

Environmental Education Organization's Needs Assessment 2021: How Can We Help You?



August 2021



ACEE Alberta Council for
Environmental Education

ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ALBERTA

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Summary of Findings

Introduction & background

The 2021 ACEE needs assessment reached 25 environmental education program providers across Alberta between July 16 and August 6, 2021. Over half of respondents were program leaders or coordinators, while the remaining respondents were educators, communicators, or held roles in marketing. The distribution of organizations was as follows: three non-governmental organizations, one federal government agency, two provincial government agencies, six municipal government agencies, one university/academic institution, seven charitable organizations, four educational institutions, and one activism-focused group. The professional position and organization distributions of the respondents in 2021 are similar to those in 2020 and 2018.

The reach of the environmental education needs assessment was lower in 2021 than in previous years. While the 2018 and 2020 surveys reached 61 and 28 program providers respectively, the 2021 survey reached 25. This may be attributable to fatigue after the 2020/2021 program year, which was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2021 needs assessment, concerns over COVID-19 restrictions and funding were cited as major concerns for many program providers. Other respondents claimed that a fourth wave and “uncertainty for how things will go with COVID-19” were their largest concerns for the coming year.

The needs assessment was structured to better understand the needs and areas of interest for environmental education organizations in Alberta. The survey covered the types of programs being offered and their audiences, topics of focus, resource need, professional development, current and future ACEE support, and the impact of COVID-19 on programming. Much of the survey was similar to previous needs assessments; however, there was an emphasis on resource need and professional development, as these were identified as areas of need in 2020. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, questions about its impact were included. Organizations can use this information to understand trends in environmental education programming and ACEE will use this information to develop plans to support organizations in 2021/2022 and as we continue to navigate COVID-19.

Key findings

1. There has been significant growth in programming catering to families, compared to other audience types
2. More environmental education (EE) providers are incorporating Indigenous Perspectives and Equity & Inclusion into their programming, and there is a need for resources/support in these areas
3. There is a significant need for climate change resources/support
4. EE providers cite struggles in accessing funding, credible resources, and partnerships as the largest barriers to finding resources/support
5. Webinars/online courses are preferred forms for networking and PD. ACEE communications have been consistently useful for those seeking PD
6. The ACEE webinars are increasing in popularity, and workshops are our best ranked offering followed by our work to enhance EE in curriculum
7. Top three areas for ACEE to provide support: promoting environmental education programs and resources, best practices in environmental education, and measuring impacts of environmental education programs
8. The majority of environmental education providers were able to adapt their programs to COVID-19 restrictions either very well, well, or somewhat well, and over half are planning to return to regular programming in the fall. However, many cite that they will never fully return to exclusively in-person programming again.
9. The greatest concerns for the upcoming school year include: lack of funding; restrictions on field-trips, school budgets, school safety requirements; and uncertainty about COVID-19
10. Overwhelmingly, program providers appreciated how ACEE connected them with other environmental educators over the past year, through promoting events, workshops, and the teacher's conventions workshops

Potential next steps for ACEE to support EE organizations

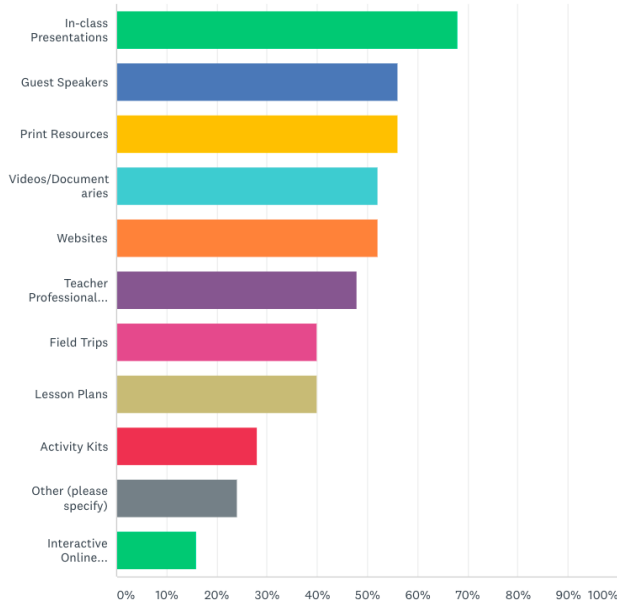
- Continuing to offer webinars and workshops to provide support that include the topics of Indigenous Perspectives, Equity & Inclusion, and Climate Change
- Continuing to gather and share best practices in environmental education
- Building spaces for EE organizations to promote their programs and exploring additional avenues beyond ACEE's Resource Hub, newsletter, and social media
- Continuing to provide spaces for program providers to connect and network with each other and with teachers
- Helping EE organizations continually find innovative ways to measure and demonstrate the impact of their programs
- Maintaining the quality of ACEE communications and continuing to showcase professional development opportunities and promoting resources

Overview of Programs, Audiences, & Delivery

Programming type

What type of programs do you deliver? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



