

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

*Utah Valley University SIMLab x Healthy Environmental Alliance of Utah (HEAL Utah)*

*February 4, 2023*



# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## Partnership Objectives



PARTNER NAMES +  
CONTACT INFO

### UVU Center for Social Impact:

- Office contact [socialimpact@uvu.edu](mailto:socialimpact@uvu.edu)  
<https://www.uvu.edu/socialimpact/>

### UVU Social Impact Metrics Lab (SIMLab):

- Kate Hickman, Impact Assessor [khickman@uvu.edu](mailto:khickman@uvu.edu)
- Cassie Bingham, Supervisor [cassie.bingham@uvu.edu](mailto:cassie.bingham@uvu.edu)  
[https://www.uvu.edu/socialimpact/what we do/simlab.php](https://www.uvu.edu/socialimpact/what_we_do/simlab.php)

### Healthy Environmental Alliance of Utah (HEAL Utah)

- Lexi Tuddenham – Executive Director [lexi@healutah.org](mailto:lexi@healutah.org)
- Meisei Gonzalez – Director of Communications [primary point of contact] [meisei@healutah.org](mailto:meisei@healutah.org)



# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Partnership Objectives*



PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE  
& OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

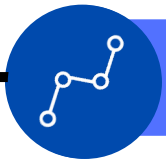
The UVU SIMLab is an **impact evaluation and measurement program** run by the UVU Center for Social Impact.

The SIMLab started its partnership with HEAL Utah in October 2022 with **the objective of conducting a high level impact assessment via partnership intake and the completion of a comprehensive [information request spreadsheet](#).**

The information request garnered ~ 20 documents, reports, tools, and web pages that were thoroughly reviewed by the SIMLab and contextualized by the partnership intake and subsequent discussions, resulting in the following impact assessment report.

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## Impact Partner Overview



PROBLEM (DEMOGRAPHIC + LOCATION)

- **Demographic** = Utah residents, Utah tourists, Utah lawmakers

*NOTE: Are participants diverse/intersectional?*

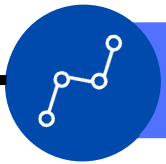
- **Location** = Utah

*NOTE: Is the geographic region too large? Are resources being spread too thin? Which initiatives are the priority?*

**Air pollution** is a multifaceted issue which causes major health concerns and disproportionately impacts BIPOC, underrepresented, struggling socio-economic, and marginalized communities living along the Wasatch Front. **Climate change** is exacerbated by burning fossil fuels, on which Utah's economy is highly reliant. Other forms of energy production have been slow to adoption and systems of infrastructure and industry still incentivize oil extraction and combustion. The history of **radioactive materials extracted and stored in Utah** has left a legacy of environmental contamination and compromised communities, particularly for Indigenous communities in Southern Utah. Due to geographic and socio-economic factors, air pollution, climate change, and radioactive waste are public health crises and social injustices. **Relationships between diverse stakeholders must be strengthened through collaboration and understanding to transform Utah into a healthy, sustainable, equitable, and united community.**

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Partner Overview*



### MISSION/PURPOSE

HEAL Utah mobilizes communities around topics relevant to public health, environmental sustainability, social justice, and grassroots advocacy by raising awareness, educating, and augmenting social networks.

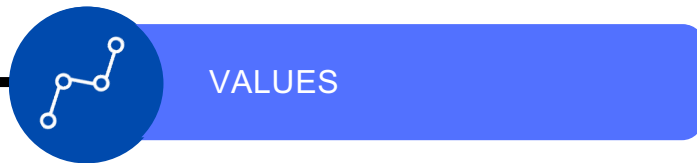
“HEAL Utah promotes renewable energy and clean air, and protects public health and the environment from dirty, toxic and nuclear energy threats.”

