

8

Climate justice emphasizes systemic change – new rules and regulations, public investments in infrastructure and better systems – above and beyond the small changes we can make as individuals. This module reflects on successful social movements, then opens up a conversation about achieving climate justice in BC.

While this module is more about movement-building than research, the Climate Justice Project (CJP) report *A Green Industrial Revolution* contains lots of ideas for how to build a sustainable economy: www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/green-industrial-revolution

The CJP's *The Good Life, The Green Life* video project looks into the lives of several British Columbians as they wrestle with change in their own lives: <http://goodlifegreenlife.ca/>

OBJECTIVES

- Students will reflect on and name the essential elements of successful social change movements.
- Students will identify the challenges to widespread social change.
- Students will identify specific challenges to achieving climate justice in BC, and brainstorm ways to overcome them.

COMPONENTS

1. Defining and creating change
2. BC climate justice: the potential of this moment

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Social Studies 8, 9, 10, 11
Civic Studies 11
Comparative Civilizations 12
Social Justice 12
English Language Arts 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Communications 11, 12
Applied Skills 11
Economics 12

Visit <http://teachclimatejustice.ca/the-lessons/PLOs> to download a comprehensive list of BC Ministry of Education prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) that may be addressed with this resource package.

TOTAL SUGGESTED TIME

1.75 hours

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Digital projector and computer with internet access
- Whiteboard/chalkboard and markers/chalk
- PowerPoint: *Challenges to Change* [Download at www.teachclimatejustice.ca]
- Copies of *The Story of Change* and Youth4Tap reflection sheet



Part 1 – Defining and creating change



Read aloud: Today we are going to explore social change and what we can do to successfully create it. In some cases, we can act as individuals to create change, but often, in order for it to have long-term, widespread impact, we need to work collectively to change structural factors, or the systems around us. We are going to use the climate justice movement, which is taking action to address climate change and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in ways that will make our province better and more just, as our focus.



Activity: In small groups, name at least three examples of:

- Personal change – changes you can make in your own behavior to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. buying recycled paper, biking instead of driving, using less energy at home).
- Systemic change – changes in systems or our environment that address the underlying causes of climate change and high greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. public transit, recycling systems, clean tap water, hydroelectric power).

Ask groups to share their ideas with the class.

- **Discuss:** What are the main changes we need to make together in order to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions?



Read aloud: To rise to the challenges of climate change, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and pursue a fairer world and better life, effective, large-scale, systemic change is vital.



Brainstorm as a class: What are some examples of successful change movements through history? (E.g. US civil rights movement, women’s right to vote in Canada, India’s independence from Britain, anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, lesbian and gay rights.)



Questions:

- Why do you think these change movements were successful?
- What are some of the obstacles and challenges these movements faced, and were able to overcome?



Show video: *The Story of Change* <http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-change/>
Ask students to think about these questions while they watch the video:

- What do you think are the biggest challenges to change?
- What do you think people need to do to make lasting change in the world?



Ask students to complete *The Story of Change* reflection sheet (page 5) in pairs, then debrief as a class.



Discuss the questions above, and as ideas emerge make notes on the board similar to this table:

Challenges to Change	Elements for Successful Change
Established systems	People work to change systems
Focusing only on individual action	People taking action together for a common goal

Possible ideas to tease out:

- Old systems can reinforce existing habits and be barriers to new ones.
- There are people who feel they benefit from the old way of doing things and may resist change.
- Over time, small changes in the right direction can add up to a lot. Back in the 1980s it was still the norm for people to smoke in restaurants or at work!



Part 2 – BC climate justice: the potential of this moment



Read aloud: How much popular support do you think the average social change movement needs to make meaningful, widespread change actually happen? Raise your hand if you agree with the percentage, and keep it up until you disagree – 80%? 60%? 40%? 20%?

What percentage of people in BC do you think support climate action initiatives for the province, such as investments in public transportation, transition programs for workers in fossil fuel industries, and subsidies for home and building retrofits?

- It's around 80% to 95%!
- 86% of people in BC believe climate action will be good for people and the province
- 89% agree that "Canadians as a whole will be better off if we can be less dependent on fossil fuels" – from *Moving Towards Climate Justice: Overcoming Barriers to Change*

As we saw in *The Story of Change* video, this means we have the numbers to make real positive change in BC around climate justice if we:

- are guided by a BIG IDEA
- work TOGETHER
- take ACTION to change SYSTEMS

AT THE TIME OF
MARTIN LUTHER
KING JR.'S MARCH
ON WASHINGTON,
ONLY 23% OF
AMERICANS
SUPPORTED HIM.