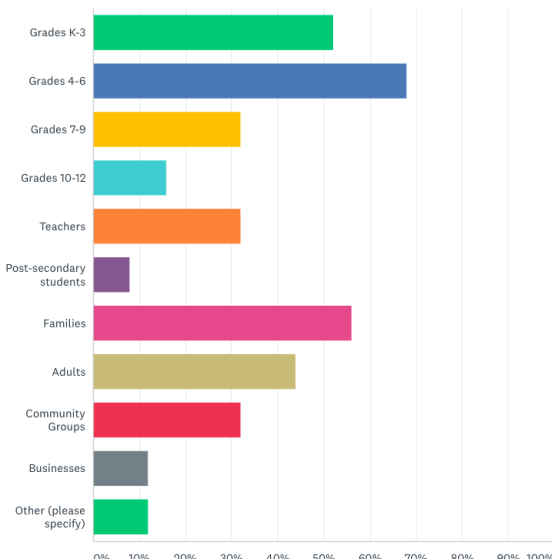
The most common type of programming was in-class presentations, with 68% of respondents offering this type of programming. 56% of respondents offer print resources or guest speakers, while 52% offer websites or video and 48% offer teacher professional learning

'Other' responses included virtual shows, live virtual presentations/assemblies, town hall presentations, school travel programming, and activity programs.

Audience

Who are the main audiences for your programs? Please indicate your main audience(s) - to a maximum of four.

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



Similar to 2020, the largest audiences remain Grades 4-6 (68%), families (56%), and Grades K-3 (52%). This distribution is consistent with that found in 2018 as well. Groups that have seen a significant increase in reach this year are Grades K-3 (39% in 2020, 52% in 2021), adults (32% in 2020, 44% in 2021), and families (43% in 2020, 56% in 2021).

The proportion of EE providers with a main audience consisting of businesses and post-secondary students has held steady at around

10% since 2018. Of the grade school audiences, Grades 10-12 have the lowest reach, at 20% in 2018, 11% in 2020, and 16% in 2021.

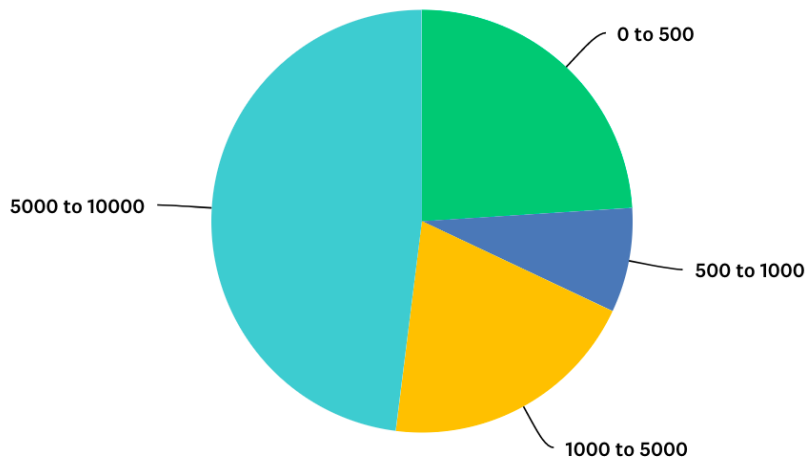
One respondent drew upon their success at using a virtual platform to cater to families and promote wellness in a virtual environment: “With covid, we developed the Home Edition of our programs and also supported schools with our virtual assemblies. Students reported being more joyful and calm after participating in our programs. Wellbeing and self-regulation were very well received by teachers, students, and families during the pandemic.”

Using a virtual platform, many program providers saw changes to their audiences. 38% of providers expanded reach to families over the past year. The greatest increases in reach were to families, adults, and teachers, while the greatest decreases in reach were to families, Grades 7-9, and Grades 10-12. It appears that while some providers chose to orient their programs towards families, others chose to focus on different audiences.

Virtual platforms seem to have allowed many program providers to expand their audiences as well. One respondent stated that a success of the past year was that they saw a, “reach of over 5,000 students across Canada through virtual programs.” Others responded similarly.

Each year, how many people do you reach through your environmental education programs?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



24% of program providers reach an audience of 0-500, 8% reach 500-1000 people, 20% reach 1000-5000, and 48% reach 5000-10000. The proportion of program providers reporting a reach of over 5000 was 48% in 2021 compared to 34% and 33% in 2018 and 2020. This may indicate that virtual delivery allowed some groups to expand their reach this year. However, it is also possible that program providers with larger audiences were overrepresented by the ACEE needs assessment this year.

Recent successes

When asked to reflect on what recent success their organization had achieved, environmental education program providers had much to share. Overall, many were successful at expanding their audiences, adapting to virtual spaces, and incorporating inclusivity into their programs. Here is what a few respondents had to say:

“Introduction of virtual classroom workshops.”

“Developed new in-person programs during the pandemic. New programs for families and 3-7Y especially. All programs [were] totally outdoors.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected how our organization delivers programs. During the past year and a half our building has been closed to the public for close to 9 months. We adapted our school programs to use a virtual platform for delivery. As classes weren't able to come on field trips to see us we were able to connect with them in their classrooms. Virtual field trips also included a pre and post lesson plan and materials that were sent to the teacher. The post lesson plan which the teacher delivered after the virtual visit with our staff always focussed on techniques for teaching and learning outside. As our exhibits were not open we also developed a series of outdoor activities that were placed [throughout] parks [with] activity signs [that] were switched out every 3 - 6 weeks and replaced with a new activity.”

“More culturally inclusive stormpond safety program.”

“Bringing adult education towards an ecological society sustainability to many citizens who have only begun to educate themselves on the needs for changing to an environmental-social justice-economy based society.”