<https://www.healutah.org/about/>



# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

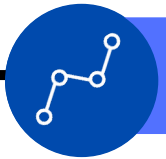
## *Impact Partner Overview*



- **Social justice**
  - Providing dignity to those who live in our communities and environments
  - Equitable economies and employment should support local community growth
- **Grassroots advocacy & community relationships**
  - Utah must be governed by a functional democracy that is driven by the active participation of individuals and communities
  - Working with legislators, local representatives, communities, businesses, and other organizations on policy advocacy to support a healthy, sustainable, and just future for Utah
- **Sustainability**
  - Policies that uphold our role as faithful stewards of the earth and reconnect ourselves with nature
  - Policies that promote clean energy and a just transition away from fossil fuel dependency
  - Policies that bring an end to nuclear weapons and resolves the problem of radioactive waste
- **Healthy environment**
  - Where everyone can breathe clean air and live healthy lives
  - Utah as a healthy environment and community for locals and visitors
  - Recognizing and acting in accordance with the understanding that natural surroundings and local communities rely upon flourishing ecosystems that support the lives of our economy, livelihoods, wellness, families, and future generations

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Partner Overview*



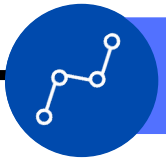
### DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

#### **HEAL Utah has the following core campaigns:**

- **Air Quality**
  - State Implementation Plans (SIPs):
    - § plans to reduce harmful air quality that doesn't meet EPA standards
  - Building Emissions:
    - § implement sustainable growth principles to reduce building emissions
  - Fugitive Dust:
    - § advocate for policies that reduce dust hazards from industrial activities
  - Great Salt Lakebed Dust:
    - § restore GSL to healthy water levels to prevent air quality disaster
  - Clean air community leadership academy (CACLA):
    - § provide Utahns with high-quality training on the causes of unhealthy air quality and how to address these sources through community-based solutions
- **Clean Energy and Climate**
  - Support community driven methods that assist Utah's transition to renewable alternatives and retirement of Utah carbon emitting power generation facilities
  - Work with communities that depend on these coal industries to develop just, equitable, and sustainable transitions for them to flourish after the retirement of these facilities
  - Develop relationship between communities and financial resources to support transition

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Partner Overview*



### DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

- **Radioactive Waste**
  - Target abandoned uranium mines across Southern-Utah; work with downwinder communities; prevent the storage and transportation of radioactive waste through Utah's communities
  - Cocreate evidence-informed policies and engage with local communities who are directly impacted by radioactive waste to hear their concerns, educate them on risks, and collaborate in promoting policies that will protect their families
- **Community programs & activities:**
  - Action Alerts (policy & individual)
  - Bill tracker
  - Lobbying trainings



# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Current State*



IMPACT CLAIM(S)

### **HEAL Utah:**

- “**protects** public health and the environment from dirty, toxic, and nuclear energy threats”
- “**outreaches** and **engages** with local communities to help **develop** the policies, regulations, and strategies to combat air pollution”
- “is the **driving force** for the transitioning of Utah towards cleaner forms of energy and climate change mitigation by **working** on a variety of projects and legislation”
- “**bring(s)** an effective, evidence-based approach to **improving** environmental health outcomes for all Utah residents from statewide to hyperlocal campaigns”

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Current State*



NATURE OF EXISTING DATA  
TO SUPPORT CLAIM(S)

- List of accomplishments in **Organizational Information**
  - Collaborations, publications, successful bills, distribute resources, secure funding
- Statistics provided from **Annual Reports**, e.g.
  - Events and engagement
  - Public policy successes (list of bills passed)
  - **Financial Report** (fundraising and spending totals)
  - Accomplishments (signatures, yard signs, grants)
- **Message Guidance**
  - Provides context, sources, actionable items
- **Fundraising Dashboard** (excel sheet)

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## Impact Current State



### Measurement and Tracking Methods:

- Post-lobbying survey (under development)
- Action Alerts (email form)
- Transit survey (under development)
- Lobby training
- HEAL Logic Model and Metrics of Success
- Bill tracker (website)

