



# Changing the Climate

Report from OISE's Sustainability &  
Climate Action Network



**OISE SCAN**  
Sustainability & Climate  
Action Network



**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**  
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE  
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

# Introducing SCAN

“Sustainability and climate action are integral components of OISE’s work and commitment to both individual and collective wellbeing, and to a more just, equitable and sustainable world.”

OISE’s Sustainability & Climate Action Network (SCAN) was founded in 2009 to broaden and deepen support for its institutional goal of Social and Ecological Responsibility. Acknowledging that the world is in a state of climate crisis, and that there is a very limited time to shift to low-carbon ways of living, OISE recognizes its responsibility as a leading faculty of education to actively create an equitable, just and sustainable future, and to support and mobilize the education sector in this critical work.



With the guidance of the Dean's Advisory Group on Climate Action, SCAN coordinates OISE's commitment to work towards sustainability and address the climate crisis through five key areas of its Sustainability & Climate Action Plan (SCAP): Governance, Facilities & Services, Curriculum & Teaching, Research, and Community Engagement & Outreach. Under the direction of OISE's Dean, SCAN leads this implementation and provides a nexus for those at OISE and in its partner communities to share information, plan events, implement programs, and undertake research. By drawing on the knowledge, perspectives, and expertise of OISE's students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners, OISE aims to minimize its carbon footprint, support learning about climate justice, and amplify its contributions to a sustainable world.

GOVERNANCE &  
INSTITUTIONAL  
SUPPORTS

FACILITIES &  
SERVICES

CURRICULUM  
& TEACHING

RESEARCH

COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT  
& OUTREACH

# Governance & Institutional Supports



Since the inception of OISE's [Sustainability & Climate Action Plan](#) in February 2021, OISE has been working to better embed this work into the governance of the Institute. This began with the formation of a Climate Action Advisory Group that reports to the Dean on the implementation of the Plan. OISE became one of the first faculties at the University of Toronto to issue a [Climate Emergency declaration](#), and established a [Sustainability Fund](#) to support OISE students, faculty and staff to engage in educational activities and projects to advance this critical work. These efforts are starting to manifest in institutional priorities, as Ed Commons and the OISE Library are now embedding sustainability into their strategic plans.

**ACTION:**  
CLIMATE ACTION  
ADVISORY GROUP

**ACTION:**  
CLIMATE  
EMERGENCY  
DECLARATION

**ACTION:**  
SUSTAINABILITY  
FUND

# SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2021



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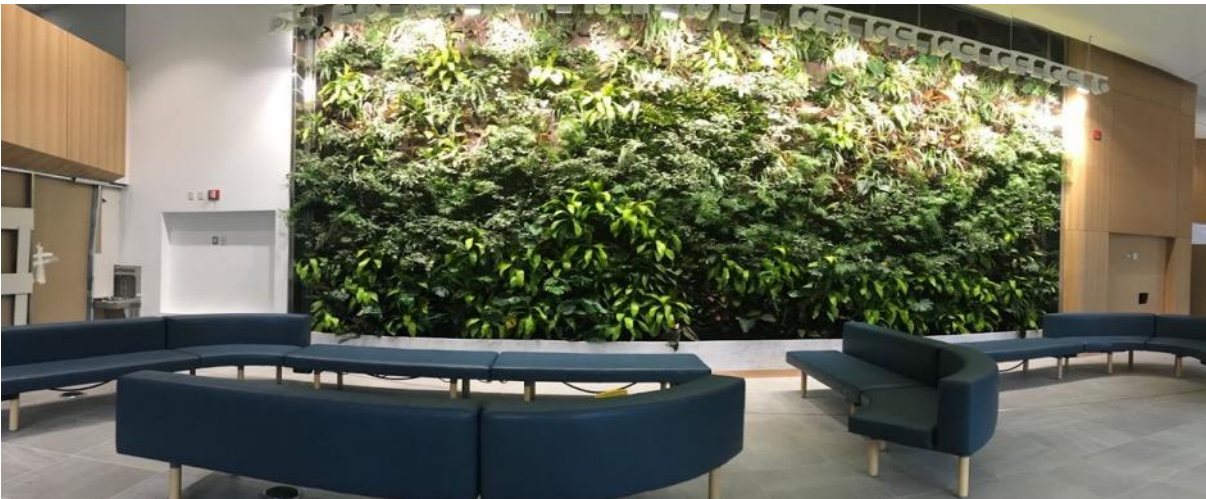
Living Wall in OISE's lobby

“

*As part of this institutional commitment, community members, including faculty, staff and students, will be asked to collectively contribute to enacting sustainability, climate justice and climate action in their work at OISE. In this, they are encouraged to harness academic resources and institutional expertise to address the systemic issues underlying this crisis, and advance environmental and sustainability education within their local, national and global communities. ”*

# Facilities & Services

OISE has been working towards a greater level of sustainability in its physical operations in recent years. While challenging to 'green' a building designed in the 1960s, OISE has reduced its carbon footprint through improvements to the HVAC system. It has reduced its use of electricity through a whole building lighting retrofit that installed motion sensor light fixtures and LED bulbs. Water conservation has been improved by installing automatic low-flush toilets and controlled water flow systems in the washroom sinks, and water bottle filling stations have been added to the lobby and the 5th floor lounge. Waste diversion has been made a priority through the installation of multi-stream waste receptacles and green bins for organic waste on every floor. A new living wall in the lobby brings oxygen-producing plants into the building, inspired by the biodiversity found in the OISE Community Learning Garden in front of the e building, Plans to add a new native plant garden to the 5th floor are already underway, helping to bolster the building's ecological footprint in the coming years!