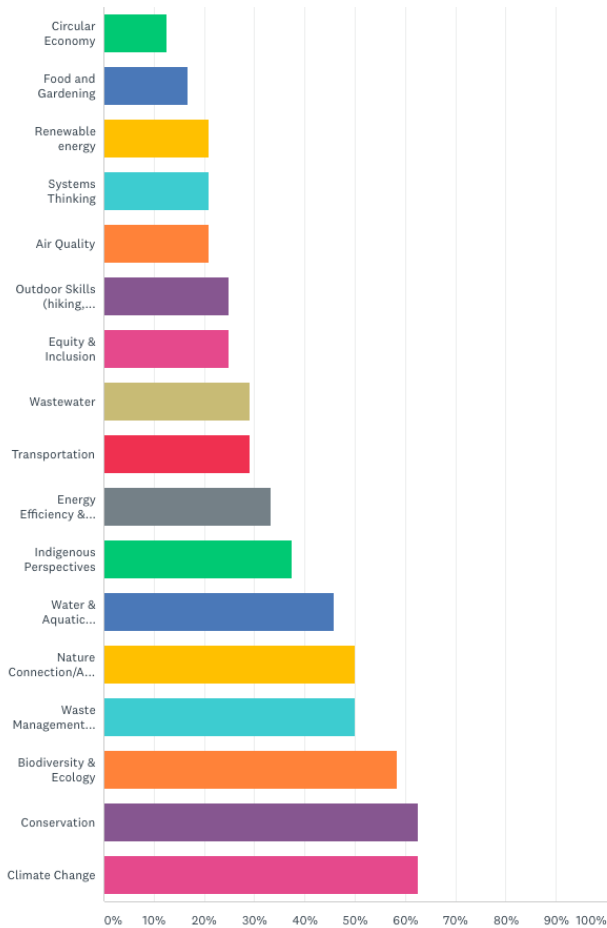
Responses edited for clarity. Full responses are included in the Appendix.

Examination of Topics of Focus & Resource Need

Topics of focus

The largest two topics of focus in the 2021 survey were Conservation and Climate Change with 62.5% of program providers focusing on these topics. Biodiversity and Ecology followed at 58%. This is fairly consistent with 2018 and 2020 findings, as in 2020, 75% of respondents focused on Climate Change, 71% on Water, and 68% on Nature Connections. In 2018, the largest two topics of focus were Water and Conservation at 72% and 66% respectively.

The topics with the least amount of focus in 2021 were Circular Economy at 11% and Food and Gardening at 17%. In both 2018 and 2020, Circular Economy was the topic with the least amount of focus.



There seems to be a trend of increasing climate change in programming, from 39% in 2017, to 54% in 2018, 75% in 2020, and 62.5% in 2021. Other significant increases have occurred in the topic of Indigenous Education/Perspectives, which rose from 20% to 43% between 2018 and 2020, and now rests at 37.5%. There has not been much change in the inclusion of Energy Efficiency/Conservation content in programming: 33.5% of providers included it in 2018, 39% in 2020, and 33% in 2021.

When asked if they had seen a change in program topics in the past year, 20% of organizations reported having seen one, compared to 7% in 2020. The top topics added were Indigenous Perspectives, with 9 providers adding this topic, Climate Change, with 5 providers, and Waste Management, with 4 providers.

Resource/Support need

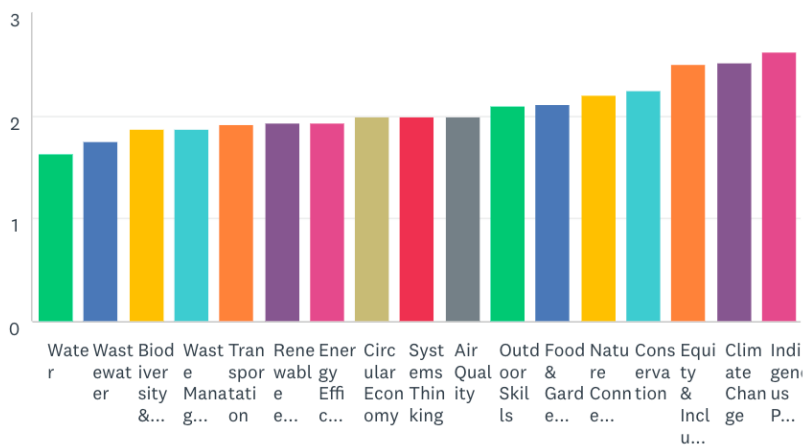
Program providers were asked to rank their need for resources and/or support for each program topic on a scale from high need to low need. 21 program providers reported a medium or high level of need for resources/support for Climate Change. On a similar note, 16 program providers reported a medium or high level of need for resources/support for Indigenous Perspectives. 10 reported a medium or high level of need for resources/support for Equity & Inclusion. For these three topics, no provider reported a low level of need.

There was also some level of need reported for resources/support relating to Conservation and Nature Connection/Appreciation, with 16 and 14 providers reporting need, respectively.

The topics with the lowest levels of need included Wastewater, Circular Economy, Systems Thinking, and Water & Aquatic Wildlife.