### 2023 Bill Tracker

Category	Bill number	Stance	Bill Name	Description	Sponsor / Co-Sponsor	Status	Bill Breakdown	Fact Sheet
Clean Air	S.C.R. 2	Support	Concurrent Resolution Regarding the Environmental Impact of Vehicle Idling	This bill encourages individuals to adopt the Turn Your Key, Be Idle Free.	Sen. Fillmore	Senate Floor	<a href="#">Watch here</a>	<a href="#">Fact Sheet</a>

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## Impact Current State



**Note: A Theory of Change is a hypothesized logic model that theorizes about what inputs and activities within an impact strategy will lead to desired outputs and outcomes. Proving this hypothesis requires data measurement to prove correlation and/or causation between an intervention’s inputs and activities and its outputs and outcomes.**

INPUTS (WHAT’S INVESTED) + ACTIVITIES (WHAT’S DONE)	OUTPUTS (WHAT WILL HAPPEN) + OUTCOMES (WHAT WILL CHANGE LONG TERM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Education through lobbying trainings</li> <li>● Awareness raising of local issues through events and media</li> <li>● Bills are reviewed</li> <li>● Community members communicate with lawmakers</li> <li>● Community members lobby</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bills are passed</li> <li>● Community members better understand how to be civically engaged</li> <li>● Community members gain more awareness of local issues</li> <li>● Legislation and culture should reflect an increasing prioritization of <b>health, sustainability, transparency, and social justice</b></li> </ul>

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Current State*



ASSUMPTIONS + RISKS W/IN  
THEORY OF CHANGE

### **Theory of change depends on:**

- lawmakers and regulators valuing **input of constituents** more than industry
- community members **sharing definitions** for sustainability, health, and social justice
- successful **bills being implemented and enforced** effectively

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Evaluation Summary + Recommended Next Steps*



### GAPS/RISKS IN CURRENT INTERVENTION

- Theory of Change (ToC) assumes: 1) HEAL Utah’s definitions are aligned with their stakeholders, 2) lawmakers prioritize input of HEAL lobbyists over industry lobbyists, 3) passed bills are appropriately enforced, and 4) passed bills effectively address the target issue.
  - Do your definitions of a “sustainable” or “healthy” environment match those of your stakeholders (both lobbyists and lawmakers)?
  - Which stakeholders are advocating for change in the opposite direction, and how far does their influence reach?
  - Are there more effective alternatives for HEAL Utah to support community-driven change?
  - What kind of “buy in” is necessary for law enforcement to implement the new laws?
- Current interventions focus on passing legislation, but do not comprehensively link passed bills to improved circumstances—causation of desired outcomes isn’t clearly established beyond correlation. The actual *impacts* of your accomplishments are not clear.
  - What do you do to ensure a passed bill is both enforced and effective?
  - Has engagement increased over hosted events, leading to more lobbying, leading to more bills, leading to better regulation?
- Available data is either incomprehensive (measuring vanity metrics rather than change) or inaccessible (not readily navigable and available to the public).
  - How have the goals you’ve accomplished directly improved material conditions related to the issue, beyond tracking event attendance and social media engagement?
  - Are you measuring both the change and effect you have on the community, using parameters relevant to the various services you provide?
- Organizational bandwidth doesn’t match broad goals of each service.
  - Do you have the resources (staff, money, community support, partnerships) to pursue each of your services to the degree you advertise?
  - If not, which services do you prioritize and are you transparent about those priorities in your marketing and engagement strategies?

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Evaluation Summary + Recommended Next Steps*



