Closing Plenary

Dr. Ian Mauro, Prairie Climate Centre, "A resilient future: Infectious disease, climate change, and community-based adaptation"

"We have the data, we have the science. But mobilizing that knowledge and getting it into the hands of people who can make a difference is really the trick." —Ian Mauro

Key Takeaways

- Place-based **climate narratives** are crucial for helping envision a resilient future for our communities.
- Effective **storytelling** meets people where they are. Techniques like **visual mapping and filmmaking** have the power to educate, bring people into conversation, and inspire climate-forward action.
- The Climate Atlas of Canada is a key example of how to do this. The tool combines mapping with storytelling and the latest climatology. It uses maps, reports, films and articles to help communities adapt and prepare.

What We Heard

Storytelling and resilient future-building

- The data on climate change are clear. Now the task is to mobilize what we know. To do this, we need effective, audience-based communication strategies involving many ways of knowing.
- Storytelling inspires climate adaptation. Stories create the "cognitive framework for our capacity to change" (Dr. Mauro). Participatory storytelling means co-creating knowledge in community, together.
- The Beyond Climate film (2018) connects data to place and lived experiences. The community tour and discussions around the film are a good example of participatory, community-based story-telling techniques.

Climate Atlas of Canada

- The Climate Atlas democratizes the climate message with "topical messages from topical messengers" (Dr. Mauro). For example, it features video of farmers discussing climate change impacts.
- Maps, interviews and reports communicate climate projections data, helping people imagine varied scenarios.
- The Atlas shows the number of days over 30 degrees Celsius in various locations, including for a "high-carbon far future" (Dr. Mauro). Climate warming has vast consequences for health and infrastructure, and visualizing these data grounds the implications in concrete locations and experiences.

What We Heard

"We have to create an opportunity, a story, a narrative that sees a resilient future—in our lives, our communities, our country, the world."

—Ian Mauro

Climate and health: Risks and opportunities

- Ground-level ozone illness, heat-related productivity loss and loss of life are all significant threats. Paris is building cooling islands and considering "heat equity." Canada needs community planning for this too.
- Brand-new modelling from the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices shows significant risk of inland flooding affecting road and rail infrastructure. Roads and rail bring us the goods we need to live and are critical for our health.
- Among communities where climate denial is high, it may be useful to strategically decouple messages about climate and health, for example in the context of Lyme disease.
- The language of "bending down the curve" has worked during the pandemic and we can apply lessons learned to climate change mitigation. COVID-19 has shown that Canadians respond to bold science-based policies.

Adaptation: Building community resilience

- The City of Selkirk's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is an excellent recent example of risk prioritization, community participation, and bringing together scientific expertise with city planning.
- Indigenous knowledge has much to impart about the extraction and arrogance that lead to poor health. Climate change is ultimately about relations—with each other, the land and the atmosphere.

Explore Further

Reports and articles mentioned in this talk

- The health costs of climate change, Canadian Institute for Climate Choices
- Under water: The cost of climate for Canada's infrastructure, Canadian Institute for Climate Choices
- "A change of heart": Indigenous perspectives from the Onjisay Aki Summit on climate change, Climatic Change
- Cities must protect people from extreme heat, Nature
- Extreme weather and climate change: Population health and health system implications, Annual Review of Public Health