What is your level of need for resources/support for each of these topics?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



The environmental education program providers were also asked to describe any barriers they face in finding resources or support pertaining to the topics of focus of their programming. Many of the responses touched upon funding, issues connecting programs to audiences and teachers, finding experts and expert information, the ability to find the right partners and staff time to research/develop programs. Here is what a few of our partners had to say:

“Our programs focus on place-based learning and therefore are very locally focussed. We always struggle to find information/experts that can share locally relevant information with us. We are also struggling to find funding to support our suite of climate action based in-school programs.”

“Where to best look for info, connecting to researchers on campus (esp during pandemic).”

“Finding professional development for out-of-school education providers, not for school teachers.”

“As part of GOA everything needs to be approved internally by experts, but it would be helpful to have scientifically supported information to share about things like how recreation relates to climate change, air quality, conservation, etc.”

“Support to me means extending our reach into wider audiences. This happens through partnerships which can take a long time to create.”

“Staff time to research and develop programs.”

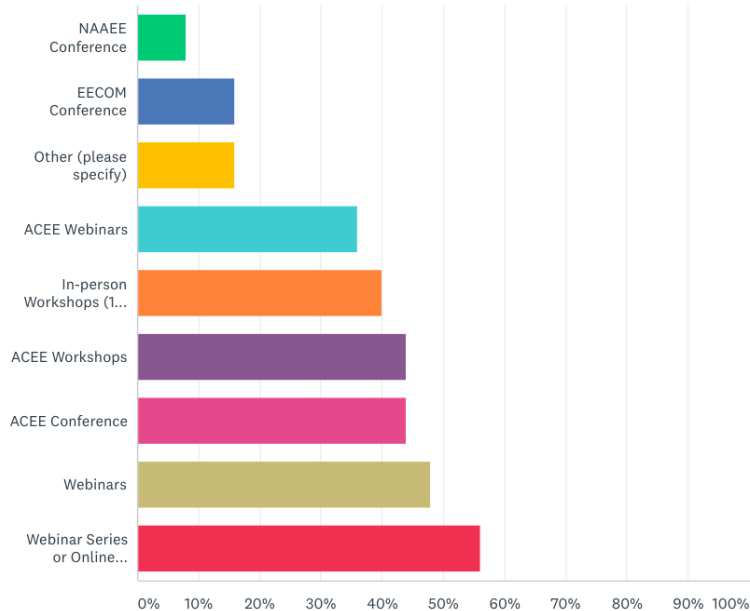
See the Appendix for all open-ended questions and answers.

Professional Development in EE

Program providers were asked two questions pertaining to professional development. The first examined their preferred form of delivery of professional development opportunities.

What is your preferred form of delivery in terms of networking and professional development opportunities that help enhance your understanding of environmental education topics and program delivery?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



Webinar Series or Online Courses were the most preferred delivery method, with 56% of providers preferring them, followed by Webinars at 48% and ACEE Workshops and the ACEE Conference at 44%. The NAAEE and EECOM Conference were the least preferred, at 8% and 16% respectively. Not enough information was gathered to ascertain why this may be.

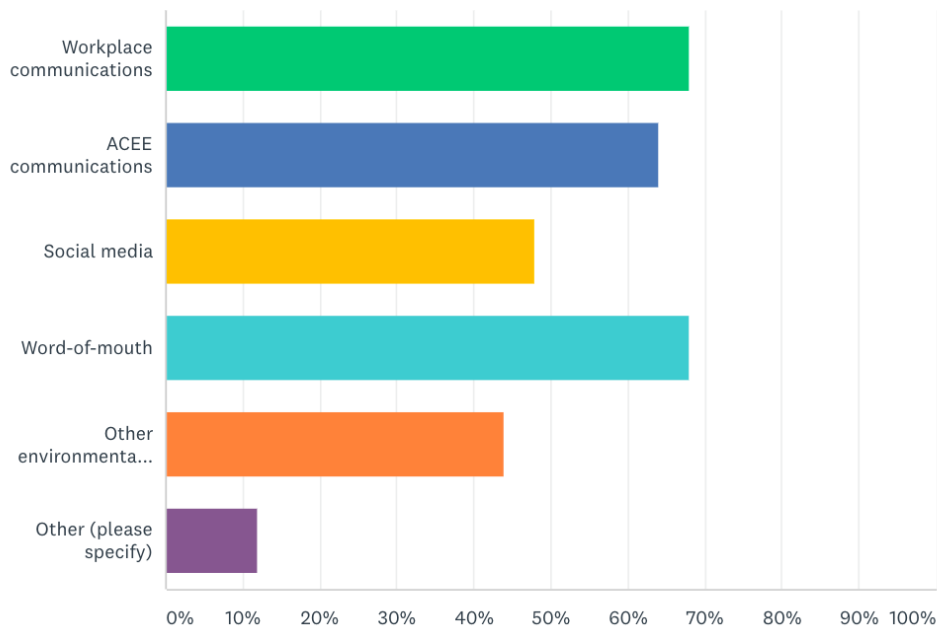
An area of growth exists within ACEE Webinars. In 2018, they were attended by 10% of survey respondents. This figure was 20% in 2020, and it is at 36% in 2021. Looking back at 2020, conferences and webinars were the most-attended professional development opportunity. With the exception of the ACEE Conference, it appears that webinars were more preferred by respondents of the 2021 needs assessment.

One respondent suggested a fair-type form of professional development, with, “speakers coming to a venue to deliver their information, answer questions and stimulate dialogue.” Another respondent noted that they, “would love to attend events in-person but there is never any budget.”