- Refine and clarify your message: 1) clearly define your key terms and reduce redundancy, 2) use language that accurately reflects the work you've done without exaggeration or ambiguity, 3) assess the priorities of your stakeholders and allow this to inform any changes to your approach.
  - What does the “impact landscape” look like if your assumptions don't match your stakeholders perception?
    - § e.g. If lawmakers *don't* prioritize constituent lobbyists, what are they prioritizing instead (their actions/choices will reflect this)? And how can this inform adjustments to HEAL Utah's approach to support effective community-driven change?
- Assess the “felt” impact of your approach and adapt according to feedback. Apply pressure where you have demonstrated influence and develop a system to address the downfalls of your approach.
  - What do your stakeholders (community members, lawmakers, etc.) think the long-term impacts of HEAL Utah campaigns are?
  - Has there been a measurable change in the target issues?
    - § e.g. As air quality bills are lobbied and pass, has the quality of the air improved as a direct result of enforcing new policies?
  - What needs to be true for lawmakers to seriously consider community lobbyists?
    - § How do lobbyists consistently talk about issues in a way that engages lawmakers?
- Improve data collection methods, increase data collection frequency, and ensure that accurate, organized data is available on public-facing platforms.
  - What qualitative and quantitative data do you need to support claims like “HEAL Utah protects public health and the environment from dirty, toxic, and nuclear energy threats,” or “Stopped the disposal of foreign low-level nuclear waste in Utah (2008)”?
  - What do HEAL Utah's “vanity metrics” look like, as compared to measurements of change?
  - Where are the most opportune places to store data about HEAL Utah's community support, services, and programs?

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Evaluation Summary + Recommended Next Steps*



- Define programs and services according to the resources available to HEAL Utah—as your resources grow, your bandwidth and services can expand accordingly.
  - What programs or services do you offer that are not operating at their optimized or desired capacity? In other words, in which services or programs are you falling short of your goals?
  - Which programs or services are HEAL Utah’s highest priority?
  - How can you adjust service descriptions or timelines to set and pursue goals that are realistic for the resources currently available?
- Bolster collaboration with surrounding grassroots organizations and utilize those networks to strengthen community and build solidarity between diverse identity groups.
  - When you collaborate with surrounding organizations to accomplish related goals, how do you document and share those collaborations?
  - How do you encourage connections between your collaborators and participants, both in person and virtually?
  - How can you transform linear relationships into a web of interconnected communities, mobilizing community-driven change?



# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Evaluation Summary + Recommended Next Steps*



DATA STILL NEEDED TO  
SUPPORT CURRENT AND  
FUTURE CLAIM(S)

- Concise, accurate, and consistent language across communications
  - Define and **share** key terms
    - § Be mindful of flexible definitions with contextual nuance
    - § Be sure these definitions reflect those of the local community
  - Be **specific** in your claims and goals
    - § e.g. What is meant by “affordable” solar in Utah?
    - § e.g. List specific strategies and dates for desired goals in **Logic Model**
- Ascertain impact and determine causative role of HEAL Utah
  - Systemic change in the target communities over time must be linked to HEAL Utah through **causation**, not just correlation. How do your accomplishments connect to the long-term changes in target issues?
    - § e.g. When training lobbyists: Is the pedagogy accessible and effective? Are you reaching the right audiences, or enough people to make the intended change?
  - Pivot from advertising “vanity metrics” to **measuring actual change** in the community.
    - § Is less radioactive waste being stored/transported as a result of this legislation?
    - § Is Utah transitioning to more sustainable energy sources as a result of this legislation?
    - § Is air quality improving, or is there a greater awareness of the issue, as a result of this campaign and legislation?
- Accurate, detailed, and accessible data availability
  - Accessible, real-time information about organizational services and accomplishments should be easily available on **public-facing platforms**
    - § e.g. Which specific bills have you advocated for? What are the success rates? How many citizen lobbyists has HEAL Utah trained? What measurable improvements result from these efforts (e.g. improved air quality, increased voter registration, etc.)?

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## Impact Evaluation Summary + Recommended Next Steps

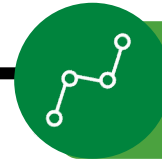


DATA STILL NEEDED TO  
SUPPORT CURRENT AND  
FUTURE CLAIM(S)