Question:

- What are some systemic changes we could make in BC that would help us move towards climate justice?

This is an opportunity to link back to other modules on food, transportation, waste, energy and the green economy, and consider actions at different levels.



Read aloud: There are already young people in the province making significant, positive change for climate justice in their schools and communities. An example of change in action is Youth4Tap, a student-driven initiative that emerged from several Vancouver schools.



Show video: *Youth4Tap Windermere*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1idmn96ceY
While they watch the video, ask students to consider how the Windermere group fulfilled the elements of change we heard about in *The Story of Change*.



Ask students to complete the Youth4Tap reflection sheet (page 7) in pairs, then debrief as a class.

Positive change is possible, and we can do it too!



Questions:

- What systems or policies in our school or community could we try to change in order to move towards climate justice?
- What would be our big ideas?
- Who would we network with in our communities?
- What collective actions could we engage in to try to make change happen?



QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

1. Using the Big Idea – Working Together – Collective Action to Change Systems/Policies model, create an action plan to address a climate justice problem in your community. What is your big idea? What system do you want to change? What can you do to bring people together? What group actions would you want to take? It doesn't have to immediately create a systemic change, but can be a start.
2. Suggestions for how to make environmental and social change happen have often emphasized individual choice or consumer-based models. Why do you think these methods have been so heavily promoted even though they have proven to be less effective in producing significant social change?
3. Start a Youth4Tap initiative in your school.
4. Watch Dave Meslin's TED Talk, *The antidote to apathy*: www.ted.com/talks/dave_meslin_the_antidote_to_apathy. Using his ideas, explain how groups advocating for social or environmental justice issues in BC can make it easier for people to be part of their movement.
5. If you wanted people to work with you on a campaign or a project for social change, what tactics or strategies could you use to encourage people to join you?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **The Good Life, The Green Life**
<http://goodlifegreenlife.ca>
- **Moving Towards Climate Justice: Overcoming Barriers to Change**
www.policyalternatives.ca/moving-towards-climate-justice
- **Youth 4 Action: Youth leadership and action at school and beyond**
www.metrovancouver.org/region/Youth4Action/Pages/default.aspx
- **Aliya Dossa, TEDxKids: Sustainability Begins with a Smile**
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdDEGn4S5nA
- **Fossil Free Canada**
<http://gofossilfree.ca>
- **The Story of Stuff Project**
<http://storyofstuff.org>
- **Why It's Not Enough To Be Right About Climate Change**
<http://desmog.ca/2014/01/27/why-it-s-not-enough-be-right-about-climate-change>

The opinions and recommendations made in these lesson plans and the linked reports and resources, and any errors, are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CCPA, BCTF or funders of the Climate Justice Project.

The Story of Change

Challenges to Change

1. When people talk about changing the world, the focus is often on giving individuals the opportunity to make different choices for themselves. Why is it a problem to try to make change solely by focusing on individual action or personal choice?

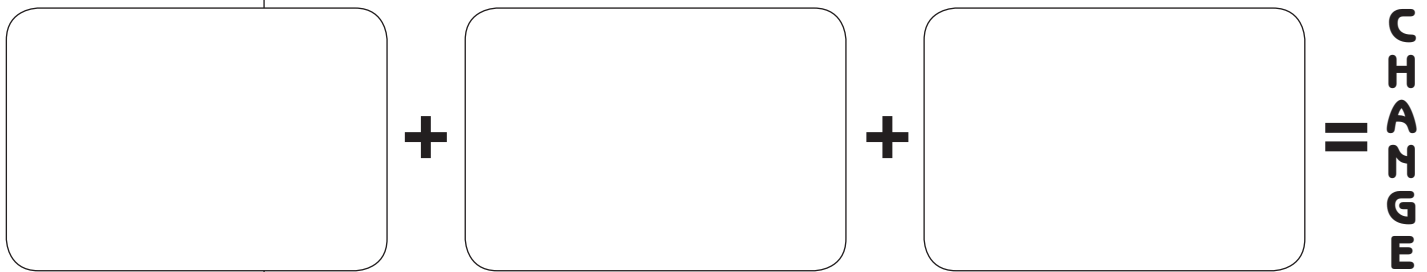
2. We often hear that we can help save the planet by changing how we shop. Yet “green” products, such as organic food or energy efficient home appliances, are usually more expensive than other options. Is this method of change equally accessible to everyone? Does it distribute the benefits and burdens of adapting to climate change fairly? Why or why not?