Respondents were also asked how they find and access professional development opportunities. 68% reported using workplace communications and word-of-mouth. ACEE communications seem to be largely helpful as well, since 64% of respondents use them to access professional development. Other respondents noted that they actively search out opportunities for themselves, or use the Internet. One respondent mentioned the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN) as a useful source for professional development resources.

How do you find and access professional development opportunities?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



Exploration of Current and Future ACEE Support

Current ACEE support

To measure the impact of ACEE’s current programs, program providers were asked to rank ACEE’s current programs from most to least valuable and they were ranked as follows:

- Providing workshops for environmental educators to connect, share, and learn together
- Working with Alberta Education to enhance environmental education in new curriculum
- Searchable resource database (Resource Hub)
- Newsletter
- Provincial conference
- Facebook and Twitter (sharing events and resources, showcasing inspiring stories)
- Alberta environmental education job board

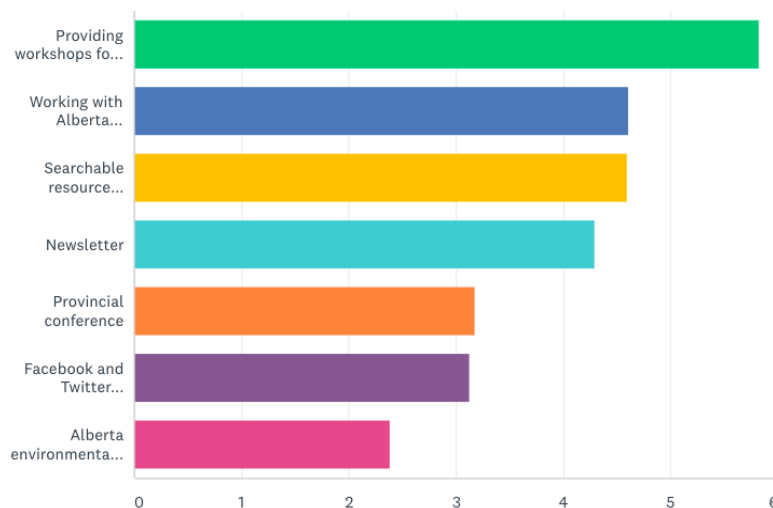
This order is consistent with the order found when respondents were asked a similar question in the 2020 needs assessment:

- Providing workshops for agencies to connect, share and learn
- Working with AB Education to enhance environmental education in new curriculum
- Searchable resource database
- Newsletter
- Provincial conference

Within the ranking, there was a wide margin between the most ranked program/service (providing workshops), and the next two programs (working with Alberta Education and the Resource Hub), which were ranked similarly.

Please rank ACEE's current programs/services in terms of the value they provide to you. Rank the programs/services from most valuable to least valuable.

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



Respondents were also asked to reflect on how ACEE had supported or helped their organization in the last year.

Many commented on ACEE's ability to:

- Connect them with other program providers and resources to share, network and collaborate
- Promote their resources
- Connect with teachers through the Calgary City teachers' convention symposium.

Here is what a few had to say:

“ACEE has been great at keeping us in the loop, even with so much isolation throughout COVID. It's so nice to feel like a part of the environmental education committee, even without in-person meetings.”

“A source of information, a hub for educators, a community.”

“Our staff have attended several on-line workshops. These were a great way to connect with other similar organizations to see what programs/ideas they had created/were working on in the Covid context. Was a great way to network with people from all over the province.”

“It has kept me up to date with nature based educational opportunities.”

“Promoted our resources.”

See the Appendix for all open-ended questions and answers.

Future ACEE support

The top three areas where respondents believed ACEE could best provide support were:

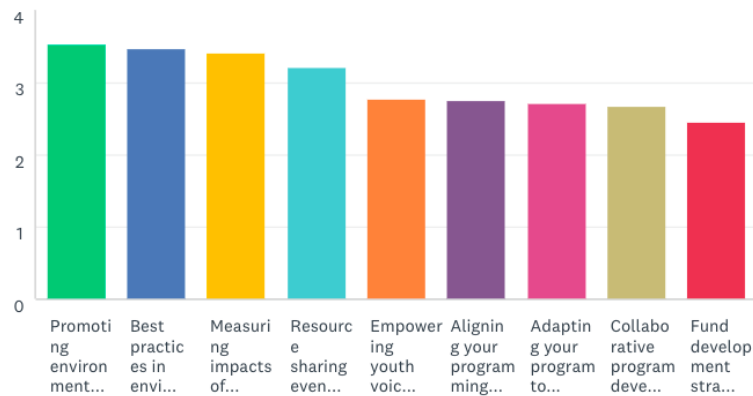
1. Promoting environmental education programs and resources
2. Best practices in environmental education
3. Measuring the impacts of environmental education programs
4. Resource sharing events with teachers (virtual delivery)

One topic that was suggested by a respondent was, “providing possible connections to speakers.” This may be an area to develop within resource sharing events.

The topics that respondents felt would be least valuable were fund development and collaborative program development and fundraising in partnership with another organization, although there were still four and six providers, respectively, who believed that those topics were exactly what they needed.

In the coming year, here are some possible topics around which ACEE could support your agency. What value would you get from each of the following topics...