**ACTION:**  
DEVELOP CAMPUS  
PARTNERSHIPS

**ACTION:**  
IMPROVE OISE  
GREEN SPACES

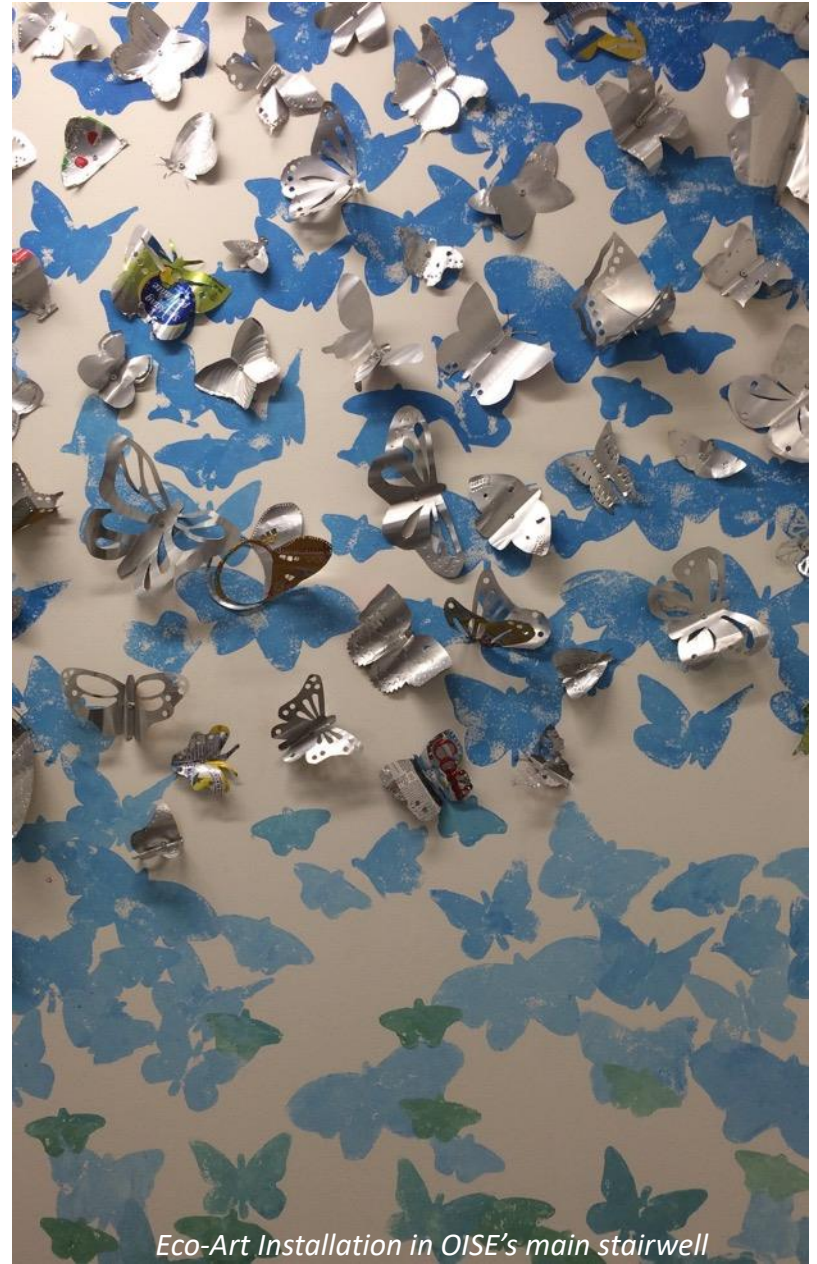
**ACTION:**  
COLLECT DATA ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
FOOTPRINT

*“...through the contribution of my artwork, I became part of OISE, part of the movement, part of something greater than myself.”*

*OISE student*



*OISE students painting a mural*



*Eco-Art Installation in OISE's main stairwell*

# Curriculum & Teaching

OISE has been growing its dedication to Curriculum & Teaching centred on Sustainability & Climate Action over the last decade. An increasing number of [OISE courses](#) have been focused on aspects of Environmental & Sustainability Education (ESE), and more recently, Land-based Learning, Place-based Education and EcoJustice Education. Two departments, Social Justice Education and Leadership, Higher & Adult Education, offer [Environmental Studies \(ES\) Collaborative Specializations](#) in their degree programs. In addition, OISE's Master of Teaching Program is one of the few teacher education programs in the country with core courses related to ESE. To complement course-based learning, an active program of co-curricular learning has been offered through [an innovative collaboration](#) between the TDSB's Sustainability Office and the Curriculum, Teaching & Learning department. This program of year-round professional learning events includes webinars, workshops and an annual ESE conference.