3. If we wanted to create a new kind of economy that focused on the wellbeing of people and the planet, would the presence of the old economy help or hinder the change? Why?

Moving Forward

4. What can people do beyond buying green products or making personal choices to help make successful change?

5. Complete the elements for change diagram below, as proposed in *The Story of Change*. Use your own words in the boxes, not their pictures.



6. Complete the sentences:

A **big idea** doesn't just make things a little better for a few people, it makes things a lot better for _____. When Martin Luther King Jr. organized his march on Washington he only had 23% popular support, yet was successful in the end. Although not everyone supported the civil rights movement, the people who did worked _____ and took collective _____.

7. What do you like to do and what are you good at? What kinds of skills could you bring to a change movement?

Youth4Tap

1. What was Youth4Tap's **big idea** for their school?

2. What different actions did they take? How did these actions involve or engage different groups of people?

3. How are the students going beyond the personal choice model to changing the systems at their school?

4. The two principles of climate justice are that actions need to 1) rise to tackle the challenges of climate change, and 2) be fair, and make life better for everyone, including the people who are most poor or vulnerable. Does Youth4Tap's initiative achieve this? In what ways?

Answer key

The Story of Change

1. When people talk about changing the world, the focus is often on giving individuals the opportunity to make different choices for themselves. Why is it a problem to try to make change solely by focusing on individual action or personal choice?

The systems and environments we live in have a much greater impact on what happens in the world than what we choose to do individually; systems greatly influence our personal choices; we can have a greater impact collectively than individually.

2. We often hear that we can help save the planet by changing how we shop. Yet “green” products, such as organic food or energy efficient home appliances, are usually more expensive than other options. Is this method of change equally accessible to everyone? Does it distribute the benefits and burdens of adapting to climate change fairly? Why or why not?

No—people with less money would have to take on more of a financial burden to “go green.” This extra burden might be a barrier that prevents some from living a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle and excludes them from being part of making change.

3. If we wanted to create a new kind of economy that focused on the wellbeing of people and the planet, would the presence of the old economy help or hinder the change? Why?

The presence of the old economy would hinder the change—old systems tend to try to perpetuate themselves and resist the new.

4. What can people do beyond buying green products or making personal choices to help make successful change?

People can work together to try to change systems or policies.

5. Complete the elements for change diagram below, as proposed in The Story of Change. Use your own words in the boxes, not their pictures.

A big idea that helps everyone a lot + a group of people who work together as a collective + people who take action together to change systems = CHANGE.

6. Complete the sentences: A **big idea** doesn't just make things a little better for a few people, it makes things a lot better for **EVERYONE**. When Martin Luther King Jr. organized his march on Washington he only had 23% popular support, yet was successful in the end. Although not everyone supported the civil rights movement, the people who did worked **TOGETHER** and took collective **ACTION**.

7. What do you like to do and what are you good at? What kinds of skills could you bring to a change movement?

Answers will vary.

Youth4Tap

1. What was Youth4Tap's big idea for their school?

Eliminate plastic water bottles at their school.

2. What different actions did they take? How did these actions involve or engage different groups of people?

They organized a water information week to engage students (both through coordinating and attending events); they lobbied administration and the school board to make changes to the school facilities.

3. How are the students going beyond the personal choice model to changing the systems at their school?

The students worked to change the physical environment of their school by installing new water fountains. Not just leaving it to individuals, they remade a system where it is now easier for everyone to engage in reducing waste and consumption.

4. The two principles of climate justice are that actions need to 1) rise to tackle the challenges of climate change, and 2) be fair, and make life better for everyone, including the people who are most poor or vulnerable. Does Youth4Tap's initiative achieve this? In what ways?