Answered: 24 Skipped: 1



Impact of COVID-19 on EE in Alberta

Changing and adapting

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a large impact on environmental education programming in Alberta over the past year and a half. Some of the major impacts that have occurred to programming because of the pandemic include shifting to virtual platforms, handling changes in demand, and uncertainty about COVID-19 restrictions.

Between March 2020 and June 2021, 48% of program providers saw a decrease in demand for their programming, while 32% saw no change in demand, and 20% had an increase in demand. These numbers are quite different from 2020. When respondents were polled during the summer of 2020, 64% said they had seen a decrease in demand since March 2020, 28% saw no change, and 8% saw an increase in demand. This suggests that many providers were able to adapt to a changing reality during the 2020/2021 programming year, and that demand for environmental education programming is beginning to increase again.

When asked what was the main factor behind changes in demand to their program, most respondents cited restrictions to in-person programming, and challenges that come with virtual delivery. Some respondents cited other factors that contributed to decreases or increases in demand:

“More time at home to garden, restrictions made gardens a haven.”

“More social issues arising for families.”

“Reaching a larger audience because of the online platform, [being] able to visit more classes, [and the] international reach of videos.”

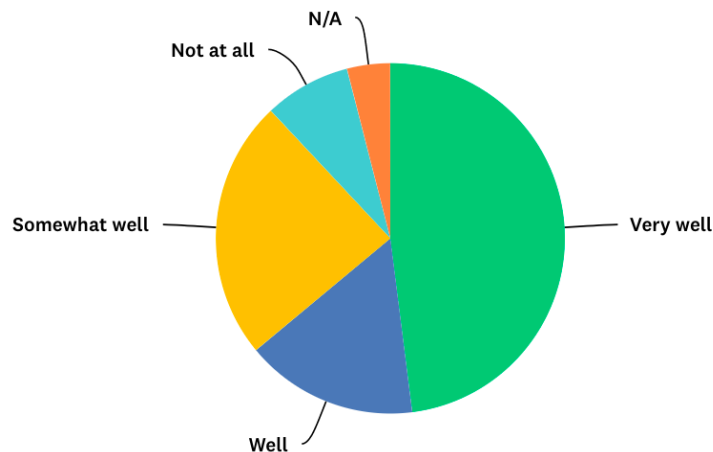
“Offering all of our programs virtually at a reduced cost.”

See the Appendix for all open-ended questions and answers.

Respondents were also asked to rate how well they adapted their programming during COVID-19 restrictions. 48% reported adapting very well, 16% reported adapting well, 24% reported adapting somewhat well, and 8% reported that they had not adapted at all.

How well did you adapt your programming during COVID-19 restrictions?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



Plans for the future

Most respondents have already returned to regular program delivery, or are planning to return by Fall 2021. When polled, 56% responded that they plan to return to regular delivery in the fall, 8% in the winter, and 4% in spring of 2022. Other respondents had this to say:

“We are starting to deliver a mix of in-person and online courses. It won't go back to what it was before entirely.”

“Probably the winter. The majority of our school programs focus on K - Gr. 6 and with this age range not yet being vaccinated we may not be able to deliver in-person field trip programs this fall.”

“We didn't stop providing regular program delivery, we were online only already.”

“Already doing regular program delivery since July 1, 2021.”

“I expect we will maintain some COVID practices forever.”

In terms of adjustments that environmental education program providers are making for the 2021/2022 school year, many are planning to make both in-person and online programming available. Some are halting school programs entirely. Here is what a few respondents had to say:

“Working to incorporate in person options back to our planning, looking to partner with new organizations.”

“Increased precautions when entering schools/being aware of school policies.”

“We are not running school programs in Fall 2021, instead relying on our partner to reach youth.”

”Further development of e-course materials and digital material.”

“Planning more stuff to be flexible enough to be delivered both in person or online (either simultaneously or in case we need to switch in-person material to online).”

See the Appendix for all open-ended questions and answers.

In looking to the future, program providers were also asked to share their biggest concerns for the 2021/2022 program year. Uncertainties in school restrictions, funding, and COVID-19 protocols were the largest points of concern.

“Reaching teachers and offering value when they are under so much demand and stress.”

“Last minute restrictions, unwillingness to commit to in person classes due to COVID-19 concerns.”

“Need to interest our public. Keep [the] cost of our programs low or free. Necessitates volunteer instructors.”

“Balancing the delivery of virtual programs with in-person programs. We have done one or the other delivery model in the past but not both within the same timeframe. With provincial budget cuts we are also concerned that schools may be looking for more virtual programs as

they can't afford bussing to come to programs in-person at our site. The experience of learning outside in nature from a place is very important in the programs that we lead and something that you can not replicate in a virtual program.”

See the Appendix for all open-ended questions and answers.

Appendix: Open-Ended Questions & Answers

Please describe any barriers you face in finding resources/support pertaining to the topics of focus of your programming.

“sometimes funding”

“Our main focus is emergency preparedness, which intersects with environmental education, but does not enjoy the same supportive community that exists with EE”

“Financial government aid!!!”

“Finding instructors would can confidently pass this information on to the general public. Wondering if AYLEE Students could help?”

“Limited to successful grant funding. Programming shifted to different audiences and mediums during COVID.”

“always need help in connecting WTT to new speakers”

“None.”

“Isolation”

“staff time research and develop programs”

“Support to me means extending our reach into wider audiences. This happens through partnerships which can take a long time to create.”