- **Goals and programs that are specific and achievable**
  - **Reconcile** the variety of potential services with the constraints intrinsic to HEAL Utah
    - § e.g. Assessing the temporal capacity of your staff and comparing with the temporal requirements to sustain each program and service might be a helpful place to start
  - Once priorities and bandwidths are decided, **communicate** these on public-facing platforms to remain consistent with values of transparency
    - § e.g. Share strategies, success, failures, explanations of services
- **Collaborative partners and relationship descriptions**
  - Link to external sites to **validate** claims of past accomplishments or current collaborations
    - § e.g. Documentation doesn't link to the eUtah Report or Clean Air Blueprint in **Organizational Information**
  - Use available resources and relationships to **enhance** your current services and programs
    - § e.g. Online **maps** could have layers that go beyond location of environmental issues to include community engagement rates, participant demographics, collaborative partners and their relative services, etc.
    - § e.g. **Bill-tracking** services could be enhanced by providing a live clock or interactive dashboard on your website
  - Be intentional about **establishing and maintaining relationships** with organizations that have a sustained interest in closely related issues and communities.
    - § Who is *participating* in, and *benefitting* from, your services and programs? Have you been tracking demographics for both engagement and overall benefit?
    - § Are you including Indigenous communities in initiatives that impact their livelihoods, experiences, etc.?
    - § e.g. Claims such as “HEAL Utah remains the only organization in the State of Utah dedicated to preventing the storage and transportation of radioactive waste through Utah’s communities”, isolate HEAL Utah and shroud grassroots efforts to protect local communities—this narrative could easily be reframed as welcoming and collaborative.

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Evaluation Summary + Recommended Next Steps*



### MEASUREMENT METHODS NEEDED TO GATHER DATA

- **Qualitative information from volunteers about learning outcomes from programs**
  - Collect survey information twice, before program commencement and after program completion, to measure relevant metrics, such as:
    - § demographic information
    - § previous knowledge specific to program
    - § preconceptions of HEAL Utah
    - § personal definitions and priorities
    - § learning outcomes
- **User-friendly, interconnected tools with data collection capabilities**
  - Who uses the tools you provide? And do those tools lead the users to take action in their community, or do they support the desired goals in any measurable way?
    - § To begin answering this question, track downloads of lesson plans, lobbyist involvement, Action Alerts, map usage, etc.
- **Demonstrated correlation between HEAL Utah and change in the community over time will require varied qualitative and quantitative data measurement**
  - HEAL Utah must go beyond quantifying activities hosted to measuring and monitoring change over time in the target community
    - § Pre- and post-survey for education initiatives
    - § Measure social media engagement, Action Alerts, email click-through rates
    - § Collect demographic data from participants at training sessions
    - § Track attendance to events
- **Interview stakeholders for mission insights**
  - Interview a variety of stakeholder subgroups along the continuum of influence and interest
    - § e.g. Lawmaker, lobbyists, event attendant, social media followers, uninvolved resident

# SIMLAB PARTNER IMPACT EVALUATION

## *Impact Evaluation Summary + Recommended Next Steps*



### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

**HEAL Utah suffers from a theory of change that relies heavily on external factors, a lack of clarity concerning primary goals and priorities, poor data availability, and insufficient resources to support all programs and services.** These shortcomings are due to imprecise language, incomplete data collection methods, and unproven assumptions about their social impact. To measure success and to shape future goals, existing data focuses on quantifying current initiatives rather than measuring change in the target communities. Moreover, under-utilization of available tools and social networks leaves unused opportunities for HEAL Utah to broaden its reach and deepen its impact. Thus, **HEAL Utah is not positioning itself to understand its long-term impact in the community and may be selecting goals based on irrelevant or outdated information.** As such, HEAL Utah and their stakeholders cannot understand their social impact because causation has not been established between HEAL Utah's initiatives and material change in target communities.

To overcome these challenges, **HEAL Utah needs to reevaluate and clarify its description of services, bolster quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, and communicate these priorities and data on a public-facing platform.** Additionally, it should focus on a stakeholder engagement strategy that could provide improved support and advocacy to target communities through establishing partnerships with local organizations that pursue adjacent goals. By helping stakeholders to better understanding its mission and successes, and building trust through relationship-development, HEAL Utah will improve its ability to achieve long-lasting change in Utah communities.