Yes. By eliminating plastic water bottles from their schools they are reducing waste and the amount of carbon used to create plastic water bottles. They are also educating others in their community on waste and consumption. Their initiative makes life better for everyone in the community, as everyone can benefit from the new water fountains.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Climate Justice in BC: Lessons for Transformation was designed to provide teachers with classroom-ready materials to engage their students with how climate action intersects with social justice (“climate justice”). The curriculum features eight modules designed for grade 8-12 students to explore climate justice within the context of BC’s communities, history, economy and ecology. These lessons tie into subject matter and prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) already in BC’s curriculum (complete list at teachclimatejustice.ca/the-lessons/PLOs), while providing a framework to unpack modern social and environmental issues.

The topics are based on reports from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives’ Climate Justice Project – a research project that looks at the two great inconvenient truths of our time: climate change and rising inequality. (Climate Justice reports, shorter pieces and videos available at www.climatejustice.ca.)

Visit teachclimatejustice.ca for downloadable and online components of this curriculum, including PowerPoint files, links to videos and resources, and individual lesson PDFs.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt these lessons to their particular classroom needs, or pull out specific activities as appropriate. Times allocated for each module are approximate and will vary greatly depending on the grade and composition of the class. While these lessons were designed for secondary students, most modules and activities are easily adaptable for upper intermediate students. Feedback is welcome and will help us refine these modules for subsequent editions.

MODULE SUMMARIES

Module 1: Introduction to Climate Justice
Causes and effects of climate change through a fairness and equity lens.

Module 2: Reimagining our Food System
Climate change and our food systems, how climate change may affect food production in BC and elsewhere, and social justice issues, such as vulnerability to hunger and migrant farm labour.

Module 3: Transportation Transformation
How community design encourages or discourages car use, and what we can do to better facilitate walking, biking and public transit options, create more complete communities and improve quality of life.

Module 4: Rethinking Waste
Moves beyond recycling and composting and looks at our culture of consumption and how it produces waste, both solid waste and airborne emissions like greenhouse gases.

Module 5: Fracking Town Hall
Uses a town hall simulation to explore the challenges of fossil fuel extraction and the bigger picture context of the push for a BC-based liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry.

Module 6: Green Industrial Revolution
Uses the mini-documentary *Town At The End of the Road*, to consider how resource sectors can be re-imagined as part of a green economy.

Module 7: Imagining the Future We Want
Uses a storytelling exercise and themes of intergenerational justice to discuss the challenges we face today and imagine how we can move towards a better future.

Module 8: Challenges to Change
Explores the essential elements of successful social change movements.

GLOSSARY

2°C – The amount of global warming above pre-industrial levels (200 years ago), which could lead to catastrophic outcomes for human populations (and countless other animal and plant species). The Earth has already warmed by 0.8°C above pre-industrial levels.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) – A heat-trapping molecule, and the principal greenhouse gas of concern to climate scientists. A growing concentration of CO₂ from burning fossil fuels is warming the Earth.

Carbon tax – A tax applied to the combustion of fossil fuels. BC currently has a carbon tax that amounts to about 7 cents per litre at the gas pump.

Climate change – The altering of climate patterns (e.g. more precipitation, more intense storms, floods or droughts) on Earth caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

Climate justice – A term for viewing climate change as an ethical issue and considering how its causes and effects relate to concepts of justice, particularly social justice and environmental justice. This can mean examining issues such as equality, human rights, collective rights and historical responsibility in relation to climate change.

Fossil fuels – Fossil fuels are the underground remains of plants and animals that lived millions of years ago, which can be processed and combusted for energy use. Examples include oil, bitumen, coal and natural gas.

Global carbon budget – An estimated maximum amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases we can emit into the atmosphere before passing the 2°C critical threshold of warming.

Global warming – The heating up of the Earth caused primarily by the burning of fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas), which releases heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) – A gas that traps heat and contributes to global climate change.

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) – Natural gas that has been converted into liquid for ease of storage and transportation.

Methane (CH₄) – A potent greenhouse gas, and the principal ingredient in “natural gas.”

Renewable energy – Energy that comes from resources that are continually replenished, such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves and geothermal heat.

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Complete project credits, biographies and acknowledgements at teachclimatejustice.ca/about



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Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – BC Office

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



British Columbia Teachers' Federation

The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), established in 1917, is a social justice union of professionals representing public school teachers in BC, Canada. www.bctf.ca

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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