“Letting people know that my humane education programs are available for presentation.”

“Finding professional development for out-of-school education providers, not for school teachers”

“As part of GOA everything needs to be approved internally by experts, but it would be helpful to have scientifically supported information to share about things like how recreation relates to climate change, air quality, conservation, etc.”

“Capacity of programs to deliver - some programs are booked solid, early on in the school year (CARS, for example) so we have to find alternatives”

“Our programs focus on place-based learning and therefore are very locally focussed. We always struggle to find information/experts that can share locally relevant information with us. We are also struggling to find funding to support our suite of climate action based in-school programs.”

“finding the right partners for our budget”

“It takes time to find quality resources that are age-appropriate and interesting to students.”

“N/A”

“Location”

“It's always a challenge getting the word out about our programs to new audiences, especially as we are a small organization with a low advertising budget. We would love to have more help in linking teachers to our programs”

“Where to best look for info, connecting to researchers on campus (esp during pandemic)”

What recent successes has your organization achieved?

“We have completed our first activity and information programs at children's summer programming.”

“Our e-course continues to reach a large audience, with over 5000 users engaged. It's still in its infancy but is one that we continue to develop.”

“During covid? NONE!”

“Transitioned much of our programming online.”

“We at St. Albert Further Education are relatively new with instruction for the General Public in this area. I will reach out to Kathy and Wyatt for support. Indigenous learning re language and now land based learning and storytelling/beading is where we have begun. We are also reaching out to help newcomers to Canada learn about conservation and environmental areas.”

“GWAS has partnered with CreekWatch to engage community members in a citizen science water quality monitoring program. GWAS has also offered community families the opportunity to explore aquatic life at a local site.”

“bringing adult education on towards an ecological society sustainability - too many citizens who have only begun to educate themselves on the needs for changing to an environmental-social justice-economy based society”

“Introduction of virtual classroom workshops.”

“Have connected infants in my care with their natural surroundings”

“Virtual programs through the Calgary Public Library have allowed us to achieve greater numbers in presentations with less resources than we otherwise would have.”

“Developed new in-person programs during the pandemic. New programs for families and 3-7Y especially. All programs totally outdoors.”

“More culturally inclusive stormpond safety program”

“I have given a few presentations and then Covid came along to close presenting to groups.”

“Online virtual events have been very well attended.”

“A significant increase in reach on social media through the Respect the Land and My Wild Alberta Facebook pages.”

“Explore Your 2.4 and Ever Active Schools In Residence (Active School Travel, Explore Your 2.4)”

“The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected how our organization delivers programs. During the past year and a half our building has been closed to the public for close to 9 months. We adapted our school programs to use a virtual platform for delivery. As classes weren't able to come on field trips to see us we were able to connect with them in their classrooms. Virtual field trips also included a pre and post lesson plan and materials that were sent to the teacher. The post lesson plan which the teacher delivered after the virtual visit with our staff always focussed on techniques for teaching and learning outside. As our exhibits were not open we also developed a series of outdoor activities that were placed throughout parks in Lethbridge. These activity signs were switched out every 3 - 6 weeks and replaced with a new activity. The focus of these outdoor exhibits was to connect people to place and discover more about what makes Lethbridge unique.”

“Reach of over 5,000 students across Canada through virtual program.”

“Awarded CASC award for best digital programming”

“Encouraging a passion for science and nature in students.”

“With covid, we developed the Home Edition of our programs and also supported schools with our virtual assemblies. Students reported more joyful and calm after participating in our programs. Wellbeing and self-regulating were very well received by teachers, students, and families during the pandemic.”

“In person activities!”

“We've found that offering virtual programs has allowed us to speak with more audiences outside Calgary”

“Development on online presence since pandemic started, creation of videos, online events and classroom visits, expanded audience”

If there was a change [in demand for your programming], what was the main factor that contributed to this change?

“We didn't offer much for programming prior to Covid - it is new for us.”

“COVID-19 disruptions changed our focus of work to response”

“Virtual learning.”

“more time at home to garden, restrictions made gardens a haven”

“Need for online programming and good instructors”

“Less in-class presentations and in-person events. Program focus shifted to virtual delivery (videos and presentations).”

“needed to shift delivery format to on-line zoom presentations of which some of the synergistic impact that group gatherings generate.g”

“Online learning decreasing educator capacity.”

“More social issues arising for families”

“Inability to do in-person programs”

“field trips and in case resource persons not permitted”

“NA”

“Not being able to visit schools”

“Increase demand for virtual programming, decreased for in-person programming.”

“had to switch to virtual delivery as in person classroom visits were not permitted”

“Multiple closures of our building meant that we were unable to see people face-to-face for programs or in our exhibits.”

“No field trips allowed”

“Lack of in-person programming due to the pandemic”

“Students primarily learning online.”

“Schools closing and teachers struggling to provide online learning”

“In person restrictions”

“Offering all of our programs virtually at a reduced cost”

“Reaching a larger audience because of the online platform, able to visit more classes, international reach of videos”

What are the biggest adjustments that you are making for the 2021/2022 school year?

“Not sure what programming will look like for us this year.”

“Further development of e-course materials and digital material”

“Getting back to “normal”.”

“planning more stuff to be flexible enough to be delivered both in person or online (either simultaneously or in case we need to switch in-person material to online)”

“Instructors are preparing for both in person and online programs and we are often offering both options”

“Uncertainty and school limitations still require adaptation.”

