundation will act as the lead sponsor of The Climate and Equity Lab, while SI Canada, a national charitable organization working to address complex challenges and create transformational change, will act as the Project lead, responsible for the management of the project's deliverables and leading the facilitation of the labs. As the academic partner, York University's Faculty of Environment and Urban Change will provide a postdoctoral researcher who will identify gaps through existing research and assist in developing new research to explore how the effects of climate change may exacerbate inequalities faced by Canada's most disadvantaged populations.

Alice Hovorka, Dean of York's Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, expressed her enthusiasm for this initiative, stating, "The research from The Climate and Equity Lab will serve as a crucial tool to inform policymakers, offering clear innovation and investment opportunities developed in collaboration with the communities most affected by climate change."

After a year of planning, phase one of The Climate and Equity Lab's multi-year initiative has begun, with stakeholder workshops set to take place in Vancouver, the Waterloo Region, and Toronto over the next nine months.

"This collaborative effort marks a significant step toward comprehending the complex connection between climate change and vulnerable groups. In collaboration with these communities, we will work towards creating a more equitable and resilient future for all Canadians," emphasized Andrea Nemtin, CEO of SI Canada.

Mutuals, Cooperatives, or Credit Unions interested in partnering with the Lab can reach out to [purpose@goremutual.ca](mailto:purpose@goremutual.ca).

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### **About Gore Mutual**

Built on a foundation of financial strength for more than 180 years, Gore Mutual Insurance Company is one of Canada's first property and casualty insurers. With offices in Cambridge, Toronto and Vancouver, Gore Mutual is a Canadian mutual company offering competitive insurance products through trusted broker partners. Every decision and investment made is anchored in the long-term benefits to customers, members and communities.

**Insurance that does good - this is our Purpose.** Grounded in our purpose and guided by our core values, at Gore Mutual, we believe that being good and doing good by our employees, customers and broker partners will benefit not only them but also us—which in turn allows us to spread good in our communities and reward the good we see in others. This is what is driving our work to become a purpose-driven, digitally-led national insurer.

### **About York University's New Faculty Of Environmental And Urban Change (EUC)**

York University's new Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change (EUC) has been created as a call to action to respond to the most pressing challenges facing people and the planet. Established in 2020, EUC brings together a critical mass of geographers, physical scientists, social scientists, humanities researchers and artists whose innovative, world-renowned research addresses natural, built and social spaces from a global perspective. Using field-based science, policy analysis, critical social theory, planning skills, geomatics, and cultural and arts-based approaches, our researchers are mobilizing knowledge to make positive change. We are a community of changemakers working to create a just and sustainable future.

### **About Social Innovation Canada (SI Canada)**

Social Innovation Canada (SI Canada) is a national charitable organization working to address complex challenges and create transformational change. SI Canada believes the application of social innovation approaches is essential to tackling problems that no sector or solo entrepreneur can solve alone. Social innovation is made possible by



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the contribution of diverse teams and the inclusion of ideas and actions from those most impacted by the challenges we face.

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