

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods: Connect & Prepare

Climate Communications Case Story



Personalization



Social Norms and Prompts



Visual Storytelling

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Project Title: Building Resilient Neighbourhoods – Connect & Prepare

Location: British Columbia, Canada

Project Partners: Building Resilient Neighbourhoods (BRN), Hey Neighbour Collective, Local Municipalities and Fire Departments, Community Organizations

Date: Launched in 2018

Climate Issue: Increasing frequency and intensity of acute emergencies and chronic stresses related to climate change impacts such as extreme heat

Action Area: Fostering neighbour-to-neighbour social connections to help build social resilience

Behavioural Theme(s): Personalization, Social Norms and Prompts, Visual Storytelling

Audience: Residents, local governments, community leaders



In any kind of crisis or emergency, neighbours are always the true ‘first responders’ because they’re the closest people to each other.

— Stacy Barter, Executive Director, BRN⁴

IMPACT STORY

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods' (BRN) Connect & Prepare is a program that equips neighbours with the relationships, knowledge and tools needed to strengthen their resilience and preparedness to extreme events and other climate emergencies. Neighbours are invited to participate in facilitated workshops, discuss their assets and priorities, and collaborate on projects such as creating a buddy check-in process for heatwaves, establishing a storage area for shared emergency supplies, or developing a building-wide communication system. A growing collection of resources also support collective action and help neighbours prepare for emergencies together.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES INCLUDE...

- Providing clear, accessible information on acute emergencies and chronic stresses related to climate change;
- Supporting the growth of social connections networks between neighbours to build community resilience; and
- Helping neighbours take leadership and assist each other more regularly, especially during emergencies.

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Resources and Guides:** Several user-friendly resources (such as toolkits, guides, checklists and other resources designed specifically for easy distribution) provide practical steps for preparing for extreme weather events and other climate risks by connecting with neighbours during times of crisis. These include tips for gathering neighbours, reviewing shared assets, emergency planning, and strategies to help neighbours enhance their connectedness and shared resilience.
- **Blog Posts:** BRN shares additional information through blog posts that further expand on the content of their resources including in-depth advice, personal stories, additional resources, and interactive elements like videos. These posts aim to engage readers and reinforce social connectedness and preparedness messages.
- **Social Media Campaigns:** BRN uses social media platforms like X (Twitter) and Facebook to share their resources with the help of social-media-friendly infographics, short videos, and interactive posts. These raise awareness about social connectedness, preparedness, and climate risks while encouraging community action. BRN also invites followers to share tips and engage with content.
- **Feedback Form:** BRN makes it easy for people to share their feedback. For example, the "Prepare Together for Extreme Heat Guide" resource page includes a feedback survey to understand how well the guide met the needs of neighbour groups, the clarity of its information, and suggestions for enhancing future versions.

BEHAVIOURAL STRATEGIES & TAKEAWAYS

- **Personalization:** The program and its resources are uniquely tailored to a British Columbia audience, referencing geographically-specific extreme events and climate impacts that British Columbians need to prepare for. Resources also address the reader as 'you' which places the reader at the centre of the action and encourages action by empowering the audience to see themselves as an integral part of the solution.
- **Social Norms and Prompts:** By promoting community-led initiatives and encouraging residents to engage in collective

preparedness, the program leverages social prompts to foster a sense of shared responsibility and connectedness. Highlighting the importance of neighbours as ‘first responders’ helps build a culture of mutual support and proactive engagement.

- **Visual Storytelling:** Resources and associated materials rely on infographics and visual elements to illustrate key points. This visual approach helps to capture attention, make complex information more digestible, and effectively reinforces key messages.

SOURCES

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods. (2023). *5 simple neighbourly actions to get ready for extreme heat together*. <https://www.resilientneighbourhoods.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/prepare-together-for-extreme-heat.pdf>

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CONCLUSION

The BRN Connect & Prepare program exemplifies the importance of proactive communication and social connectedness to build climate resilience. By using personalized and accessible language, community-driven approaches, and developing visually engaging resources, BRN equips residents to take meaningful action in preparing for extreme events and climate emergencies. By encouraging residents to participate in neighbour-led initiatives, the program activities and related communications foster a sense of ownership, connectedness, and shared responsibility.

MORE CASE STORIES AND RESOURCES ONLINE

This case story was developed by ICLEI Canada through the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation (ORCCA) as part of a Climate Communications Toolkit. Find more case stories and additional climate communications resources online at icleicanada.org/project/climate-communications-toolkit

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CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

