ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SERIES, 2016-17

SOME DEFINITIONS & RESOURCES

CSLS Working Definition of Environmental Justice
“Environmental Justice is concerned with making sure that (A) no community takes on an unfair share of environmental burdens and (B) environmental benefits are shared in an equitable way regardless of race, class, gender, or orientation.”

Short Videos on Environmental Justice
- Animated Definition: Environmental Justice, Explained (3.5 min) Presented by Grist
- “What does environmental justice mean?” LaToria Whitehead of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes Environmental Justice as working to ensure everyone has equal protection from harmful environmental effects, and a fair chance to live in a safe and healthy environment.
- The Beloved Community, Environmental Justice, and the Green Movement (6 min) Video clips from an MLK Day event at The King Center, from the Atlanta group PURE (Project Urban Renewable Energy), a Serve-Learn-Sustain partner; featuring Dr. Robert Bullard, Dean of the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University and the “father of environmental justice;” Aaron Mair President of The Sierra Club; and Dr. Beverly Wright, professor of Sociology and founding director of the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Dillard University in New Orleans
- MacArthur award-winner Majora Carter on Environmental Justice (2 min) “…no community should have to bear the brunt of environmental burdens and not enjoy environmental benefits”
- Environmental Justice: Peggy Shepard at TEDxHarlem (8 min) Shepard is founder of WeACT for Environmental Justice, a leader in the EJ and climate justice movements

EJ Case Studies
Historical:
- Dumping in Warren County, NC:
  - PCB Contamination in Warren County, USA
  - Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality
- Landfill siting in Houston

Contemporary:
- Flint water crisis
- Indiana soil crisis

Additional Resources on Environmental Justice
- Principles of Environmental Justice
- Presidential Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice; Presidential Proclamation -- 20th Anniversary of Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice
- Dr. Robert Bullard, “Father of Environmental Justice”
  - Dr. Bullard’s home page
Interview: “Robert Bullard: The Father of Environmental Justice” (history, policy, and current movement)

- Linking ‘Toxic Outliers’ to Environmental Justice Communities (academic article)
- US EPA Environmental Justice
- Environmental Injustice and Health Disparities:
  - National Institutes of Health: Environmental Injustice
  - National Institute of Minority Health Disparities (NIMHD)
  - Urban Institute

Get involved in local Atlanta efforts related to environmental justice:
- Proctor Creek Stewardship Council & West Atlanta Watershed Alliance - both partners in the Georgia Tech-led Westside Communities Alliance, focused on Atlanta and the West End
- Partnership for Southern Equity – Serve-Learn-Sustain partner focused on many issues related to justice and sustainable communities
- PURE (Project Urban Renewable Energy) – Atlanta group focused on issues related to justice and sustainable communities

Some Other Definitions of Environmental Justice

“Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

What is meant by fair treatment and meaningful involvement?
- **Fair treatment** means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies
- **Meaningful Involvement** means that:
  1. people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
  2. the public’s contribution can influence the regulatory agency’s decision;
  3. their concerns will be considered in the decision making process; and
  4. the decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected”

- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

“An environmental injustice exists when members of disadvantaged, ethnic, minority or other groups suffer disproportionately at the local, regional (sub-national), or national levels from environmental risks or hazards, and/or suffer disproportionately from violations of fundamental human rights as a result of environmental factors, and/or denied access to environmental investments, benefits, and/or natural resources, and/or are denied access to information; and/or participation in decision making and/or access to justice in environment-related matters.”

- National Institute of Minority Health Disparities

“Environmental justice science [seeks to] understand how burden disparities lead to exposure, risk, and health disparities”
- Sacoby Wilson, Assistant Professor, Applied Environmental Health, University of Maryland School of Public Health, in “CAFOs and Environmental Justice: The Case of North Carolina”

Some Definitions of Environmental Racism

“Environmental racism is the systemic placing of toxic burdens upon people of color. It is an example of structural racism – not necessarily the conscious acts of individuals, but ways in which society is structured that creates patterns of unequal burdens.”
- Carl A. Zimring, Associate Professor of Sustainability Studies, Department of Social Science and Cultural Studies, Pratt Institute, in “Flint’s Sorry Legacy of Environmental Racism”
“Environmental racism,” the term used in the earliest literature in the field (e.g., Chavis 1987), describes the disproportionate effects of environmental pollution on racial minorities. Because it describes the disproportionate relationship between high levels of pollution exposure for people of color and the low level of environmental benefits they enjoy, environmental racism can be defined as the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and pollution burdens based on race. ‘Environmental inequality’ has emerged more recently to encompass both additional factors that associated with disproportionate environmental impacts such as class, gender, immigration status, as well as the inter-connections between these factors. ‘Environmental justice’ is the name of the social movement that emerged in response to these particular problems.”

- “Environmental Justice at the Crossroads,” by Julie Sze and Jonathan K. London, University of California-Davis

**General Resources on Equity and Sustainability**

*Blog Posts:*

- **“Equity? That’s not an issue for us, we’re here to save the world”**
  By Julian Agyeman, Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University and creator of the concept of “just sustainabilities”
- **Sustainability’s New Rules, 50 Years Old – Sustainability’s Caste System Can Go to Hell**
  By Dave Newport, Director of the Environmental Center at University of Colorado Boulder and a leader in the campus sustainability field

*Videos:*

- **Introducing 'The Doughnut': A safe and just space for humanity** (4 min)
  Kate Raworth, Senior Researcher at Oxfam Great Britain, introduces the Oxfam doughnut visual framework
- **Environment and Equity: The Interface between Sustainability and Social Justice** (1 hr)
  Van Jones, Attorney, activist, and nonprofit leader, speaks to students at Franklin & Marshall College
- **Just Sustainabilities: Re-Imagining E/Quality with Julian Agyeman** (1 hr)
  Julian Agyeman, Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University and creator of the concept of “just sustainabilities,” talks about the central role that justice plays in sustainability