*Learning in a TDSB Classroom*

**ACTION:**  
INFUSE  
SUSTAINABILITY &  
CLIMATE ACTION  
INTO OISE COURSES

**ACTION:**  
PROVIDE  
COMMUNITY-  
ENGAGED LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES

**ACTION:**  
PAID PROFESSIONAL  
LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
STUDENTS





*Learning lakeside in CTL 1122*



*Co-curricular Learning in Taddle Creek Park*

*“ I feel incredibly fortunate to have taken part in a fully outdoor and place-based course at OISE. The fact that our learning was aligned with the tenets of outdoor and place-based education created a unique experience of living and breathing the pedagogy that we were learning about. This means that my learnings were cognitive and embodied and affective – I felt the possibilities, as a student, that stepping outside of a physical classroom could bring. ”*

*OISE student*

# Research

**ACTION:**  
MOBILIZE OISE  
RESEARCH IN  
ENVIRONMENTAL &  
SUSTAINABILITY  
EDUCATION

**ACTION:**  
SECURE FUNDING  
FOR STUDENT  
RESEARCH IN ESE

**ACTION:**  
DEVELOP TDSB-OISE  
ACTION RESEARCH  
TEAM



As a faculty of education, OISE has been at the forefront of researching aspects of education related to Sustainability & Climate Action, as framed by the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). The fourth SDG, Quality Education, has been at the heart of research conducted by OISE researchers for decades, with impressive contributions to knowledge and understanding on SDGs such as Gender Equality, Good Health & Wellbeing, Reduced Inequalities, and Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions. Research into the SDG on Climate Action has been manifested at OISE through scholarship focusing on the many theories and practices of Environmental & Sustainability Education. Inspired by OISE faculty who mobilize evidence-based praxis in these areas, OISE graduate students are learning to conduct and share their own research as the next generation of scholars to contribute to a more equitable and sustainable future for all.



*“ OISE’s aim is to build capacity for, and mobilization of, educational research related to Sustainability & Climate Justice while raising awareness about the sustainable management of research projects. ”*

OISE’s Sustainability &  
Climate Action Plan

# Community Engagement & Outreach



*EcoFair at the annual ESE Conference*

OISE has a strong foundation from which to develop Community Engagement & Outreach in relation to Sustainability & Climate Action. SCAN helps to raise awareness and encourage action through its projects that include [OISE Community Learning Garden](#), and over a dozen environmental art installations. [Natural Curiosity](#) project, affiliated with the Jackman Institute for Child Studies, provides professional learning for teachers focused on environmental inquiry through an Indigenous lens. An innovative partnership with the [Toronto District School Board's Sustainability Office](#) has brought many opportunities for OISE students to connect with EcoSchools teachers to share ESE praxis, as well as engage in professional learning through co-curricular programming. An engaging online presence provides virtual meeting places to bring together those interested in strengthening engagement with the SDGs across and beyond the OISE community.

**ACTION:**  
DESIGN  
SUSTAINABILITY  
GUIDES FOR OISE  
COMMUNITY

**ACTION:**  
PROVIDE UPDATES  
ON OISE'S  
SUSTAINABILITY &  
CLIMATE ACTIONS

**ACTION:**  
COLLABORATION  
WITH TDSB's  
SUSTAINABILITY  
OFFICE



*Professional Learning Event with TDSB teachers*



*Seed-saving Workshop for the OISE Seed Library*

# Gratitude

The meeting place of Toronto (from the Mohawk word 'Tkaronto'), on which the OISE operates, has been a site of human activity for thousands of years. This territory is currently covered by Treaty 13 with the Michizaagiig (now known as the Mississaugas of the Credit), but it has also been referenced in other agreements, including the *24 Nations Wampum Belt*, and the *Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant*. It is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and around the world. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work in this community, on this territory and Land.

Our gratitude goes to all the members of the OISE community who contribute to the Sustainability & Climate Action Network, the work of the Natural Curiosity Program and the collaboration with the TDSB's Sustainability Office. Special thanks go to the SCAN team members for 2022-23:

Coordinator: Dr. Hilary Inwood

Research Assistants: Alysse Kennedy, Sarah Urquhart

Graduate Assistant: Tien Pham, Tracy Xi

Sustainability Education Assistants: Melissa Pan, Rasika Mohamed Halideen

Learning Garden Assistant: Ian Pinnell, Eric Beyeler, Danielle Gove

For more information...



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<https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/scan>