Commons and Climate Justice: Ecofeminist and Indigenous Paths

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Outline

• What is climate justice?
• How can commons advance climate justice?
• Community climate resilience and commons readiness – education, skills, policies and removing barriers
• Ecofeminist and indigenous insights
• Conclusion
Climate Injustices: those already marginalized are hit hardest

• Coastal flooding and storms: Urban infrastructure damage, endangered housing, rebuilding costs
• Rising sea level: small island states and coastal cities uninhabitable, migration, saltwater intrusion in agricultural areas, reduced food production
• Drought: threatened livelihoods, migration, conflicts over water and land
• Heightened risk and instability
In Durban, South Africa, periodic flooding affects sanitation, transportation, and quality of life.
During a 2010 storm in Maputo, Mozambique, about 20 houses were washed into this gulley. More are endangered.
Increasing sea levels and storms are causing erosion along Maputo’s Indian Ocean coastline.
A commuter train in the Don Valley, Toronto, July 8, 2013. Passengers were evacuated by rubber dinghy. A commuter filmed a water snake swimming under the train seats. Link to snake video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMfTvb9A8bY
Climate Justice

• Climate change exacerbates post-colonial inequalities at the global level.

• Energy transitions have always used power to reduce work for some, not for all.

• Democratic accountability and participation, ecological sustainability, and social justice can together provide solutions to climate change – and address the social injustice, ecological destruction and economic domination perpetrated by pro-growth capitalism (Chatterton 2012).
Gender Justice

- Climate change also exacerbates gendered social, political and economic inequities.
- “The conventional world dichotomy across North-South lines dissolves once we see vulnerability as an embodied experience felt by every human being... vulnerability as a shared (albeit unequal) experience becomes the impetus for change” (Tschakert and Machado 2012).
Climate Justice and Political Engagement, North and South

• Local people are the experts on what they need
• Community-based environmental education and organizing lead to government action
• Green jobs / climate jobs provide an opportunity for local development, improvements in housing, recreation, sanitation, etc.
• Global and local coalitions create productive synergies
“The commons has become a key discursive tool for the climate justice movement … Climate justice politics which more clearly articulates the antagonistic relations of uneven capitalism can build a prefigurative commons and extend practices of north-south and interclass solidarity.”

Chatterton et.al. (2006: 613,618)
Commons scholars and activists show how cooperative governance can work better than private property/markets or State management in many situations.
Climate Justice in BC: Lessons for Transformation

Are you looking for new ways to teach about climate change and social justice? Frustrated with models that stop at changing light bulbs and driving smart cars?

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the BC Teachers’ Federation have teamed up to create free classroom-ready materials that help students engage with the two great inconvenient truths of our time: climate change and rising inequality. And we don’t stop at small-scale personal choices, climate justice looks to how we can re-imagine the systems around us to make a better life for everyone.

Consisting of eight modules designed for students in grades 8 to 12 (adaptable for intermediate), the package explores climate justice within the context of BC’s communities, history, economy and ecology.

**Climate Justice in BC modules:**

1. Introduction to Climate Justice
2. Reimagining our Food System
3. Transportation Transformation
4. Rethinking Waste
5. Fracking Town Hall
6. Green Industrial Revolution
7. The Rhetoric of “Growth”
8. The Price of Power

Print-friendly PDFs are now available. You can download the complete resource package [here](http://www.climatejustice.ca), or individual module PDFs on their respective web pages.

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The CCPA is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social, economic and environmental justice.

[www.climatejustice.ca](http://www.climatejustice.ca)

The British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF), established in 1917, is a social justice union of professionals representing public school teachers in BC, Canada.
Co-operatives are guided by 7 principles: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training, and information; co-operation among co-operatives; and concern for community. http://www.coopscanada.coop/
When a homeowner can’t keep up with the harvest produced by their tree, they let Not Far From the Tree volunteers pick the bounty. The harvest is split three ways: 1/3 is offered to the tree owner, 1/3 is shared among the volunteers, and 1/3 is delivered by bicycle to be donated to food banks, shelters, and community kitchens in the neighbourhood.
http://www.notfarfromthetree.org/
Marine Priority Conservation Areas: Baja California to the Bering Sea (B2B), is developing a plan for marine conservation at a continental scale — the first cooperative efforts in marine conservation among Mexico, the US and Canada. http://www.marine-conservation.org/
Nigerian environmental activist Nnimmo Bassey’s poem, “I will not dance to your beat” includes the lines “Leave the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole and the tar sands in the land!”
Climate resilience and commons priorities

- Develop and transfer skills and institutions for building trust / reciprocity
- Build and recognize commons experience
- Develop social networks / social learning
- Respect and foster diversity, transparency, political and economic interdependence
- Distribute income equitably
- Integrate culture and care
Commoning tools to advance climate justice

- Diaspora connections
- Solidarity, ethics and understanding
- Emergent leadership
- Watersheds and ecological boundaries
- Complexity resilience
- Conflict resolution
- Polycentricity
Watercolor depicting the Klallam people of chief Chetzemoka (1808-1888) at Port Townsend, WA, with one of Chetzemoka's wives distributing potlatch.
Thank you!

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