“n/a”

“We won't be delivering school programs anymore”

“Flexibility”

“Sending my child back to in person”

“We are not running school programs in Fall 2021, instead relying on our partner to reach youth.”

“few programs in fall 2021; prepared for outdoor delivery for all of the 2021-2022 school year (planning for Covid waves”

“Supporting partners where possible. Communication of City priorities, developments and being understanding of partners challenges.”

“Continuing to offer a mix of virtual and in-person delivery”

“I've responded to the survey through the lens of wider departmental work, which doesn't work with schools. However, for Bow Habitat Station we will continue offering virtual programs moving forward.”

“Planning for a mixed virtual/in person delivery”

“We are planning on offering virtual as well as in-person field trips at our site. We would normally just offer in-person field trips.”

“blended approach of virtual and field trip in person”

“More online programs”

“More students”

“Adjusting our promotional efforts to better support teachers in hybrid teaching settings”

“Increased precautions when entering schools/being aware of school policies”

“Offering both in-person and virtual options to teachers so that they pick whatever they are most comfortable with”

“Working to incorporate in person options back to our planning, looking to partner with new organizations”

What are your biggest concerns for the 2021/2022 program year?

“Not sure what programming will look like for us this year.”

“Reaching teachers and offering value when they are under so much demand and stress.”

“Parental support.”

“Last minute restrictions, unwillingness to commit to in person classes due to COVID-19 concerns”

“Need to interest our public. Keep cost of our programs low or free. Necessitates volunteer instructors.”

“Connecting children and youth with programs outside of their school, i.e., being in nature with an interpretive focus.”

“that a fourth wave of Covid infection will bring us away from group gathering presentations again.”

“Educator capacity”

“The horrible new curriculum draft and I certainly hope the ACEE avoids it like the plague. The risk to students since the education minister has so inadequately addressed safety concerns”

“Uncertainty for how things will go with COVID-19.”

“field trips and in class resource people are not permitted; 4th and 5th Covid waves”

“I don't really have any concerns”

“uncertainty and restricted school budgets”

“It would be nice to have certainty moving forward, but that's beyond our control. Budgets are also always a concern. Additional resources directed at how to prove the worthwhile nature of environmental education would be much appreciated.”

“Evaluating travel mode shifts as school populations fluctuate! It's difficult to collect meaningful data.”

“Balancing the delivery of virtual programs with in-person programs. We have done one or the other delivery model in the past but not both within the same timeframe. With provincial budget cuts we are also concerned that schools may be looking for more virtual programs as they can't afford bussing to come to programs in-person at our site. The experience of learning outside in nature from a place is very important in the programs that we lead and something that you can not replicate in a virtual program.”

“that field trips will be cancelled again”

“If revenues will be on par to normal non-pandemic years”

“Going back online”

“If funding will be consistent and enough”

“More in person restrictions”

“I am concerned about teachers not being able to book in-class presentations due to budget or policy restrictions”

“Uncertain whether we will be in person or online, hard to plan events Want to maintain online presence, need to find new balance of events”

In looking at the last year, how has ACEE supported or helped your organization?

“ACEE lead us in a teachers convention collaboration which was well received.”

“NA”

“sharing ideas with other organisations/staff”

“It has given us the impetus to move toward educating our general public here in St. Albert.”

“ACEE worked with the CCTCA to provide an excellent Environmental Symposium. This was a great opportunity for GWAS to collaborate with others and to connect with teachers. Thank you!”

“n/a”

“ACEE has connected us with organizations that have similar mandates and audiences to collaborate and improve our reach.”

“It has kept me up to date with nature based educational opportunities”

“Promoted our resources”

“A source of information, a hub for educators, a community”

“We spoke at the climate symposium at CCTCA”

“To be honest I haven't done much with ACEE over the past year. It's always nice to know that you're available and willing to help through.”

“Sharing of resources, gathering collaborators together”

“Our staff have attended several on-line workshops. These were a great way to connect with other similar organizations to see what programs/ideas they had created/were working on in the Covid context. Was a great way to network with people from all over the province.”

“ACEE's fireside chat events were a great way to stay connected with other environmental educators across Alberta and beyond and be inspired by the work of our amazing peers.”

“Unknown”

“Resources that are interesting to students.”

“ACEE has been a long partner to collaborate and share about our resources. We are looking forward to the next school year to increase the ways to collaborate together.”

“ACEE has been great at keeping us in the loop, even with so much isolation throughout COVID. It's so nice to feel like a part of the environmental education committee, even without in-person meetings”

“ACEE has helped us share our resources with organizations outside of our immediate circle, which was essential during the pandemic as our program delivery and outputs changed entirely.”

Any final thoughts or comments?

“Thanks for all you do!”

“NA”

“Thanks for all the opportunities you create!”

“We could use some ideas of how to reach out to local business to partner with us in offering this programming- especially so we could compensate our instructors”

“Thank you for the work you do!”

“Thanks for the consultative opportunity for input something from which our present GOA could learn.could”

“I appreciate all of the work the ACEE team does and look forward to participating in future events and learning opportunities.”

“Great survey for a great organization”

“Thank you”

“Thanks for doing what you do!”

“Thank you!”

“Thanks for the work you do.”

“I enjoy the newsletter that is delivered to my email.”