

ACTIVITY 2

CLIMATE JUSTICE

Time: 30 minutes

Aims

1. To understand two key elements of climate justice: inequality and interconnectedness.
2. To think in greater detail about how the lifestyles of people in the world's high-income countries, which emit the greatest amounts of carbon dioxide per capita, impact on people in the world's low-income countries, which have lower carbon dioxide emissions.

Background

Climate change may have environmental impacts which are consistent over large areas or even the entire planet – for example, a particular global rise in temperature or an increase in sea levels. However, how these impacts are experienced by people varies greatly depending on people's access to resources, their knowledge, and their capabilities (the things they are able to do). Who and where you are in the world really matters.

On the right are some of the factors which may influence how a person is affected by climate change. The climate doesn't know who individual people are or anything about their backgrounds any more than Covid-19 knows who it infects and makes unwell. However, people's backgrounds and their everyday lives greatly influence how they will be affected.

Who and where you are matters

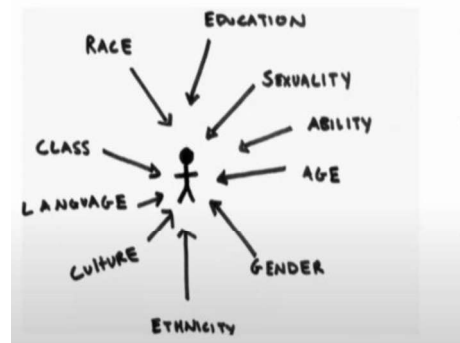


Image: From Kate Crowley at the Scottish Climate Citizen's Assembly, Nov 2020, 12:03 mins into this talk: <https://youtu.be/-4eLuFDsIAM> Provided on slide 2 of the slideshow.

Starter discussion

1. Show learners this photograph showing farmers' homes in Bangladesh (provided on slide 5 of the slideshow). Explain that these farmers, who live in poorly constructed homes close to rivers which frequently flood, were more seriously affected by Cyclone Bulbul than wealthy people living in well-constructed homes on drier land. Among the farming communities along the river, women, children and the old were often more severely impacted than young men because these groups have less money and education than the young men. In addition, their ability to move away and look for work outside the community is more restricted.
2. Ask learners to think about this example from Bangladesh. They should try to identify other similar examples they have heard of and suggest how the different factors in the **Who and where you are matters** diagram above may apply in other real-life situations.



Photo: Fabeha Monir/Oxfam. Provided on slide 5 of the slideshow.

3. Empathise that these **inequalities** occur both between different countries and inside the same country. In some cases, inequalities **within** countries may be greater than inequalities **between** countries. For example, South Africa is frequently cited as the world's [most unequal country](#). It has wealthy suburbs located near informal settlements which lack basic services and are vulnerable to crises, as when the city of Cape Town experienced a severe drought and water shortage during 2017 and 2018. It was the communities experiencing poverty which found it most difficult to access the limited water supplies.

Inequality is the first key element of **climate justice**. The second element is the result of interconnectedness, whereby the people who are affected the most by climate change are also the people who are least responsible for causing it. This can be explained and understood by asking learners to solve a **mystery** activity and following this activity up with a discussion.

Running the activity

For further details see Oxfam's [Global Citizenship in the Classroom](#) guide (p. 15).

A **Mystery** involves learners in piecing together 'clues' printed on separate pieces of paper to answer a question or tell a story. This is an excellent tool for exploring global interconnectedness.

1. Learners should work in groups of three or four. Their task is to solve a mystery which has one central question: **'Why did Runa's street food stall close down?'**
2. To answer the question, learners should have a set of the **Clue cards** ([Activity sheet 2](#)). Some clues may be more important than others in solving the mystery.
3. Emphasise that it's not enough to simply sequence clues in the correct order. Learners should be able to explain how they solved the mystery and reflect on the message the activity is communicating.

Follow up discussion

1. The climate emergency is complex. There are several reasons why Runa's stall closed, including her gender and her subsequent difficulty in accessing a loan. There are also good reasons why Shrafaz is driven to school despite the environmental impact. The point of the activity is not to blame a global problem on one young person's actions, but to illustrate interconnectivity and inequality between people on a global scale.

2. The per person carbon emissions for an average person in the UK in 2018 were [5.6 metric tons](#). The comparable carbon emissions for an average person in Bangladesh were [0.6 metric tons](#). UK carbon emissions per person are therefore more than six times greater than the emissions of an average Bangladeshi. Not everyone in the UK or Bangladesh emit equal amounts of carbon. These figures are averages and conceal wide in-country differences.
3. The climate emergency impacts both Shafraz and Runa. For example, the air quality, public health and environment of Sparkbrook are damaged by carbon emissions. However, Runa has completely lost her livelihood and will find it difficult to find a new way to make a living. She has few available alternatives and no social protection 'safety net'. Runa has suffered personal loss and damage and cannot yet adapt to the disastrous impact the climate emergency is having on her life. Her gender excludes her from accessing a loan to repair her stall. This type of scenario is being repeated millions of times in countries across the world.
4. The people who have done the least to cause the climate emergency (such as Runa) are those who suffer from it the most. Meanwhile the people who do the most to contribute towards the emergency (such as people in the UK and other high-income countries) have so far suffered relatively few impacts while enjoying the benefits of modern life. The climate emergency is also an inequality emergency. The debate rarely focuses on how millions of people like Runa will be supported through this emergency which they did not cause.

CLUE CARDS

Activity sheet 2

Cut out the cards and place them in envelopes for group work

Shafraz is driven to school each day in his parents' car.	Runa cannot afford to repair her damaged stall. The moneylender she asks for a loan only lends money to men.	Climate change contributes towards rising sea levels and the risk of extreme weather.
Bangladesh is in South Asia. It is one of the countries that are most at risk from the effects of sea levels rising and extreme weather.	Sea levels are rising, and storms are stronger and more frequent because of climate change.	Shafraz's parents say the traffic in Sparkbrook is too dangerous for him to walk the short distance to school on his own.
Runa's street food stall has had to close down. Runa has no way to make a living.	Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas which contributes to climate change.	After her husband died, Runa worked hard and saved up the money to set up her stall. It's unusual for a woman to be in business by herself and she doesn't make much money.
Shafraz lives two kilometres from his school in Sparkbrook, Birmingham.	Last week very heavy rains and winds badly damaged Runa's stall for the second time.	Birmingham's traffic is mostly made up of cars. Some drivers have large SUVs.
Local workers and people catching a bus visit Runa's stall for a snack or a drink.	Bad storms and rain have been flooding the roads in Chattogram. Fewer workers stop for a snack or a drink.	Cars produce carbon dioxide from the burning of petrol.
Chattogram is a large port city on the south-eastern coast of Bangladesh.	Runa's stall is on a main road next to Chattogram's port.	The morning bus to Shafraz's school is often held up by heavy traffic.