

EJ Ice Breaker

Objective: Participants discuss an environmental justice issue and shares their views.
Activity anchors the group into an environmental justice framework.

Instructions:

- Print 3 sets of the EJ statements. Take one set and 10 envelopes. Put one EJ statement into an envelope and seal. When you have a set of the 10 statement, bound with a rubber band and put aside. Make two more sets.
- When a community participant arrives, slip one of the envelopes into their portfolio.
- For the activity, every participant should have an EJ statement.
- To begin the EJ ice breaker, explain that this activity will explore various aspects of EJ. Each person has an envelope with an EJ statement inside. Direct the participants to open their envelope and find other participants with the same EJ statement.
- Meet together. Introduce your self and the group that you represent.
- Discuss the EJ statement. What is the significance of this statement? How does or doesn't it relate to advancing an EJ agenda? *Take 10 minutes to discuss and prepare to report back to the whole group. Prepare a 2 minute presentation.*

What is the significance of this statement and why did it need to be said?

1. No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving the Federal financial assistance.

Title VI Civil Rights Act

Environmental racism is racial discrimination in environmental policy making. We see the struggle against environmental racism as being an ongoing part of the civil rights and freedom movement in this country.....

United Church of Christ, Commission on Racial Justice

- Can't be biased to any group.
 - Environmental discrimination goes hand in hand with racial discrimination.
 - Environmental racism needs to be considered part of the civil rights struggle.
2. We speak for ourselves. Communities of color have often taken a more holistic approach than the mainstream environmental movement, integrating 'environmental' concerns into a broader agenda that emphasizes social, racial, and economic justice.

PANOS Institute publication "We Speak for Ourselves"

- Draws the distinction between EJ and 'traditional' environmental movement
- There's a tendency to 'solve' EJ issues (eg. Just toxics) – this statement makes it clear that EJ is also about an approach and perspective about how change happens.
- 'we speak for ourselves'—highlights that communities all have different experience and concerns that are specific, so communities know what's best for themselves and should take charge in describing and deciding what happens to them.

- Diversity is necessary for inclusion of all community.
3. 60% of the total Black population and Hispanic population live in communities with one or more uncontrolled toxic waste sites. About half of all Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native American live in communities with uncontrolled waste sites.
United Church of Christ, Commission on Racial Justice “Toxic Waste and Race”

Communities of color wait up to four years more than white communities in getting Superfund site clean-up.

National Law Journal

4. Environmental justice must recognize a special legal and national relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. and Canadian government through treaties, agreements, compacts and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
Environmental Justice Principle 11, adopted National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit

We reaffirm the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination and our inherent sovereignty over our traditional lands, waters, territories and natural resources.

Indigenous Peoples Caucus statement, Second People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit

5. As youth, we feel society has a negative perception of us. Society places stereotypes on us based on our race, class, gender, sexuality, and age. Our voices and concerns are often not heard by decision-makers that affect our society. We believe that we have a unique and diverse perspective that can enhance the environmental justice movement. We want to learn from our elders.... We believe that through being mentored by our elders, as well as being involved in the decision-making processes, we can build a powerful movement ensuring environmental justice for all.
Youth Leadership Caucus, Second People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit

- culture—follow elders, restrict youth ‘opinion’
- ideas of them dismissed
- need voice recognized
- Youth perspective is important.
- Youth pulled in other democracy
- Youth are concerned.
- Show respect & ask for respect

6. We are not NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard). We create nets that work to fight for environmental justice.

Southwest Network for Environmental Justice

Achieving environmental justice in California means building healthy communities that meet the basic needs of people, protect against avoidable harm, and allow for grassroots leadership and participation in public policy and decision-making. In the fight for equal protection and justice, the ongoing work and accomplishments of EJ organizations in California and the environmental justice movement nationally and internationally will benefit all communities.

Building Health Communities from the Ground Up: Environmental Justice in California, APEN, CBE, EHC, PODER, SVTC

- EJ work is a ‘not in anyone’s backyard’ work
 - Denies long history of racism
 - Easy accusation against most targeted communities.
 - We don’t have backyards.
7. We need to research connections between exposure, causation, and the manifestation of disease and ailments. We need to have cumulative and synergistic impacts considered. We need a preventive approach to environmental protection (e.g. precautionary principle). We need community intervention in the health and risk assessment process.
- Legislation and Policy Workgroup, Second People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit*
- These issues have been used against us!
 - Causation is ‘catch 22’.
 - Synergistic
 - Sample size (causation) manifestation
8. We need language in the legislation (Fair Housing Act – Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act) dealing with environmental discrimination. “Discriminatory impacts” should include: adverse health, unwanted land uses, hazardous wastes and releases, siting, zoning, and requiring people to live near noxious facilities.
- Legislation and Policy Workgroup, Second People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit*
9. 99,000 industrial chemicals currently in use, only one percent have been tested for deleterious effects on human life, two percent on animal life. Consequently, industry uses workers, in effect, to test these chemicals.
- Unequal Exposure at Work workshop resolution, Second People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit*
- The information is not readily available
 - The bottom line would be economics not human life
 - Industries uses workers, these workers are mainly people of color
 - It’s designed that their industries are located in low-income + communities of color
10. Environmental human health research, whenever practicable and appropriate, shall include diverse segments of the population in epidemiological and clinical studies, including segments at high risk from environmental hazards, such as minority populations, low-income populations and workers who may be exposed to substantial environmental hazards.

The public may submit recommendations to federal agencies relating to the incorporation of environmental justice principles into federal agency programs or policies. Each federal agency shall convey such recommendations to the Working Group.

Executive Order No. 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and low-income Populations

- Need to make sure all are represented
- ‘May’ submit recommendation should be ‘must’
- Agencies don’t think about low-income + POC who need it the most.